

Dundee City Council

British Sign Language (BSL)

Local Plan

2024-2030



Dundee City Council
www.dundee.gov.uk **CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE**



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The Scottish Government published their second British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2023-2029 in November 2023. Within the national plan there are 45 actions which will help the Scottish Government in achieving their ten long-term goals.

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires listed public bodies in Scotland to develop and publish a local 6-year plan which demonstrates how they will work towards implementing the national plan.

This plan sets out the goals and actions for Dundee City Council from 2024-2030 and is framed around the same goals as the national plan. Our BSL Plan also aims to achieve equal access to services and support for services by BSL users. The latest available data indicates that there are more than 400 people in Dundee who use BSL at home. A priority in this plan is to ensure that BSL users throughout the city have equal access to services that are welcoming, inclusive, fair and focused on their needs.

This plan has been developed through an extensive engagement and consultation process over a six-month period, involving both local and national partners. These include the Scottish Government, the British Deaf Association (BDA), Deaf Links, the Council's Corporate Equality & Diversity Steering Group, BSL users from our local deaf community and North East Sensory Services (NESS), as well as input from local deaf children and young people from Craigie High School and Claypotts Castle Primary School.

Four local BSL Stakeholder events were held across the city, with between 15 and 25 BSL users in attendance at each event, ensuring the voices of local people with lived experience were provided with the opportunity to help shape this plan. In addition, feedback and information from national Scottish Government and BDA events and workshops has provided additional information which has been included.

Engagement with BSL users will take place at least six-monthly throughout the course of the plan. This will enable any required updates to the plan to be made, with Dundee City Council formally reporting on progress in 2027.

The Council is committed to continuing to work in partnership whenever possible with our neighbouring local authorities, NHS Tayside, Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership and Leisure & Culture Dundee, as well as local organisations working with BSL users and the Deaf community in the development of common approaches to the delivery of our local actions.

2.1 Background

We aim to ensure that all our plans and strategies contribute to and deliver on the outcomes and objectives of the [City Plan 2022-32](#) and [Council Plan 2022-27](#). Our plans build upon the foundation of these city-wide strategies and plans and aim to support our partners to deliver joined up services for mutual benefit. The City Plan and Council Plan are set against the backdrop of ongoing financial and social challenges but still aim to deliver high quality and transformational services.

The BSL Plan for Dundee 2024-2030 plays an important part in delivering a range of aims and objectives within our strategic plans and builds upon the achieved outcomes and learning of the previous Local Plan. Whilst the Council was committed to implementing all the previously agreed actions in the 2018-2024 Local Plan, this proved challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis. Our new BSL Plan has therefore been developed following extensive engagement with key stakeholders to agree a set of new actions and includes several actions from the previous plan that remain relevant.

2.2 Key Achievements of 2018 – 2024 Local Plan

Workforce, Partnerships & Community

All Dundee City Council's services are acutely aware of the need to foster positive contact with those with protected characteristics, particularly those with disabilities. To facilitate this, a range of supports are in place:

- We have encouraged and supported our workforce to attend Contact Scotland and other BSL awareness raising training sessions and workshops, both online and face-to-face.
- We have introduced a contracted Social Work and Specialist Equipment Service for people with Sensory needs. The service supports people who are Blind, Partially Sighted, Deaf, Deaf Blind and those who are Hard of Hearing. Its workforce can communicate directly with people in British Sign Language.
- A BSL user participated in a work placement scheme and has now gained permanent employment within the Communication Team, based within the Chief Executive's Service.
- Members of teaching staff have been trained in Deaf Awareness by a Deaf Tutor.
- The workforce in the Health and Social Care Partnership has full access to interpreting services from NHS Tayside to provide services and supports to those whose main language is not English.
- Members of the Council's Accessibility & Inclusion Service provide support to more than 150 children and young people across Dundee who are Deaf, and they have been supported to access remote and in-person learning with either BSL or other interpretation and adaptations.

Accessibility

- We actively disseminated, shared and signposted people to accessible information through the Council, Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership and NHS Tayside channels. This includes BSL and easy read information.
- A key area of focus in the previous Local Plan was to improve the accessibility of the Council's website for BSL Users. This has been achieved thanks to feedback and input received from the British Deaf Association and other local BSL user groups' including North-East Sensory Service, Deaf Action and Deaf Links, as well as from individual service users who all highlighted the need for more accessible information.
- Six deaf young people based in our local authority have been trained in professional BSL Presentation skills and they fronted a series of BSL Videos to explain to the Deaf Community how to access council services and supports using ContactSCOTLAND-BSL
- A link to Contact Scotland, and a series of BSL videos on how to access Dundee City Council services was produced as part of the BSL Video project partnership between Deaf Links, Angus Council and Dundee City Council, and these are now available on the Council's web site. The Council also embedded a link for BSL service users to information about [Key Services, and updates in BSL](#).

Dundee City Council's British Sign Language (BSL) Local Plan 2024-30 is framed around the same long-term goals as the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan 2023-2029:

- Delivering the Local BSL Plan
- BSL Accessibility
- Children, Young People and their Families
- Access to Employment
- Health and Wellbeing
- Celebrating BSL Culture
- BSL Data
- Transport
- Access to Justice
- Democratic Participation

Although our plan covers all ten long-term goals contained within the Scottish Government's National Plan, Dundee's Local BSL Community has advocated that particular focus and attention should be given to Accessibility, Celebrating BSL Culture, and Children, Young People and their Families. We will therefore focus predominately on these goals.

This plan sets out the actions that we are aiming to deliver between 2024 and 2030.

4.1 Delivering the Local Plan

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

To improve outcomes for BSL users by embedding BSL in relevant local policies, plans and strategies in order to develop solutions to the barriers faced by BSL users in their daily lives.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Regularly engage with the BSL community and the services that support them on Council policy and service delivery.
- Work in partnership, whenever possible, with our neighbouring local authorities, NHS Tayside, Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership and Leisure and Culture Dundee, as well as local organisations working with BSL users and the Deaf community, to develop common approaches to the delivery of our local actions.
- Integrate the BSL Plan as part of our Equalities Mainstreaming Activities.
- Publish a Progress Report in 2027, the midway point of the plan.

4.2 Our Actions: BSL Accessibility

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

To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people's awareness of communication tools.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Work with local BSL users and organisations to develop a programme aimed at providing information on Dundee City Council's website in BSL.
- Continue to support and promote the use of the Scottish Government's BSL online interpreting video relay service 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to staff and to local BSL users.
- Identify and promote BSL Awareness training to Council frontline staff and those working with BSL users.
- Continue to develop effective communication channels through engagement with BSL users.
- Ensure Council staff are aware of legal duties around the provision of BSL interpreters for meetings and appointments as appropriate.

4.3 Our Actions: Children, Young People and their Families

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 deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Continue to raise awareness of all sources of advice and support available on BSL issues to all employees within school services in the city.
- Ensure that digital resources meet the communication needs of children and their families.
- Ensure that teachers have appropriate BSL skills and qualifications as required by relevant guidance in relation to specialist teacher and support staff.
- Continue to gather and share examples of good practice across the region.
- Consult with BSL-using parents on improving parent – teacher interactions to identify and ensure the use of good / best practice.
- Encourage BSL as a subject area in Primary and Secondary Schools.
- Work to make better transitions from school to a positive destination (e.g. further education or employment).
- Continue to offer Early Years staff the opportunity to learn BSL to support and include children who are BSL users.
- Continue to promote the development of BSL with very young deaf children and their families/ carers from the time of referral, through targeted sessions and informal learning at specialist baby / toddler groups.

4.4 Our Actions: Access to Employment

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

BSL users will receive person-centred support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and enter into the workforce so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland's economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Include the needs of BSL users in the development of Dundee City Council People Services policies, procedures and processes and training.
- Provide reasonable adjustments and support for BSL candidates during the recruitment process.
- Provide reasonable adjustments and support for BSL employees.
- Work with employability service providers to ensure they are aware of deaf culture and the support available, and encourage them to incorporate best practice into their recruitment and retention activities.

4.5 Our Actions: Health and Wellbeing

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

BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL.
- Ensure that information on a range of physical and sporting opportunities in Dundee is available in BSL locally, regionally, and further afield.
- Engage with public and voluntary sector agencies to ensure that as many activities / opportunities as possible are open to BSL users to reduce social isolation.

4.6 Our Actions: Celebrating BSL Culture

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

BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, and equal opportunities to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and deaf culture with the people of Scotland.

By 2030, in partnership with Leisure & Culture Dundee, Dundee City Council will:

- Continue to support access and opportunities for BSL users through the public library network.
- Ensure that the information on culture and the arts with BSL provision is routinely available on websites and at venues.
- Undertake a review of current provision of BSL interpretation for access to performances, galleries and museum exhibits, and consult with the BSL community on what their interests and needs are.
- Provide routes for BSL users to request interpretation for performances, exhibitions and tours.
- Continue to look for opportunities to ensure equality of access to performances, galleries, and museum exhibits for BSL users.

4.7 Our Actions: BSL Data

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

To strengthen the evidence and data on the BSL community in Scotland to better inform decision making in public policy and service design.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Utilise new Dundee specific Census Data on BSL to target resources where they can be of most use.
- Capture data on Council employees who are BSL users and those experienced in BSL.

4.8 Our Actions: Transport

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

BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Involve BSL users directly in Dundee City Council's transport forum and provide appropriate communication support.
- Encourage bus operators to explore options to provide travel information in more accessible formats for deaf passengers and include deaf awareness training as part of drivers' mandatory training programme.
- Provide BSL accessible information on changes to travel /transport policies as appropriate.
- Work with the Council's Planning and Roads services to ensure that new or replacement pedestrian crossings are those that are visible to BSL users to enable and ensure their safety.

4.9 Our Actions: Access to Justice

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

BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Work with Criminal Justice colleagues and relevant local partner agencies to improve availability of, and access to, information on justice issues for BSL users.

4.10 Our Actions: Democratic Participation

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

BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies.

By 2030, Dundee City Council will:

- Promote the Access to Elected Office Fund via our website and through direct engagement with BSL users locally. The fund can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections.
- Ensure that support is available and actively promoted to BSL users to ensure they are included in democratic citizenship, such as registering for and casting their vote at national, city and local levels.
- Ensure information on how to register for and cast their vote is available in BSL.
- Ensure relevant polling station staff have undergone Deaf / BSL Awareness training.
- Ensure elected members are informed of how to book BSL interpreters if required by constituents who wish to meet with them.

The Dundee City Council BSL Plan will be regularly reviewed, and updated as appropriate. The plan will develop over time as actions are delivered and projects mature. A mid-term progress report on this plan will be delivered in 2027, three years after the launch in 2024. This report will detail progress and achievements made, including an assessment of how actions and measures change over the life of the plan. The BSL Plan and actions within it will also form part of the Council's Equality Mainstreaming activities, with regular monitoring and progress reporting taking place.

The Council is keen to ensure we maintain ongoing and open dialogue with the BSL user community. As a result, consultation and engagement will continue after this plan is launched and when significant progress is made. BSL users are welcome to provide their feedback at any time on positive or negative developments. This insight is key to ensuring we are focusing on areas of greatest need and on our BSL users' priorities.



6.1 Where to find the BSL version of this plan

A BSL version of this plan will be available on our website at:

www.dundee.gov.uk/service-area/chief-executive/chief-executives-services/equality-and-diversity

6.2 Name and contact details of Equalities & Fairness Officers:

Ross Craig: ross.craig@dundee.gov.uk

Anna Yule: anna.yule@dundee.gov.uk

6.3 Key agencies in Dundee

Deaf Links

www.taysidedeafhub.org.uk

North East Sensory Services

www.nesensoryservices.org

National Deaf Children's Society

www.ndcs.org.uk

Deaf Action

www.deafaction.org.uk

Deaf Blind Scotland

dbscotland.org.uk/resources/contact-us

SENSE Scotland

www.sensescotland.org.uk

British Deaf Association

www.bda.org.uk



