

CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

30th May 2024

Borders College British Sign Language Action Plan 2024-30

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

For decision

- 1.1 For members to approve Borders College British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan 2024-2030.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Borders College Draft BSL Action Plan 2024-2030 is included in this paper. It outlines the action that will be taken to support BSL users at Borders College.
- 2.2 It follows Borders College BSL Action Plan 2017-2023 Progress Tracker which outlines the progress made with the college's previous BSL Action Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED



- 3.1 I recommend that the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee approve the college's British Sign Language Draft Action Plan 2024-2030, and agree the plan can now be interpreted and published into an accessible BSL format.





4.0 BACKGROUND





- 4.1 The Scottish Government published the second BSL National Plan 2023 – 2029 on 6 November 2023. The [BSL \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) requires listed authorities to publish their Authority Plans (also known as 'BSL plans') within 6 months after the publication of the BSL National Plan, therefore listed authorities are required to publish their Authority Plans by 6 May 2024. This deadline is established by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires all listed authorities to publish and consult on a draft of their plan and to take account of any responses to the consultation. A listed authority's plan must set out the measures it intends to take in relation to the use of BSL in connection with the exercise of its functions and the timescales within which the measures are to be taken.
- 4.2 Following approval from the Equalities and Inclusion Committee, Borders College have published their Draft BSL Action Plan meeting the Scottish Governments deadline.


5.0 Borders College British Sign Language Action Plan 2018-2023 Progress Tracker & Borders College British Sign Language Action Plan 2024-2030



Progress Made from BSL Plan 2017-24



- 14/16 Actions have been achieved, the status of these are green . The two remaining actions are ongoing and have been carried forward into the BSL Draft Action Plan for 2024-2030, the status of these are orange .


Borders College BSL Action Plan 2017-2023 Progress Tracker - April 2024				
 Across our services	Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.			
	Aim	Action	Timescale	Overall Progress
	To increase awareness of BSL Scotland Act 2015 amongst college staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to be disseminated through various College communication tools including staff newsletter, website, yammer, social media Examples of Best Practice to be delivered through internal communications/awareness sessions 	From August 2018 and ongoing updates thereafter	<p>Staff EDI survey showed that 50% of staff who completed the survey were aware of BSL Scotland Act 2015. Less than 20% of staff returned survey.</p> <p>BSL Scotland Act 2015 is referenced on the website with current BSL plan, and information was provided through social media at the time.</p> 
	To identify students who are BSL users at course application and enrolment stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option available to indicate D/deaf and/or user of BSL when applicants complete College Application/Enrolment forms 	From August 2018	<p>Those who indicate learning support needs are contacted by a member of the learning support team to ensure the appropriate support is arranged.</p> 
To make the college more accessible to potential BSL students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ContactSCOTLAND-BSL logo to be added to the Contact Us section and main page of website BSL translations of key pages of website eg Welcome page, Student Support Text-based course information to be available and presented in an optimal 	By August 2018	Available on Contact Us section: https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/contact	
		By August 2019	<p>BSL translation is in place for this BSL action plan.</p> <p>Members of the Student Support Services Team have undergone BSL training.</p>	

	way for readers whose first language is not English.	Currently available	Accessibility support is available on the 'accessibility' page, including signposting and links to Google Translate for anyone whose first language is not English. https://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/accessibility	
To improve initial communication and information provision for BSL users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ContactSCOTLAND-BSL to be promoted to all front-line staff Frontline staff and lecturers with D/deaf students to add the ContactSCOTLAND-BSL logo in to email signatures. ContactSCOTLAND-BSL to be promoted and encouraged to be used by D/deaf students 	By December 2018	A member of the Student Support Services Team currently attends a 12-week BSL course. There are plans to roll this training out across the Student Services team via train the trainer sessions. Longer term, this will enhance accessibility for BSL users receiving support from the college's pastoral team.	
Increase awareness training for staff (and students) who may work with BSL users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D/deaf Awareness and Deaf Blind training to be made available to relevant frontline Awareness training to be made available to lecturers with students who are BSL users Option for deaf awareness to be delivered in classes with a D/deaf, BSL user student Explore options for online deaf awareness training to be made available as part of mandatory CPD 	From August 2018 and as required	<p>The College will continue to raise awareness of training opportunities for staff and students.</p> <p>Two Student Support Officers have completed or are completing an introduction to BSL course.</p> <p>Departments can submit annual training requests for their teams to the People Services Department.</p>	
To build relationships with specialist external agencies to ensure the needs of the D/deaf community are understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain contact and build relationships with support agencies and attend appropriate events/seminars/sector specific training as available e.g Deaf Action, BDA, deafscotland 	From August 2018	<p>The College is linked with BSL national groups, equalities group and the HE/FE BSL group.</p> <p>The College has been working in partnership with Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders to consult on and develop our BSL action plans.</p>	
Review the College's BSL National Plan to ensure it is meeting the needs of our BSL user community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued consultation to be held with BSL students, support agencies and other key stakeholders 	From October 2019	<p>Consultation has been held with BSL the community and their representatives when the College's BSL plan was first developed in 2018.</p> <p>A further consultation has taken place ahead of the</p>	


			launch of the next iteration of the plan. Going forward, we will commit to an annual review of this plan, including BSL users and/or their representatives where possible.	
To increase accessibility of BSL across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer BSL classes within the community and evening class provision at Borders College 	Continue current provision	This is ongoing and will continue to be considered within the next BSL plan.	



 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)			
	Aim	Action	Timescale	Progress/Evidence/Impact
To support the transition of BSL users progressing to college.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish link with local authority to identify BSL students progressing from school at an early stage Where requested, provide interpreting service at college information events One-to-one meeting with Learning Support Specialist/Adviser to discuss and agree on support needs before academic session begins considering not only communication support, but also literacy and study skills support, and appropriate assistive technology Opportunity to meet BSL user and support providers for familiarisation session before academic session begins 	From August 2018	<p>Achieved and ongoing.</p> <p>This happens where required.</p> <p>The Learning Support Team continues to work during the summer to meet with students with an identified support need to ensure that appropriate support is in place for their transition into college. The team provides a suite of support for students throughout the academic year, including study skills, 1:1, group support and support with assessments. We have a dedicated role within the learning support team to provide specific support around assistive technology.</p> <p>A Quiet Induction programme allows students to meet with the college's support team and familiarise themselves with the college before the academic year starts. These sessions are quiet and focus on 1:1 support and guided tours of the campus. They are</p>	



			specifically designed to support students with additional learning support needs, or those who may feel anxious about coming to college.	
To make learning and teaching methods more accessible for students who are BSL users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible develop videos used in learning and teaching to have subtitles or a transcript provided Notes / teaching materials to be given in advance for interpreters to prepare Glossaries of subject-specific vocabulary to be made available in advance to the BSL student and interpreter/s. Prioritised reading lists, where appropriate, made available to students who may require more time to process written English. Lecturers to be made aware of key information for creating an inclusive classroom e.g. awareness of: managing noise and turn-taking; where best to stand; optimal classroom layout; pacing of speech; working with communication professionals; and using wearable microphones. Explore options for BSL students to complete coursework in modes other than written essays e.g. signed presentations; posters; infographics; video; animation (in accordance with exam bodies and required core competences). Facilitate Alternative Assessment arrangements in accordance with exam body requirements 	By August 2019	<p>Where possible this would be put in place. As per current accessibility regulations, all digital materials must be accessible, including the use of subtitles.</p> <p>The college's internal MIS system provides detailed information in relation to a student's learning and support needs, including clearly displayed learner badges within each profile. This helps staff identify students who are receiving learning support.</p> <p>The learning support team also regularly updates learning support logs to provide an overview of the support provided. The learning support team are in regular communication with curriculum teams, including attendance at tracking and monitoring meetings. This is a key opportunity for learning support and curriculum teams to discuss the support required for students with additional support needs.</p> <p>The learning support team facilitates alternative assessment arrangements as required.</p>	
To ensure appropriate assistive technology is in place for students who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the service offered by ContactSCOTLAND-BSL and ensure hearing loops (mobile) to be available at all campus 		We have an Induction Loop system at Reception of Galashiels Campus and at Hawick, as well as the library service desk.	

are BSL users.	<p>receptions and Student Services areas and staff are aware of how to operate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore use of radio aids to reduce the need for one-to- one support for users of hearing aids / cochlear implants • Improve signage to indicate availability of hearing loops • Provide information in appropriate format about personal listening systems and routes through which these can be obtained e.g. DSA; NDCS extended loan scheme (for <25s). • Students who require support with using written English given information at needs assessment stage about assistive technology to support note taking, essay planning, spelling and word-choice e.g. Sonosent Audio Notetaker, mind mapping software; Texthelp Read and Write Gold; My study bar, Grammarly, Rewordify, Pen friend, Dragon dictate, Global Autocorrect. On-going training and support offered in college. • Potential assistive technologies are investigated, and new technologies evaluated in partnership with students. 		<p>Next steps will be to review accessibility for deaf/BSL users across campuses.</p> <p>An accessible Microsoft Teams Room system in the board room allows users to use headphones or Bluetooth enabled hearing aids.</p> <p>The college has two portable crystal systems (hearing aids) available at reception for anyone who needs one.</p> <p>Outstanding actions will be carried forward to the next BSL Plan.</p>	
Ensure support provided for students who are BSL users is appropriate and maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication support professionals/interpreters are included in College life and supported to continue their professional development • Good working practices are understood and observed e.g. regular breaks, professional standards • Provide opportunities that enables a student to raise concerns through the complaints procedure 	From October 2018	<p>All staff are provided with opportunities to access CPD.</p> <p>The College provides a variety of opportunities for students to raise complaints and concerns: This can be in person, by phone, in writing, by email, or by using the complaints form.</p>	

	without needing to use the allocated communication support professional/interpreter to do so			
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 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			
	Aim	Action	Timescale	Progress/Evidence/Impact
	Facilitate appropriate careers advice for students who are BSL users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments to be made available for all BSL users with SDS Careers Service Consult with Deaf Action (over 25) and Action on Hearing loss (under 25) for additional support which may be available 	No timescale on plan	SDS are on campus one day a week to provide support for all students. <div data-bbox="2085 772 2152 831" data-label="Image"> </div>
	Raise awareness of the UK Governments 'Access to Work' scheme for students who are BSL users as part of any careers advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make information regarding 'Access to Work' available to BSL users and signpost to DWP video relay advice pages https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgWBXN5Bp_E Ensure front-line advisors are aware of available information and where to signpost for further help 	No timescale on plan	The learning support team provides signposting to this service. Promotion of the Access to Work Scheme and wider signposting for BSL users across the wider student support team is required. Outstanding actions will be carried forward to the next BSL Plan. <div data-bbox="2092 1007 2159 1066" data-label="Image"> </div>

 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			
Aim	Action	Timescale	Progress/Evidence/Impact	Overall Progress
To work in partnership with our community agencies in developing student support services to ensure they are accessible to students who are BSL users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give consideration to required adaptations to sessions for BSL users to meet their need and account for the longer communication times • Liaise with community agencies to ensure suitably qualified interpreters and adaptations are available to support BSL user while accessing the service 	Begin developing from August 2018	<p>Consideration is given to the requirements of the individuals. Learning Support manager provides advice and guidance when additional support is required.</p> <p>There are limited qualified interpreters locally. The college works with community agencies and wider links to ascertain identified contacts should we need interpreters.</p>	

 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			
Aim	Action	Timescale	Progress/Evidence/Impact	Overall Progress
To promote opportunities for students who are BSL users to become involved in representation, championing the student voice and actively involved in shaping learning and student experience at Borders College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support BSL users to become members of the Students' Association and to campaign for elected posts • Encourage and support BSL users to become class representatives 	From October 2018	<p>All students are automatic members of the Student Association once enrolled at college. The Students Association operates as an 'opt out' service.</p> <p>Information regarding student elections is advertised in accessible formats and using a range of formats.</p> <p>The Students' Association is actively considering ways to increase the diversity of Class Reps.</p>	



British Sign Language

Draft Action Plan

2024-2030

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Section 1

Introduction

British Sign Language (BSL) is a recognised language of Scotland which means that people whose first or preferred language is BSL may access information and services based on their language.

Throughout the plan reference is made to “BSL 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.

A BSL version of this plan will be added to the college website following the relevant Board/Committee approval processes.

Borders College BSL Action Plan supports the BSL National Plan for Scotland 2023-2029¹. The National Plan has ten priority areas which represent the collective ambition for BSL in Scotland and underpins the Scottish Government’s overall ambition; to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015², requires listed authorities in Scotland to publish BSL plans every six years demonstrating how they will promote and support BSL. The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to:

1. Promote awareness and use of BSL; and
2. Improve access to services for Deaf and Deaf- blind people.

As a listed authority, Borders College will write and publish actions outlining the measures it will take to promote awareness of BSL, and access to education and services for Deaf and Deaf-blind people. In developing this plan, Borders College aims to achieve consistency with the National Plan and will take account of how best to respond to BSL users’ needs within local contexts and services.

¹ British Sign Language National Plan 2023-29 [url] <https://www.gov.scot/publications/bsl-national-plan-2023-2029/documents/>

² British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 [url] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/11/introduction/enacted>

Context for Borders College BSL Action Plan 2024-2030

Borders College has reviewed the progress it has made with its BSL Action Plan 2018-24. In partnership with Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders, Borders College has actively engaged BSL users and their representatives in a consultation process to comment on, and develop themes which will inform the priorities of this plan. We are committed to continued engagement with this group around shaping provision, implementing actions, providing feedback on progress and developing further actions and future evaluation.

Borders College is committed to;

- Ensuring the voices of BSL users are heard in the matters that are important to them.
- Improving access to, and the use of BSL across the College.
- Supporting BSL users through their transition into college, participation within, and beyond.
- Raising awareness and celebrating BSL Culture.

Section 2

Borders College BSL Plan 2024-2030: Long Term Goals

Borders College BSL Plan 2024-2030 has identified five long term goals. These goals are consistent and aligned within the ten long term priorities of the National BSL plan.

National BSL Priorities		Borders College BSL Long Term Goals	
BSL Accessibility	1	Promote and develop sustainable approaches to ensure that BSL users have access to opportunities, support and services.	
Children, Young People and their Families	2	Support BSL users through their transition into college, participation within college and beyond.	
Health and Wellbeing	3	Provide information and support to enable BSL users to live active and healthy lives.	
Celebrating BSL Culture	4	Consider how we promote and raise awareness of the cultural life of Scotland with BSL users, and enable them to celebrate their own culture and heritage.	
Democratic Participation	5	Ensure the voices of BSL users are heard in the matters that are important to them.	

Section 3

Borders College BSL Action Plan

BSL Accessibility

Long Term Goal 1

Promote and develop sustainable approaches to ensure that BSL users have access to opportunities, support and services.

Borders College BSL Actions:

- Work in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders and wider partners to consider options for further qualifications in BSL for staff and students.
- Review, improve and develop accessible materials and information for BSL users across college systems e.g. website, learning platforms and approaches.
- Consider the sustainability of the support offered to BSL users across our services.
- Provide opportunities for staff attend BSL training.
- Explore assistive technology and AI to support BSL users.

Children, Young People and their Families

Long Term Goal 2

Support BSL users through their transition into college, participation within college and beyond.

Borders College BSL Actions:

- Continue to review and develop approaches to transition and support for BSL users into college.
- Improve outreach meetings with schools to gather greater understanding of the support that is required and available for BSL users.
- Work with partners and services to provide details of schemes to support transition beyond college and into work.
- Ensure curriculum staff working with BSL users are aware of and can support the needs of BSL users.
- Ensure support and information is available to all staff to build confident and positive interactions and communication with BSL users.

Health and Well Being

Long Term Goal 3

Provide information and support to enable BSL users to live active and healthy lives.

Borders College BSL Actions:

- Ensure BSL users are aware of the wellbeing support they can access at College.
- Deliver health and wellbeing activities that are inclusive of the BSL community at College.

Celebrating BSL Culture

Long Term Goal 4

Consider how we promote and raise awareness of the cultural life of Scotland with BSL users, and enable them to celebrate their own culture and heritage.

Borders College BSL Actions:

- Explore opportunities to celebrate BSL culture through our awareness raising.
- Promote events and opportunities which highlight and celebrate BSL culture.

Democratic Participation

Long Term Goal 5

Ensure the voices of BSL users are heard in the matters that are important to them.

Borders College BSL Actions:

- Ensure feedback and engagement process are accessible for BSL users.
- Support BSL users to actively participate in college experiences.

Monitoring and Review

Borders College will monitor progress of the BSL Plan on an ongoing basis through the BSL Steering Group. Annual updates will be provided to the Equalities and Inclusion Committee, and to the Regional Board where appropriate.

Contact

The lead officer for Borders College's BSL Action Plan is Amy Brydon and can be contacted if there are questions or comments in relation to the College's BSL Action Plan.

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6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

Interpretation costs for the 2024-2030 Action Plan to be published in accessible BSL format.

6.2 Learner Implications

This paper provides an overview of steps taken by the college to ensure the college is an inclusive and supportive place for BSL students/users.

6.3 Staff Implications

This paper provides an overview of steps taken by the college to ensure the college is an inclusive and supportive place for BSL staff/users.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

The Draft BSL Action Plan 2024-2030 outlined in this paper is one of many plans and policies which the college has in place to support its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The plan seeks to address equal access, opportunity, representation, and inclusion for all BSL users.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

There are no direct implications on sustainability and environment from the contents of this paper and the action plan.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 This paper aims to provide assurance to the Committee that Borders College is meeting its requirements under the Equality Act to provide information and support in accessible formats for BSL users.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This paper seeks to assure the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee that the college is actively working to align support for BSL users with the Scottish Government's National BSL Plan and to meet the needs of BSL users within the college.

Hilary Broatch

Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Officer

14.5.24

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

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