

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) PLAN 2018-2024

University of Strathclyde

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The place of useful learning

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University of Strathclyde British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context

This is the BSL Plan for the University of Strathclyde, as required by the BSL (Scotland) Act. It sets out the actions we will take over the period 2018-2024.

It follows the BSL National Plan, published on 24th October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

Our plan is framed around the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to the work of this University. The plan has also been informed by the findings of a joint West of Scotland consultation event with local BSL users, organised by the Glasgow College and University Equality and Diversity Network, which took place on 25th August 2018.

This plan embraces our strategic vision of “a leading international technological university, inspired by its founding mission as ‘the place for useful learning’, that is socially progressive and makes a positive difference to the lives of its students, to society and to the world”. Based in the heart of Glasgow, we take pride in our local roots and contribution to the social, cultural and economic life of Scotland, as well as our global reputation and influence.

At the University of Strathclyde, we are fully committed to protecting and promoting BSL. Equally, we aspire to deliver an “outstanding student experience” to all our students, including BSL users and have successfully supported a number of BSL users to reach their full potential on their programmes of study. This plan builds on the work already undertaken across the University to enhance equal opportunities and encourage all applicants, students and staff to fulfil their potential and furthers our commitment to protecting and supporting BSL, including in its tactile form.

Central to this is our commitment to involving and engaging BSL users in developing our BSL Plan, as well as continued engagement around implementing actions and providing feedback on progress. We will also contribute to the national progress report in 2020.

1.2 University of Strathclyde BSL Contacts

The University’s contacts for any questions or feedback in relation to the BSL plan are:

- Ann Duncan, Head of Service, Disability & Wellbeing Service disability-wellbeing@strath.ac.uk
- Annie McLaughlin, Equality & Diversity Manager annie.mclaughlin@strath.ac.uk

1.3 Where to find the BSL version of this plan

The BSL version of this plan can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/>

2. Summary

This British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, sets out the actions the University of Strathclyde will undertake during the period 2018-2024 to achieve the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to the work of the University.

Throughout this plan, we have highlighted the actions we will take to achieve our goals and have indicated where responsibility lies for fulfilling the actions.

The implementation of the plan will be monitored by the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee through the submission of annual progress reports. Additional actions towards other long term goals may also be added as the Plan is reviewed.

3. University of Strathclyde BSL Plan 2018-2024

3.1 Across all of our services

<p>We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:</p> <p><i>“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users”.</i></p>				
<p>By 2024, we will:</p> <p>analyse existing evidence we have about current and prospective students and staff who use BSL in our University; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.</p>				
Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Scope existing mechanisms for collating BSL user data and develop new data collection processes where necessary.	2020	Equality & Diversity	Human Resources, Strategy & Policy	Availability of reliable data on BSL users in the University.
Include data on BSL users as part of equality reporting and use this data to inform development of processes, services and activities.	2021	Equality & Diversity	Human Resources, Academic Departments, Student Experience	Data and actions included in equality monitoring reports.
<p>By 2024, we will:</p> <p>improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.</p>				

Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Convene working group to identify key web pages and services to be improved, develop programme of works.	2022	Corporate Communications	Equality & Diversity Human Resources Student Experience Academic Departments	Key webpages translated into BSL.
Continue to ensure open days and other university events are accessible to BSL users through the provision of BSL interpreters and accessible information.	2018	Corporate Communications	Disability & Wellbeing, Equality & Diversity RIO	Needs identified and provision available as required.
<p>By 2024, we will:</p> <p>promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL', which allows BSL users to contact public and their sector services and for these services to contact them.</p>				
Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Promote 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to all University departments, services and students via internal communication mechanisms and users trained in its use.	2020	Corporate Communications, Disability & Wellbeing	Equality & Diversity, Human Resources, Student Experience, Academic Departments	'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' in use across University.
<p>By 2024, we will:</p> <p>Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training, and enable them to take up such training.</p>				

Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Continue to offer tailored deaf awareness sessions for academic departments in which students who are d/Deaf/ hearing impaired are studying.	2018	Disability & Wellbeing		Tailored programmes delivered as required.
Continue to offer “Working with students who are d/Deaf or hearing impaired” training workshop.	2018	Disability & Wellbeing		Sessions delivered annually.
Promote the BSL training course offered by the Centre of Lifelong training and support staff who are working with BSL users to undertake the course.	2024	Corporate Communications, Human Resources/ Heads of Department		Programme promoted. Staff supported to participate if expression of interest made.

3.2 Post-School Education

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

“BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so, and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s)”.

By 2024, we will:

take action to ensure that students and prospective students who use BSL are properly supported.

Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Continue to provide support at open days for prospective students who use BSL.	2018	Recruitment & International	Disability & Wellbeing, Academic departments	Provision made available as required.
Continue to provide support to BSL users throughout their student journey from point of application to graduation.	2018	Disability & Wellbeing	Academic Departments, Student Experience	Support provided as required.
Develop “access checklist” for University events to ensure the requirements of students with disabilities and BSL users are routinely taken into account.	2020	Corporate Communications	Equality & Diversity, Disability & Wellbeing	Checklist developed and routinely utilised as part of events preparation.
Continue to work with applicants and schools/colleges to make tailored transition arrangements as required.	2018	Disability & Wellbeing	Academic Departments	Support provided as required.
Promote the use of the ILF Transition Fund by BSL applicants who require targeted transition support.	2019	Disability & Wellbeing	Recruitment & International	Transition fund promoted.

Explore availability of BSL interpreters with literacy/English language teaching skills to support the development of English for academic purposes skills.	2024	Disability & Wellbeing		Provision scoped and quantified. Key contact list compiled.
Continue to work with academic departments to agree suitable reasonable adjustments for BSL users.	2018	Disability & Wellbeing	Academic Departments	Reasonable adjustments implemented as required.
Develop processes to ensure that teacher training placement is accessible to BSL students.	2022	HaSS- School of Education	Disability & Wellbeing	Processes reviewed and updated.
By 2024, we will:				
Take on board guidance/advice produced by the SFC and others to ensure that across the college/university, staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect.				
Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Disseminate guidance to all University departments, services and students via internal communication mechanisms.	2024	Disability & Wellbeing	Corporate Communications, Human Resources	Guidance disseminated and available on University website.
By 2024, we will:				
Invite continuous feedback from students/prospective students and staff who use BSL over the coming year/18 months after adopting this plan.				
Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Collate feedback from surveys and 1:1 meetings with BSL users and use this to inform future practice and	2020	Equality and Diversity	Disability & Wellbeing,	Feedback collated and used to inform Plan

developments.			Human Resources	review.
By 2024, we will:				
Commit to reviewing/refreshing this plan to include more 'local' actions (based on that feedback) after the national progress report (due October 2020).				
Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Consider feedback from BSL users on Plan and specific requirements and incorporate these into the 2020 Plan review.	2020	Equality and Diversity	Disability & Wellbeing, Human Resources	Plan refreshed with new actions.

3.3 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, we will:

Raise awareness of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme for students who use BSL towards the end of their course, so that they can benefit from the support it provides when they enter the world of work.

Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Promote the ‘Access to Work’ scheme to students at key points in their programme of study including work placements and final year to ensure they are fully informed of its benefits.	2019	Careers Service	Disability & Wellbeing, Academic departments	Annual Access to Work promotion session delivered.
Raise awareness of the ‘Access to Work’ scheme to employers that the University has developed partnerships with.	2019	Careers Service		Access to Work scheme routinely promoted to employers.

3.4 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”

By 2024, we will:

Take steps to ensure that health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) within the college/university are fully accessible to students who use BSL.

Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Explore supply of BSL trained counsellors to make this provision available to BSL students.	2024	Disability & Wellbeing		Scope existing provision and compile contact list.
Work with the School of Psychological Sciences and Health to highlight the benefits of BSL trained counsellors with a view to encouraging recruitment of BSL users for the counselling programme.	2024	Equality & Diversity	Disability & Wellbeing, School of Psychological Sciences & Health	Meeting to discuss supply of BSL trained counsellors and encourage recruitment.

3.5 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”.

By 2024, we will:

Take action to ensure that extracurricular/recreational activities offered within the college/university are accessible to students who use BSL.

Action	Timescale	Lead responsibility	Support	Measures
Engage with Strath Union to ensure they are fully aware of the requirement to make events accessible to BSL users.	2020	Disability & Wellbeing	Corporate Communications, Equality & Diversity	Meeting to discuss access responsibilities arranged. Adoption of access checklist for events by Strath Union.
Continue to recommend BSL interpreting support for individual students to enable them to engage in wider university leisure and recreational activities.	2018	Disability & Wellbeing		BSL interpreting support delivered as required.