



Deaf Sector Partnership - BSL(Scotland) Act 2015

Annual Report

April 2015 to June 2016

Deaf Sector Partnership – BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

Background

The Scottish Government Equality Unit has funded five deaf organisations to take forward the preparatory work on the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act with the Scottish Government, listed public authorities and people whose first or preferred language is BSL in Scotland.

The work focussed on two primary outcomes:

1. Engaging with the people whose first or preferred language is BSL (mainly, in the first instance, Deaf and Deafblind people who use BSL); and
2. Supporting public bodies to better understand/meet the needs of people whose first or preferred language is BSL (mainly, in the first instance, Deaf and Deafblind people who use BSL).

Each organisation, while funded separately, collaborated and worked in partnership with the other four organisations as well as the Scottish Government and the Voluntary Action Fund. This work continues for a further year and will be reported on in July 2017.

The Deaf Sector Partnership had an overall work programme, and each project had its own project plan. This report is based on the DSP work programme.

The organisations are:

British Deaf Association (Scotland)

Deaf Action

Deafblind Scotland

Deaf Connections - as of 1st April 2016, no longer member of the DSP
NDCS (Scotland) – joined the DSP in October 2015.

Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD)

The work of the Deaf Sector Partnership began just before Stage 2 of the BSL (Scotland) Bill's progress through the Scottish Parliament. The

aim of the Deaf Sector Partnership was to support the Scottish Government to prepare for the Bill becoming an act; and to help to:

- Develop the National Advisory Group (NAG). The National Advisory Group was set up using a co-production model that is fully inclusive of people whose first or preferred language is BSL; and
- Prepare the first National Plan with national public bodies using a co-production model.

The Deaf Sector Partnership also worked with and supported Deaf and Deafblind people whose first or preferred language is BSL to understand co-production, and how to work with the Scottish Government and national public bodies to produce the first National Plan.

Evidence of Need

SCoD commissioned a piece of research early in 2015. The research looked at what support the public bodies listed in the BSL (Scotland) Bill as introduced would need to work with the Deaf/Deafblind/BSL communities to put in place the proposed BSL plans.

The public bodies that responded thought that the BSL (Scotland) Bill would:

1. Help to raise understanding of BSL and BSL users.
2. Help overcome some of the misunderstandings, myths and confusion about BSL - both in their own organisations and among the Scottish public in general.
3. Give BSL more status among budget holders, policy makers and politicians.
4. Help their organisations to improve access to information and services and to manage their resources better so that duplication is reduced.
5. Raise standards of service by sharing good practice and by providing opportunities for sharing practice and collaborating on developments in BSL.
6. Prompt their organisations to see BSL as relevant to more of their functions than previously.
7. Improve engagement with the Deaf/Deafblind/BSL communities, including BSL users who may not have been engaged with before.

The main theme was that public bodies would like support to make the necessary changes to their practice or to share good practice with others.

Why the need should be addressed

In order that the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 makes a difference to the lives of people whose first or preferred language is BSL, it is important that the Scottish Government, national and local public bodies have the tools they need to work in co-production with people whose first or preferred language is BSL (including Deaf and Deafblind people) and that the National Advisory Group is set up and organised using a co-production model.

It is equally important that Deaf/Deafblind BSL users have the necessary skills and confidence to take part in the planning and writing of the National and Local BSL Plans and in the ongoing review of these plans.

What is the motivation to address the need

The Deaf Sector Partnership has identified that an asset-based approach to our work that is person-centred and rights-based will enable BSL users to work with the Scottish Government and national public bodies using a co-production model:

- (a) to set up and work with the National Advisory Group, and
- (b) do the preparation for the planning and writing of the first National BSL Plan.

People whose first or preferred language is BSL will be at the heart of all the work done by the Deaf Sector Partnership. The first year's work concentrated on Deaf and Deafblind people whose first or preferred language is BSL and the national public bodies that will have to produce the first BSL National Plan with the Scottish Government.

Whole team approach

By taking a Whole Team Approach, the Deaf Sector Partnership bring the capacity of the Deaf Sector to its work - Third, Public and Private Sector resources - through the contacts made by each organisation/body in the partnership and through SCoD's membership. VAF and the Equality Unit enabled access to other equality organisations so that there is no need to "re-invent the wheel".

Each group/organisation/body brings knowledge, expertise, skills and networks to the work.

People whose first or preferred language is BSL have their own skills, knowledge and expertise that can be shared with others as well as with the Deaf Sector Partnership, the Scottish Government, national and local public bodies.

There are models of practice that have been used by other sections of the community to work in co-production. These community groups and organisations are part of the whole team approach.

The Deaf Sector Partnership Outcomes

1. Engaging with people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including Deaf and Deafblind people and communication with these communities including people with protected characteristics.

It was agreed at the start of the Deaf Sector Partnership that all meetings and messages would be produced bilingually in BSL and in English. In order to facilitate this, the Deaf Sector Partnership produced accessible tools and materials that are easily understood and available through a wide range of media sources – Website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, DVD, face to face, paper.

2. Preparing for and supporting people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including Deaf and Deafblind people and those with protected characteristics, to be involved in the BSL National Advisory Group (NAG).
 - a. This was done by supporting their understanding of

- i. the possible models for the National Advisory Group,
 - ii. understanding the decision making processes,
 - iii. choosing the model to be used,
 - iv. the role of National Advisory Group,
 - v. the limitations of National Advisory Group, and
 - vi. the consequences of involvement.
 - b. Setting up the Youth NAG to support deaf children and young people to be involved in the NAG and to provide a forum for deaf children and young people to be involved with the drafting of the first NBSL National Plan.
 - c. Setting up the Deafblind NAG to support Deafblind BSL users to be involved in the NAG and to provide a forum for Deafblind BSL users to be involved in the drafting of the first BSL National Plan.
 - d. Setting up the Parent NAG to support the hearing parent of a Deaf child whose first or preferred language is BSL to be involved in the NAG and to provide a forum for parents of Deaf children to be involved in the drafting of the first BSL National Plan.
 - e. Can you add something about BDA outreach workers and delivering Feeder Deaf NAG's?
3. Deciding on the most appropriate model for the National Advisory Group and what the first National Plan may look like.
 - a. Groundwork was carried out with strategic working groups across the public sector and within public services to start to build awareness of the BSL (Scotland) Bill and the Deaf Sector Partnership.
 - b. Using desktop research, come up with a number of potential models that could be used for the National Advisory Group and at a regional/local level.
 - c. Using desktop research, come up with a number of potential models that could be used for a template for the National Plan.

4. Supporting public bodies to better understand/meet the needs of people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including Deaf and Deafblind BSL users.

Working with training organisations to further develop BSL awareness training models that can be used throughout the listed public authorities so that all those involved in the development and implementation of the BSL Plans know what is expected of them. The starting point for any deaf awareness training was with the Scottish Government, and the public bodies that will be involved in the first National Plan.

Ensuring the listed public bodies/statutory consultation bodies understand what it means to involve and consult with people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including Deaf and Deafblind BSL users, and those with protected characteristics.

Public bodies across Scotland were mapped to show what they are doing at the present time to involve BSL users and what needs to be done according to good practice - <http://www.scod.org.uk/deaf-services-map/> .

The Deaf Sector Partnership will produce a toolkit of good practice for Scottish Government and public bodies involved in the BSL National Plan and those involved in the BSL Local Plans. This information and good practice will be reviewed every two years to make sure that it remains fit for purpose.

5. The evaluation of contactSCOTLAND-BSL which showed the impact of the service.
 - a. The research specification was negotiated;
 - b. The Deaf Sector Partnership collected data from face to face focus meetings and the dissemination of questionnaires; and
 - c. The report of the Deaf Sector Partnership work was sent to the Scottish Government for inclusion in the overall report.

Reporting

The main reporting mechanism for the Deaf Sector Partnership was to use the Scottish Community Development Centre's LEAP system that VAF had been using for all its "managed" projects:

<http://www.planandevaluate.com/> Each project completed their own LEAP report on a quarterly basis. SCoD then complete the overall Deaf Sector Partnership report from the information contained in the individual report. SCoD also maintain the Work Programme, Learning Log, Risk Register and Communications Protocol on behalf of the Deaf Sector Partnership.

The quarterly reports were the basis for the Planning and Delivery meetings that took place throughout the funding period. The partnership outcomes were reviewed at the Planning meetings and alterations made before being taken to the Delivery meetings so that the Deaf Sector Partnership members could take forward the work.

The Learning Log, Risk Register and Communications Protocol highlighted any areas for discussion, training and/or change. The Communications Protocol directed all the communications internally and externally for all members of the Deaf Sector Partnership in order that the same messages were being delivered across the partnership.

SCoD (Derek Todd) provided the secretariat to the Deaf Sector Partnership from the outset. This role developed to include the organisation of:

- all planning and delivery meetings;
- all sub group meetings; and
- the pre-NAG meetings for the people whose first or preferred language is BSL.

The Deaf Sector Partnership held a review day for all members of the partnership to look at what work would be ongoing into the next funding period and what work had been completed. Those attending agreed that the partnership had managed to do something special in the fact that the

first BSL NAG was up and running and it had been done bilingually using a co-production model. This is a first for the Scottish Government.

Deaf Sector Partnership work pre the passing of the BSL (Scotland) Bill

contactSCOTLAND-BSL

Irene Bruce and Angela Bonomy of contactSCOTLAND-BSL met with SCoD and BDA to propose that the Deaf Sector Partnership carry out the first evaluation of the service from the point of view of people whose first or preferred language is BSL. It was proposed that this evaluation would help to inform the procurement process for the next tender and the ongoing service. SCoD put together a research specification and shared this with all the DSP partners. All the partners agreed to take part in the evaluation. SCoD worked with Alix Rosenberg (Scottish Government Health Analytical Services) to set the research boundaries for the Deaf Sector Partnership and develop question sets. Members of the Deaf Sector Partnership carried out a number of face-to-face interviews with individuals who had used the service or were potential service users. The research was not undertaken to the standards necessary for publishing the results. This meant that the DSP report was not published publicly.

This was the first time that members of the Deaf Sector Partnership were involved in this type of research project with the Scottish Government and there were several pieces of learning noted after the work was complete. The main one was that it was, perhaps, too early in the life of the partnership to undertake such a piece of research and it would have been more productive to have members work together for a bit longer before this type of project was undertaken.

The use of Facebook to keep people informed and to share views

During the progress of the Bill through the Scottish Parliamentary process, the Facebook page set up by the Education and Culture Committee had been very successful and ensured the involvement of

people whose first or preferred language is BSL in the progress of the Bill.

When the work of the Education and Culture Committee was finished, the Scottish Government approached the BDA to set up a Facebook page for the Deaf Sector Partnership to keep the interest and involvement of people whose first or preferred language is BSL in what was happening with the Bill and the work that was being done in preparation of the Bill becoming an Act. This Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/> - has 1700 members and provides information on the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and the work of the BSL NAG, the Youth NAG, the Deafblind NAG and the Deaf Sector Partnership.

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Draft Delivery Plan

BDA Scotland and SCoD worked with the Scottish Government Equality Unit to deliver the summary of the UNCRPD Draft Delivery Plan in BSL.

Deaf Sector Partnership work after the Bill received Royal Assent

Working towards the first BSL National Advisory Group

Once the Scottish Government had agreed that there would be more people whose first or preferred language is BSL than public bodies on the first BSL National Advisory Group- the BSL NAG – the decision was taken that the set up would follow a co-production model and would be done bilingually in BSL and in English.

The work carried out by the Deaf Sector Partnership on the recruitment to the BSL NAG for people whose first or preferred language is BSL can be found separately in a case study – www.deafsectorpartnership.net/.

All members of the Deaf Sector Partnership were involved in the design of the recruitment process and the process itself as well as supporting the members to take part in the first meetings.

The decision was taken to involve deaf children and young people in the BSL National Advisory Group. Deaf Action and NDCS Scotland worked with the Scottish Government Equality Unit and the Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland to ensure that the right recruitment and support mechanisms were put in place to allow real involvement from deaf children and young people between the ages of 10 and 18. The result is the Youth NAG.

One of the "Deaf" places on the BSL NAG was set aside for a hearing parent of a Deaf child whose first or preferred language is BSL. It was agreed that NDCS Scotland would provide the support for the Parent NAG that would provide information for the parent who was successfully recruited to the BSL NAG.

One of the main issues that was brought up when the "appointment to the BSL NAG" process began was that some individuals who worked for the Deaf Sector Partnership or the organisations involved wanted to apply for places on the NAG. The decision was taken that, since the Deaf Sector Partnership is in a unique place of influence, no person employed by or volunteering with one of the deaf organisations involved should be allowed to apply. This would bring new faces to the table and give other Deaf/Deafblind people a chance to represent their communities. The other main issue was whether or not non-Deaf/Deafblind people whose first or preferred language is BSL could apply to join. The decision this time was that apart from the hearing parent of a deaf child whose first or preferred language is BSL, all other, non-public body members of the BSL NAG would be Deaf or Deafblind in the first instance.

The membership of the BSL NAG will be part of the review of the BSL NAG after the first BSL National Plan is published.

Working with public bodies

Members of the Deaf Sector Partnership have been supporting national public bodies and the Scottish Government to prepare for taking their duties under the Act forward. This has, in the main, been BSL awareness training and Deafblind awareness training delivered by Deaf Action.

Some public bodies are carrying out their own research into what they will have to do to make their services and information accessible for people whose first or preferred language is BSL. For example, the Scottish Legal Aid Board has started to make information accessible in BSL and is carrying out research into how accessible civil justice is for deaf people; including those whose first language is BSL.

Communication about the BSL NAG and the work of the partnership

The partnership members agreed that technology and online services would play an important role in making sure everyone got the same messages at the same time whether in BSL or in English.

Social Capital

Recording the “intangibles” of the work that the Deaf Sector Partnership does is quite difficult. VAF and Asset Social Capital - <http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/30th-anniversary/social-capital/> - ran a pilot project to try and capture this data in a way that shows progress as a project moves forward. Social Capital mapping looks at reciprocity, trust, as well as bonding, bridging, linking relationships and how they grow as projects/partnerships grow. Several projects supported by VAF were involved in the Social Capital Project, including the Deaf Sector Partnership. It is hoped that as the DSP progresses, this work can be extended to each project as well as the partnership as a whole to measure the individual input as well as the intangibles that our networking brings to the partnership work.

Learning Log and Risk Register

As the work of the Deaf Sector Partnership progressed, the learning log and risk register were used to good effect to highlight potential issues and solutions to these issues. For some members of the Deaf Sector Partnership, it was the first time that they had used both tools. One of the main issues highlighted was training for members of the Deaf Sector Partnership: for example, how to use LEAP – the reporting mechanism; Deafblind awareness; how to use a person-centred, human rights based approach; and how to use social media to the best advantage.

Information Hub

In order to support public bodies with their BSL (Scotland) Act duties, the Deaf Sector Partnership is developing a number of toolkits, templates and information packs. It was decided that these would be collected in the one place – the Deaf Sector Partnership website – which will act as an information hub and provide a legacy when the work of the current Deaf Sector Partnership is finished.

Working with other equality groups

The Deaf Sector Partnership realised that it needs to do more to reach people whose first or preferred language is BSL, especially those for protected characteristic groups. This work was started by the Deaf Connections project. It will be built in to the projects funded in the next funding period – 2016 to 2017. Part of this work will be for the Deaf Sector Partnership organisations to connect with other equality groups/projects/organisations supported by VAF.

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