

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN 2018-2024 PROGRESS REPORT 2023

Tasks	Responsible Person	Status	Start Date	End Date	Task Progress Comments
BSL 3.1a) Collate the existing information we have about BSL users in our organisation and community to establish a baseline to monitor progress towards enhancing accessibility to services for BSL users.	Johanna Morrison - CE – Organisational Development Officer	Complete	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	Information about BSL users have now been collated and a baseline to monitor progress towards enhancing accessibility to services for BSL users established. Due to COVID-19, the main source of BSL data in the Western Isles is still the 2011 Census. The information will be updated periodically so it is available when required.
BSL 3.1b) Improve access, based on assessed need, to our information and services for BSL users.	Johanna Morrison - CE – Organisational Development Officer	Complete	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	BSL services and technology are available to BSL users to access information, service and training. Information on the Web is checked to ensure that it is accessible.
BSL 3.1c) Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' through our website.	Norma Skinner - CE – Organisational Strategy Manager	Complete	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	This is a free service which allows BSL users to contact public services and for these services to contact them. A link to ' contactSCOTLAND-BSL ' is provided on the Comhairle's contact web page and its British Sign Language Plan web page , as well as on its Equality pages . British Sign Language is also listed within the online Services A-Z listed, which hyperlinks to the Comhairle's British Sign Language information webpage.
BSL 3.1d) Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL training.	Johanna Morrison - CE – Organisational Development Officer	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	<p>Training needs are identified as part of the employee appraisal process. When required employees are provided with necessary training. BSL Training was made available to school staff as part of the August 2019 Inservice with over 70 staff taking part. One member of staff has undertaken training in Teaching Braille and Braille Technology.</p> <p>New Accessibility training to make documents accessible has taken place in March 2023 and representatives of all departments have taken part.</p>

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					The Corporate Training Team will use the documents provided by Visibility Scotland to create an accessibility training course for the Comhairle's in-house training program LearnPro.
BSL 3.2a) 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.	Neil MacLeod - Service Manager – Performance & Staffing	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	<p>The Comhairle's Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) supports children and families from birth to 18 years old (and sometimes beyond). Early years staff are advised to seek Comhairle support when it is identified that they will be working with a child or parent that is a user of BSL.</p> <p>If a deaf pupil joins a nursery in the local authority, then the Comhairle's TOD will have been informed by Audiology although the nursery can contact the TOD directly. There are no pupils in the authority who currently use BSL as their first language. The Comhairle have bought a BSL pack from The Highlands Council which is an excellent 1+2 resource for primary schools.</p>
BSL 3.3a) 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.	Neil MacLeod - Service Manager – Performance & Staffing	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	<p>Appointment of a Teacher for the Deaf (TOD) in 2021 with a remit that includes development of a plan to take forward Education Scotland advice as well as to provide support and guidance for teachers and schools where they are working with parents and/or learners that are BSL users.</p> <p>If a child is a CODA (child of deaf adults) then the TOD will also usually support this family if needed. The TOD is qualified to BSL Level 2 and is available to advise schools on deaf friendly practices and the necessity of interpreters etc.</p>
BSL 3.4a) Signpost pupils and students to a range of information,	Neil MacLeod - Service Manager –	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	The Teacher of the Deaf co-ordinates information and support materials, where they are required, to signpost

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advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.	Performance & Staffing				BSL users to make informed choices about learning and careers.
BSL 3.4b 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.	Dolina Smith - Employability Services Manager	Complete	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	Local Employability Services take a person-centred approach to participant support needs. Initial assessment identifies their need and this is reflected in their training plan and support needs put in place. The Comhairle work with partners, for example Sight Action Western Isles who advise on an implementation plan to support the full needs of the participant. This includes adhering to the guidance found in the Comhairle's BSL Plan and National BSL Plan.
BSL 3.4c) 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.	Dolina Smith - Employability Services Manager	Complete	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	All partners are aware of the additional funding that can be awarded when supporting participants with additional support needs. This support is then passed directly to the participant.
BSL 3.5a) Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL.	Frank Creighton - Social and Community Services Policy Officer	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	<p>All Health and Social Care public Information Resources is produced in large print format on request. All Departmental documents are checked for accessibility compliance before presentation within the public domain.</p> <p>It is currently under review whether a new Audio support service can be implemented. It involves co-production of series of audio 'Policy Podcasts' relaying Comhairle policy and procedure information to those members of the community with sight impairment.</p> <p>Improving available communication resources with those with sensory loss has been discussed at meetings</p>

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					<p>with Sight Action and there is a willingness to work together to develop service improvement.</p> <p>A BSL translator is engaged, as required and by request, and in association with local partners 'Sight Action' Western Isles Sensory Centre.</p>
BSL 3.5b) Take steps to improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities.	Neil MacLeod - Service Manager – Performance & Staffing	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	All signage meets existing legislation - tactile, colour contrast, etc. Existing promotional material is under review to take into account the needs of BSL users.
BSL 3.6ai) Support BSL users to take part in Authority lead cultural events (Library Service) as participants, audience members and professionals.	Neil MacLeod - Service Manager – Performance & Staffing	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	<p>August 2022 - Current provision: Books and information resources available for all residents in print and digital form.</p> <p>Identified needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome pack will be developed to fully inform new members of all services and how to access them.
BSL 3.6aii) Support BSL users to take part in Authority lead cultural events (Heritage Service) as participants, audience members and professionals.	Colin George Morrison – Team Leader Heritage and Culture	In Progress	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	BSL translator can be engaged as required and by request in partnership with Sight Action Western Isles Sensory Centre.
BSL 3.7a) 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.	Derek MacKay - Governance and Elections Manager	Complete	01-Apr-2022	31-Mar-2024	The fund is promoted through the election pages on the Comhairle website. Specific reference was made in publicity and materials in respect of the Local Government Elections in May 2022 and the by-elections in June 2022.