



**Clackmannanshire Council**

**British Sign Language (BSL) Plan**

**2018-2024**

**A BSL version of this plan is available at:** [**https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYsYiplr\_vHP0M3XvnJ7w1w**](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYsYiplr_vHP0M3XvnJ7w1w)

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# Introduction and background

The Scottish Government has stated its commitment to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users[[1]](#footnote-1) to live, work and visit, and has set out how it aims to achieve this in the BSL National Plan, which was published in October 2017. The plan is framed under ten long-term goals which were co-produced with BSL users across Scotland.

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires a range of Scottish public bodies, including local authorities, health boards, colleges and universities, to also publish plans showing how they will support BSL users and promote the use of BSL. This plan sets out the actions Clackmannanshire Council will take over the period 2018 – 2024 and is framed around the same long term goals as the national plan. While developing our plan, we have consulted with BSL users and their representatives locally. There are no local groups specific to the BSL or D/deaf and deafblind[[2]](#footnote-2) communities in Clackmannanshire, so consultation has involved individuals who have expressed an interest in helping to develop our BSL plan. We are committed to continuing that engagement as we implement the actions in our plan and review our progress.

We will contribute to the national progress report in 2020 and a further 6 year plan will be published in 2024.

## BSL in Clackmannanshire

Data on the use of BSL and deafness in Clackmannanshire is limited. 2011 census data indicates that there are 129 people in Clackmannanshire who use BSL at home, and of these, 27 are deaf or have partial hearing loss. Meanwhile the Scottish Council on Deafness estimate that there are 3,477 people with some level of hearing loss in the county. However, we have had little contact with local D/deaf and deafblind BSL users. It may be that they manage without having to contact Council services, or that they use alternative ways to communicate with us, but it could also mean that some people struggle to find the support that they need.

BSL is recognised as a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary, distinct from spoken or written English. Whilst most D/deaf and deafblind BSL users people read and write English, they may have great difficulty, especially when more complex concepts, grammar or less common words are used.

This plan sets out how we will improve communication and access to services for D/deaf and deafblind BSL users living, working and visiting Clackmannanshire.

## Name and contact details of lead officer

Cherie Jarvie

Strategy & Performance Manager

E-mail equalities@clacks.gov.uk

# Summary - Clackmannanshire Council’s BSL Plan

Our plan shows how we will improve communication and access to services for D/deaf and deafblind BSL users, and promote the use of BSL. It is structured under the same long-term goals as the Scottish Government’s BSL National Plan, apart from those relating to Post-school education, Justice and Transport, which are outwith the scope of local authorities. However, some of our local actions, particularly around making it easier for BSL users to access information and services, as well as developing staff awareness and skills, will contribute to the achievement of all of the national goals.

Key action areas include:

* Improving our links with, and understanding of, BSL users locally and the issues they face when accessing services
* Signposting services and support for BSL users
* Promoting learning resources for those who would like to learn BSL, or improve their skill level
* Improving information for BSL users and staff, so that both know what to do to when communicating with each other
* Working with partner organisations to ensure services and support for BSL users are joined-up and seamless
* Responding positively to BSL initiatives coming from the Scottish Government, and other organisations

# CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL BSL PLAN

## Across all our services

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

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

By 2024, we will:

* 1. Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users and identify and fill key information gaps, so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress
  2. Establish links with the BSL community locally and engage directly with them so that we can better understand what needs to improve
  3. Review our website to make it easier for BSL users, and other people with sensory impairments, to find the information they need
  4. Work with partner organisations, including the third sector, to improve services for BSL users and to promote BSL in the community
  5. Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to staff and to local BSL users. This is a free service which allows BSL users to contact public and their sector services and for these services to contact them
  6. Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training
  7. Review arrangements for accessing interpretation and translation services
  8. Respond positively to Scottish Government initiatives emerging from the national BSL Plan

## Family support, Early Learning and Childcare

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

*The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL.*

By 2024, we will:

* 1. Provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or deafblind child

## School Education

We share the long-term goal 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.*

By 2024, we will:

* 1. Contribute to the Scottish Government’s investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and deafblind pupils in schools, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL
  2. Take forward advice developed by Education Scotland to a) improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL and b) ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child’s education
  3. Contribute to the SCILT 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
  4. Review the information we offer on additional support for hearing impaired children to make it easier for parents to access the support they need for their child

## Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal 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.*

By 2024, we will:

* 1. Signpost pupils and students to a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process
  2. Work 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
  3. Raise awareness locally of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ (AtW) scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides
  4. Ensure we will have transition plans for BSL users in place

## Health (including Social Care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal 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.*

By 2024, we will:

* 1. Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL (to be produced by NHS Health Scotland and NHS24), and b) develop complementary information in BSL about local provision, as appropriate
  2. Through integration boards, ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users
  3. Take steps to improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities
  4. Ensure that any local work to tackle social isolation explicitly considers the needs of BSL users
  5. Promote the national access support card for health and social care use locally and ensure staff are aware of how to respond
  6. Consider how the needs of BSL users can be integrated into the See Hear strategic framework for meeting the needs of people with a sensory impairment, to ensure the seamless provision of assessment, care and support
  7. Promote local and national organisations that offer support to the deaf and hearing impaired

## Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal 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.*

By 2024, we will:

* 1. Improve access to information about Culture and the Arts on our website for BSL users

## Democracy

We share the long-term goal 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.*

By 2024, we will:

* 1. 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

# HOW TO FEED BACK ON THIS PLAN

We would like to hear your views, comments and suggestions. You can give us feedback by:

* Joining one of our consultation meetings on 26th September (1pm - 3pm and 6pm - 8pm in the Speirs Centre, Alloa)
* Completing the online survey: <https://clackmannanshire.citizenspace.com/strategy-quality-development/british-sign-language-plan>
* By email: [equalities@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@clacks.gov.uk)
* By recording a BSL video on your home phone or tablet (send to equalities@clacks.gov.uk)

1. Throughout this plan “BSL users” includes all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A capital D denotes people who have been deaf from birth, while a small d is used to refer to people who become deaf. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)