



British Sign Language Plan 2018-2024

1. Introduction

The University of Glasgow is committed to promoting equality in all its activities and aims to provide a work, learning, research and teaching environment free from discrimination and unfair treatment. As a public authority, the University is committed to ensuring we give due regard to the three duties of the Equality Act 2010; the opportunity to develop and implement our British Sign Language (BSL) Plan allows us to address the specific requirements of BSL/Deaf community.

The Scottish Government's BSL Plan 2017-2023, sets out 10 long term goals, and all local authorities were encouraged to mirror this format, identifying the relevant goals, and setting local actions relevant to their function.

The University recognises BSL is a language in its own right, with all the creative nuances of dialect, grammar, syntax and vocabulary. The University's recognises people who have BSL as their native language, contribute to the communities and culture they live within.

Throughout the plan, we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss.

2. University of Glasgow Context

When first considering the University's BSL Plan, it was essential we understood our local BSL community. From the University's data, we can easily identify both staff and students who have disclosed they are either Deaf or have a Hearing Impairment; for students this is 2% of the 1815 students registered with the Disability Service, and for staff 6.1% of the 277 who have declared a Disability on their Human Resources record. This outlines the first challenge for the University, as it there is currently no record of whether these staff or students are BSL users. In addition, this system does not allow us to record staff who are hearing BSL users. This has been addressed in our plan.

At a local level, the University has supported a number of BSL users as students (although no current students), and we have a BSL using member of staff in the University's Disability Service, who acts as our internal expert in this field. In addition, we have two current BSL users on our staff team, both working within Estates and Commercial Services.

3. Developing the Plan

The University attended and participated in a range of the consultation and information events aimed at the public sector, and with the Higher Education on developing our BSL plan. In addition, the University received direct support from Deaf Action who met with key personnel in developing the plan.

At the request of the Disability Equality Group, the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) established a BSL Working Group which included representation from the Disability Service, External Relations, Student Representative Council (SRC), BSL Student Society, Communications and Public Affairs Office, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery and a staff representative. This group ensured a wide range of expertise, however wider consultation took place with staff responsible for implementation individual sections of the plan.

The plan was reviewed by the Disability Equality Group on 9 October 2018, and to the relevant senior managers prior to final approval.

4. Engagement

The Higher and Further Education (HE/FE) sector in the Glasgow region jointly hosted a BSL/Deaf community consultation event in late August. As this event was for all in the tertiary education sector, rather than consulting on institutional plans, we hosted tables that focussed on specific parts of the student journey, and we had an additional table that considered employment in FE and HE. As recommended the event was held in central venue, known to the BSL/Deaf community, and although attendance from the community was low, all institutions represented felt the information from those attending was extremely informative.

5. Action Plan

The University's action plan follows this document. In writing the action plan, the University recognises the need to grow capacity both internally and externally to deliver for the BSL/Deaf community. Therefore, we aim to grow awareness of BSL through both our student and staff communities, by offering BSL taster sessions, and supporting the BSL Student Society with gaining BSL qualification(s).

Our action plan highlights some of the positive work we already do to support BSL students, and identifies how we can expand this support. In addition, we aim to raise the University's profile with the BSL/Deaf community by ensuring welcoming film clips have BSL captioning, and a select number of public events have BSL Interpretation.

The University recognises the BSL Plan is a living document, and therefore feedback is welcome at any point.

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