

British Sign Language Plan 2024-30 Consultation draft

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About the Commission

The Scottish Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is a public body created by the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, to protect and promote the human rights of all people in Scotland.

We are Scotland's human rights watchdog. Our job is to work with people and communities to understand their experiences, hold public bodies to account and help them to do better.

The Commission is also part of the international human rights system. We are accredited by the United Nations as its trusted organisation to provide impartial evidence on human rights in Scotland.

The language used in this plan

BSL

This is an abbreviation for British Sign Language (BSL). BSL is a vibrant language, integral to the lives of many people in Scotland. BSL has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and is the first language of many Deaf and Deafblind people in Scotland.

BSL users

Throughout the plan, we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who use the tactile form of the language.

Rights holders

Every person has human rights, and collectively, we are known as rights holders.

BSL Plan 2024-30

This plan sets out how we will promote the use of BSL in the Commission's work.

We have aligned our commitments to the key priority areas outlined in the Scottish Government's [BSL National Plan 2023-29](#) which are most relevant to the Commission, including:

- BSL Accessibility
- Access to Employment
- Democratic Participation

On the advice of Deaf-led organisations, we have broken down our strategy for achieving each commitment into short-term, medium-term and long-term actions.

We will also publish annual progress updates on our BSL Plan from 2025-30.

This is the draft version of our new BSL Plan which we are now publishing for consultation. [The Plan is available on BSL on our YouTube channel](#). We would welcome feedback, including by video message, video relay via [Contact Scotland BSL](#), or email us at hello@scottishhumanrights.com. Thank you.

BSL Accessibility

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

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, using technology and increasing people's awareness of communication tools.

Our commitment

To remove barriers for BSL users to access information we produce about human rights and the Commission's work wherever possible and practicable.

To achieve this, we will:

- Explore new avenues for reaching BSL users.
- Increase resources available in BSL
- Raise awareness of communication tools such as Contact Scotland BSL

Our actions

By 2025:

- Reach out to Deaf-led organisations to explore partnership work
- Attend events held by Deaf-led organisations to raise awareness of human rights and the Commission
- Create a dedicated BSL page on our website

By 2027:

- Consult BSL users during our next website build
- Develop more communications strategies which highlight BSL accessibility, including digital strategy.

By 2030:

- Make as many new website publications as possible available in BSL
- Explore developing our BSL website page.

Access to Employment

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

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.

Our commitment

To become a BSL-friendly employer and workplace.

To achieve this, we will:

- Raise awareness about BSL within the Commission
- Consult with BSL users on creating a supportive workplace

Our actions

By 2025:

- Establish a BSL taskforce, responsible for progressing actions in the BSL Plan
- Propose a BSL Plan working group with other public bodies, to learn from each other.

By 2027:

- Introduce BSL awareness into staff inductions
- Promote vacancies in BSL

By 2030:

- Conduct a review of workplace infrastructure to identify changes required to become a BSL-friendly employer

- Support colleagues to learn BSL

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.

Our commitment

To identify, engage and support BSL users to participate meaningfully in our work.

This will include in:

- Participation work with rights-holders
- Policy development

Our actions

By 2025:

- Consult Deaf-led organisations to identify the best channels to reach BSL users
- Make consultations available in BSL

By 2027:

- Work with the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to produce information about senior appointments in BSL
- Provide BSL support for participation opportunities
- Establish a Participation Strategy which gives specific consideration to BSL users.

By 2030:

- Partner with Deaf-led organisations to research BSL users' experiences of human rights and publish any resulting reports.

Review of the 2018-24 plan

This section reviews the commitments made in our previous BSL Plan.

We will work with BSL users to learn more about how we can improve on specific actions. For example, our previous BSL Plan said we would research how we engage with BSL users; monitor and improve content and promote recruitment in BSL. In these areas we need to do more and have established specific goals for 2024-30.

The plan also included commitments to support BSL users to participate in the Commission's work; to establish staff training; and to make our work available in BSL wherever possible.

We have offered BSL interpretation at public events and promoted recruitment for the [SNAP Leadership Panel with a five-part series available in BSL](#). We also introduced a link to Contact Scotland BSL to email signatures and undertook BSL awareness training.

We have published content about human rights in BSL. For example, we published a series on individual rights, including the [rights to health](#), [housing](#), [independent living](#) and [social care](#).

More information about our BSL content is available on our website www.scottishhumanrights.com and our YouTube channel [@ScottishHumanRights](#).