



University of Dundee

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-2024

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SECTION 1 – Introduction

1.1 Overview

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

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

It is framed around the same long-term goals as the National Plan, where these are relevant to the work of the University.

The BSL version of the University's BSL Plan is available on the [University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion website](#).

** Wherever we refer to 'BSL users*' we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.*

1.2 University Context

The University of Dundee is one of the UK's leading universities, internationally recognised for its expertise across a range of disciplines including science, medicine, engineering and art. The University has almost 18,000 students and over 3,000 staff, and regularly attracts visitors from the local community and beyond.

The University has three campuses (in Dundee City, Kirkcaldy and Ninewells Hospital), and consists of nine Academic Schools and eleven Professional Services.

We are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable environment that fosters a positive experience of the highest quality for our students, staff and all other members of the University community.

This commitment is enshrined in the University's core purpose to transform lives locally and globally, and in our five core values: valuing people, working together, integrity, making a difference and excellence. The University's Strategy to 2022 outlines our plans to achieve this and to measure our progress.

1.3 Current BSL Provision

The University's current BSL provision primarily reflects our responsibilities to enable access for disabled people under the Equality Act, including those who are BSL users. This provision is managed by Disability Services and includes:

- Providing confidential information and advice to disabled students and staff, including prospective students and applicants
- Undertaking individual needs assessments for disabled students
- Supporting applications for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Arranging BSL/note-taking/other support for students (on campus or remotely)
- Sharing individual students' reasonable adjustments with University staff, with the student's consent
- Providing Deaf awareness training for University staff
- Providing assistive technology and associated training for students
- Liaising with external support providers e.g. BSL interpreters, Tayside Deaf Hub
- Ensuring Disability Services' staff have completed Deaf awareness training and have an understanding of Level 1 BSL

In addition, the University's School of Humanities offers two BSL Certificate Courses for students and staff through their 'Languages for All' programme, one of which enables students to gain credits towards their degree course.

The University's Campus Accessibility Group prioritises improvements to the accessibility of campus facilities for disabled people. This includes the provision of alert systems in University buildings, linked to emergency alarm activation, for those who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

The University's Students' Association (DUSA) has a Sign Language Society which offers free lessons for those interested in learning introductory BSL, and also hosts a range of social and fundraising events for the Tayside Deaf Hub and other deaf charities.

1.4 Consultation on the Draft BSL Plan

The draft version of this BSL Plan was published on the University's website (in English and BSL format) and circulated for consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and BSL users. This included:

- Existing and previous students of the University who are BSL users
- Tayside Deaf Hub
- Deaf Action
- Dundee City Council
- Dundee and Angus College
- North East Sensory Services
- Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA)
- Internal lead contacts for progressing action identified in the Action Table

All feedback was considered and incorporated into the final version of our BSL Plan.

SECTION 2 - Summary of BSL Plan

2.1 Overall Aim

This BSL Plan is one of many policies and procedures which the University has in place to support its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

It sets out how the University intends to meet the statutory obligations of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

Specifically, the University is committed to:

- Promoting and supporting the use of BSL, including in its tactile form
- Improving access to services for Deaf and Deafblind people
- Involving BSL users in developing and providing feedback on our BSL plans
- Implementing actions and providing updates on our progress
- Contributing to the National Progress Report in 2020
- Reviewing this plan, including identifying additional 'local' actions where relevant, following publication of the National Progress Report

2.2 Key Actions

- Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and other members of the University community who use BSL, and provide updates on our response
- Promote the use of the Scottish Government's BSL online interpreting video relay service, contactSCOTLAND-BSL
- Establish a central web resource for BSL information, including the University's BSL Plan, contactSCOTLAND-BSL details, and links to BSL interpretation services
- Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events, including our Graduation Ceremonies
- Provide Deaf awareness training for students and staff and promote access to BSL training, particularly for staff in front-line roles
- Ensure the cost implications of BSL interpretation services and associated staff training are considered in annual budgets
- Ensure key student information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on our academic courses, student life and support facilities, and our key student policies and regulations
- Ensure that students who use BSL are supported throughout their student journey, including at transition into University, for all aspects of learning and teaching, and into further study, training or employment
- Ensure students who use BSL have access to student support services, including financial and careers advice

- Ensure key staff information on the University’s website is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment and training opportunities, and our key staff policies and procedures
- Ensure the University’s health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use BSL

SECTION 3 - Contribution to Long-Term Goals of BSL National Plan



3.1 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.1.1 Analyse the existing evidence on BSL users in the University community, including students and prospective students, staff and visitors
- 3.1.2 Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and other members of the University community who use BSL, and provide updates on our response
- 3.1.3 Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s BSL online interpreting video relay service, [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)
- 3.1.4 Establish a central web resource for BSL information, including the University’s BSL Plan, [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#) details, and links to BSL interpretation services
- 3.1.5 Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events, including our Graduation Ceremonies
- 3.1.6 Provide Deaf awareness training for students and staff and promote access to BSL training, particularly for staff in front-line roles

- 3.1.7 Support staff and students to practice the use of BSL, including by providing informal BSL practice sessions
- 3.1.8 Ensure the cost implications of BSL interpretation services and associated staff training are considered in annual budgets
- 3.1.9 Consider the implications for BSL video communication when procuring new digital systems
- 3.1.10 Ensure the University's BSL Plan is linked to our annual Outcome Agreements for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- 3.1.11 Respond to guidance and communication from the Scottish Government, SFC and the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 Partnership to support the development, monitoring and review of the University's BSL Plan



3.2 Post-School Education

We share the long-term goal for post- school education 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)”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.2.1 Ensure key student information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on our academic courses, student life and support facilities, and our key student policies and regulations
- 3.2.2 Provide access to University Open Days and Visit Days for prospective students and applicants who use BSL
- 3.2.3 Provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants who are BSL users in BSL format on request
- 3.2.4 Ensure that students who use BSL are supported throughout their student journey, including at transition into University, for all aspects of learning and teaching, at graduation and into further study, training or employment
- 3.2.5 Consider the provision of pre-sessional BSL classes for students with limited experience of communicating outwith their immediate local community, or for those students who are users of other sign languages
- 3.2.6 Ensure students who use BSL have access to student support services, including financial and careers advice

- 3.2.7 Ensure the University's virtual learning environment and other online teaching and assessment systems have the capacity for BSL video output
- 3.2.8 Ensure teaching and assessment materials that rely on audio output are provided in BSL for Deaf students who are BSL users
- 3.2.9 Ensure that University staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect from the University
- 3.2.10 Champion the support and use of BSL across the University



3.3 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.3.1 Ensure the University's childcare facilities are accessible and welcoming to parents and children who use BSL, including providing key service information in BSL
- 3.3.2 Ensure the University's sport and exercise events for children are accessible to BSL users



3.4 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.4.1 Promote the University's initial teacher education courses to BSL users who are interested in becoming teachers
- 3.4.2 Provide Deaf awareness training and promote opportunities to learn BSL on the University's initial teacher education courses
- 3.4.3 Consider access for BSL users to the University's other professional education courses
- 3.4.4 Liaise with local schools to raise awareness of the University's provision for BSL users for pupils considering higher education, and to support their transition



3.5 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.5.1 Ensure key staff information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment and training opportunities, and our key staff policies and procedures
- 3.5.2 Raise awareness of the UK Government's 'Access to Work' scheme
- 3.5.3 Support students and staff who are BSL users to apply for jobs or further training



3.6 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.6.1 Ensure the University’s health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use BSL



3.7 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.7.1 Ensure that the University’s extracurricular and social activities are accessible to BSL users
- 3.7.2 Ensure promotional material for all University events includes the statement ‘please contact us if you require a BSL interpreter’
- 3.7.3 For events that run for a week or more, identify one night when a BSL interpreter will be present



3.8 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”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- 3.8.1 Promote opportunities for BSL users to be members of University committees and student/staff representative groups

SECTION 4 – BSL Plan – Action Table

No.	Relevance to BSL National Plan, 2017-2023	Action No.	Action	Lead Responsibility	Timescale (by end of)
3.1	Scottish Public Services. Our long-term goal: Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.	3.1.1	Analyse the existing evidence on BSL users in the University community, including students and prospective students, staff and visitors	Director of Strategic Planning	AY 18/19
		3.1.2	Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and other members of the University community who use BSL, and provide updates on our response	BSL Working Group	AY 18/19
		3.1.3	Promote the use of the Scottish Government's BSL online interpreting video relay service, contactSCOTLAND-BSL	Deans and Directors	AY 18/19
		3.1.4	Establish a central web resource for BSL information, including the University's BSL Plan, contactSCOTLAND-BSL details, and links to BSL interpretation services	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	AY 18/19
		3.1.5	Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events, including our Graduation Ceremonies	Director of External Relations Director of Registry	AY 18/19

3.1	Scottish Public Services. Our long-term goal: Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users. (cont.)	3.1.6	Provide Deaf awareness training for students and staff and promote access to BSL training, particularly for staff in front-line roles	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	AY 19/20
		3.1.7	Support staff and students to practice the use of BSL, including by providing informal BSL practice sessions	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	AY 19/20
		3.1.8	Ensure the cost implications of BSL interpretation services and associated staff training are considered in annual budgets	Director of Finance Deans and Directors	AY 19/20
		3.1.9	Consider the implications for BSL video communication when procuring new digital systems	Director of UoD IT Director of Library and Learning Centre	AY 18/19
		3.1.10	Ensure the University's BSL Plan is linked to our annual Outcome Agreements for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)	Director of Strategic Planning	AY 18/19
		3.1.11	Respond to guidance and communication from the Scottish Government, SFC and the Deaf Sector Partnership to support the development, monitoring and review of the University's BSL Plan	BSL Working Group	AY 18/19

3.2	Post-School Education. Our long-term goal: 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).	3.2.1	Ensure key student information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on our academic courses, student life and support facilities, and our key student policies and regulations	Director of External Relations Director of Academic and Corporate Governance	AY 19/20
		3.2.2	Provide access to University Open Days and Visit Days for prospective students and applicants who use BSL	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	AY 18/19
		3.2.3	Provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants who are BSL users in BSL format on request	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	AY 19/20
		3.2.4	Ensure that students who use BSL are supported throughout their student journey, including at transition into University, for all aspects of learning and teaching, and into further study, training or employment	Director of Student Services Associate Deans (Learning & Teaching)	AY 18/19
		3.2.5	Consider the provision of pre-sessional BSL classes for students with limited experience of communicating outwith their immediate local community, or for those students who are users of other sign languages	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions Director of Student Services	AY 20/21
		3.2.6	Ensure students who use BSL have access to student support services, including financial and careers advice	Director of Student Services	AY 18/19

3.2	Post-School Education. Our long-term goal: 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). (cont.)	3.2.7	Ensure the University's virtual learning environment and other online teaching and assessment systems have the capacity for BSL video output	Director of the Library and Learning Centre	AY 19/20
		3.2.8	Ensure teaching and assessment materials that rely on audio output are provided in BSL for Deaf students who are BSL users	Deans	AY 19/20
		3.2.9	Ensure that University staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect from the University	Director of Human Resources Director of Academic and Corporate Governance	AY 18/19
		3.2.10	Champion the support and use of BSL across the University	Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching)	AY 18/19
3.3	Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare. Our long-term goal: 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.	3.3.1	Ensure the University's childcare facilities are accessible and welcoming to parents and children who use BSL, including providing key service information in BSL	Director of Student Services	AY 18/19
		3.3.2	Ensure the University's sport and exercise events for children are accessible to BSL users	Director of the Institute of Sport and Exercise	AY 18/19

3.4	School Education. Our long-term goal: 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.	3.4.1	Promote the University's initial teacher education courses to BSL users who are interested in becoming teachers	Dean of School of Education and Social Work	AY 19/20
		3.4.2	Provide Deaf awareness training and promote opportunities to learn BSL on the University's initial teacher education courses	Dean of School of Education and Social Work	AY 19/20
		3.4.3	Consider access for BSL users to the University's other professional education courses	Dean of School of Education and Social Work	AY 19/20
		3.4.4	Liaise with local schools to raise awareness of the University's provision for BSL users for pupils considering higher education, and to support their transition	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions	AY 18/19
3.5	Training, Work and Social Security. Our long-term goal: 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.	3.5.1	Ensure key staff information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment and training opportunities, and our key staff policies and procedures	Director of Human Resources	AY 19/20
		3.5.2	Raise awareness of the UK Government's 'Access to Work' scheme	Director of Human Resources	AY 18/19
		3.5.3	Support students and staff who are BSL users to apply for jobs or further training	Head of Careers Service	AY 18/19

3.6	Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing. Our long-term goal: 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.	3.6.1	Ensure the University's health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use BSL	Director of Student Services	AY 18/19
3.7	Culture and the Arts. Our long-term goal: BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, and 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.	3.7.1	Ensure that the University's extracurricular and social activities are accessible to BSL users	Director of Student Services Director of HR	AY 19/20
		3.7.2	Ensure promotional material for all University events includes the statement 'please contact us if you require a BSL interpreter'	Director of External Relations Deans and Directors	AY 18/19
		3.7.3	For events that run for a week or more, identify one night when a BSL interpreter will be present	Director of External Relations Deans and Directors	AY 18/19
3.8	Democracy. Our long-term goal: 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.	3.8.1	Promote opportunities for BSL users to be members of University committees and student/staff representative groups	Director of Academic and Corporate Governance	AY 18/19