

# **Comhairle nan Eilean Siar**



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

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### **SECTION 1:**

**1.1 Introduction**

**1.2 Consultation and Contact Information**

### **SECTION 2:**

**2.1 Short summary of the plan**

### **SECTION 3:**

**3.1 Across all our services**

**3.2 Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare**

**3.3 School Education**

**3.4 Training, Work and Social Security**

**3.5 Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing**

**3.6 Culture and the Arts**

**3.7 Democracy**

### **SECTION 4:**

**4.1 What happens next?**

## **SECTION 1**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies to publish BSL plans from October 2018. The BSL National Plan 2017-2023 was published on 24 October 2017 following extensive engagement with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users.

This is a draft BSL Plan for this Local Authority, as required by BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. It sets out draft actions the Comhairle will take over the period 2018-2024.

The plan is framed around the same long-term goals as the national plan which has been co-produced with BSL users across Scotland. The Comhairle is committed to improving access to services for those using the language, and raising awareness of BSL.

The Comhairle aims to involve BSL users and those who represent them; ensure that the consultation on the draft plan is accessible to D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users; and that the draft plan published in BSL as well as in English in both draft form, and in final form.

According to the last census in 2011 there were 36 people using BSL at home across the islands. This provides a unique opportunity to tailor this plan to meet the specific needs of individuals. The BSL plan will form part of the wider Sensory Strategy which is currently being developed.

## **1.2 Consultation and Contact Information**

All comments and feedback on the contents of the draft plan are welcomed. If you would like to comment on this draft plan you can do this in a number of ways:

Comments can be submitted in writing to the address below:

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Sandwick Road

Stornoway

HS1 2BW

Comments can also be e-mailed to the address below:

[equalities@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cne-siar.gov.uk)

Alternatively British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via:

[contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#).

If you would like any further information relating to this draft plan you can contact:-

Norma Skinner

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01851 822 614

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01851 822 614

The draft plan is available in BLS and English and can be accessed at <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultations/>.

Responses to the draft should be received no later than Thursday 13 September 2018.

## **SECTION 2:**

### **Summary of the BSL plan:**

This BSL Plan outlines the actions the Comhairles will undertake to aim to improve the ways in which BLS users find out about our services and ensure equality of access to these services.

The plan will form part of the wider corporate Sensory Strategy and include elements of partnership working with other local service providers and support services.

Here are some of the key actions the draft plan outlines:

- a) promote the availability of accessible BSL interpreting services locally
- b) improve access to our information and services for BSL users
- c) Support staff and offer learning opportunities to raise awareness of BSL

## SECTION 3:

### DRAFT BSL PLAN FOR COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

#### 3.1: 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:

- d) Collate the existing information we have about BSL users in our organisation and community in order to establish a baseline to monitor progress towards enhancing accessibility to services for BSL users.
- e) improve access, based on assessed need, to our information and services for BSL users
- f) promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ through our website. This is a free service which allows BSL users to contact public services and for these services to contact them.
- g) Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL training.

### **3.2: 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, we will:**

- a) Work with early years staff to ensure that information about BSL and Deaf culture and the resources that are available in BSL, are made available where necessary to meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child.



### **3.3: 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, we will:**

- a) take forward advice developed by Education Scotland to improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL and to ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child’s education.

### **3.4: 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:**

- a) signpost pupils and students to a range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.
- b) work with partners who deliver employment services, and with employer groups already supporting employability to help signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users.
- c) raise awareness locally of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ (AtW) scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides.

### **3.5: 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:**

- a) signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL.
- b) take steps to improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities.

### **3.6: 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:**

- a) support BSL users to take part in Authority lead cultural events as participants, audience members and professionals.

### **3.7: 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”*

#### **Our Actions - By 2024, we will:**

- a) Take opportunities to 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.

## **SECTION 4:**

### **4.1 What happens next?**

- This draft plan is available in BSL and in English. Comments are welcomed on it and can be directed by e-mail to [equalities@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cne-siar.gov.uk) or in writing to the Organisational Development Section, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, HS1 2BW. Responses to the draft should be submitted before Thursday 13 September 2018.
  
- A public participation event is currently being planned and details will be posted on the Comhairle webpages when details are finalised. BSL interpreting support will be available at the event.
  
- The final version of the plan will be published by October 2018. In English and BSL.