

Implementing the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

Deaf Sector Partnership



**Effecting change, equality
& access for BSL in Scotland**

November 2015

Introduction to the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP)

The **Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP)** has been funded by the Scottish Government to support public bodies to implement the new **British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015**.

Under the new legislation, Scottish Government Ministers must publish a BSL National Plan within two years. Other listed authorities (including local authorities and regional NHS boards) will have to publish their own BSL plans a year later, and these must reflect the priorities set out in the National Plan.

The Scottish Government wants to support all Scottish public bodies to implement the Act effectively, and wants Deaf / Deafblind BSL users to get involved to ensure BSL plans reflect their priorities. We have created the Deaf Sector Partnership to help with this. The DSP will provide practical assistance to public bodies to engage with Deaf / Deafblind BSL users, and to improve the way they understand and respond to the needs of the BSL users they serve, and will work with Deaf / Deafblind BSL users across Scotland to help ensure their views are taken into account.

If you would like to find out more about how we can support your organisation or if you are a Deaf / Deafblind BSL user who wants to get involved, please contact: **admin@deafsectorpartnership.net**

For more information about Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP), you can visit DSP website: **www.deafsectorpartnership.net** or contact us: **0141 248 2474**

Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP) – Who We Are?

The Deaf Sector Partnership is made up of **six delivery partners** and **two support partners**. The delivery partners are:

- **British Deaf Association Scotland** (BDA Scotland)
- **Deaf Action**
- **Deaf Connections**
- **Deafblind Scotland** (DbS)
- **National Deaf Children's Society Scotland** (NDCS Scotland)
- **Scottish Council on Deafness** (SCoD)

Please go to page 3 for more information on each of the delivery partners.

The Scottish Government directs the DSP and the **Voluntary Action Fund** (VAF) provides support and monitoring.

The DSP will focus on:

- 1.) Engaging with Deaf / Deafblind people who use BSL as their first or preferred language (including Deafblind people who use tactile BSL) so that they can contribute to the development of BSL plans required by the Act; and
- 2.) Supporting public bodies to better understand / meet the needs of Deaf and Deafblind BSL users.



About the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP) Partners

British Deaf Association (BDA) Scotland

Established in 1890, BDA Scotland is a Deaf-led British Sign Language (BSL) organisation. Through the BSL (Scotland) Charter, they can provide **support and practical guidance** on making sure Deaf BSL users have the same quality of provision, information and standards and the same right to be consulted as everyone else.

Within the DSP, BDA Scotland will be responsible for engaging with Deaf BSL users, via a team of Deaf Outreach Workers. They also support the Scottish Government and other organisations to ensure information is **translated into BSL** and **shared**, for example, through the new BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 Facebook Group which BDA Scotland will be administering on behalf of the DSP:

British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

(www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/)

Deaf Action

Established in 1835, Deaf Action provides a wide range of services to deaf* people in several regions across Scotland and works to raise awareness of the needs and rights of deaf people, challenge discrimination and promote independence and quality of life.

Within the DSP, Deaf Action will undertake direct work around **participation and citizenship** with **young people** who are Deaf BSL users and provide **BSL Awareness training to public bodies**.

deaf* = Deaf BSL users, Deafblind, Deafened and Hard of Hearing people.

Deaf Connections

Deaf Connections is the oldest and longest running Deaf charity in the world, having been established in 1822. Deaf Connections has evolved as an organisation with the capacity and capability to work in partnership with our service users, other providers and funding bodies to deliver high quality services. In particular, Deaf Connections has expertise in working with individuals and groups with protected characteristics, especially older adults, including those are living with dementia, and members of minority ethnic groups.

As part of the DSP, Deaf Connections will support engagement with **Deaf BSL users from minority and protected characteristic groups** so that public bodies can work with a diverse range of Deaf BSL users to implement the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

Deafblind Scotland (DbS)

Deafblind Scotland (DbS) is a charity operating since September 1989, with a vision of "A society in which Deafblind people have the permanent support and recognition necessary to be equal citizens". DbS is one of the few Disabled Persons User Led Organisations (DPULO) in Scotland with 60% of their trustees being Deafblind.

Within the DSP, DbS will provide **Deafblind expertise and awareness** to public bodies. This includes information about the special measures needed to ensure Deafblind BSL users are included in consultation on draft BSL plans, and so that they benefit from the Act. DbS will also **support Deaf BSL users in raising awareness** of the needs of Deafblind BSL users; and will **support** Deafblind BSL users to undertake this work, ensuring that **individuals develop the skills and confidence** to achieve outcomes.

National Deaf Children's Society Scotland (NDCS Scotland)

National Deaf Children's Society Scotland (NDCS Scotland) is dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. NDCS Scotland delivers information and advice services, and a range of learning and activity events for deaf children, their families and the professionals who support them.

Within the DSP, NDCS Scotland offers the **Family Sign Language programme**, which provides parents, carers and families with the opportunity to learn British Sign Language (BSL) in a way that is appropriate for everyday family life. The project also provides **parenting support to build confidence, knowledge and resilience of parents and carers**.

Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD)

Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) is the Deaf Sector umbrella organisation and represents members in the Third, Public and Private Sectors. SCoD members include organisations who work with and on behalf of deaf* people, and individuals who have an interest in deaf issues or are deaf themselves.

SCoD co-ordinates the DSP and is the **first point of contact** for any enquiries and will host an **information hub for public bodies** implementing the legislation. SCoD will act as secretariat for the DSP and will for the BSL National Advisory Group (NAG).

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF)

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) is a long-established independent grant-making body which invests in voluntary organisations and community groups across Scotland. VAF's core work is making grants to the Third Sector. The grant programmes fall into two main categories: grants that VAF manages on behalf of other funders and grants that are open for application.

As part of the DSP, VAF will provide **Monitoring and grant management support; Development support; and Co-ordination.**

British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015

This Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament on Thursday 17 September 2015 and received Royal Assent on Thursday 22 October 2015.

The British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to promote the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL), principally by means of BSL plans, which are to be published by Scottish Government Ministers and specified public authorities. These plans are to be reviewed and updated at regular intervals and reported on via progress reports.

The National Plan will be published by Scottish Government Ministers and will include the authorities that report straight to Scottish Government Ministers. The other listed public authorities will produce their own plans. The National Advisory Group (NAG) will advise Scottish Ministers on the National Plan and the listed public authorities on the publishing and review of their plans.

For more information about the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, please check website: **<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/11/resources>**

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