

BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

Scottish Local Authorities: Summary of Progress being made with BSL Plans

August 2021



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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BDA Scotland would like to thank Scotland's Local Authorities for their contributions about their work on their BSL Plans, which are reported in this document.

This initiative was funded by Scottish Government.

Compiled: 2021

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I. Background

On the 17th September 2015 Scotland passed the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. The Act placed a responsibility on listed public bodies to set out how they will promote the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL).

The Scottish Government is required to publish a BSL National Plan every 6 years that will cover itself and other national agencies – the first one was published in 2017.

The 2011 Census shows that 12,500 (2%) of people in Scotland used British Sign Language (BSL) at home. This equates to a rate of 24 BSL users per 10,000 people in the population. The Census 2022 will see the addition of two new questions to ask whether 1) a person can use BSL and 2) BSL is the main language within the home. It is hoped that the accuracy of data on BSL users across Scotland will be improved by these additions. See [Home | Scotland's Census](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk) ([scotlandscensus.gov.uk](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)).

Other listed Public Bodies are required to create BSL Authority Plans, which are to take due regard of the BSL National Plan. This includes Local Authorities, NHS Boards, colleges and universities across Scotland. Thirty (94%) Local Authorities published their first BSL Authority Plans in 2018. **By August 2021 a further two Local Authorities had published, which increased the total to 32 (100%).¹**

The Scottish Government funded the British Deaf Association Scotland to support public bodies with implementing their work in relation to BSL for three years. Since 2017, an Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer within BDA Scotland has been assigned to support the thirty-two (32) Scottish Local Authorities.

¹ The updates (2021) from the Local Authorities are shown in bold throughout this report.

2. Establishing Relationships

In November 2017, work began to engage with all 32 Local Authorities (Councils) to establish who would lead in developing the BSL Authority Plans within each Local Authority. This was a huge task that took many months to complete. Initially, there was some difficulty in identifying the council leads for the BSL Authority plans. Council websites were in the most part very difficult to navigate, and when calling Local Authorities to ask for assistance, staff were unsure of who the correct department or council lead may be.

In the first few months of 2018, BDA Scotland was involved in developing and delivering BSL Roadshows for Public Bodies across Scotland. During this time relationships began to form with the council leads for each Local Authority. Whilst initially challenging (possibly due to Local Authorities not having an awareness of who or what BDA Scotland were and how BDA Scotland could offer support), across the year things became progressively easier. The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer noticed during initial contact with Local Authorities at the roadshows that this was often the first time council leads had met and worked with Deaf BSL users; this was a very new experience for some.

There were new working practices that had to be learned. For example, as a hearing person, arranging a meeting is straightforward – they place a call or email to arrange a date and time, then have the meeting. When working with Deaf BSL users, different practices had to be adopted, such as when arranging a call, offering a selection of dates and times to ensure that BSL/English interpreters could be booked, then agreeing a meeting time, again offering a selection of dates and times to allow for BSL/English interpreters to be booked. This was a learning curve but through time council leads became more used to working alongside staff within the BDA Scotland. All council leads were open to this new way of working and were happy to adapt usual practices.

From November 2019 onwards, those relationships were established and working practices were more fluid between BDA Scotland and the council leads. For instance, Local Authorities learned that when arranging a meeting, it takes some time and the logistics of booking BSL/English interpreters have to be considered.

Early in 2019 it became clear that there was some confusion over the differences between the See Hear Strategy and the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer attended the Scottish Council Equality Network (SCEN) to address all Local Authorities around the differences between these two pieces of work.

The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer and the Community Development Manager attended a further two SCEN meetings. This was to follow up on the need to move forward with BSL Authority Plans and ensure work was on track. After this meeting, many of the council leads said they were clearer on what was expected of them, and the meeting served as a good reminder that they had support from BDA Scotland.

Establishing Relationships (Cont'd)

In April 2021, the original questionnaires (see Section 4 – Methodology) were returned via email to all Local Authorities with a request to deliver an update for the final BSL Progress Report. A new BSL Plan Checklist (Appendix A) with any additional information and updates from August 2020 to August 2021 was also included to assist council leads in completing the updates.

The final BSL Progress Report 2021 is being compiled to include all updates from Local Authorities across Scotland and prepared for submission in October 2021.

3. Purpose

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 states a BSL National Plan Progress Report is to be submitted before the Scottish Parliament. This was due in October 2020. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, this submission to Scottish Parliament was postponed to October 2021.

In order to collate information from the 32 Local Authorities to submit to the Scottish Government for consideration in the BSL National Progress Report, the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer created a questionnaire and interviewed council leads in relation to their progress with their BSL Authority Plans over the last 3 years. This work had already commenced before the decision to postpone the BSL National Plan Progress Report was taken, therefore the data was presented as an interim report (October 2020).

See www.bsiscotlandact2015.scot

This final report is being collated with the intention of further supporting Scottish Government and Public Bodies in identifying good practices and challenges. It is hoped the information in the report will continue to assist Local Authorities with progressing their BSL Authority Plans and in engaging with their local BSL communities. BDA Scotland present this report in the hope of encouraging Local Authorities and Public Bodies to work together to share ideas and tackle common challenges, in order to make progress towards a common goal.

4. Methodology

The questionnaire for Local Authorities consisted of five questions. The first 4 were developed around the key themes identified in the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015:

(see https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/11/pdfs/asp_20150011_en.pdf, p.4)

Question 1.

Do you feel that the action points under the BSL Plan are on track? Bearing in mind the requirement to consult in the Act, do you feel it has been straightforward to engage with the Deaf/BSL community? What challenges have you faced, and do you think the level of engagement has been sufficient?

Question 2.

Are you able to share any milestones or achievements that have occurred during the period of 2017-2020? Has there been any feedback on the direct impacts on BSL users?

Question 3.

Are there any challenges that you face in influencing and promoting the BSL Plan? What are the major issues?

Question 4.

Have you considered any plans and work required for 2021-2024?

Question 5.

What support would you want from BDA Scotland, and to what extent?

Do you feel you have a good understanding of BDA Scotland's role and work?

The interviews ran across 9 months from November 2019 to July 2020. See Table 1 below:

Local Authorities	No. of Council Leads	Interview Date
Aberdeen City	1	25 February 2020
	1	7 July 2021
Aberdeenshire	2	23 June 2020
Angus	1	3 December 2019
Argyll & Bute	1	2 June 2020
Clackmannanshire	-	-
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	1	7 January 2020
Dumfries & Galloway	1	24 July 2020
	2	5 July 2021
Dundee City	1	28 January 2020
	2	9 July 2021

Local Authorities	No. of Council Leads	Interview Date
East Dunbartonshire	2	10 March 2020
	2	30 June 2021
East Lothian	1	16 January 2020
East Renfrewshire	1	23 June 2020
	1	12 July 2021
Edinburgh City	3	18 February 2020
	3	14 July 2021
Falkirk	1	7 January 2020
	2	5 July 2021
Fife	2	2 June 2020
	3	13 July 2021
Highland	1	28 May 2020
Inverclyde	1	9 June 2020
	1	9 July 2021
Midlothian	1	24 March 2020
	1	8 July 2021
Moray	2	4 February 2020
	2	30 June 2021
Orkney Islands	1	28 July 2020
	1	28 July 2021
Pan Ayrshire (East, North & South)	4	10 December 2019
	3	8 July 2021
Perth & Kinross	2	21 January 2020
	1	7 July 2021
Renfrewshire	1	14 April 2020
	1	5 July 2021
Scottish Borders	1	19 December 2019
	1	5 August 2021
Shetland Islands	1	26 November 2019
	1	12 July 2021
South Lanarkshire	1	2 June 2020
	1	4 August 2021

Local Authorities	No. of Council Leads	Interview Date
Stirling	1	23 June 2020
	1	5 July 2021
West Dunbartonshire	1	19 November 2019
	1	8 July 2021
West Lothian	1	5 May 2020
	1	29 July 2021

The interviews were conducted either face to face or over the phone. It was decided not to utilise email. The main reason for this was to help build better two-way rapport between BDA Scotland and the council leads, allowing for better conversations and shared learning to take place. It also allowed the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer to better understand the corporate culture that the council leads were operating within.

It became clear, after the BSL Roadshows for Public Bodies that were delivered across 2018, that some council leads had, through a lack of information, made some decisions that needed review. This became particularly apparent through responses to Question 5 (see p.8).

On reflection, the roadshows may have presented council leads with an information overload. Looking back, it would have been worth having half-yearly follow up engagements with Local Authorities to ensure they had all the information they required.

As of July 2020, 31 (97%) interviews had been conducted. One Local Authority, Clackmannanshire, was outstanding. Clackmannanshire Council had undergone a significant period of redesign and service restructure which concluded in late 2019 and still face a significant challenge to date in not having dedicated resources in place to implement their BSL Authority Plan.

Starting in April 2021, BDA Scotland re-engaged with Local Authorities using the same format used for the interim report, to request and receive updates. However, when the initial request was made in 2020, BDA Scotland felt the responses were more generalised. In order to assist council leads to create more specific updates relating to their own BSL Authority plans, a new BSL Plan Checklist was added to allow the Local Authorities and BDA Scotland to identify which areas of work still required attention and which they had completed. For the checklist template, see Appendix A. This submission took place through email instead of face-to-face, due to the pandemic.

Since April 2021, 25 (78%) Local Authorities have returned their BSL Plan Checklists and latest updates; 7 (22%) are still outstanding (see Table 1 above, figures and dates in bold).

5. Overview

Within the 31 (97%) interviews in 2020 and the 25 (78%) in 2021, some commonalities across Local Authorities have been noted. It should be noted that there have been no formal interviews with the following Local Authorities:

2020	2021
Clackmannanshire Council	Clackmannanshire Council
	Aberdeenshire
	Angus
	Argyll & Bute
	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
	East Lothian
	Highland

Since no formal interviews with Local Authorities mentioned above took place, the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer reviewed their council websites and included some information on achievements in this report based on those reviews.

BDA Scotland used the five questions framework (see Section 4, Methodology) to address the commonalities. **In addition, information received from the 25 (78%) council leads via the BSL Plan Checklists are incorporated into the data.**

Question 1.

Do you feel that the action points under the BSL Plan are on track? Bearing in mind the requirement to consult in the Act, do you feel it has been straightforward to engage with the Deaf/BSL community? What challenges have you faced, and do you think the level of engagement has been sufficient?

- Sixteen (52%) of the Local Authorities have been pro-actively implementing some sections of their BSL Authority Plan.
- Nine (28%) Local Authorities have achieved some of the actions stated in their plans due to effective engagement with their local BSL communities. They are as follows:
 - Dundee City
 - Falkirk
 - Fife
 - North and South Lanarkshire
 - Pan Ayrshire (East, North, and South)
 - Perth & Kinross

As of August 2021, Aberdeen City Council has been working with their local BSL community. This sees a rise from 9 (28%) up to 10 (31%).

- It should be noted that some council leads have other responsibilities within their remit which can impact on their focus on the BSL work, including limiting proactivity.
- It is noted that there have been a number of absences and high staff turnover amongst the council leads which have caused delays in implementing some of the actions. There have also been many role changes for Local Authority staff due to the pandemic.

It was noted that during the hand over phase between former staff leaving and new staff arriving, there is often a lack of information sharing. This results in the new staff member having to devote a significant amount of time to gaining an understanding of the current situation and where the Local Authority are at with their local plans, which seems counterproductive.

Question 2.

Are you able to share any milestones or achievements that have occurred during the period of 2017-2020? Has there been any feedback on the direct impacts on BSL users?

- All Local Authorities have published their BSL Authority Plans in written English. Thirty (94%) of them have also published their BSL Authority Plans in BSL. At the time of the initial interviews, East Dunbartonshire Council stated that they were working on a translation for their BSL Authority Plan. **In April 2021, East Dunbartonshire Council successfully completed the translation of their BSL plan from English to BSL, raising the number of Local Authorities who have published their plans in BSL to 31 (97%).** Orkney Council stated that they intend to use their draft plan in BSL as there were no changes made between draft and final plan. The final plan has still to be ratified by the management committee within Orkney Council. **It was noted during 2021 that Inverclyde Council have removed their Authority Plans from their website** (see BSL Authority Plans: www.bs Scotl andact2015.scot/plans).



- Twenty-six Local Authorities initially implemented changes on their websites to include the contactSCOTLAND-BSL logo. **In August 2021, this number had decreased to 21 (66%).** See Appendix B and Section 6 – BDA Scotland's Perspective, for explanation.

Most of the changes that have been made, including the addition of the contactSCOTLAND-BSL logo which can be seen in Appendix B) are in the 'Contact Me' section of each website. This can prove difficult to find, as navigating Local Authority websites in English can be challenging for Deaf BSL users. It is recommended that the contactSCOTLAND-BSL logo is placed on the home page at the top, ensuring it is clearly visible (see <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home>, for example).

This relates to Action **05** of the BSL National Plan which states:

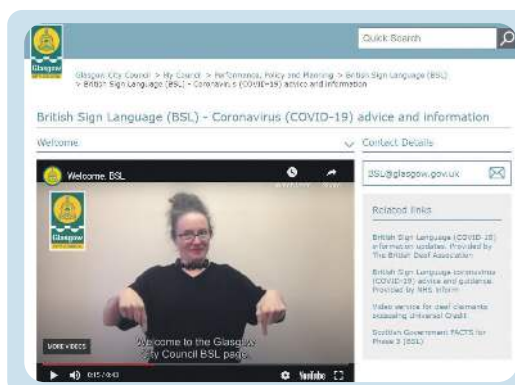
Promote the use of Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service (VRS) called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL', which allows BSL users to contact public and third sector services and for these services to contact them, and explore potential for its greater use.

- Five (16%) of the Local Authorities have established BSL and/or Deaf Awareness training for staff.

This relates to Action **06** of the BSL National Plan which states:

Encourage public bodies to access BSL Awareness training for staff who may work with BSL users, and signpost to appropriate training.

- During the COVID-19 crisis, many Local Authorities have been proactive in producing BSL information videos. Twenty-seven (83%) of the Local Authorities have translated information visible on their online platforms. **During August 2021, two Local Authorities added COVID-19 information in BSL to their websites, while another four Local Authorities removed BSL content. This has resulted in a decrease to 25 (78%).** See Appendix B and Section 6 – BDA Scotland's Perspective, for explanation.



Quote 1: *'The BSL user reference group has been utilised during the COVID-19 response, along with local BSL organisations, to raise awareness of a dedicated COVID-19 page for BSL users. The content of this page mirrored that of the main COVID-19 page to ensure BSL users had up to date information on service changes.'*
Glasgow City Council, July 2021

Overview (Cont'd)

This supports Action **40** of the BSL National Plan:

Increase the availability of accurate and relevant health and social care information in BSL and work with BSL users to determine where this information should be located. NHS Health Scotland and NHS 24 will deliver this work in partnership and will review progress in 2019 and every two years thereafter.

~ Good Practices Identified ~

- a. Some Local Authorities have established excellent connections to their local BSL communities, such as Dundee City, Glasgow City, Falkirk, Fife, North and South Lanarkshire, and Perth & Kinross. This has undoubtedly made their job far easier. **During 2021, Aberdeen City Council has also made great strides in establishing excellent connections to their local BSL community due to a new staff member having a greater awareness of the Deaf community and an understanding of different cultural aspects.**

Local Authorities in areas where there is an active Deaf club have found that attending the club on occasion, making connections with BSL users in an environment where they feel safe, has proved beneficial. For other Local Authorities, establishing a working group which involves a number of Deaf BSL users has allowed for more efficient working practice in the achievement of actions contained in BSL Authority Plans.

Councils	Connections
Aberdeen City	Aberdeen Deaf Club
Dundee City	Tayside Deaf Hub
Falkirk	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Fife	Deaf Communication Service
Glasgow City	BSL User Reference Group
North Lanarkshire	Deaf Services Lanarkshire Lanarkshire Deaf Club
South Lanarkshire	Deaf Services Lanarkshire Deaf Equality & Accessibility Forum (D.E.A.F.) South Lanarkshire
Perth and Kinross	Tayside Deaf Hub

This relates to Action **03** of the BSL National Plan which states:

Develop, test and share a set of guidelines to help Scottish public services to improve access to information and services for BSL users. This will include advice on how to involve BSL users in the design and delivery of Scotland's public services.

- b. North and South Lanarkshire Councils planned an annual BSL conference that should have taken place in June 2020. This is on hold due to the COVID-19 crisis but there is a commitment to ensuring this takes place as soon as possible. The aim of the conference is to develop further actions the BSL community wants to prioritise over the course of the next 3 years.

In addition to this, it is noted that during 2021 the Lanarkshire BSL Steering Group² set up a COVID-19 survey in BSL. This steering group have been very proactive in ensuring the work of the local BSL plans continue. See [British Sign Language – Covid-19 survey | North Lanarkshire Council](#).

- c. Angus and Dundee City Councils pooled finances to establish a social enterprise, training a number of BSL users in presentation and BSL translation skills. They will use these trained people to produce translated materials for the Local Authorities whilst also engaging in social enterprise by selling this resource to others. See below for the latest update:

Quote 2: *‘Six Deaf young people based in our local authority have been trained in professional BSL presentation skills and they will be given the opportunity to present a series of BSL videos to explain to the Deaf community how to access council services and supports using contactSCOTLAND-BSL, as part of a BSL social enterprise.’*

Dundee City Council, July 2021

In December 2020, Angus Council shared a BSL video on the 16 Days of Action – Violence against Women and Girls. This is in line with one of the ten goals – Health, Mental Health & Wellbeing section – under the BSL National Plan. See Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/posts/27966905339852399>

Quote 3: *‘We commissioned this BSL video, with assistance from WRASAC Dundee & Angus (Women’s Rape and Sexual Assault Centre), and [a local Deaf organisation], to ensure that BSL users in our community have equal access to information about rape and sexual assault and know where to seek help.’*

Angus Council, December 2020

- d. Perth & Kinross Council produced a poster and BSL video for their Christmas Lights switch-on in 2019 for their local BSL residents. See link below.

www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/permalink/2444728895848073

In 2021, they also introduced BSL film clips on the Perth Medieval Heritage Trail storyboards ([BSL – Medieval Heritage Trail – YouTube](#)) and for popular local visitor attractions ([BSL – Cultural Attractions – YouTube](#)). These clips have proven popular.

² This steering group consists of Deafblind Scotland, Deaf Services Lanarkshire, D.E.A.F Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Lanarkshire Deaf Club, North Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire.

Overview (Cont'd)

This supports Actions **54** and **56** of the BSL National Plan which state:

Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.

Increase information in BSL about culture and the arts on websites and at venues.

- e. Pan-Ayrshire Councils have supported and continued connections with Ayrshire Deaf Club SCIO in Kilmarnock. The club brings in Deaf children and young people across East, North, and South Ayrshire. See Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AyrshireDeafClub/about/?ref=page_internal

Question 3.

Are there any challenges that you face in influencing and promoting the BSL Plan? What are the major issues?

- As mentioned earlier, there have been challenges with capacity for several Local Authorities, as council leads have multiple roles and various foci within their remit.

Further challenges exist where council leads have struggled to connect with their local BSL communities.

- Some council leads have experienced confusion around the Equality Act 2010, BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and the See Hear Strategy, and have found it challenging to understand concepts such as Deaf culture and the linguistic minority concept (as opposed to a disability model). This has been apparent in some of the actions contained within some of the BSL Authority Plans, which refer to a disability or sensory impairment for example.
- There is confusion around the difference between Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). VRS involves a meeting between a BSL user and a hearing person, using a BSL/English interpreter online, with all three in different locations. VRI is used where the BSL user meets with someone in person and uses their tablet, i.e. iPad, to call a remote BSL/English interpreter to facilitate communication; in this case the two people conversing are in one location, and the interpreter in another.
- There are challenges for Local Authorities who have a rural demographic. The numbers of BSL users may be small and can be scattered. This poses a financial challenge as well as a logistical one when trying to engage. Further to this, councils such as Argyll & Bute have poor broadband connectivity. Strong reliable broadband connectivity is vital for Video Relay Services such as contactSCOTLAND-BSL or video messages via YouTube or Vimeo, for example.

- As has been mentioned previously, Local Authorities who are not as effective in engaging with their local BSL communities, and who may also not have established working groups, are experiencing further challenges with achieving actions.
- There were significant issues early on, with BSL translation of BSL Authority Plans. Local Authorities were advised not to use BSL/English interpreters and so they looked to local BSL community members for support with this. However, those community members often did not have the necessary skill to translate complex information from English into BSL. Local Authorities then looked to tender work out to translation companies, however, most Local Authorities were looking to secure the same services and so delays and difficulties arose in achieving translations.
- Looking forward, Local Authorities have made commitments within actions that they will make information accessible. There are concerns around budgets however, and whether funding will come from the Scottish Government to support BSL translation activity.
- There are further considerations around activities such as BSL Awareness training. This had been funded by the Scottish Government during the first year of the BSL National Plan (2017) for public services, however, that has now stopped.

Question 4.

Have you considered any plans and work required for 2021-2024?

- Thirty-two (100%) Local Authorities are continuing to work through actions that are still to be achieved.
- Only five (16%) of the Local Authorities (Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow City, North and South Lanarkshire) have set up working groups that include Deaf BSL users. Several other Local Authorities are looking into this suggestion.
- Thirty-two (100%) Local Authorities have stated a commitment to engage with their local Deaf community members to understand what local needs there are in relation to BSL translations.
- The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer has encouraged council leads to consider collaboration, working with other Local Authorities and Public Bodies to gain support and advice.

Question 5.

What support would you want from BDA Scotland, and to what extent? Do you feel you have a good understanding of BDA Scotland's role and work?

Overview (Cont'd)

- Over Years 1 and 2 (2017-2019), most Local Authorities had little understanding of the support they could receive from BDA Scotland. In Year 3 (2019-2020), through the face-to-face interviews and telephone calls Local Authorities began to have a better understanding of the role of BDA Scotland.

A comment repeatedly made by several Local Authorities was that:

Quote 4: *'We wish we'd realised from the start that we had this level of support from BDA Scotland.'*

- Face-to-face meetings and telephone calls have allowed Local Authorities to gain a better understanding of the subtleties of working with the Scottish BSL community and they appreciate the work BDA Scotland has done to support the establishment of initial connections. It has also been important for Local Authorities to understand why they should book highly skilled BSL/English interpreters when engaging with Scottish Deaf BSL users.
- Local Authorities now understand that BDA Scotland, as a Deaf-led, BSL focused organisation, can provide the specific support and guidance needed when looking to engage with BSL users in their areas.

In addition, 25 (78%) Local Authorities completed BSL Plan Checklists in July 2021 which highlight the progress of their BSL Authority plans.

Based on each council's Authority Plan, the BSL Plan Checklist shows the number of long-term goals set (see <https://www.gov.scot/publications/british-sign-language-bsl-national-plan-2017-2023/>) and how far each authority has progressed with those goals.

No.	Long-Term Goals	No.	Long-Term Goals
1	Scottish Public Services	6	Health, Mental Health & Wellbeing
2	Family Support, Early Learning & Childcare	7	Transport
3	School Education	8	Culture and the Arts
4	Post-School Education	9	Justice
5	Training, Work & Social Security	10	Democracy

Because of the irregularity in numbers, a percentage has been drawn up to provide a means of comparing progress during the past three years (2018 – 2021).

Local Authorities	Total Number of Goals	Number of Goals Achieved	Percentage of Goals Achieved
Aberdeenshire	6	-	-
Aberdeen City	7	6/7	86%
Angus	10	-	-
Argyll & Bute	5	-	-
Clackmannanshire	6	-	-
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	3	-	-
Dumfries & Galloway	6	5/6	83%
Dundee City	6	6/6	100%
East Dunbartonshire	10	4/10	40%
East Lothian	6	-	-
East Renfrewshire	8	2/8	25%
Edinburgh City	6	4/6	67%
Falkirk	5	5/5	100%
Fife	8	5/8	63%
Glasgow City	9	6/9	67%
Highland	9	-	-
Inverclyde	7	3/7	43%
Midlothian	6	3/6	50%
Moray	6	6/6	100%
North Lanarkshire	7	3/7	43%
Orkney Islands	5	6/6	100%
Pan Ayrshire (East, North, South)	6	4/6	67%
Perth & Kinross	10	10/10	100%
Renfrewshire	6	1/6	17%
Scottish Borders	7	4/7	57%
Shetland Islands	8	0/8	0%
South Lanarkshire	7	4/7	57%
Stirling	3	1/3	33%
West Dunbartonshire	6	5.5/6	92%
West Lothian	7	6/7	86%

The table above shows that only five (16%) Local Authorities (Dundee City, Falkirk, Moray, Orkney Islands, and Perth & Kinross) have achieved all their aims. It will be interesting to see whether the achievements have translated across to tangible improvements in BSL users' daily lives. The data from the BSL users' roadshow should shed some light on this.

6. BDA Scotland's Perspective

An unexpected and fortunate positive has evolved from the COVID-19 crisis. In 2020, 27 out of the 32 Local Authorities realised that access to information in BSL was vital for the community to gain information around the fast-paced progression of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August 2021, an additional two Local Authorities (East Dunbartonshire and East Lothian) added COVID-19 information in BSL on to their websites. Four Local Authorities (Angus, Clackmannanshire, Renfrewshire, and Stirling) deleted information from theirs.

As part of the BDA remit, there are continual checks made on the accessibility of BSL content on Local Authority websites. It was identified that a small number of Local Authority weblinks were not working. On contacting these Local Authorities, it was clear staff had not been aware of the issues. It seemed that an internal systems update had caused the links to stop working. Some of the Local Authorities affected have rectified this issue, with others still outstanding.

Twenty-five (78%) Local Authority websites are now more accessible for BSL users than ever before. Throughout the pandemic, over the last 18 months, BDA Scotland has created a significant amount of content to support the BSL community of Scotland – Scottish Government daily and weekly briefings, BSL Blethers (to curb social isolation and loneliness), Facts and Myths of COVID-19, and Winter Support videos. See <https://bda.org.uk/covid19/>

These BSL sessions and videos have been emailed to Local Authorities weekly with updated news bulletins and links to other information videos. This has resonated with council leads who had previously struggled to understand the concept of making information accessible. The delivery of our content has allowed Local Authorities to gain a better understanding of accessible content and to further build and develop their connections to their local communities. Each Local Authority also has a better understanding of the support they have from BDA Scotland. Appendix B contains links and evidence of this.

Quote 5: *'Thank you for sending through these updates which have been a very useful source of information for me to share with our groups. As the topics you cover are varied, it has been a mixture of helpful information, events and lighter topics for BSL users to try and engage with.'*

I was also very pleased to see that in the updates you cover other protected characteristics and share all current news that benefits many of us. As always, thank you for your invaluable support in helping us engage with and empower our BSL community.'

Aberdeen City Council, December 2020

From the 31 (97%) reports that were collated in 2020, the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer noted that 25 (78%) Local Authorities still require significant support from BDA

Scotland. Currently they face challenges in many areas of their BSL plans, chief among which is **engagement** with their local BSL communities.

BDA Scotland would like to see all Local Authorities across Scotland fully adopt and integrate a bilingual approach to information delivery. If there is a release of written English content, BDA Scotland would stress there should be a simultaneous delivery of BSL content. This is vital not only as good practice but also to build trust with the Scottish BSL community and ensure that they receive important information at the same time as other members of society and not at a later date.

In one progressive example, Glasgow City Council are now considering creating a secondment post for a Deaf BSL user from another organisation to assist with their BSL work for a set period of time.

Employing a Deaf BSL user within Local Authorities, whether individually or as part of a consortium, would ease the burden on council leads and allow Local Authorities to access that individual's knowledge, lived experience and networks, potentially making actions more achievable. There would be great potential for shared and incidental learning for all parties. This would also create employment opportunities for a community that has a high unemployment rate and faces a number of challenges. This will require resourcing of course, but it may be a useful area to develop.

Having a Deaf BSL user as a member of staff working within Local Authorities could bring about cultural shifts in attitudes, especially for those Local Authorities who are not as fully engaged with the Scottish BSL community. Having a visible Deaf staff member who can influence the working environment and act as a positive role model will go some way towards changing certain societal views that are still held by some.

Society in general views deafness as a disability, perceiving it in terms of the medical model. BSL users are also considered in this light. However, change needs to be made towards a social model, understanding that BSL users see themselves as a linguistic minority rather than a disabled group. BSL is a language that any person can learn and adopting social model framing will allow people understand BSL users in a new way, one of benefit to the organisation.

As the Scottish Government states, we want Scotland to be the best place in the world for Deaf BSL users to live, learn, work and visit.

Dundee City Council established an apprenticeship course for young people to work alongside senior management. The successful candidate was a young Deaf person who impacted the working practices of Local Authorities. This is a successful example of the change that could happen.

Quote 6: *'I can confirm that Dundee City Council offers graduate trainee opportunities to work within our Chief Executive Services. In 2020, a young BSL user was recruited and has recently been promoted to a permanent role within our Communications Team.'*

Dundee City Council, August 2021

Employing Deaf people can already be seen within the Scottish Government (BSL Policy Officer), at the Scottish Parliament (BSL Development Officer), and at the University of Edinburgh (BSL Development Officer). This should be exemplified as good practice for Public Bodies, including Local Authorities, across Scotland.

Further supporting evidence for this system can be seen in Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland, where a dedicated Language Officer is employed.

See <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/language>

The Scottish BSL community must have the ability to engage with Local Authorities. This can be achieved through empowerment training, delivered over time to allow the community to gradually and fully absorb the knowledge and understanding of the structures and processes that exist within local government, which can appear complicated at first.

It has been noted that there are specific challenges for Local Authorities with a rural demographic such as the Islands, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders. With a lack of face-to-face BSL/English interpreters in these rural regions, particularly the Islands, access to services are impeded where there is a reliance on interpreting. It is felt that the Scottish Government should consider providing VRI services (see p.16 for definition) at no cost for BSL users, whether via contactSCOTLAND-BSL or another provider.

Twenty-five (78%) Local Authorities report that they need BSL Awareness training. BDA Scotland would like to know whether there is any move from Scottish Government to reinstate funding for BSL Awareness training for Local Authorities.

It is BDA Scotland's view that this is in fact part of a package of empowerment training. BDA Scotland are driven to empower the BSL community to engage with Local Authorities effectively – however, council staff need to feel empowered and confident to engage with the Scottish BSL community. This is a two-way process, and both parties must be able to engage fully with each other.

One potential solution to better empower council staff to engage could be to deliver a series of meetings in a roadshow format. This will bring BSL users and Local Authorities together, allowing them to create better engagement and begin to build the bridges needed to succeed

in achieving the actions in their plans. This could be done via either face-to-face or via online platforms e.g., Zoom.

BDA Scotland have placed a focus over the last few years on establishing a bridge between the BSL community and Local Authorities. This has needed time and attention and BDA Scotland are beginning to see the fruits of this. BDA Scotland will now place even more emphasis on ensuring they continue to create these strong bridges and will work across the next 3 years to continue to support BSL communities and Local Authorities to connect in more meaningful ways.

Four Local Authorities have developed policies for staff, to assist them in engagement with BSL users. Those Local Authorities who have these policies in place have yet to engage meaningfully. Over the next 3 years, BDA Scotland will support Local Authorities in utilising their toolkits on how to engage with the community, whilst recommending the links below.

Audit Scotland: [Engagement strategy and plan 2019/24](https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/engagement-strategy-and-plan-2019-24) ([audit-scotland.gov.uk](https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk))

Community Council: [Community Engagement | Community Council](https://www.communitycouncils.scot/)
([communitycouncils.scot](https://www.communitycouncils.scot/))

Community Planning Aberdeen: [Engagement-participation-empowerment-strategy.pdf](https://www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/engagement-participation-empowerment-strategy.pdf)
([communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk](https://www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk))

Falkirk Council: <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/policies-strategies/community-engagement.aspx>

Orkney Communities: [community-consultation-and-engagement-guide-version-3-2.pdf](https://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/community-consultation-and-engagement-guide-version-3-2.pdf)
([orkneycommunities.co.uk](https://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk))

Scottish Borders Council: [SBC Community Engagement Toolkit.pdf](https://www.sbc.gov.uk/CommunityEngagementToolkit.pdf)

In relation to empowerment training for the Scottish BSL community, it is vital that BDA Scotland works towards providing this, offering this training as a collaboration between the Scottish BSL community and Local Authorities. Historically, Deaf BSL users have had no access to information about the workings of government and its structures. The Scottish BSL community requires time to fully understand how government structures work, including local government, national government, and parliamentary bodies. There also needs to be work done with the Scottish BSL community to allow them to understand and access complaints procedures. As there is no statutory obligation to provide access for BSL users it is vital that BSL users have the understanding and confidence to challenge and respond to any inequalities they experience. This can be achieved through empowerment training.

During the pandemic, there have been significant developments in the use of technology within the Scottish BSL community. There has been far more engagement with platforms such as Zoom, Facebook and Twitter. Local Authorities have been hampered in engaging this way with the Scottish BSL community due to internal policies and firewalls which prevent them using Zoom or social media. Local Authorities currently use Microsoft Teams, but this software does not work well for Deaf BSL users, particularly when working with BSL/English interpreters.

Quote 7: *'Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, I feel that the access and the information in BSL on the social media has been excellent for Deaf BSL users. BDA Scotland supported older Deaf BSL users to use social media platforms such as Zoom. As a result, these Deaf BSL users became confident enough to use social media platforms without further support from BDA Scotland. We found that engagements with local authorities and other public bodies were effective through the use of video call platforms, aided by increased BSL/English interpreter availability.'*
BDA Scotland

Council leads have themselves identified the need to engage with the Scottish BSL community using these platforms and are currently in discussion with various departments to find a resolution to allow them to use other platforms.

7. Key Points

Across the course of the last three years, we have seen some excellent initiatives, excellent working practice and some challenges. This is to be expected, and as we move forward to the next three years, we will see further examples of real success and major challenges.

The following 7 proposed **key points** are:

	Key Points	BSL Users	Local Authorities
1.	Empowerment training (BDA provides Empowerment trainings to both BSL users and Local Authorities)	BSL users are confident to promote the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and to have their voice heard.	Local Authorities learn BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1-3. They are confident in working with BSL users and provide BSL access at their workplace and local events. They lead by example in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.
2.	BSL Awareness training and BSL Level 1-3 learning for Local Authorities	BSL users in Scotland are trained and employed to do translation work and teach BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1-6.*	Local Authorities learn BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1-3. They are confident in working with BSL users and provide BSL access at their workplace and local events. They lead by example in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.
3.	BSL Roadshow (BDA Scotland leads the roadshow events)	BSL users are consulted about the BSL National Plan every year. The BSL users or working groups meet with their council leads every quarter of a year.	Local Authorities are provided with information on BSL issues annually through COSLA. They engage with their local BSL users or working groups every quarter of a year.
4.	Video Remote Interpreting	BSL users in rural areas are provided with appropriate devices and trained on how to use VRI.	Local Authorities provide VRI and are trained on how to use this service.
5.	Ongoing funding for delivery of actions for BSL Authority Plan and BSL translation work	BSL users in Scotland are trained and employed to do translation work and teach BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1-6.*	Local Authorities provide BSL translation work on their websites, Facebook pages and local events.
6.	Engagement (BDA Scotland supporting the engagement events)	BSL users collaborate with council leads and attend local events and panel meetings provided by Local Authorities.	Local Authorities provide BSL access on their websites, Facebook pages and local events. They reach out to their local BSL communities and attend BSL events or clubs as well as consultation events.
7.	Commitment	BSL users, including Deaf young people, are employed by Local Authorities and involved in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.	Local Authorities collaborate with other public bodies and engage with their local BSL communities. They employ BSL users to promote BSL Authority Plans and lead good working practices.

* BSL Teachers will need to have achieved a standard equivalent to BSL Level 3, or above, in order to teach BSL Levels 1 onwards.



Key Points (Cont'd)

During the year of 2020-2021, the key points have remained the same, with no additional points to be raised. BDA Scotland have made some achievements that will be further discussed in the Updates section. **The achievements, to date, are as follows:**

- **Local Authorities' BSL Weblinks**
- **BSL Emblem**
- **Empowerment Training**
- **BSL Roadshow**
- **Scottish Government Nationally Funded Video Remote Service (VRS)**

8. Updates 2021

Local Authorities' BSL Weblinks

Thirty-one (97%) of the 32 Local Authorities have accessible website content. It is noted that 10 (31%) Local Authorities appear to prefer that their local BSL users use contactSCOTLAND-BSL to make enquires or ask for information in BSL instead of posting BSL translations on their websites. See Appendix B.

BSL Emblem

A BSL emblem has been added to a number of websites (shown below). The emblem provides quick and direct access to BSL on websites.

For example, see Dundee City Council: [BSL Information on Council Services](#) | [Dundee City Council](#)

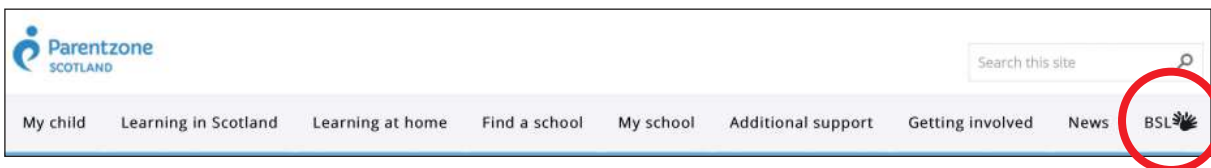
The initial concept of using a BSL emblem was developed by BDA Scotland when consulting with two Public Bodies – Food Standards Scotland and Education Scotland. See [Food Standards Scotland](#) and [Parentzone Scotland](#) | [Parent Zone](#) (education.gov.scot)

Examples of good practice:

Food Standards Scotland: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/>



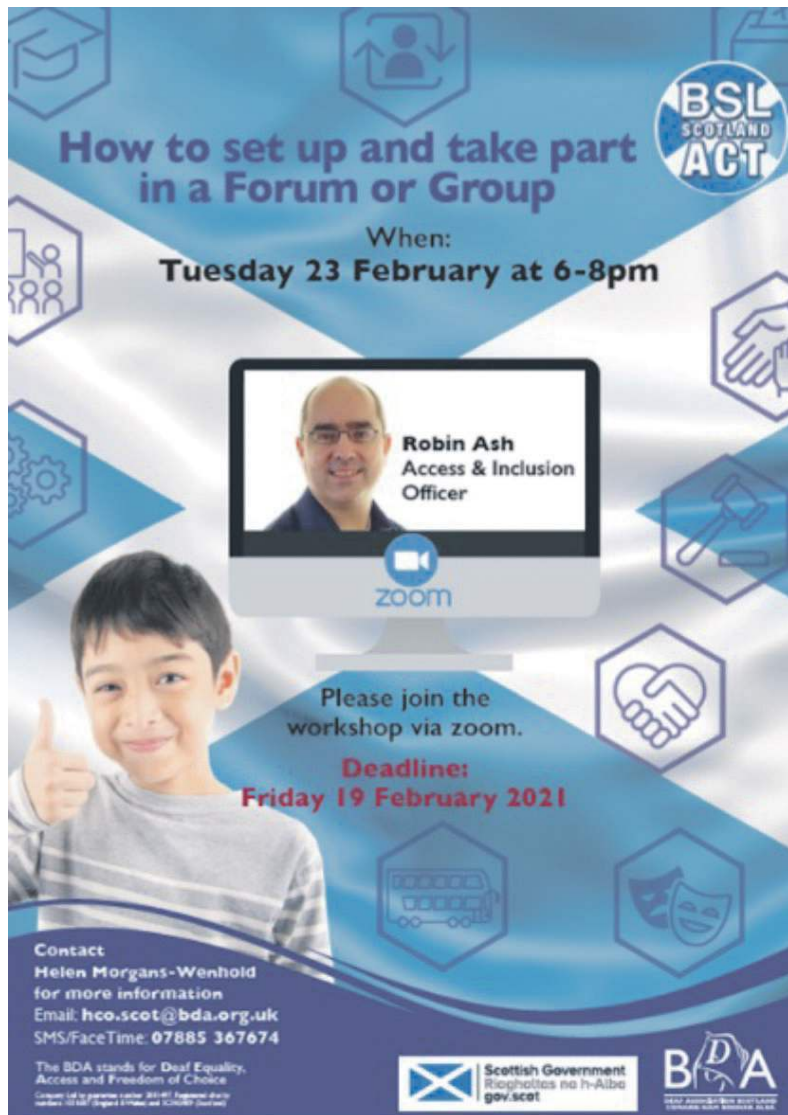
Education Scotland's Parentzone: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/>



Empowerment Training

Empowerment training that supports the Scottish Deaf community in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and having their voice heard confidently (see Key Point no.1, p.25) has been rolled over the last few months, from September 2020 to date.

6 Empowerment Training sessions have been delivered, with a total of 55 attendees.



How to set up and take part in a Forum or Group

When:
Tuesday 23 February at 6-8pm

Robin Ash
Access & Inclusion Officer

zoom

Please join the workshop via zoom.

Deadline:
Friday 19 February 2021

Contact
Helen Morgans-Wenhold
for more information
Email: hco.scot@bda.org.uk
SMS/FaceTime: 07885 367674

The BDA stands for Deaf Equality, Access and Freedom of Choice.
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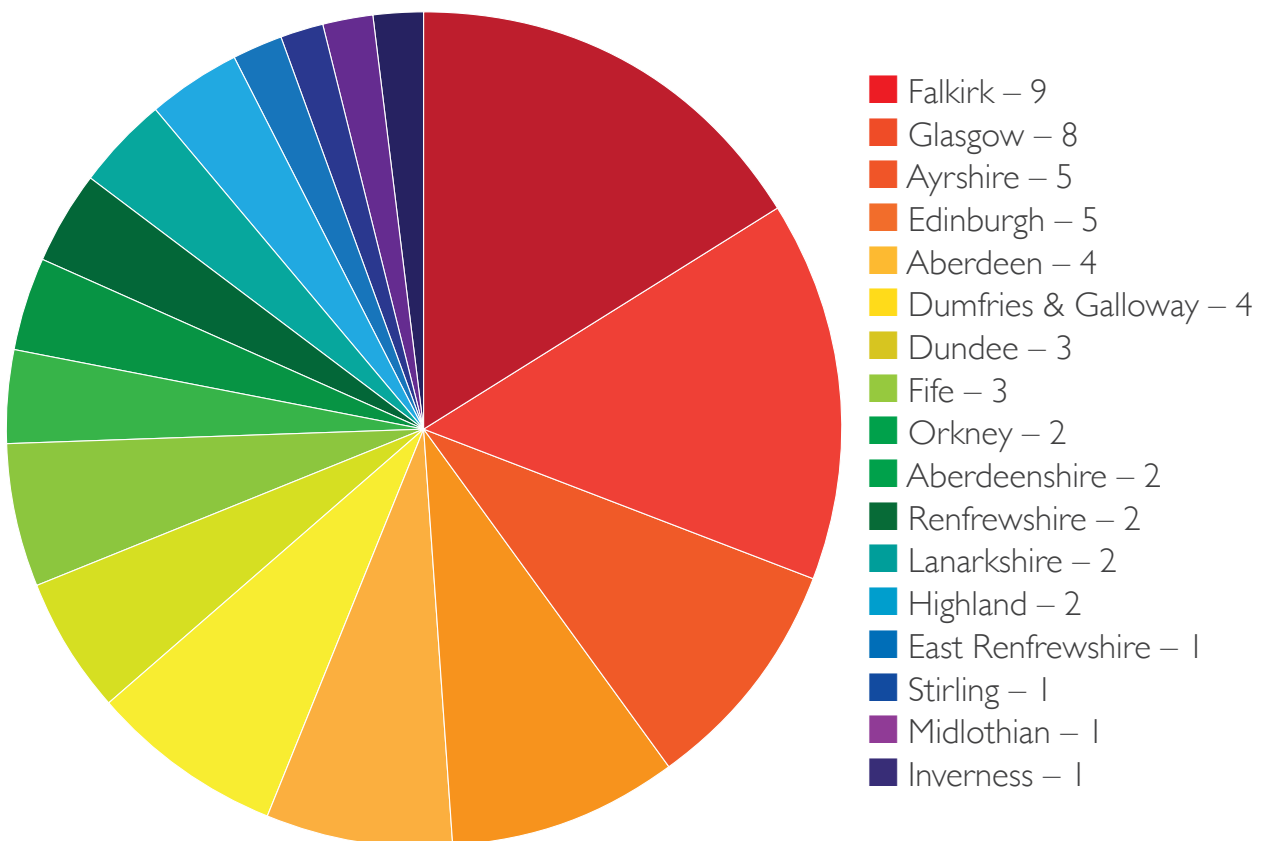
 **Scottish Government**
Riaghaidh na h-Alba
gov.scot

 **BDA**
BRITISH DEAF ASSOCIATION
BRITANNISCHE DOOF VERENIGING

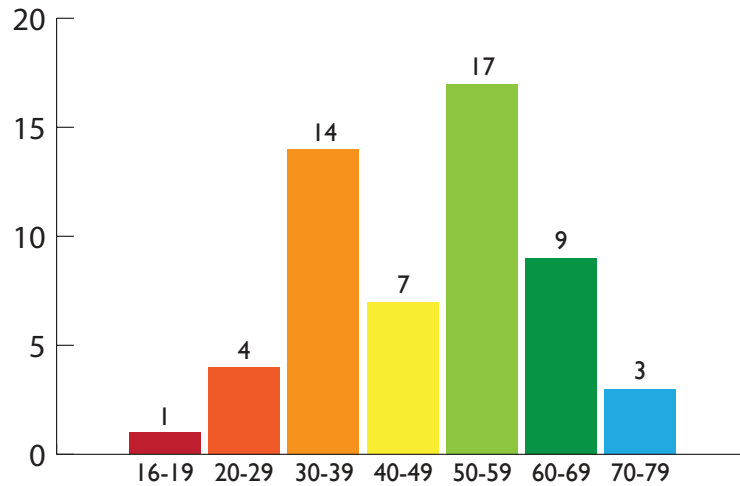
Demographic data from BDA Scotland's six empowerment training events

Date	Participants	Geographical Demography		Gender	Age Group	Ethnicity
6 events from Oct 2020-Aug 2021	55	9x Falkirk 8x Glasgow 5x Ayrshire 5x Edinburgh 4x Aberdeen 4x Dumfries & Galloway 3x Dundee 3x Fife 2x Orkney	2x Aberdeenshire 2x Renfrewshire 2x Lanarkshire 2x Highland 1x East Renfrewshire 1x Stirling 1x Midlothian 1x Inverness	29x Female 26x Male	1x 16-19 4x 20-29 14x 30-39 7x 40-49 17x 50-59 9x 60-69 3x 70-79	46x White Scottish/ British 4x White European 5x Asian

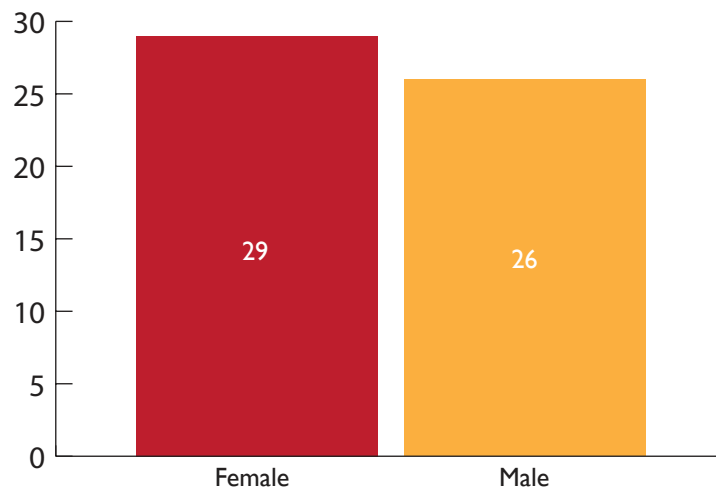
Geographical Demography of the empowerment training participants



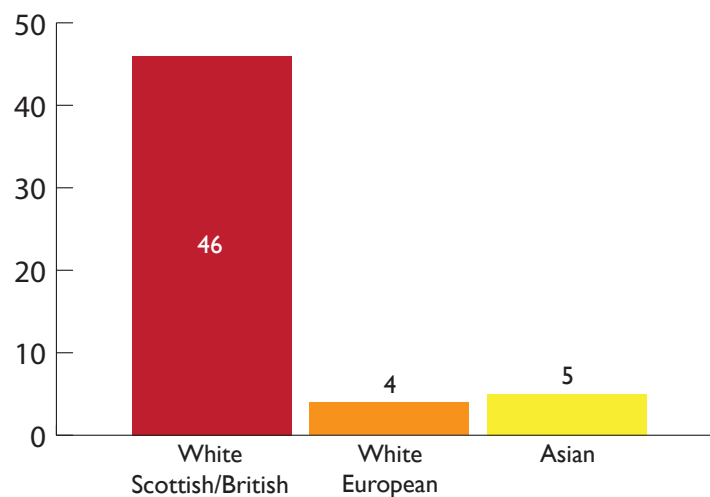
Age Group of the empowerment training participants



Gender of the empowerment training participants



Ethnicity of the empowerment training participants



Topics covered during the training were

- how to engage with your Local Authority
- how to set up a forum and working group
- how to give compliments and complain to your Local Authority

Case Study 1: A BSL user attended the empowerment training and was surprised at what she learned. Following self-reflection, she identified that she currently has two roles: her professional relationship with public bodies and her personal relationship away from work. She realised that although she works with public bodies on a daily basis, her experiences in her personal life were markedly different and she lacked a proactive approach in engaging personally with her local council. Following the training, she felt more empowered with the tools she acquired to approach her local council and offer feedback to them in a positive manner.

Quote 8: *'I know that in the future I will bear it in mind if I am not happy about something and I want to complain to the council or wherever. Often companies don't know anything about Deaf people and it's up to us to make sure that we give them feedback on how they can improve. But we need to do that in a nice way so that they will take it on board. Usually, my instinct is to be quite sharp and angry but that can be seen as confrontational and often it does not work. This training explained how I can plan and structure my approach to make it more successful. It was very useful, and I think it's definitely worth all BSL users learning these tactics on how to engage with public bodies such as the Local Authority or the NHS. It was very useful. I recommend that you go on the course.'*

Deaf BSL user, Fife

BSL Roadshow

As indicated on Key Point no. 3, p.25, the Scottish Deaf community were consulted about the BSL National Plan annually.

In total to date, 7 BSL Roadshow events have been delivered across Scotland with a total of 63 attendees.



Progress Report 2021 Roadshow

BSL Scotland ACT logo and Zoom logo.

BDA Scotland are working with the Scottish Government. We want your views and feedback on the BSL Plans in Scotland for the BSL Progress Report in October 2021

Location	Date/Time
Islands and the North of Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll & Bute, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands	Thursday, 18 February at 10pm
The South of Scotland: Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire	Saturday, 6 March at 11am
The West of Scotland: East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire	Tuesday, 11 May at 2pm
The East of Scotland: Dundee City, East Lothian, Edinburgh City, Midlothian, Perth & Kinross, West Lothian	Saturday, 5 June at 11am
The Central of Scotland: Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Fife, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling	Tuesday, 13 July at 2pm

Please book your space and you will receive a Zoom invitation.

These meetings are for BSL Users only

Contact
Helen Morgans-Wenhold
 for more information
 Email: hco.scot@bda.org.uk
 SMS/FaceTime: 07885 367674

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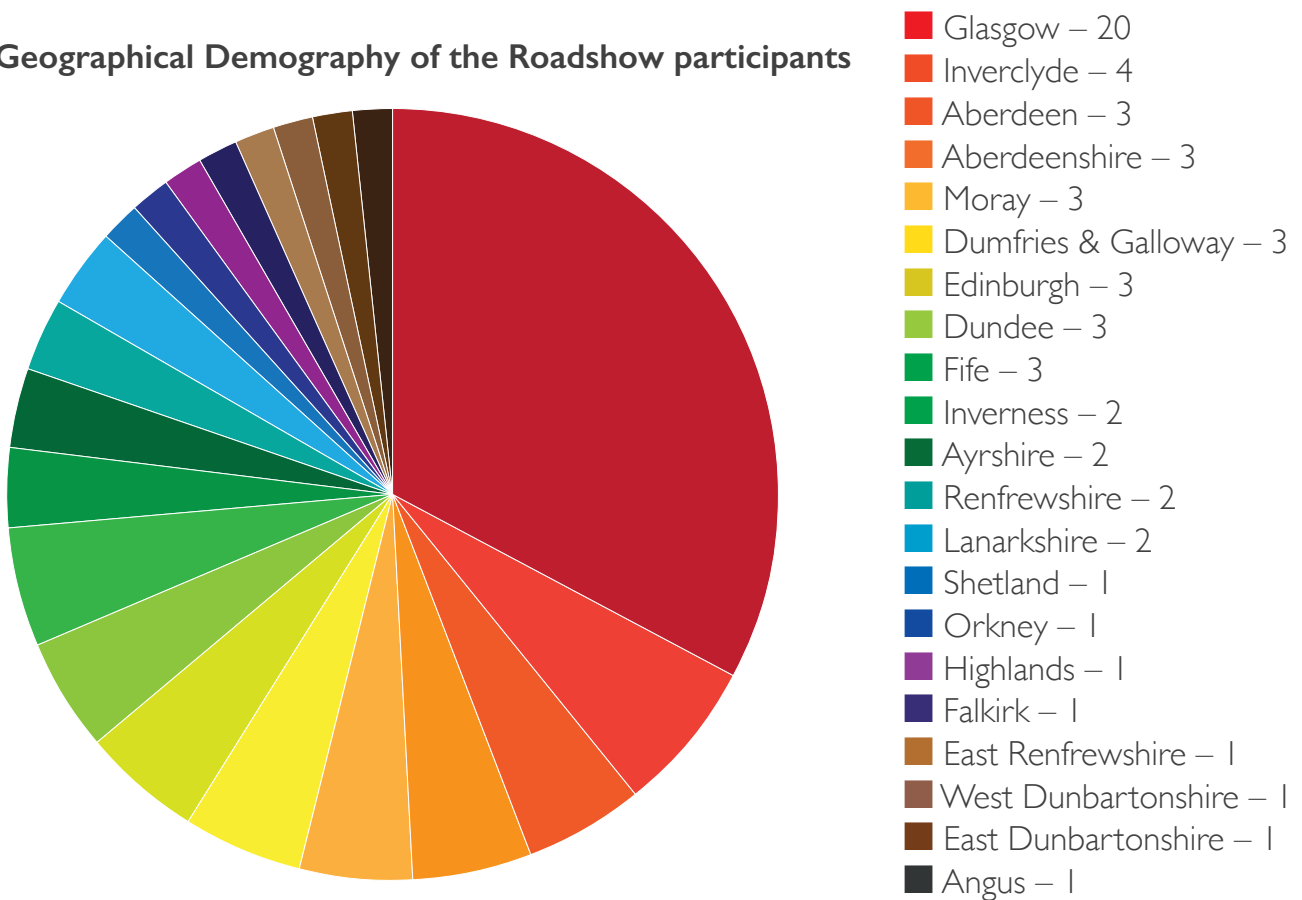
Scottish Government
 Rìghdhaas na h-Alba
 gov.scot

BDA
 DEAF ASSOCIATION SCOTLAND
 CO-OPERATIVE FOUR SQUARE ALEX

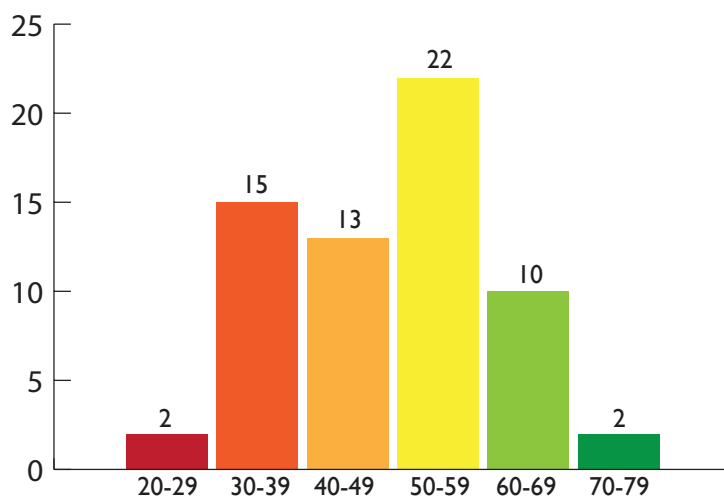
Demographical Data from BDA Scotland's 7 Roadshow events

Date	Participants	Geographical Demography		Gender	Age Group	Ethnicity
7 events from Feb-July 2021	63	20x Glasgow 4x Inverclyde 3x Aberdeen 3x Aberdeenshire 3x Moray 3x Dumfries & Galloway 3x Edinburgh 3x Dundee 3x Fife 2x Inverness 2x Ayrshire	2x Renfrewshire 2x Lanarkshire 1x Shetland 1x Orkney 1x Highlands 1x Falkirk 1x East Renfrewshire 1x West Dunbartonshire 1x East Dunbartonshire 1x Angus	37x Female 26x Male	2x 20-29 15x 30-39 13x 40-49 22x 50-59 10x 60-69 2x 70-79	48x White Scottish/ British 14x Asian 1x White European

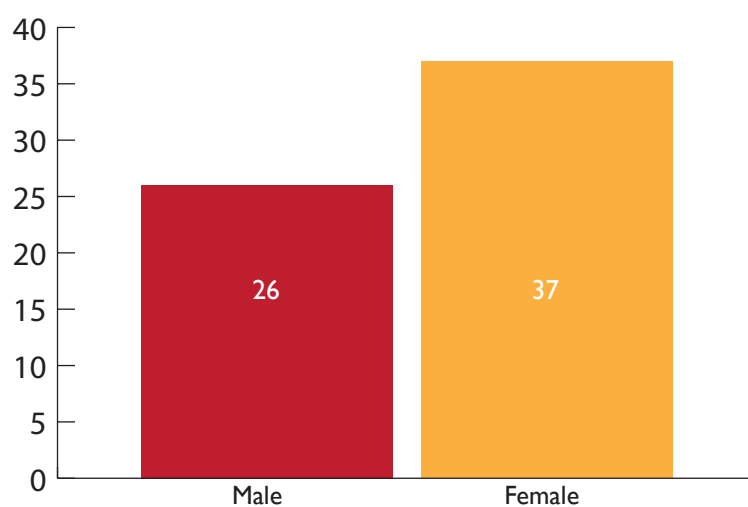
Geographical Demography of the Roadshow participants



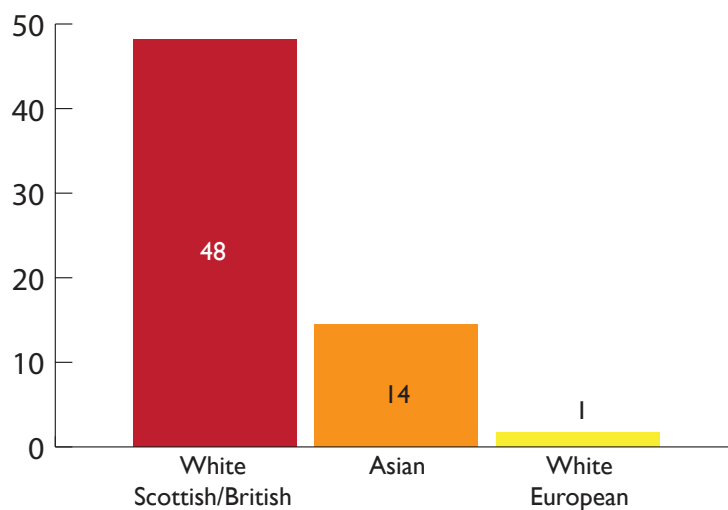
Age Group of the Roadshow participants



Gender of the Roadshow participants



Ethnicity of the Roadshow participants



During the events a number of interesting points were raised:

- There has been lack of engagement between Local Authorities and local Scottish BSL communities.
- Some BSL users feel that Local Authorities are not very forthcoming and still feel there are issues around contacting them and feeling like they are supported.
- Local Authorities lack BSL awareness.
- Local Authorities have not been providing BSL/English interpreters when BSL users are trying to engage with departments.
- When BSL users give comments or criticisms they often feel that their views and feedback are ignored. However, BSL users are sometimes not aware of the best way to deliver feedback, and can be overly critical.
- There is still a real worry with BSL users around education such as L1 & L2 polices³, and level of BSL skills for Deaf young people.

Scottish Government Nationally Funded Video Remote Service (VRS)

Over the last year a key point identified was the need in some area for a VRI system (See p.16 for definition). Where this is not yet provided, particularly during the pandemic, usage of the contactSCOTLAND-BSL VRS service has increased exponentially.

The figures provided by contactSCOTLAND-BSL for the months of July 2020 and 2021 are 3,672 and 4,142 calls respectively.

The expansion of the service to operate 24/7 has significantly improved the quality of life for BSL users, specifically during COVID-19, giving them the ability to call and seek help if needed. Some BSL users have commented that this has been a lifeline for them in times of need.

There are still a number of issues around connectivity for VRS systems in some Local Authority buildings, which will need to be addressed. It is assumed that as technology improves that we will see improvement with connection issues.

Case Study 2: One BSL user received information from their Local Authority on Council Tax Discounts. The information was in written English, and they did not fully understand whether they would be eligible or not. The BSL user called their Local Authority via contactSCOTLAND-BSL and spoke with the council tax department and was able to clarify the eligibility criteria. The ability to call the council and deal with everyday tasks without asking family or friends to assist was empowering for them.

³ L1 refers to the person's first language since birth while L2 means the person's second language or the language they are currently learning.

9. Appendix A

Councils' BSL Plan Checklist

Long Term Goals	Details	Achievements YES/NO	Action required
"Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users."			
"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."			
"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."			
"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 subjects."			
"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."			

“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.”			
“BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.”			
“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 will be encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland.”			
“BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.”			
“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.”			

10. Appendix B

Weblinks

Councils	Scottish Government's National Funded Video Remote Service (VRS)	Year	BSL COVID-19 Weblinks	Local Authorities' BSL Weblinks
Aberdeenshire	Contact by phone – Aberdeenshire Council	2020-2021	https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/covid-19/	Search - Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeen City	Contact us Aberdeen City Council	2020-2021	https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/british-sign-language	British Sign Language Aberdeen City Council
Angus	Contact the council Angus Council	2020	https://www.angus.gov.uk/community_empowerment/equality_diversity_and_human_rights/equality/covid_19_resources_for_bsl_users	Search Results Angus Council
Argyll & Bute	home (argyll-bute.gov.uk)	2020	https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/coronavirus-help-and-advice	Search results (argyll-bute.gov.uk)
Clackmannanshire	Contact Us (clacks.gov.uk)	2020	https://www.clacks.gov.uk/coronavirus/guidanceforyou/	Search Results ClacksWeb
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Contact Us (cne-siar.gov.uk)	2020-2021	-	Site Search (cne-siar.gov.uk)
Dumfries & Galloway	Contact us (dumgal.gov.uk)	2020-2021	https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/article/20829/Accessible-information	Search (dumgal.gov.uk)
Dundee City	Dundee City Council Changing For The Future	2020-2021	https://www.dundee.gov.uk/covid-19-information-in-bsl-easy-read-%26-community-languages	Search Results for BSL Dundee City Council https://www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/chief-executive/chief-executives-services/bsl-information-council-services
East Ayrshire	-	2020	https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Coronavirus/British-sign-language-videos.aspx https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-useful-links.aspx	Search Results Page (east-ayrshire.gov.uk)
	-	2021	https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Coronavirus/British-sign-language-videos.aspx	
East Dunbartonshire	Contact us East Dunbartonshire Council	2021	Covid-19 Council services update East Dunbartonshire Council	Site East Dunbartonshire Council
East Lothian	Contact us East Lothian Council	2021	Coronavirus/COVID-19 East Lothian Council	Search results East Lothian Council

Councils	Scottish Government's National Funded Video Remote Service (VRS)	Year	BSL COVID-19 Weblinks	Local Authorities' BSL Weblinks
East Renfrewshire	–	2020	https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus	Search - East Renfrewshire Council
		2021	Community information - East Renfrewshire - Covid	
Edinburgh City	Contact us – The City of Edinburgh Council	2020-2021	https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus-4/british-sign-language-coronavirus-advice	Search – The City of Edinburgh Council
Falkirk	–	2020-2021	https://falkirk.gov.uk/covid19/useful-links.aspx	Search Falkirk Council
Fife	Contact Us Fife Council	2020-2021	https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/health-and-social-care2/coronavirus-covid-19/community-groups	Search Fife Council
Glasgow City	Contact Us - Glasgow City Council	2020-2021	https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/covidbsl	Search - Glasgow City Council
Highland	Contact us The Highland Council	2020-2021	–	Search results The Highland Council
Inverclyde	–	2020-2021	https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/covid-19	Search - Inverclyde Council
Midlothian	Contact us Midlothian Council	2020-2021	https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/670/have_your_say/315/contact_us https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200296/coronavirus	Search results Midlothian Council
Moray	–	2020-2021	http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_132517.html	Search Results - The Moray Council
North Ayrshire	–	2020-2021	https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/councilwide-coronavirus-covid-19-updates.aspx	BSL, Extranet, Funnelback Search (north-ayrshire.gov.uk)
North Lanarkshire	–	2020	https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=34980 https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=34915 https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=34955	Search North Lanarkshire Council North Lanarkshire Council
		2021	https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/community-advice-including-shielding/advice-and-support	

Appendix B (Cont'd)

Councils	Scottish Government's National Funded Video Remote Service (VRS)	Year	BSL COVID-19 Weblinks	Local Authorities' BSL Weblinks
Orkney Islands	A to Z (orkney.gov.uk)	2020-2021	https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/C/coronavirus.htm https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/C/coronavirus-covid-19-community-support-hub.htm	Search Results (orkney.gov.uk)
Perth & Kinross	Perth & Kinross Council - Contact the Council (pkc.gov.uk)	2020-2021	https://www.pkc.gov.uk/coronavirus https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21675/Coronavirus-Hearing-aid-batteries	Perth & Kinross Council - Search (pkc.gov.uk)
Renfrewshire	-	2020-2021	http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10182/Coronavirus-information-in-BSL-other-languages-and-Easy-Read	Site Search - Renfrewshire Website
Scottish Borders	Contact us Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk)	2020-2021	https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/coronavirus https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20056/disabilities/161/deaf-deafened-or-hard-of-hearing	Search results Scottish Borders Council (scotborders.gov.uk)
Shetland Islands	Accessibility – Shetland Islands Council	2020-2021	-	-
South Ayrshire	-	2020	https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus	Search Results for BSL (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)
		2021	Shielding and Protecting the Vulnerable - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk)	
South Lanarkshire	-	2020-2021	https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200228/health-and-medical-information/1863/coronavirus-covid-19-advice	South Lanarkshire Council
Stirling	-	2020	https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/emergencies-emergency-planning/coronavirus/	Search - Stirling Council
West Dunbartonshire	Contact Us West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)	2020-2021	https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/latest-advice/	Search West Dunbartonshire Council (west-dunbarton.gov.uk)
West Lothian	Contacting the Council - West Lothian Council	2020-2021	https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/56641/Accessible-information-on-COVID-19	https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/search?q=BSL

The BDA stands for **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of choice

Vision

Our vision is Deaf people fully participating and contributing as equal and valued citizens in wider society.

Mission

Our Mission is to ensure a world in which the language, culture, community, diversity and heritage of Deaf people in the UK is respected and fully protected, ensuring that Deaf people can participate and contribute as equal and valued citizens in the wider society. This will be achieved through:

- Improving the quality of life by empowering Deaf individuals and groups;
- Enhancing freedom, equality and diversity;
- Protecting and promoting BSL and ISL.

Values

The BDA is a Deaf people's organisation representing a diverse, vibrant and ever-changing community of Deaf people. Our activities, promotions, and partnerships with other organisations aim to empower our community towards full participation and contribution as equal and valued citizens in the wider society. We also aim to act as guardians of BSL and ISL.

- 1. Protecting our Deaf culture and Identity** – we value Deaf peoples' sense of Deaf culture and identity derived from belonging to a cultural and linguistic group, sharing similar beliefs and experiences with a sense of belonging.
- 2. Asserting our linguistic rights** – we value the use of BSL and ISL as a human right. As such, BSL and ISL must be preserved, protected and promoted because we also value the right of Deaf people to use their first or preferred language.
- 3. Fostering our community** – we value Deaf people with diverse perspectives, experiences and abilities. We are committed to equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination with a special focus on those affecting Deaf people and their language.
- 4. Achieving equality in legal, civil and human rights** – we value universal human rights such as the right to receive education and access to information in sign language, and freedom from political restrictions on our opportunities to become full citizens.
- 5. Developing our alliance** – we value those who support us and are our allies because they share our vision and mission, and support our BSL and ISL community.

About the British Deaf Association

Founded in 1890, the British Deaf Association (BDA) is a national Deaf-led organisation that works directly with Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). Our work concentrates on campaigning for equal rights on a national level and working at a local level empowering Deaf people to achieve access to their local public services. This is carried out through projects delivering individual and community advocacy.

We also work to ensure BSL/ISL is included by public bodies by delivering a public commitment through signing the BSL and ISL Charter.

Our Board of Trustees are all Deaf (we use the capitalised 'D' to denote the fact that we have a separate language and culture), and, 80% of our staff are Deaf.

Many Deaf people who use BSL/ISL lack access to education, health services, employment and other public services. Our work is designed to empower Deaf people and to improve access to general information and public services. We seek to achieve this by working with Deaf people at the local level through setting up forums to lobby public bodies and supporting Deaf people individually.

This is in line with the overall BDA objectives, which are: **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of choice.

For a list of signatories to our BSL and ISL Charter, FAQs, and other information, including what the BDA can do for your organisation, please look at our website: www.bda.org.uk





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The BDA stands for **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of Choice

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