

## **Appendix 2: Aberdeenshire Draft BSL Plan 2024-2030**

### **Feedback from Area Committees and ECS Committee and Chair and VC of Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board**

The Draft BSL Plan has been considered by all Area Committees during February and March 2024 and Education & Children's Services Committee on 21 March 2024 and from the Chair and Vice Chair of Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

<b>Area Committee</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Service response</b>
Garioch Area Committee 27 February 2024	Feedback from engagement activity should be included to allow proper scrutiny of the plan and actions	Feedback from engagement activity has been shared with Members and is attached as an appendix to the Committee report.
	Query regarding data confirming the number of BSL users in Aberdeenshire.	The census carried out in 2022 was the first census to ask a question around whether BSL was used in a household. When the census results are published we should have more clarity on the number of BSL users in Aberdeenshire. This data is not currently available.
	The necessity of promoting Aberdeenshire as an employer of choice within the BSL plan was queried as this approach should apply equally to all.	There is desire to promote Aberdeenshire as an employer of choice to the BSL community to engage people from that community.
	Query around the governance route as the plan will go to all Area Committees as well as Education & Children's Services and the Integration Joint Board before Business Services for approval.	The monitoring officer for Education & Children's Services Committee has confirmed that due to the number of actions that fall within the remit of ECS and IJB it is appropriate for the Plan to be considered at these fora. Due to time constraints, it will not be possible to present the plan to IJB however feedback is being sought from the Chair and Vice Chair and will be included when received.
Buchan Area Committee 27 February 2024	The commitment to explore BSL for Council and Committee meetings was welcomed.	There is a commitment to explore this option, however budgetary constraints as well as a shortage of BSL interpreters will dictate our response. This was not a priority identified by the BSL community.
Formartine Area Committee 5 March 2024	The inclusion of "Can you use BSL" within the 2022 Census was welcomed.	Noted.
	It would be helpful to know if any changes were made to the proposed plan, following consultation and engagement.	Our plan was drafted based on the responses received.
	It would be useful to know who funds Deaf Action Scotland.	Deaf Action Scotland is a charity.
	It would be helpful to know if the responses received were representative of the cohort	The two main areas of feedback from engagement with BSL users were accessibility of information and health

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	and if the responses differed from previous consultations.	and social care. Amendments were made to the plan to reflect feedback.
	It is vital that young people have support throughout their academic years, from staff across the board.	Hearing Support Staff provide support to identified individuals throughout a young person's time at school. Education staff work closely with multiagency staff and third sector partners as appropriate to provide holistic support to pupils who use BSL.
	The expansion of BSL being taught in primary schools was welcomed.	Noted.
	We should take forward the inclusion of BSL users being able to view our committee meetings	This option is being explored subject to budget and availability of BSL interpreters. This was not a priority identified through consultation with BSL users.
	It would be helpful to know if all consultations were held through Engage or if there were discussions with relevant user groups	Face to face consultation was carried out at the Aberdeen Deaf Club in January and February 2024, in addition to online engagement.
	It would be useful to have more information on how we are upskilling our current members of staff	<p>The Council has a Top Tips mini booklet with information to support staff working with anyone with a sensory loss or deafness. Physical copies are available through the Health and Social Care Partnership and Sensory Support Services. Digital copies are available via the ALDO course: <a href="https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/courses/sensory-impairment-or-deafness">Course: Sensory Impairment or Deafness (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>On ALDO, there are courses on Sensory Impairment or Deafness (<a href="https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/courses/sensory-impairment-or-deafness">Course: Sensory Impairment or Deafness (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)</a>) and Hearing Support (<a href="https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/courses/sensory-support-services-hearing-support">Course: Sensory Support Services - Hearing Support (aberdeenshire.gov.uk)</a>) which are accessible to all staff.</p> <p>BSL training was carried out for frontline staff at Service Points.</p>

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		<p>As part of this plan, awareness raising has increased with the engagement of Officers on the BSL National Plan and how our Local Plan can support. This will increase further when we make more information accessible to BSL users on our corporate website.</p> <p>In Education, school staff supporting BSL users work closely with Hearing Support Teachers/ BSL Communicator to upskill their own BSL/deaf awareness and skill set. All Aberdeenshire Education schools can access the Highland BSL resource and use this as training material.</p>
Kincardine & Mearns Area Committee 5 March 2024	Promote links to community councils in reference to 'democratic life'	The plan will be shared with community councils and BSL users can be linked to community councils.
	Ensure BSL needs considered in recruitment processes.	A number of policies in place to support those with disabilities including Guaranteed Interview. Applicants are asked if they have a need for any Reasonable Adjustments to support them in attending interview.
	Aspiration that BSL will form part of all policies in future.	Noted.
	Raise awareness of the Plan via social media to the wider Aberdeenshire community.	The Plan when agreed will be published on the Council website and can be promoted through social media channels.
	Queried if BSL can be taught in mainstream schools and colleges as a qualification.	<p>SQA National Units - SQF Levels 3-6 in BSL are available through colleges and locally at NESCOL.</p> <p>There is national momentum to look at developing SQA courses for school pupils e.g. National 4/5 course This is still at the very early stages of development. There would be funding/staffing/ staff</p>

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		training implications were this to become an option locally in future. The Education Service has representation on various national fora and will continue to keep abreast of developments regarding any future rollout of BSL qualification availability in Scottish schools.
Banff & Buchan Area Committee 13 March 2024	Welcome the report.	
Marr Area Committee 13 March 2024	Welcomed the report.	
Education & Children's Service Committee 21 March 2024`	Query around the use of subtitles on Council videos.	Closed captions or subtitles are available on most Council videos including Committee meetings published on YouTube.
Feedback from Chair and Vice Chair of the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board	Section 1 – Introduction: In relation to the data currently provided by the 2011 census it highlights that there are 24 BSL users per 10,000 people within Scotland. Based on the number of residents in Aberdeenshire that equates to 630 (approx.) within Aberdeenshire. We would consider it helpful to see data relating to the BSL community within Aberdeenshire.	The Census carried out in 2022 was the first Census to ask the question around whether BSL is used in households. It is anticipated that data on the number of BSL users in Aberdeenshire will be available when this is published.
	Section 2 – Short summary of the plan: We would propose the inclusion of an additional outcome relating to the Getting it Right For Everyone (GIRFE) Principles, aligned with the inclusion of GIRFEC. Aberdeenshire HSCP is a pathfinder in the development of this national approach and practice model. For example: 'The Getting It Right For Everyone (GIRFE) principles will also be supported, which place the person at the centre of decisions that affect them, in accessing help	Plan amended to include this suggestion at Section 2.

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	<p>and support when it is needed and to achieve the best outcomes based on a joined-up and consistent multi-agency approach at any stage of life.'</p>	
	<p>Section 3 – Where are we now? It is acknowledged that BSL interpretation has been included in the Council's Translation contract however it was noted by the SeeHear implementation group that it has not necessarily meant that people have access to a BSL interpreter when required.</p>	<p>Noted. There is a national shortage of BSL interpreters and work is ongoing with the Interpretation &amp; Translation provider as well as Scottish Government to address this.</p>
	<p>Section 3 – Where are we now? The current information under Deaf Action Scotland is incorrect. Please can this be updated to the following:</p> <p>'Deaf Action are commissioned by the Health and Social Care Partnership to provide information and advice to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind, and to support access to equipment and support services. Information is provided in a range of formats and settings to maximise engagement with people who are deaf or have hearing impairments. This may include the sign-posting of people to other agencies including statutory and third sector organisations, and rehabilitation input for example training in relation to hearing aid use.'</p>	<p>Amended the Plan at Section 3 to reflect this feedback.</p>

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	<p>Section 3 – Where are we now? We would suggest highlighting that the use of Contact Scotland BSL is an initial short contact designed to support the initial access to services. (It is important to remember that BSL users will only be able to use this service if they have appropriate technology, comfort with using technology and broadband coverage to allow access.)</p>	<p>Amended the Plan at Section 3 to reflect feedback.</p>
	<p>Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – We would suggest adding that it is recognised that for BSL users BSL is their first language and it is a language of its own right with its own distinct grammar and syntax. BSL users’ first or preferred language is BSL, which is not written form therefore key information should be provided simultaneously in BSL and English.</p>	<p>Amended Section 4 to reflect feedback.</p>
	<p>Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – 4.1: We would request an additional action to include: ‘Work with the AHSCP when improving accessibility of the website for BSL users, specifically around the AHSCP pages that sit within the council’s website.’</p>	<p>The Policy &amp; Performance team within Customer &amp; Digital Services will work with all Council Services to improve accessibility of the Council website for BSL users, including the Aberdeenshire Health &amp; Social Care Partnership pages within the website.</p>
	<p>Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – 4.4.1 – We would request that this be removed as this is not within the Terms of Reference for the See Hear Group. The See Hear group is happy to consider actions which are within the remit of the group.</p>	<p>Plan amended to reflect this feedback.</p>

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	Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – 4.4.2: It was queried if this action relates to the HEAL (Health Eating Active Living) strand of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). If yes, it is suggested that further clarity and detail would be helpful as to what are the actions in relation to the BSL Community and how the impact of these actions will be measured.	Noted. The Policy & Performance team will work with Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership to develop actions and measures around this element.
	Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions – We would suggest it may be helpful to consider the inclusion of an additional action (similar to the NHSG Draft BSL Plan) in relation to raising awareness of the availability of Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People.	Plan amended to reflect feedback.
	Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions 4.3 Is there scope to consider promoting access to Deaf awareness training on Aldo and also on Turas for Health & Social Care staff, as well as awareness training for frontline and admin staff around appropriate use of Contact Scotland BSL?	Plan amended to reflect feedback.
	Section 4 – BSL Aberdeenshire Council Plan – Actions 4.6 Transport. We would suggest also highlighting that support can be accessed through THInC (Transport to Healthcare Information Centre for the NHS Grampian area) which provides advice on travelling to health and social care appointments, and also the Council's A2B service.	Plan amended to reflect feedback.
	Additional Action: Would there be scope to consider including an action around data	The Data & Analytics team within Customer & Digital Services are collaborating with NHS Grampian



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	collection which would help to understand the access across Council and Health & Social Care Services? (Noting NHS Grampian have actions in their draft BSL Plan looking to collect and map data about BSL Users' service access, use of interpreters and appointments.)	analysts around data sharing. We will explore this proposal with them and work collaboratively to share data.