



# University of St Andrews

## British Sign Language (BSL) Plan

### October 2018 - 2024

**Institutional sign-off:**

- Vice Principal for Governance, Chair of the University Equality Compliance Group

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**Published for public view:**

<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/equalityschemeandpolicies/reports>

This document is available in 'Alternative Format' upon request.

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## **SECTION 2:**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This is the British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for the University of St Andrews, as required by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. It sets out actions the institution will take over the period 2018-2024 and is presented within the recommended template document provided by the Scottish Government for colleges and universities.

It follows the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan, published on 24 October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

It is framed around the same long-term goals as the National Plan, where these are relevant to the work of the University.

Note: Where 'BSL users\*' are stated, this refers to 'D/deaf' and/or 'Deafblind people' (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

Framed around the same long-term goals as the National Plan, where these are relevant to the work of this organisation.

#### **2.1.1 University context**

The University's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is reflected in the Strategic Plan 2015-25 and through University's Equality Outcomes Plan 2017-21 (strategic and operational action plan). The BSL plan is referred to as 1.10 as part of 'Equality Outcome 1: Making the University that is accessible, and is recognised as encouraging diversity and the appreciation of it in our staff, students and suppliers.'

The institutional Equality Statement states that the University of St Andrews is fully committed to respect and fair treatment for everyone, eliminating discrimination and actively promoting equality of opportunity and delivering fairness to all.

#### **2.1.2 Current BSL Provision**

The University's current BSL provision primarily reflects our responsibilities to enable access for disabled people under the Equality Act (2010), including those who are BSL users. Support and advice on BSL provision is provided by Disability Advisers (Student Services); Occupational Health (Environmental, Health & Safety Services); and the Head of E&D (Human Resources).

Examples of support includes:

- Arranging BSL interpreters which meet the needs of the individual
  - Staff: recruitment interviews to workplace line-management induction through the Department of Work & Pensions 'Access to Work' scheme
  - Students: When applicants declare that they are a BSL user, arrange BSL interpreters. Provide advance information and guide for interpreters

- Specific support for Orientation
  - Exam support
- Arranging equipment for BSL users and to assist interpreter to record content as additional support
- Confidential advice and information to applying and current disabled staff and students
- Explaining BSL related reasonable adjustments to line managers and student Disability Coordinators in Schools and Units
- Providing awareness of BSL provision as an adjustment through training to staff and student representatives
- Promote the use of the University published online '[Disabled Go Access Guide](#)'

### **2.1.3 Involvement of BSL users on the draft plan**

The plan was published on webpage [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/eia/engagement/bsl-plan/](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/edi/eia/engagement/bsl-plan/) on 26 September 2018 for BSL users to comment on the draft plan as part of its development containing BSL interpretation.

The draft plan was shared with the following organisations inviting comments:

- Advance HE (formerly ECU)
- Deaf Action (head office)
- Fife Centre for Equalities
- Fife Sensory Impairment Centre
- Scottish Funding Council
- Tayside Deaf Hub

Our level of engagement with the community and national bodies will continue around:

- a) Implementing actions
- b) Providing feedback on progress

The University has committed to contributing to the relevant National Progress Report in 2020.

People were open to comment on the draft plan until 19 October 2018 by contacting the lead officer as stated below (section 2.2).

### **2.2 Name of lead officer/contact**

The following lead officer and contact for the BSL Plan supports the Vice-Principal for Governance as a core member of the Equality Compliance Group:

Name/post: Sukhi Bains, Head of E&D, Human Resources, University of St Andrews  
 Email: [diversity@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:diversity@st-andrews.ac.uk)

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

ContactSCOTLAND-BSL is the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service which enables BSL users to contact public services and for these services to contact BSL users, with the support of an interpreter.

### **2.3 Where to find the BSL version of this plan**

A BSL version of the final version of the plan was uploaded onto webpage xxxx (TBA) in October 2018, and is monitored by the Head of E&D.

## **SECTION 3: Short summary of the plan**

### **3.1 Overall Aim**

The main aim of the University's BSL Plan is one of many policies and procedures which the University has in place to support its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It sets out how the University intends to meet the statutory obligations of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

Specifically, the University is committed to:

- Promoting and supporting the use of BSL, including in its tactile form
- Improving access to services for Deaf and Deafblind people
- Involving BSL users in developing and providing feedback on our BSL plans
- Implementing actions and providing updates on our progress
- Contributing to the National Progress Report in 2020
- Reviewing this plan, including identifying additional 'local' actions where relevant, following publication of the National Progress Report

To demonstrate *due regard* to the Scottish Specific Duty (2012), the following 3 areas of compliance relating to the Equality Act (2010) are met through this plan in relation to BSL as a reasonable adjustment on the grounds of disability:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Foster good relations between people from different groups - this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups

### **3.2 Key Actions**

The following is a short summary of key actions that compliment 'Appendix 1: BSL Action Plan 2018-2024', which contains strategic and operational actions that will be monitored by the University's Equality Compliance Group as chaired by the Vice-Principal for Governance, supported by the Head of E&D, in order to ensure institutional progression.

- Identify and improve access to key University information and services, including making our website more accessible to BSL users

- Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and other members of the University community who use BSL, and provide updates on our response
- Establish a central web resource for all BSL information, including the University's BSL Plan, Contact Scotland details, and links to BSL interpretation services
- Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events e.g. Graduation Ceremonies
- Promote the use of the Scottish Government's BSL online interpreting video relay service, 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL'
- Conduct a check of buildings where intercom access is required in order to make accessible for BSL users.
- Provide access to key University student recruitment information in BSL, including on our academic courses, student life and support facilities
- Ensure students who use BSL have full access to student support services, including financial and careers advice
- Ensure key staff information is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment, policies, guidance and training opportunities
- Ensure our health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use BSL

## **SECTION 4 - Contribution to Long-Term Goals of BSL National Plan**

### **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"*

#### **Institutional actions**

##### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.1.1 Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in the University community, including students and prospective students, staff and visitors.
- 4.1.2 Identify and improve access to key University information and services, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.
- 4.1.3 Conduct a check of buildings where intercom access is required in order to make accessible for BSL users.
- 4.1.4 Identify and improve access to key University information and services, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.

- 4.1.5 Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and other members of the University community who use BSL, and provide updates on our response.
- 4.1.6 Establish a central web resource for all BSL information, including the University's BSL Plan, Contact Scotland details, and links to BSL interpretation services.
- 4.1.7 Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events e.g. Graduation Ceremonies.
- 4.1.8 Promote the use of the Scottish Government's BSL online interpreting video relay services, 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL'.
- 4.1.9 Signpost staff to Deaf awareness training and enable them to take up formal BSL training.
- 4.1.10 Support staff and students to practice the use of BSL.
- 4.1.11 Ensure the University's BSL Plan is linked to our annual Outcome Agreements for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- 4.1.12 Respond to guidance produced by the Scottish Government, SFC and the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 Partnership to support the development, monitoring and review of the University's BSL Plan.

## **4.2 Post-School Education**

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

*"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)"*

### **Institutional actions**

#### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.2.1 Provide access to key University student recruitment information in BSL, including on our academic courses, student life and support facilities.
- 4.2.2 Provide full access to University Open Days and Visit Days for prospective students and applicants who use BSL.
- 4.2.3 Provide accessible feedback to unsuccessful applicants who are BSL users.
- 4.2.4 Ensure that students who use BSL are supported throughout their student journey, including at transition into University and into further study, training or employment.
- 4.2.5 Ensure students who use BSL have full access to student support services, including financial and careers advice.
- 4.2.6 Ensure that University staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect from the University.

### **4.3 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”*

#### **Institutional action**

##### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.3.1 Ensure the University’s childcare facilities are accessible and welcoming to parents and children who use BSL, including providing key service information in BSL.

### **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”*

#### **Institutional actions**

##### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.4.1 Support and prepare BSL users to apply for jobs or further training.
- 4.4.2 Raise awareness of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme.
- 4.4.3 Ensure key staff information is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment and training opportunities.

### **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”*

#### **Institutional action**

##### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.5.1 Ensure our health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use 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”*

#### **Institutional actions**

##### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.6.1 Ensure that the University’s extracurricular/recreational activities and events are accessible to BSL users.
- 4.6.2 Ensure promotional material for all University events includes the statement ‘please contact us if you require a BSL interpreter’ as standard.

#### **4.7 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”*

#### **Institutional action**

##### **By 2024, we will:**

- 4.7.1 Promote opportunities for BSL users to be members of University committees and student/staff representative groups.