

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership

British Sign Language (BSL) Draft Plan 2018-2024

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SECTION 2:

2.1 Foreword

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership are delighted to introduce the first draft shared British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Aberdeen.

We welcome the opportunities provided by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 to:

- show our commitment to protecting and supporting BSL including in its tactile form;
- recognise and value BSL as a language in its own right, and;
- ensure the needs of Deaf and Deafblind BSL users are brought into the heart of our organisations.

This shared plan aims to make Aberdeen a city where the BSL community has a fair opportunity to be actively involved citizens, able to make informed choices about every aspect of their lives.

Some special thanks go to all our Deaf and Deafblind representatives who have worked to support us in producing this shared draft plan.

Angela Scott – Chief
Executive – ACC



Sally Shaw – Interim Chief
Officer – ACHSCP



2.2 Introduction

This draft BSL plan for Aberdeen City Council (ACC) and Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP), as required by BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, sets out draft actions that our council and the Health & Social Care Partnership will take over the period 2018-2024.

It follows the BSL National Plan 2017-2023, published in October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

Our shared draft plan has the same long-term goals as the national BSL plan.

ACC and ACHSCP will be committed to protecting and supporting BSL, including in its tactile form.

2.3 ABOUT US

Aberdeen

Aberdeen is the 3rd largest city in Scotland and the population is estimated at about 229,000. Aberdeen has been named both as one of the top five liveable cities in Britain in the Mercer Quality of Living Survey and as one of the top eight cities leading the United Kingdom's economy.

The 2014 census data shows that the city of Aberdeen has 563 people over the age of three who are users of BSL.

According to the North East Sensory Service (NESS), there are 129 registered users of BSL; however not all BSL users are registered with NESS.

InterTrans, which is an in-house interpreting service for the council and its customers, reported the following figures on the requests for a BSL interpreter:

Financial Year	Total requests
2014-15	74
2015-16	69
2016-17	46
2017-18	99

Community Planning Aberdeen – Vision for Aberdeen City

It is a statutory requirement for every local authority area to have a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). These plans outline what the area wants to improve and how it is going to do it.

The vision for Aberdeen's LOIP is 'a place where all people can prosper'. By this we mean that we want all our citizens to have equal opportunities to thrive. We want people, families, businesses and communities to do well, flourish and succeed in Aberdeen. This means supporting people to enjoy positive outcomes throughout their life journey, rather than reacting to issues and problems as they arise.

To achieve this vision, we are committed to tackling the issues that exist in our society which prevent equal opportunity for all to lead a happy and fulfilling life. This includes reducing health inequalities.

Aberdeen City Council

This BSL Plan links to the Aberdeen City Council Equality Outcomes (2017-21), particularly Outcomes 5:

"We have in place support for BSL users to access services, information on services and to be involved in making improvements for the Deaf and Deafblind communities."

More information about our Equality Outcomes in a BSL version can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgvF3_ERk2o

The draft BSL Action Plan also ties into our ambition to make Aberdeen a fairer and kinder city for all.

Aberdeen City Council approved the Target Operating Model (TOM) to be in place by 2020 at a council meeting in August 2017.

The TOM will see the council become a far more customer-focused, technology-driven organisation - for example:

- Can we intervene earlier to prevent problems arising later?
- How can we make better use of the technology that's now available to deliver our services differently?
- Do we have to deliver everything ourselves; who else could help; what could communities/ customers do for themselves?

Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership

“A caring partnership working together with our city communities to enable people to achieve fulfilling and healthier lives and wellbeing”

Adult health and social care services in Aberdeen are now delivered by a partnership of Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian. This organisation is known as Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership. It has the responsibility to plan and deliver community health and social care services for example social workers, physiotherapists, GPs and other colleagues in health, care, and the third (e.g. NESS), independent and housing sectors all working towards an improved service to individuals and carers.

2.4 Rationale for a shared plan

Aberdeen City Council in its current structure supports approaches to partnership working so it was an easy decision to work with the Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership in developing this shared draft plan.

The outcome of a shared approach to working will enhance the experience of our BSL user groups by engaging with them in a consistent way for a shared purpose. The two individual organisations will take

ownership and accountability on the production of this draft, and outcomes and actions will be delivered, monitored and reviewed.

This shared approach will bring together specialist knowledge and avoid duplication of information and community engagement and so save time and resources.

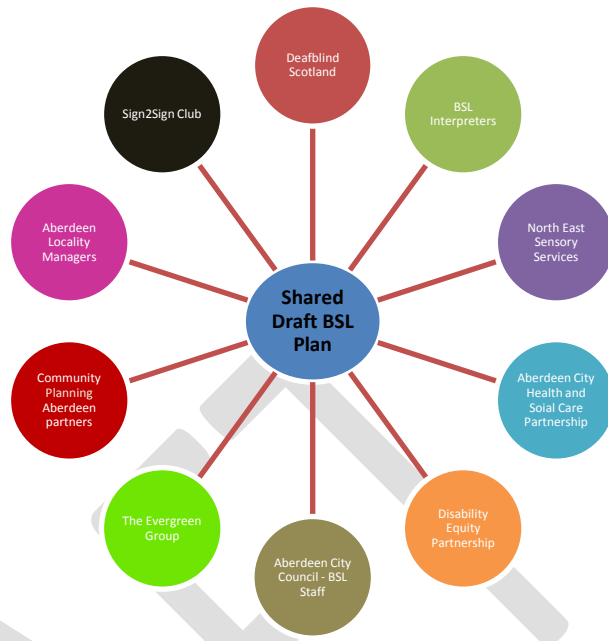
For this shared draft plan to be fully accessible and meaningful, we engaged with our local organisations who represent and work with the Deaf and Deafblind BSL users.

Some of our engagement and consultations took place and are ongoing with:

- Deafblind Scotland
- Aberdeen City Council – BSL staff users, Human Resource and Training Officers, Customer Service and Education Officers
- Disability Equity Partnership
(The DEP is a diverse and passionate group of advocates who have created a foundation within the city for building equality, accessibility and acceptance for those with disabilities.)
- Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership
- BSL freelance interpreters with InterTrans (ACC in-house interpreting and translation service)
- North East Sensory Services
- The Evergreen Group (NESS service user group)
- The Sign2Sign Club
(Active engagement with the informal BSL staff learners from sign language classes)
- Aberdeen City Council's Equalities Ambassador Network
- Community Planning Aberdeen and Locality Planning Partnerships will be consulted between July-September 2018.

Scottish Council of Deafness and British Deaf Association (BDA), as lead organisations for deaf issues in Scotland, have offered to give their input on the draft plan.

Shared Draft Plan consultation group



Representatives from the Council and the Health & Social Care Partnership agreed that a shared approach was the best way forward to:

- provide a clear pathway across Aberdeen regardless of which organisations services are being accessed;
- reduce consultation fatigue as we would be consulting with the same people;
- assist with maximising the availability of BSL interpreters and Deafblind guide communicators, and;
- allow effective use of available resources as most services are challenged with cuts.

2.5 Engagement and Consultation:

As part of our on-going engagements and consultations, our shared draft plan shares a strong working relationship with our communities through events, get-togethers and surveys:

- InterTrans survey on the experience of accessing our services;
- awareness-raising done at ad-hoc events for our community groups;
- making our website more accessible;
- creating an Equalities video clip for social media that is inclusive of BSL users as participants and as an audience.

It is through the continued awareness-raising initiatives that employees and customers of the council are better supported with their communications needs.

There is commitment to continued engagement around a) implementing actions and b) providing feedback on progress through:

- continuous engagement with the BSL community;
- monitoring and review of the council's Equality Outcomes, and;
- ACC 's contribution to the national progress report in 2020.

Consultation on the shared draft plan

Critical to the completion and implementation of this plan are the Deaf and Deafblind BSL users to ensure their needs are being effectively met.

To progress this, ACC and ACHSCP will over the next few weeks continue engagement and consultation opportunities through:

- piggy-backing on community events, for example the Jo Cox Get-Together event, Equality Ambassadors meeting (internal group for staff);
- meeting with representative of deaf groups and employees who are BSL users;
- promoting consultation and feedback through an online survey and with the assistance of BSL interpreters;
- using the council's social media platforms.

How can you comment on this draft shared plan

The consultation for this draft plan was open from June. The comments received were reflected in this revised version of the draft plan. There was further informal consultation on the draft plan in July. There will be a further opportunity when the formal committee consultation on the draft plan takes place between 10th August – 21st August.

BSL interpreting support is available to assist you in making your contribution to the plan. Please contact InterTrans on 012224 523542 or email intertrans@aberdeencity.gov.uk

At the end of the consultation, the draft plan will be presented to council committees and to the Health & Social Care Partnership's Integration Joint Board to approve. The final plan will be published in October 2018.

Activity	Timeline	
National BSL Plan	2017 - 2023	
ACC and ASCHP joint plan	2018 -2024	
Work and consultation on draft plan	15 January – 29 th June	
Informal consultation	7 th June 15 th June	
Formal committee report consultation	10 th – 21 st August	
Final report to be ready for committees: Operation Delivery Committee (ACC) Education Operation Delivery	27 th August September 2018	
Publish by	October 2018	

For further queries about this plan or to give your views, please contact

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British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via
[contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

SECTION 3:

This shared BSL Action Plan strengthens our partnership working in providing a fair and accessible quality of service for our customers whilst maintaining the individual accountability of both organisations to improve and deliver the required services.

SUMMARY OF PLAN TO BE DEVELOPED FOLLOWING
CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

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SECTION 4:

DRAFT BSL NATIONAL PLAN FOR ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL AND THE ABERDEEN CITY HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

4.1: Across all our services

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our organisation; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.

Include a question in our equalities questionnaires/monitoring forms in relation to the use and understanding of BSL which the Scottish Government is developing for the next census.

We will also:

- continue the use of producing audio and videos on Equalities and awareness raising;
- make our websites more user friendly and accessible;
- promote the use of BSL interpreters via InterTrans at meetings and events to enable a fair chance for BSL users to be actively involved;
- promote awareness of InterTrans with a specific tab on the council's internal Zone and email signatures;
- offer newsletters and bulletins in BSL;
- raise awareness amongst colleagues, especially front-line staff across our organisations, on knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture, language and service provision; this will be communicated via clusters, line managers, and included on our development pages which will highlight YouTube and contacSCOTLAND-BSL as below; raise awareness and promote

‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ – a free service initiative which allows BSL users to contact public sector services and for these services to contact them.

4.2: Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a Deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL.”

Where we are at:

Current practice across our services include:

- directing parents, carers, children and all interested BSL users to the online video clips from the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) in BSL on Getting to know GIRFEC;
- within Aberdeen School for the Deaf (ASfD), interpreters are engaged to interpret at meetings, assemblies, parents’ evenings and school social events;
- a good working relationship between Audiology and the Hearing Support Service in Aberdeen resulting in early diagnosis and appropriate support being offered from the start – as early as six weeks after a child is born;
- we have an informed choice policy which means we offer parents information about all communication methods available for their child, including BSL;
- parents are supported by weekly visits from a Teacher of the Deaf and are offered BSL classes weekly, during term time, at ASfD;
- the Hearing Support Service (HSS) delivers deaf awareness training to the nursery staff which can include showing staff basic BSL signs if they have a child who uses BSL in their nursery.

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- continue to promote and raise awareness on the use of InterTrans and using BSL interpreters at all council events;
- work with BSL stakeholders across the new council clusters to ensure and develop resources and information that are appropriate and relevant for their needs;
- provide Early Years staff with access to training and awareness raising on Deaf and Deafblind BSL for Early Years and Childcare workers – to include private nurseries;
- ensure families of Deaf and Deafblind children are made aware of and have access to nationally developed BSL resources as early as possible in their child's life;
- ensure our children's services have access to nationally developed BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as Bookbug;
- ensure that services which offer sensory support in Aberdeen are listed on the Family Information Service website and that their details are up-to-date. Health visitors regularly utilise the Family Information Service when referring support services to families;
- improve access to Early Years services for parents whose child is diagnosed as D/deaf or Deafblind by developing information about BSL and Deaf culture for service providers who support parents, such as health visitors.

4.3: School Education

We share the long-term goal for school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school.”

Where we are at:

- ASfD has a total communication policy in place and if pupils attend their local mainstream school, they are supported through their experience with a signer.
- Teaching staff within ASfD and the HSS all have to undertake a mandatory Teacher of the Deaf PG Diploma and have to undertake BSL level 1.

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- ensure that any new guidance for teachers and support staff working with pupils and users of BSL are adopted and that the level of BSL qualified teachers is advanced;
- progress the standards developed by Education Scotland to effectively engage with parents and carers who use BSL;
- further support parents and carers who use BSL into how they can get more involved in the child’s education;
- contribute to the SCILT (Scotland’s National Centre for Languages) programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance;
- identify potential for teachers to provide BSL Learning in Schools and share our best practice and learning throughout;
- promote the use of InterTrans to ensure deaf parents and carers have access to school information in BSL; this information would include, report cards, parent teacher consultations, routine and social information, homework information and the opportunity to participate in Parent Councils.

4.4: Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- make sure pupils and students are signposted to a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process;
- continue working with partners who deliver employment services, and with employer groups already supporting employability to help signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users;
- raise awareness locally of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ (AtoW) scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides; our information on AtoW is made available on the council Intranet for employees;
- work with local employment services and groups to highlight specific requirements and guidance that might be required by BSL users.

4.5: Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives.”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- increase the availability of accurate and relevant health and social care information and will work with BSL users to determine where this information should be located;
- work with partners and BSL users to improve the way that adult social care is commissioned and delivered;
- raise staff awareness across the partnership of BSL and Deaf Culture by rolling out the national learning resource when this becomes available;
- ensure that BSL users are offered Psychological Therapies on a fair and equal basis;
- consult with NESS and BSL users on our Draft Mental Health Strategy.

4.6: Transport

We share the long-term goal for transport set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.”

By 2024, we will:

- as part of our Digital Transformation, research technological solutions for providing accessible information in transport ports (for example bus stations, train stations, airports etc.) for BSL users (employees, citizens, patients, customers);
- actively involve through the DEP, the participation of BSL users in the formation of transport strategies and policies;
- ensure BSL users can participate in the on-going feedback process of the ‘Going Further: Scotland’s Accessible Travel Framework’ as individuals and employees;
- create guidance for passengers and employees who use BSL on how to contact local/national transport providers when things go wrong on a journey;
- develop and provide training for transport providers which includes strategies for communicating with BSL users;
- encourage private transport providers to have access to technology to support communicate with BSL users and/or designated drivers have basic BSL awareness;
- ensure inclusion of BSL awareness within partners’ regulated transport services driver training including School Transport.

4.7: Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland.”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- consult with North East Sensory Services, Engage Scotland and NDSC and seek the views of BSL users to help inform Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums’ work and programming in this area;
- work with ACC Education colleagues to develop and support programmes of targeted work with Aberdeen School for the Deaf and Orchard Brae School to provide BSL resources and events for school pupils either in their school settings or at our venues;
- work to recruit a small working group of BSL users to help deliver a bespoke programme of talks and tours programme at Aberdeen Art Gallery;
- develop a series of BSL videos in partnership with a BSL user or service for each of its venues offering summary information about the building, collections and programmes;
- explore the merits of developing a BSL training programme for front of house, curator and learning staff with the aim of identifying 1-2 BSL ambassadors for the service;
- provide BSL interpretation at a selection of public lectures, talks, music and art performances after consultation with the ACC - BSL user group;
- work with Aberdeen City Council colleagues and external partners to create a series of BSL tours and events with, and for, the BSL community of young, working age and retired adults in Aberdeen.

4.8: Democracy

We share the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies.”

Our Actions

To support BSL users to actively participate in DEP meetings, service user forums and events, therefore representing interests to the council and partners.

By 2024, we will:

- carry on raising awareness through our Elected Member Training programme on the use of InterTrans and ContactScotland BSL;
- continue providing and improving the support to BSL users to actively participate in community events;
- encourage BSL users to participate in and take up roles in the DEP and all our community groups;
- take opportunities to promote the Access to Elected Office Fund locally, which can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections;
- provide links on websites to national information on the Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) to provide a signpost to BSL users who wish to stand for selection and election.