**Dundee City Council**

**British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-2024**

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**SECTION 1: Executive summary**

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We are committed to working in partnership whenever possible with our neighbouring local authorities, NHS Tayside, Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership and local organisations working with the British Sign Language (BSL) users and the Deaf community in the development of common approaches to the delivery of our local actions**.**

**2.1 : Background**

Throughout the plan, we refer to ‘BSL (British Sign Language) users’. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss.

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to, publish a local BSL Plan by 24th October 2018. A report on the plans progress must be published by 24th of October 2020 and must be renewed every 6 years.

This is Dundee City Council’s first BSL Plan. This plan follows the format of the BSL National Plan 2017-2023, which was developed through extensive engagement with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them. The Dundee City Council BSL plan is framed around the following 10 long-term goals as set out in the national plan:

* 1. **Scottish Public Services**. Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.
  2. **Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare**. 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. **School Education.** 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.
  4. **Post-School Education**. 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).
  5. **Training, Work and Social Security.** 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.
  6. **Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**. 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.
  7. **Transport.** BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.
  8. **Culture and the Arts.** 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.
  9. **Justice.** BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.

1. **Democracy**. 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.

**2.2 : Where are we now?**

Dundee City Council and its Partners currently support BSL users in the following ways:

* All service areas arrange BSL interpreters on request.
* In 2013-2016 over 200 council and partnership staff completed Deaf awareness training.
* Our web page provides a link to Contact Scotland BSL
* We funded a Deaf Awareness Card to help BSL users inform individuals and agencies of their communication needs.
* We routinely engage via our Disability and Age Action Group with local Deaf and Sensory Impaired individuals and third sector agencies to develop inclusive policy and practice.
* Our Children and Families Service, Multi-Sensory Services employs the equivalent of 1 full-time Education Communication Support Worker. 0.6 of this post is filled by a registered interpreter the remaining 0.4 is filled by a member of staff whose first language is BSL.
* 12 pupils who use BSL were involved in a consultation event on the BSL Local plans hosted by The National Deaf Children's Society in March this year
* North East Sensory Services (NESS) delivers statutory social work services for citizens who are sensory impaired on behalf of Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership.
* Dundee City Council’s Equality Outcomes include a commitment to ensure that protected characteristic communities, including BSL users, are fully involved with Dundee Community Planning Partnership through the provision of appropriate communication support.
* Accessible transport policies and practice take account of the needs of BSL users communication needs.

**SECTION 3: BSL LOCAL PLAN FOR DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

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| **3.1 Our Actions across all services**  **By 2020 we will:**   * Work with local BSL organisations to develop a program aimed at providing information on Dundee City Council’s web site in BSL. * Continue to support and promote the use of the Scottish Government’s BSL online interpreting video relay services ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to staff and to local BSL users. * Continue to support council front line staff and those who work directly with BSL users access to appropriate BSL awareness training. |

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| **3.2 Our Actions : Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare**  **By 2020 we will :**   * Ensure that all employees within primary and pre-school services in the city are made aware of sources of advice and support available on BSL issues. * Ensure that there is a greater awareness of Deaf culture and best practice when meeting the needs of D/deaf and Deafblind children and their families. |

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| **3.3 Our Actions: School Education**  **By 2020 we will :**   * Contribute to the Scottish Government’s investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools. * Take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL. * Take steps to improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL. * Ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child’s education. * Encourage BSL language as a subject area in primary and secondary schools. * Gather and share examples of good practice across the region. * Encourage D/deaf Deafblind pupil’s involvement in developing best practice. * Ensure that teachers have appropriate BSL skills and qualifications. |

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| **3.4 Our Actions: Post School Education**  **By 2121 we will:**   * Work with all relevant organisations and the Deaf community to identify barriers and opportunities to support D/deaf Deafblind student’s transition from school to further education and employment and take steps to improve outcomes. * Signpost pupils and students to information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process |

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| **3.5 Our Actions : Training, Work and Social Security**  **By 2021 we will:**   * Gather and review evidence from BSL user employees within the council, identify any barriers or issues and take steps to address these. * Work with local employment service providers and employers to improve their knowledge of Deaf culture, supports and best practice. * Raise awareness locally of how the ‘Access to Work’ scheme can support employees and employers in the recruitment and retention of BSL users. |

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| **3.6:** **Our Actions**: **Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing**  **By 2021 we will:** In partnership with Dundee Health and Social Partnership, NHS Tayside and Leisure and Culture Dundee.   * Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL. * Ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users. * Provide information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities in BSL * Work across public and voluntary agencies to address issues of social isolation faced by many BSL users. |

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| **3.7 Our Actions : Transport**  **By 2019 we will:**   * We will involve BSL users directly in Dundee City Council’s accessible transport forum and will provide appropriate communication support. |

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| **3.8: Our Actions: Culture and the Arts**  **By 2023 we will:** Dundee City Council in partnership with Leisure and Culture Dundee will:   * Work with Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils’ schools, local colleges and leisure services in developing regional opportunities for BSL users’ participation in sport and leisure activities. * Ensure that information in BSL about culture and the arts is routinely available on websites and at venues. * Continue our productive relationship with the Dundee V&A to ensure equality of access to all exhibits for BSL users. |

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| **3.9: Our Actions : Access to Justice**  **By 2024 we will:**   * We will work with local partner agencies to improve access to information and advice on justice issues for BSL users. |

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| **4.0: Our Actions: Democracy**  **By 2023 we will:**   * Promote the Access to Elected Office Fund via our web site and through direct engagement with BSL user’s locally. The fund can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections. * Provide information in BSL on our web site how to vote and participate in local and national elections. |

**SECTION 4: ACCESSING OUR PLAN AND KEY CONTACTS**

**4.1 Where to find the BSL version of this plan**

A BSL version of this plan is available at: [**https://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/search/equality**](https://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/search/equality)

**4.2 Name and contact details of lead officer**

Scott Mands, Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator [scott.mands@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:scott.mands@dundeecity.gov.uk) Tel 01382 307482, Text 07914667358

**4.3 Key agencies in Dundee**

Dundee Deaf Hub - <http://www.taysidedeafhub.org.uk/>

North East Sensory Services: <https://www.nesensoryservices.org>

Deaf Action http: [www.deafaction.org.uk/](file:///\\dundeecity.gov.uk\dcc-dfs-data\commpol-team\COMMPOL-Policy\Equalities\Corporate%20Equality%20Steering%20Group\Consultations\www.deafaction.org.uk\)

Dundee Independent Advocacy Support: <http://www.diasdundee.org>

Deaf Children’s Society[: http://www.ndcs.org.uk](file:///\\dundeecity.gov.uk\dcc-dfs-data\commpol-team\COMMPOL-Policy\Equalities\Corporate%20Equality%20Steering%20Group\Consultations\:%20%20http:\www.ndcs.org.uk)

Deaf Blind Scotland[: https://dbscotland.org.uk/resources/contact-us/](file:///\\dundeecity.gov.uk\dcc-dfs-data\commpol-team\COMMPOL-Policy\Equalities\Corporate%20Equality%20Steering%20Group\Consultations\:%20%20https:\dbscotland.org.uk\resources\contact-us\)

SENSE Scotland: <http://www.sensescotland.org.uk/>