

Developing our BSL plan for 2025-2030

We developed a first draft of our plan for 2025-2030 using the themes of the ambitions set out in the National Plan¹, and the feedback received during the extensive consultation² carried out by the Scottish Government in development of that Plan – including an online consultation, which received 80 responses, and 43 community events across Scotland.

Our draft plan included a vision, outcomes and actions. We asked people for their views on these at three consultation events in Edinburgh, two in person, attended by around 30 people in total, and one on-line session, attended by five people. We also made our draft plan available on the Council's Consultation Hub, and invited people to provide their views by email or through discussion.

A second period of engagement was held in November – December 2024 to support the development of the implementation plan, using the Council's Consultation Hub, engagement sessions and invitations to key organisations including Deaf Action, British Deaf Association and the National Deaf Children's Society to provide comments and suggestions.

Feedback from BSL users and stakeholders highlighted a range of issues and challenges that BSL users face:

- Accessing BSL interpreters, which impacts on all areas of life including health care, education and leisure. The limited numbers of BSL interpreters, teachers and tutors is a challenge for deaf people who use BSL as well as for parents and families who need support to develop their BSL.
- Finding information on:
 - i. how to access services, reporting a fault, or getting help on Council housing, rent arrears, benefits, and repairs.
 - ii. how to buy a tram ticket.
 - iii. how to find out about getting involved in community activities.
 - iv. whether an interpreter will be available.³
- Receiving communication from the Council such as a parking fine and having to go online to pay – *“there's too much information and it's a dense and difficult process. If there is a phone number to pay your parking fine, how can a BSL user do that?”*
- The cost and suitability of BSL courses for parents of deaf children.

¹ [British Sign Language \(BSL\) National Plan 2023-2029](#)

² [British Sign Language \(BSL\) National Plan 2023-2029: consultation analysis](#)

³ In response to this feedback, we have added a link to Contact Scotland BSL from the Council's website page.

- Behaviours which do not feel respectful because people lack awareness of BSL.
- Front line Council staff who do not know how to have good conversations with BSL users and ask meaningful questions.
- The isolation that BSL users can face in schools - BSL pupils can experience isolation and a lack of opportunities for chatting with their peers if they have to speak through an adult interpreter.
- More engagement from Elected Members would be welcomed.

The feedback from the engagement activities was used to develop the final version of our BSL plan and implementation plan for 2025-2030.