

Moray Council

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018- 2024



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Section 2: Background

2.1 Introduction

This is the British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Moray Council.

It sets out actions that Moray Council wants to take over the period 2018-2024 to help BSL users¹, their families and people who work with them.

The BSL plan for Moray follows the BSL National Plan 2017-2023. The BSL National Plan can be viewed in BSL at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGL-E01x3hH_Zycn2ZB056Q/featured?disable_polymer=1.

Our draft BSL plan was published on 26 June 2018. During July and August there were three meetings with the D/deaf community. These were organised with the help of the Moray Deaf Club.

2.2 Issues raised by the D/deaf community in Moray

General comments about the BSL plan

- Written English was sometimes difficult to follow. For example, the language used to present the draft BSL plan was too difficult for many BSL users to follow. It would be helpful if the BSL plan could be presented by a Deaf person.
- The video of the BSL plan, presented by a Deaf person should be put onto a DVD so that BSL users can watch it at home on TV or laptop. DVDs can be made available in libraries, North East Sensory Services and Moray Council Access Points. Not all BSL users have access to the internet.
- To promote the use of ContactScotland, it was recommended that Moray Council follow the approach used by NHS Grampian. If a BSL user comes into hospital a laptop is brought to the place where the BSL user is where they can log onto the video relay.
- Letters from public bodies such as Moray Council, electricity and water suppliers are often too difficult. The language and grammar is too complex.
- People welcomed the actions in the plan.

Some of the issues that arose are more difficult for a local authority to tackle. For example:

- Shortage of BSL interpreters.
- BSL users face difficulties in getting accreditation to evidence their skill in BSL.
- Access to BSL interpretation when taking driving lessons or sitting a driving test, either the theory or practical test. Although it is possible to book BSL

¹ When we use the term “BSL users” in this plan, we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

interpretation at the theory test, the BSL used is London based. Candidates are not allowed to ask questions if anything is not clear.

- A number of BSL users commented on the information available in polling stations and asked that this would be more accessible to BSL users. This is not an action for local authorities, but it is included in the BSL national plan under action 67: *Work with the Electoral Commission in ensuring improved information about voting for BSL users is made available in time for the next Scottish Parliament election in 2021 and review whether it has been effective.*

Although it is difficult for Moray Council to address these issues, we will continue to work with BSL users in Moray to how we can make this better.

2.3 Structure of the plan

The actions for the plan can be found in section 4. This section is divided into 8 subsections, each covering a particular service area.

All actions are based on the long-term goals for the BSL National Plan. The BSL National Plan was published by the Scottish Government in October 2017. The long-term goals for each service area are given at the beginning of each subsection, with an icon of the service area beside them. These are followed by the actions that Moray Council will take to help achieve the long-term goals.

2.4 What happens next?

The plan has actions for various services within Moray Council. Once the plan is approved, services will be asked to include the actions in their service plans and report on progress every three months. Progress will also be reported to the Scottish Government for its National progress report which will be published in 2020.

We will also continue to meet with the Deaf Club to hear from BSL users if the plan is making a difference to their lives. This will happen once every six months, beginning in December 2018.

This is not the last BSL plan for Moray. Some parts of the plan will need to be developed further. There may be other needs that we haven't covered in the plan. We hope that we can make further improvements for BSL users by continuing to meet with the Deaf Club.

2.5 Contacts

If you want further information about the BSL plan, please contact

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You can contact us in writing at the address or email address above. If you prefer, you can send a video clip in BSL with your questions or comments.

Section 3: Summary of the plan

This plan is Moray Council's contribution to the Scottish Government's commitment to make information and services across the public sector accessible to BSL users. The plan covers the period from 2018 – 2024

It proposes actions in 4 areas that the Scottish Government thinks local authorities should address. These are actions affecting:

- All services
- Early learning and childcare
- School
- Democracy

The guidance from the Scottish Government also recommends actions relating to culture and the arts. We have not included them in this draft plan because there are no services within Moray Council that can support the actions recommended by the Scottish Government.

Moray Council is also proposing actions on areas where the Scottish Government has not recommended actions for local authorities. These are:

- Post-school learning and work
- Public transport

There are no recommended actions from the Scottish Government relating to Justice. During the consultation on the draft plan it became clear that there are issues around access to appropriate adults who can use BSL and to BSL interpreters. We have included an action to explore this further.

Section 4: BSL Plan for Moray

4.1 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”

By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our organisation. We will use this information to find out what works well for BSL users and what we need to do better.
2. Give BSL users better access to our services and our information. This also means making our website more accessible to BSL users.
3. Promote the use of contactSCOTLAND-BSL. This is a free video-relay service giving online BSL interpretation. It gives BSL users the opportunity to contact public services and for these services to communicate with BSL users.
4. Direct staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training.
5. Make sure that customer facing staff within Moray Council are D/deaf aware.
6. Continue to meet with BSL users in Moray to monitor the outcomes of the plan.

4.2 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”

By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. Provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and those of hearing children of Deaf parents.

4.3 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”

By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. contribute to the Scottish Government’s investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.
2. take forward advice developed by Education Scotland to a) improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL and b) ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child’s education.
3. contribute to the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (SCILT) programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance. We will do this by
 - a. Ensuring that schools in Moray are aware that BSL can be one of the languages on offer as part of their 1+2 language policy.
 - b. Establish the number of schools in Moray which have the capacity, or desire, to deliver BSL as part of their 1+2 policy.
 - c. Investigate various strategies by which schools across Moray could develop BSL as part of their 1+2 policy and share good practice across the authority.

4.4 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”

By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. Raise awareness of the Access to Work (AtW) programme among line and senior managers. This Department for Works and Pensions programme gives financial support towards reasonable adjustments in the workplace. It can be used to ensure that BSL users in work can use BSL interpreters at important work-related meetings as well as pay for equipment that can help BSL users do their job.
2. Give up-to-date guidance to managers on reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

3. Work with BSL users in Moray to improve access to driving instruction and exams.
4. Work with BSL users in Moray to train more Deaf people to support BSL communication.
5. Work with BSL users in Moray to look at ways in which BSL users can get certification to evidence their skill in BSL.

4.5 Transport

We share the long-term goal for transport 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.

By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. Promote the use of HITRANS Thistle Assistance Card by BSL users. The card can alert drivers to support needed by users of public transport.
2. Raise awareness among bus operators of the needs of BSL users.
3. Promote the use of a booking system for Dial M for Moray on-demand bus service that is appropriate for BSL users.
4. Encourage taxi operators to use of booking system that is appropriate for BSL users.
5. Raise awareness among taxi operators of the needs of BSL users and ensure that BSL users who have hearing dogs can take their dogs in taxis.

4.6 Culture and the Arts

The long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan 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”

Moray Council does not have a service which can contribute to this element of the BSL National Plan.

4.7 Justice

We share the long-term goal for justice 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’*



There are no actions proposed for local authorities in relation to justice. The feedback during the consultation shows that there are issues for BSL users in relation to being properly represented throughout the judicial process. For instance, there is a need for appropriate adults who can use BSL but are not used as interpreters in court.

By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. Work with BSL users to improve access to BSL interpretation throughout the judicial process, ensuring that the roles of appropriate adults are separate from those of BSL interpreters.

4.8 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”



By 2024, Moray Council will:

1. Continue 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.