



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Scottish Parliamentary  
Corporate Body

# British Sign Language Plan

## 2025–2031

This plan has been prepared under Sections 2 and 3  
of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015.



# Foreword

I am pleased to publish our second British Sign Language (BSL) Plan on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

As an official language of Scotland with its own rich cultural heritage and history, BSL is central to the interests of Deaf and Deafblind people and the wider BSL community across the country.

Our Plan runs from 2025 to 2031. It sets out our ongoing commitment towards ensuring BSL users have equal opportunity to work at, participate in, and engage with, the Parliament and parliamentary processes.

This new plan builds on our very first BSL Plan. That plan laid the foundations for our work in supporting the use and promotion of BSL at the Parliament, increasing access to our information and services for BSL users, providing opportunities for staff to learn BSL, and improving the visitor experience for BSL users.

During the period covered by our last plan, a global pandemic followed by a rapid increase in use of technology in our lives demonstrated all too clearly how much things can change within the six years of a plan. We have approached this new plan with an open mind about how to deliver some of our commitments so that we have space to grow and respond. We've aligned it to our values, as they drive how we work.

In that spirit, this new plan continues to give BSL the prominence and visibility that it deserves and contributes to the National Plan goal of making Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work, visit and learn. Our plan has been developed from the experiences of our staff, our Members and their staff and importantly from the experiences of BSL users across Scotland.

I am proud to present it, reaffirming our commitment to British Sign Language and its communities across our work.

**Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP**

**Presiding Officer**



# Introduction

In passing the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015, the Scottish Parliament committed its public institutions to promoting the use and understanding of British Sign Language.

The Act requires the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) to try to achieve consistency between its own plan and the most recently published National Plan. The National Plan seeks to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work, visit and learn.

This is the second British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, for the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB), produced in compliance with sections 2 and 3 of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015.

The plan sets out the actions which the Parliament will take over the period 2025–2031 to improve access to parliamentary information and services to BSL users in the Deaf and Deafblind communities, and the wider BSL community.

To the extent that the Parliament's functions are exercisable using BSL, our plan supports the British Sign Language (BSL): National Plan 2023 to 2029, published on 6 November 2023, which sets out a range of government actions to tackle barriers faced by British Sign Language (BSL) users to help make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work, visit and learn.

## Development of our plan

The SPCB's Plan starts from the principled position that BSL is a language in its own right and that BSL users, like all other citizens of Scotland, have the right to engage with and access information about the Scottish Parliament and its services when they so choose, without unnecessary barriers, including language barriers.

Our new plan builds on the learning and success from our first plan. We have 20 actions to deliver against over 6 years, and have ensured these are aligned to the values of the SPCB's services:

- **Stewardship**
- **Excellence**
- **Inclusion**
- **Respect**

The SPCB's BSL Plan reflects feedback which was garnered from an eight-week long public consultation which took place in summer 2024.

To ensure that the BSL community, including digitally excluded people, were able to contribute in BSL without barriers, two routes were offered for providing feedback:

- **in-person consultations at Deaf clubs and organisations across Scotland,**
- **a BSL accessible online survey.**

In total, 154 people made contributions, including MSPs, MSP staff, Scottish Parliament staff, contractors, the public and the BSL community.



# Delivery of our plan

The SPCB is committed to continued engagement around:

- implementing actions
- providing feedback on progress.

In our plan, we are committed to monitoring, evaluation and feedback and reporting. These are all key components in ensuring we understand expectations and needs, are effective in our delivery and can share our learning with others.

We see our plan as a 'living document' and, as such, it will be revised and reissued as necessary. We will contribute to the national progress review (interim report) on the BSL National Plan scheduled for 2026. As such, we have included our own review period in 2026 which will also coincide with the start of the Parliament's seventh session.

## Let us know what you think about our plan

We encourage people to give us feedback about the plan and about their experiences in using BSL and BSL use with the Parliament.

**Email:** BSL@parliament.scot

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2184260275190446/>

**Post:** Public Information  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

**Telephone:** 0131 348 5000 / 0800 092 7500

**Text Relay service:** 18001 0131 348 5000

**British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via the Contact Scotland BSL video relay service.**

## Versions of this plan

The BSL and text versions of this Plan are available on our website.



# BSL Plan for the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

## Stewardship:

Focusing on the longer term to ensure we are leaving things better than we found them and putting our shared interests ahead of any individual or team.

- **In delivering our plan, we contribute to creating a diverse and inclusive Scotland by supporting the use of BSL in Scottish Parliament life and services.**

## Inclusiveness:

Understanding the big picture and seeking out alternative perspectives. Every colleague feels they are able to make a valued contribution and deliver their best work.

- **In delivering our plan, we will be an inclusive workplace for deaf and deafblind people, including as an elected representative.**

## Excellence:

Taking care to enhance our reputation in everything we do. Using our skills and resources efficiently and effectively to deliver high-quality sustainable results.

- **In delivering our plan, we ensure services are easy to use and access, based on what our communities value and provide value for money.**

## Respect:

Appreciating difference, building cohesive teams and fostering the values and experiences of diversity.

- **In delivering our plan, we support Scottish Parliament staff, MSPs and their staff in growing their skills to communicate in BSL and understand deaf culture.**

## To help us achieve this, we will undertake the following actions:

1. Continue to provide BSL interpreting of First Minister's Questions and parliamentary business directly relating to the Deaf and Deafblind communities.
2. Continue to have an open dialogue with BSL communities about when and how we provide parliamentary business in BSL.
3. Encourage public involvement in our work through welcoming and inclusive facilities and services developed with Deaf and Deafblind people. This includes work in:
  - Visitor experiences
  - Arts and culture experiences
  - Health and safety procedures
  - Capacity building within Deaf and Deafblind communities for BSL users to be active contributors to the shape and content of our products and events



4. Provide a wide range of digital, online and print information and resources including resources in BSL for:
  - Visitors to the building
  - Visitors to our website
  - Those seeking information from the Parliament (e.g. freedom of information requests, enquiries)
  - BSL-based businesses engaging with the Parliament as a contractor or potential contractor
  - Videos and materials produced to inform or inspire public engagement
  - A programme of engagement events developed with the BSL community
5. Always be mindful of the needs and experiences of BSL users in any online work we do. This includes:
  - Working in line with best practice for integration of BSL into digital communication platforms such as our website
  - Monitoring how BSL develops in the online world over the life of our plan, including the advance of AI and the use of videos and text within webpages
  - Maintaining a meaningful presence on the most popular and appropriate platforms of social media so we are engaging in the spaces communities value
6. Offer educational resources in BSL and respond positively to any requests for sessions or tours to be delivered in BSL on a case-by-case basis.
7. Continue to consider BSL user needs from the start as part of developing participation and scrutiny work.
8. Consider BSL interpreting needs, including hands on signing, for activities held in the Parliament that are designed to inform or inspire public engagement on a request, proactive or retrospective basis as appropriate.
9. Make Scottish Parliament staff recruitment and selection procedures BSL accessible.
10. Create an inclusive working environment for elected members by engaging with MSPs and potential MSPs to understand their requirements.
11. Develop further our monitoring and evaluation systems and reports to inform our decisions about services in BSL. In doing so, we will reference the work within the BSL National Plan on using BSL data and key findings from the Scotland Census 2022.
12. Develop further our networks to exchange good practice and continuously improve. This includes attending BSL conferences and events, and networking with other legislatures and visitor attractions.
13. Continue working closely with the Scottish Parliament Gaelic Development Officers to share good practice on language provision and consider joint projects.



14. Continue to provide advice and assistance relating to BSL if requested by the Officeholders supported by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB).
15. Expand and promote a BSL Dictionary resource on parliamentary phrases.
16. Promote BSL services and effective use of Contact Scotland BSL for those who want to use it to contact the Parliament.
17. Continue to provide BSL and deaf awareness training to staff, including customised training for targeted staff teams as appropriate.
18. Continue to provide BSL training to ensure skills to communicate in BSL with a focus on practical use in staff roles.
19. Ensure BSL is a regular presence within the internal communications of the Parliament, which will help to normalise the language.
20. Continue work to raise awareness and skills both at induction and throughout the working life of a colleague. This includes:
  - Awareness raising at induction
  - Awareness raising within team and service structures
  - BSL training opportunities
  - Bespoke information sessions
  - Intranet presence and promotion

