**BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) SCOTLAND ACT 2015:**

**A BRIEF GUIDE FOR NATIONAL PUBLIC BODIES PREPARING BSL PLANS**

This guidance has been written by the Scottish Government Equality Unit to help National public bodies NOT covered by the BSL National Plan to write their own BSL plans, which must be published by October 2018.

Background

The BSL (Scotland) Act requires the following public bodies listed in the schedule of the Act to publish BSL plans[[1]](#footnote-1):

The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland

The Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life

The Scottish Human Rights Commission

The Scottish Information Commissioner

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The Standards Commission for Scotland

Police Investigations and Review Commissioner

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator

Audit Scotland

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Food Standards Scotland\*\*

Revenue Scotland\*\*

Registers of Scotland\*\*

National Records of Scotland\*\*

The BSL plans prepared by these public bodies must:

* Involve BSL users (including those who use the tactile form of the language) and those who represent them;
* Ensure that the consultation on the draft plan is accessible to Deaf and Deafblind BSL users; and
* Be published in BSL as well as in English in both draft form, and in final form.

What should be in national public body BSL plans?

The legislation says that BSL plans should ‘try to achieve consistency’ with the BSL National Plan <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/10/3540>. It also says that they should take account of any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers.

The BSL National Plan is framed under **ten long-term goals** which have been co-produced with BSL users across Scotland. It includes **70 actions** which we will take by 2020, which will help take us closer to these goals.

**Long-term goals**

* National public bodies should consider structuring their BSL plans under the same long-term goals **where they are relevant to the exercise of their functions.**
* This will vary from one organisation to the next, for example the goal on justice will be relevant to the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and the PIRC, whereas the goal on democracy will be relevant to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body.
* For some national public bodies, such as Food Standards Scotland, National Registers of Scotland, Scottish Housing Register and others, it may only be the overarching goal on all our public services that will be relevant to the exercise of their functions.

**Actions**

* There are some actions in the national plan which **all** national public bodies should copy or adapt in their own plans. For example [3] adopting guidelines to improve access to information and services in BSL, [5] promoting contactSCOTLAND-BSL and [6] enabling key staff to access BSL training.
* And there are some actions in the national plan which are relevant to some national public bodies but not others, for example, action 64 specifically refers to access to all Scottish Fire and Rescue Services for BSL users, and actions 69 and 70 are about public appointments and so will be of particular relevance to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life.
* National public body plans should include other actions they will take to help make progress towards the relevant long-term goals. This means that their BSL plans will be tailored to their own particular circumstances, opportunities and priorities.
* Wherever possible, actions should be Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Timebound (SMART).

The template which follows provides more details about how to structure your plan, and what you could include under each section.

**[insert name of national public body]**

**British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-2024**

**SECTION 1:**

**Contents**

**SECTION 2:**

**2.1 Introduction**

**2.2 Name and contact details of lead officer**

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

**SECTION 3:**

**Short summary of the plan**

**SECTION 4: DRAFT BSL PLAN**

**4.1 Across all our services**

**4.2 Our contribution to relevant long-term goals.**

**In this section, you should select from the nine policy-specific long-term goals in the national plan, which are:**

**Family support, early learning and childcare**

**School education**

**Post-school education**

**Training, work and social security**

**Health (including social care), mental health and wellbeing**

**Transport**

**Culture and the Arts**

**Justice**

**Democracy**

**SECTION 2:**

**Introduction**

Explain that this is the (draft) BSL Plan for this public body, as required by BSL (Scotland) Act. It sets out draft actions we will take over the period 2018-2024.

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

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

Set organisation’s context for the plan.

Confirm commitment to protecting and supporting BSL, including in its tactile form.

Describe involvement of BSL users in developing/commenting on draft.

Commitment to continued engagement around a) implementing actions and b) providing feedback on progress.

Our organisation will contribute to national progress report in 2020.

How can people comment on the draft? Timescale?

**Name of lead officer**/who to contact with any questions.

British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](http://contactscotland-bsl.org/) [cid:image001.gif@01D1966E.ADD680A0](http://contactscotland-bsl.org/)

**SECTION 3**

**Short summary:** captures overall aim of the plan and includes some key actions

**SECTION 4:**

**DRAFT BSL NATIONAL PLAN FOR [INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC BODY]**

**NB: ALL NATIONAL PUBLIC BODIES SHOULD CONSIDER INCLUDING THIS SECTION IN THEIR BSL PLANS**

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| **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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  [These should reflect actions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the national plan. The text below gives the number of the relevant action in the national plan, and offers an example of how this could be worded in a local authority plan (although would need to be more specific, ie. where possible say what steps will be taken, by when). Please also consider what additional actions you can take which will help make progress towards the long-term goal for all public services]  **By 2023, we will:**  [2] analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our area; identity and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.  [3,4] improve access to our information and services for BSL users[[2]](#footnote-2), including making our website more accessible to BSL users.  [5] promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, 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, and enable them to take up such training.  **Are there any other actions you can take in your organisation that will help make progress toward the long-term goal for public services?** |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for family support, early learning and childcare] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for school education] |

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| **4.X: 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)”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for post-school education] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for training, work and social security] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for transport] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for culture and the arts] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for justice] |

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| **4.X: 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”* |

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| **Our Actions**  **By 2023, we will:**   * [include any actions your organisation can take which will help make progress toward the long-term goal for justice] |

**SECTION 5:**

**What happens next?**

* How to comment on this draft (is it a formal consultation? What are the timescales? How will you make sure it is accessible to Deaf and Deafblind BSL users?)
* And/or, will you hold public meetings, and encourage Deaf and Deafblind BSL users to attend to share their views on your draft?
* Final version of the plan will be published by October 2018. In English and BSL.
* Please contact [insert name] if you want to continue to be involved as we further develop/implement the actions in our plan.

1. \*\*These four national public bodies were erroneously omitted from the schedule but should also prepare BSL plans while the schedule is amended. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)