

The aim and long-term ambitions for British Sign Language (BSL) in Scotland

This information is **NOT** the National Plan.

The **Scottish Government** decided that there has to be a **starting point** for the **National Advisory Group (NAG)** to begin putting together the **BSL National Plan**. These **aims** are the **headlines**. The **NAG** will then put the **actions** that will be expected to be **carried out** by the **public bodies** in place under each headline.

The **aims** have come from the **issues** that **Deaf and Deafblind people** **raised** during the **consultations** that the **Scottish Parliament** held on the **BSL (Scotland) Bill**. The issues raised were **access to language** for Deaf children, Deaf young people and their families, **education**, **health and social care**, **culture and leisure**, **access to justice**, and **transport**. Members of the **Deaf Sector Partnership** gave suggestions for the obvious **gaps**, such as **housing** and **employment**.

The first BSL National Plan will set out our long term goal for BSL in Scotland. This information bulletin suggest what the long-term goal could be.

It also sets out long-term ambitions in important policy areas, like education, health & social care and justice.

NAG will discuss the aim and long-term ambitions for the National Plan at NAG2.

At NAG3 and NAG4, the BSL National Advisory Group will decide what actions should be included in the first BSL National Plan, to help make progress towards the long-term aim and ambitions over the period 2017-2023.

We will report on the progress we have made in taking forward these actions in the National Progress Report which we will publish in October 2020.

The second National Plan (which will be published in October 2023) will have the same long term aim and ambitions as the first National Plan but the actions for the period 2023-2029 will be different.

The aim of the BSL National Plan

The Scottish Government values BSL. We will show leadership in promoting and supporting BSL as a vibrant and living language of Scotland.

We want to make Scotland the best place in the world for Deaf and Deafblind BSL users to live.

This means that they will be able to make their full contribution to daily and public life in Scotland, as active, healthy citizens and will be able to make informed choices about every aspect of their lives.

1.) Our ambition for early years

1.1) Families with a Deaf and Deafblind child will be given information about Deafness and BSL as soon as their baby is diagnosed as Deaf; and will offered support to learn to sign to their child, from birth through to starting school, wherever they live.

2.) Our ambition for school education

2.1) Every Deaf and Deafblind child in Scotland will have the opportunity to be taught bilingually in BSL and in English from pre-school, through primary school and secondary school, with full access to the curriculum in BSL (resources and teaching).

2.2) All school age children will have the opportunity to learn BSL through the “1 + 2 languages” programme.

3.)Our ambition for further or higher education

- 3.1) Deaf and Deafblind BSL users will attain the school qualifications needed to access further or higher education if they wish to do so; will be supported to transition to post-school education and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s).

4.)Our ambition for employment

- 4.1) Deaf and Deafblind people who use BSL will be supported to develop the necessary skills to become valued members of the Scottish workforce through fair and equal access to employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, internships and employability programmes.

5.)Our ambition for health & social care

- 5.1) Deaf and Deafblind BSL users will have access to the information they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every step of their care pathway.

6.)Our ambition for justice

- 6.1) Deaf and Deafblind BSL users will have the information and legal support they need to have full access to civil and criminal justice in Scotland, and will have the information and legal support they need if they are arrested and charged with a crime in Scotland.

7.)Our ambition for transport

- 7.1) Deaf and Deafblind BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.

8.) Our ambition for culture, leisure, sport and the arts

8.1) Deaf and Deafblind BSL users will enjoy fair and inclusive access to Scotland's culture, leisure pursuits, sport and the arts and will have every opportunity to share their own Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland.

9.) Our ambition for housing

9.1) Deaf and Deafblind BSL users will have equality of access to social housing, information on their rights as tenants of private landlords and advice on mortgages and buying a house.

10.) Our ambition for all our public services

10.1) Key information and services, including those provided online, will be accessible to Deaf and Deafblind BSL users across the Scottish public sector.

11.) Our ambition for representation of Deaf and Deafblind BSL users in democracy

11.1) We want Deaf and Deafblind BSL users to be represent the people of Scotland as elected politicians at a national and local level, and to serve on boards of our public bodies.

What we would like to know is

1. Are these the things you want in the BSL National Plan?
2. If these are not the things you want in the BSL National Plan, what have we missed out?