



British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-29

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015

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British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

Perth and Kinross Council

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-29

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SECTION 2

Introduction

This is the British Sign Language (BSL) plan for Perth and Kinross Council. The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 says each Council must make their own plan. Our first BSL Plan was in place between 2017-2023 and this updated BSL Plan will be in place from 2024-2029.

The updated BSL National Plan 2023-29 by the Scottish Government aims to make “*Scotland the best place in the world for BSL signers to live, work, visit and learn.*” Our plan has the same long term aims as the Scottish Government plan. The plan aims to protect equal access to services and support for BSL users in Perth and Kinross.

This BSL Plan will report to the ‘See Hear Steering Group’ as part of the Sensory Impairment Strategy in Perth and Kinross.

Officers from different Council service areas have helped develop this Plan. We have also shared this with BSL users and those who work with them. We have had feedback from carers and members of the public about what they wanted to see included in the plan. The plan was finalised following further meetings with local groups and talks with BSL users and was shared through our online consultation website, the Consultation Hub. We will review this plan during its lifetime and make any updates as required.

Name of Lead Officer/who to contact with any questions:

David McPhee: Equalities Team Leader

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

Address: Perth and Kinross Council, 2 High Street, Perth PH1 5PH

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SECTION 3

Review of Previous Plan 2017-2023

Our first plan said what we would do to improve how BSL users find out about services and to ensure BSL users have equal access to those services. Working more closely with the BSL community was also an important aim of the plan to enable us to better understand BSL users' needs.



The Council's Equalities Lead, Councillor Peter Barrett, with pupils and staff at one of our play area BSL storyboards.

Through the actions in the plan we worked with partners such as Live Active Leisure, St Johnstone FC, Culture Perth and Kinross and Horsecross Arts to make sure BSL users could better access and enjoy leisure and culture opportunities in Perth and Kinross.

Here are some of the key things we did as part of delivering our first plan between 2017-2023.

Learning and training opportunities

- Regular learning opportunities were offered to Council staff and those in partner organisations on Deaf and BSL awareness.
- More specific training programmes, including a 10-week BSL level 1 course, have been offered to staff groups who tend to work directly with customers.
- Funded teacher training and BSL level 1 and 2 materials have been made available in schools and nurseries.

Projects

- The D-code project was introduced to support local visitor attractions to make their venues and facilities more accessible and welcoming for BSL users. A variety of local visitor attractions have taken part and now have a BSL video on their website. A specific Deaf and BSL awareness learning session was also made available to the staff within these visitor attractions. Poster and leaflets were provided for each venues.



Example poster linking to virtual tours in BSL at many Perth and Kinross cultural attractions.

- The Perth Heritage Trail storyboards were updated. Each board now has a QR code which links to the information in BSL. This allows BSL users to take part in the Heritage Trail.
- Perth and Kinross Council installed BSL signage in two school/playpark areas in Perth and Kinross to help raise awareness of BSL amongst younger people.

Website information

- Perth and Kinross Council's website has been improved to include information in BSL across all council services.
- The website was also updated to provide external links to NHS information and was expanded to include additional Coronavirus information during the pandemic.

Events

- A variety of accessible events have been made available for the BSL community. These have included group tours with a BSL Interpreter of, for example, St Johnstone FC Stadium, Norrie Miller winter lights, Jacobite Exhibition at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, and The Enchanted Forest.

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- Doors Open day takes place annually and has been made available to BSL users by including information in BSL and arranging interpreters at venues.
- BSL film clips have been created for larger local events such as the Christmas Lights Switch On.
- Perth and Kinross Council have worked with the BSL choir to give them the opportunity to perform at some of our local events.

SECTION 4

Our Actions for 2024-29 Linked to the BSL National Plan

4.1 BSL accessibility

We share the long-term aim for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:



Links to virtual content and BSL guides have been added to the Perth City Heritage Trail information.

“To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people’s awareness of communication tools.”

Our actions in this section relate to actions, 6, 7 and 8 in the National Plan. You can see these numbers alongside our actions.

[6] The following will help us improve access to information and services for BSL users, including making our website as accessible as possible for BSL users

- *We will work with BSL users to make the Perth and Kinross Council website and other digital methods of communicating with the Council as accessible as possible.*

- *Staff in Council services who work directly with the public will be offered training courses to learn how to communicate effectively with BSL users.*
- *All Council staff will be offered opportunities to learn about BSL culture and deaf awareness – sometimes this will be through online learning. We will ask D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users to tell us what should be taught to staff.*

[7] The following will help to ensure that BSL is included in the See Hear Strategy

- *We will report on the progress of the BSL plan to the See Hear Strategy Group*

[8] The following will help us to 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 and be contacted by public and third sector services.

- *We will continue to make contactSCOTLAND – BSL available in Perth and Kinross. This will be a first point of contact for people who use BSL if they need it.*



Councillors John Rebbeck and Peter Barrett with staff and pupils at one of our playground BSL storyboards

4.2 Children, Young People and their Families

We share the long-term aim 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 in this section relate to actions 15, 16, 17 and 20 in the National Plan. You can see these numbers alongside our actions.

By 2029:

[15]

- *We will support our young people with additional support needs who are Deaf and their families to have a positive education experience.*

[16 and 17]

- *We will look at the best ways to provide opportunities for early years workers and school based staff to learn BSL at an appropriate level.*

[20]

- *Hearing Support staff in schools can provide staff working with younger children with information about BSL and Deaf culture. They can also help staff to find information that is available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child. Currently within Perth and Kinross Hearing Support staff hold mandatory BSL qualifications at the required level.*

4.3 Access to Employment

We share the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will receive person-centred support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and enter into the 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 in this section relate to actions 22 and 23 in the National Plan. You can see these numbers alongside our actions.

By 2029:

[22 and 23]

- *The Employment Support Team in the Council and the Perth and Kinross Employability Network will work in partnership with Deaf Links, Tayside Deaf Hub and Vision PK.*

[22 and 23]

- *We will ensure appropriate support is in place for any BSL user who is an employee of the Council.*

4.4 Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term aim 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 in this section relate to actions 24, 26, 27 and 30 in the National Plan. You can see these numbers alongside our actions.

By 2029:

[24]

- *We will ensure any specific care strategies consider the needs of the Deaf/Deafblind community.*

[26 and 27]

- *We will ensure services to support mental health and wellbeing are accessible to BSL users.*

[30]

- *We will ensure that opportunities to reduce social isolation consider the needs of BSL users.*

4.5 Celebrating BSL Culture

We share the long-term aim 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, and equal opportunities 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 in this section relate to actions 32 and 33 in the National Plan. You can see these numbers alongside our actions.

By 2029:

[32]

- *We will continue to promote opportunities for BSL users to attend and join in with cultural events and activities in the local area.*

[33]

- *We will work with the local BSL community to promote and celebrate their culture.*

4.6 BSL Data

We share the long-term aim for BSL data as set out in the National Plan, which is:

“To strengthen the evidence and data on the BSL community in Scotland to better inform decision making in public policy and service design.”

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Our actions in this section relate to actions 35 and 37 in the National Plan. You can see these numbers alongside our action.

By 2029:

[35 and 37]

- *We will examine how available local data can be used to plan services and support for BSL users.*

4.7 Transport

We share the long-term aim for transport as 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 in this section relate to action 38 in the National Plan. You can see this numbers alongside our action.

By 2029:

[38]

- *We will examine how the Scottish Government’s Accessible Travel Framework can be used at a local level to improve transport services for BSL users.*

4.8 Access to Justice

We share the long-term aim for access to justice as 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 in this section relate to action 42 of the National Plan. You can see this number alongside our action.

By 2029:

[42]

- *We will ensure support is available to any BSL users who may access Criminal Justice Service or Community Safety Teams. These teams will also be targeted to take part in BSL training opportunities.*

4.9 Democratic Participation

We share the long-term aim 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 in this section are the same as actions 43, 44 and 45 in the National Plan as indicated by the number alongside.

By 2029:

[43, 44 and 45]

- *We will ensure the needs of BSL users are considered to allow them to fully take part in any elections and other local democratic processes.*

SECTION 5

What Happens Next?

- The final version of the plan will be published by May 2024.
- The final version of this plan is in Plain English and will also be available in BSL and Easy Read Formats.
- Please contact David McPhee (Equalities Team Leader) if you want to continue to be involved as we further develop/implement the actions in our plan. Contact details are on the cover of this plan.

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

BSL users can contact us via Contact Scotland BSL, the online British Sign Language video relay interpreting service. Find out more on the Contact Scotland BSL website <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>