

Angus Council
British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-2024



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SECTION 2:

2.1 Introduction

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland, by 24th October 2018, to publish a local BSL Plan, aligned to the BSL National Plan. This is Angus Council's first BSL Plan, 2018-2024, and it is framed around the same long-term goals as the BSL National Plan 2017-2023, which was published 24 October 2017. The National Plan was developed through extensive engagement with D/deaf (persons whose first language is BSL) and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them. Throughout our Plan, we refer to 'BSL (British Sign Language) 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.

We are committed to protecting and supporting BSL, including its tactile form. BSL is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary. It has its own dialects and is a language which enables many of our D/deaf and Deafblind citizens to learn, work, parent and to make their contribution to our communities, our culture and our economy. The number of people in Angus who stated in the 2011 census that they used BSL at home was 262, and we are looking to address their needs in ways most appropriate to them, wherever possible.

In April 2018, in Angus Council we established a BSL implementation group to take forward the requirements of the BSL legislation. Membership of the group consisted of representation from all council service areas listed in the National Plan, including our partner organisations, ANGUSalive (for leisure and culture), and the Angus Health & Social Care Partnership. These organisations will deliver relevant actions in the BSL action plan.

In May 2018 we jointly held an engagement event with Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside to consult with BSL users, their families and support organisations. The feedback from that event was mainly positive, and the results have helped to shape our draft plan. This draft plan was presented at a further joint engagement event with Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council and NHS Tayside in June 2018.

Our draft plan was also discussed at Angus Council's disability forum, of which Deaf Links is a member. Deaf Links represents deaf and BSL users in Angus and Dundee. Membership of the forum is also open to BSL users themselves. Through our consultation and engagement we have asked BSL users if they would like us to keep in contact with them on an ongoing basis and we will look to develop our action plan in collaboration with them.

The period of consultation on our draft plan ended on 17 August 2018, and we welcomed responses throughout this period.

We will contribute to the national progress report and publish our own Plan in English and BSL, by 24th of October 2020, renewing it every 6 years, in line with the statutory requirement.

The Angus plan is framed around the following 10 long-term goals as set out in the National Plan:

1. Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s).
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.
8. BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, and 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.
9. BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.
10. 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.

2.2 Name of lead officer if you wish to comment on this Plan, if you have any questions, or wish to be involved in the development of actions contained within the Plan:

Doreen Phillips, Senior Practitioner (Equalities)

**Address: Angus Council, Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park,
Forfar DD8 1AN**

Email: Phillipsd@angus.gov.uk

BSL users can contact us via <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>

2.3 Where to find BSL Version of the Plan

https://www.angus.gov.uk/community_empowerment/angus_british_sign_language_draft_action_plan

SECTION 3:

Short summary of the Angus Council BSL Plan:

Our aim for people whose first or preferred language is BSL is to improve the way they find out about our services and ensure they have equal access to them, by reducing the barriers to communication wherever possible. This links to the Community Planning Vision of:-



We will work with our partners ANGUSalive and the Angus Health and Social Care Partnership to ensure that BSL users in Angus can be active, healthy citizens, and enjoy inclusive cultural activities.

Some of the key actions from our plan are:

Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service (VRS) called contactscotland-BSL, for contacting Angus Council, ANGUSalive, and Angus Health and Social Care Partnership.

Offer the opportunity to attend BSL awareness training to all council staff, prioritising those dealing directly with the public.

Look to develop e-learning in BSL awareness.

Ensure BSL pupils have their educational needs met.

Promote the opportunity to have BSL as a third language in schools through 1+2.

Support parents who are BSL users in being fully involved in their child's education.

Use more BSL video clips on council website for priority information on services. Work to improve accessibility of website generally.

Work with partners to eliminate barriers to accessing health and social care and improve the way adult social care is delivered, including commissioning residential care and help to live at home.

Look to provide BSL information at certain locations regarding public transport.

Work with BSL users and their knowledge and experience of how to develop a better communications strategy.

Explore how the council as a major employer in the area can better promote access to employment and training opportunities for BSL users.

SECTION 4:

DRAFT BSL NATIONAL PLAN FOR ANGUS

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 continue to support and promote the use of the Scottish Government’s BSL online interpreting video relay services ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to staff and to local BSL users. We will highlight this free service for everyone to access.
- We will establish baselines for measuring progress in future years, and identify gaps in the existing information we have regarding BSL users in our area.
- We will work with our disability forum and BSL users to ensure our new digital strategy meets accessibility requirements, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.
- We will explore using QR codes for information about council services.
- We will ensure that our IT systems identify customers who are BSL users, avoiding the need for them to repeat this information to each service, and to flag up how customers would like to receive communication from us.
- We will offer BSL awareness training to all staff, prioritising those dealing directly with the public.
- We will collaborate with partners Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council and NHS Tayside wherever possible ensuring that there is consistency of approach across the area, and minimising consultation fatigue.
- Our corporate Equalities Group will investigate issues raised regarding BSL users living and/or working in Angus, identify any barriers, and take steps to rectify these.

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 D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL”

Our Actions

By 2024,

The Early Years' service will:

- Provide Early Years staff within pre-school services with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and make them aware of sources of advice and support available regarding BSL issues.
- Develop and share best practice when meeting the needs of D/deaf and Deafblind children and their families.
- Deliver basic BSL to pre-school children when opportunities arise.

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”

Our Actions

By 2024,

The Schools and Learning service will:

- 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.
- Take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.
- Take steps to improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL.
- Ensure that parents/carers who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child’s education.
- Continue teaching BSL at primary school level as part of the 1+2 language programme at Carlogie PS, to BSL level 2, and look to share good practice with other schools.
- Encourage D/deaf Deafblind pupil’s involvement in developing practice to best suit their needs.
- Ensure BSL pupils have access and understanding of Active Schools activities.
- Embed the Youth Engagement Strategy’s (2018) messages of empowerment and accessible communication within any new plans and strategies.

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:

- Signpost pupils and students to information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.
- Work in partnership with local employment service providers and employer groups already supporting employability, to signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users.
- Raise awareness locally of how the ‘Access to Work’ (AtW) Scheme can support employees and employers in the recruitment and retention of BSL users (including Modern Apprentices). Promote the benefits of the AtW Scheme.
- Work with the deaf community and deaf organisations such as Deaf Links, Deaf Action, and North East Sensory Service to identify opportunities to support D/deaf Deafblind students’ transition from school to further education/work.
- Work to make jobs more accessible to 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, in partnership with Angus Health and Social Partnership, NHS Tayside and ANGUSalive:

- Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL. Decide which local information should be produced in BSL.
- Work with partners to eliminate barriers to accessing health and social care and improve the way adult social care is delivered, including commissioning residential care and help to live at home.

- Ensure BSL users' views will be at the centre of planning and developing care services which affect them.
- Ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users.
- Improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities, including Active Schools activities.
- Ensure any work done in Angus to tackle issues of social isolation explicitly includes the needs of BSL users.
- Provide inductions at leisure facilities in BSL.

4.6: 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:

- Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.
- Ensure that information in BSL about culture and the arts is routinely available on websites and at venues.
- Encourage and support BSL users to consider a career in culture and the arts by providing work experience and volunteering opportunities where possible.
- Improve access to the historical environment, cultural events and performing arts and films for BSL users. Hold BSL interpreted museum lecture and BSL interpreted theatre performances.
- Promote BSL interpreted events through deaf organisations and schools.

4.7: Justice

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

“BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.”

Our Actions

By 2024,

We will work with local partner agencies such as the Procurator Fiscal's office to assist in improving access to support for BSL users.

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

By 2024,

We will:

- 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.
- Continue to provide and update information in BSL on our website regarding registering to vote, and how to vote at polling stations.
- Look to provide information in BSL regarding the role of an elected member and provide information on support available if looking to stand for election.

4.9 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."

Our Actions

By 2024,

We will:

- Work with local partner agencies to assist in increasing accessibility to public transport.
- Investigate the potential with BSL users for some public transport information to be converted into BSL videos.