



**WRITTEN QUESTION FOR SUBMISSION TO EDUCATION,
CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY
19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WARREN
DATE SUBMITTED: 14 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The British Sign Language Act 2015 is an Act of the Scottish Parliament to promote the use of British Sign Language to include the provision for preparation and provision for authorities to prepare and publish their own British Sign Language plans.

By learning BSL, students can gain many cognitive benefits and also be exposed to a different perspective and could gain a greater appreciation for the diversity of the UK.

Recently in Moray, we have seen how BSL transcends normal language barriers when a deaf Ukrainian refugee with no English could communicate fluently with a member of our deaf community as there's a huge amount of commonality in sign language.

The Scottish Government is committed to supporting and developing the use of BSL as a language for teaching and learning.

Can we get an update on where we are with the Moray Plan for BSL, the development of learning and teaching of BSL in our schools in Moray, what CPD is offered to our educational staff, how many schools in Moray are offering BSL as a second language, and how many schools (both primary and secondary) are preparing to offer BSL as a second language, along with numbers of pupils that have been presented for SQA awards in BSL?

RESPONSE

We currently have an Acting PT Sensory Education Services who was not involved in this piece of work which was being led by the previous PT and the Equalities officer. The existing team are currently delivering BSL training in 2 primary schools as well as upskilling the team in BSL also. This will increase the sensory team's ability to support Education staff across schools and ELC settings to more effectively support children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The sensory education team offer Stage 2 Deaf awareness training as part of our Supporting all Learners training offer.

The team are unaware of any schools offering BSL as a second language however the training will raise awareness of it as a second language option and the team are happy to support any schools who would be interested in this. Moray College deliver courses in BSL at SCQF levels 3-6 which offers the opportunity to work in partnership.

The Equalities officer is currently engaging with a number of BSL users to develop the Council's BSL plan for next year. There is currently a focus on improving access rather than strategic outcomes. There is a plan to invite BSL users to various Council services, to begin with the contact centre. There is also an intention to involve users in consultations, especially regarding the budget and the cultural quarter. There is work ongoing to discuss BSL interpretation for the Out of Darkness Theatre Group's next Xmas panto.