

Appendix 4 – Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute 2018 - 2024; Additional information on some of the actions detailed in the BSL Plan

The following provides some supplementary information about some of the actions contained within the Joint Local British Sign Language Plan for Argyll and Bute.

For ease of reference further details have been provided under the actions in the plan to which they relate.

Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare:

Action Point	Success Measure
2.1	<i>Produce a pack containing deaf friendly educational resources and information about deaf culture for parents, nurseries and health visitors which will also include links to additional online resources.</i>

The National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland) (NDCS) will be developing resources to assist parents of deaf children to raise awareness of different pathways for language and communication, and to help them make informed choices. The Teacher of the Deaf will work with NDCS and the Council's Early Years Team to produce packs containing deaf friendly educational resources and information which can be used by parents, nurseries and health visitors. Some literature and online educational resources have already been identified, and include both free and paid for items.

Action Point	Success Measure
2.1	<i>Provide Early Years' employees with access to training on basic BSL and fingerspelling</i>

A one day BSL based course, "Using Sign in an Early Years Environment" is being offered for the Continuing Professional Development session in 2018-19 to practitioners working within Early Years settings in Argyll and Bute. This can be given as twilight training to the islands, or in more rural areas, and can be repeated if demand is high. The course covers:

- General Deaf awareness to give practitioners an understanding of what it means to be deaf in a hearing nursery and the impact this has on learning and wellbeing.
- Conductive hearing loss such as glue ear which affects 8 out of 10 children under the age of 10 and can cause temporary deafness which may delay language and communication development in young children. It can also affect children's wellbeing, behaviour and their educational progress. Strategies to support these children.
- Learn BSL signs to support listening, eye contact and communication. Sign can be an effective strategy to overcome barriers to learning and communication for all children but particularly for children who are deaf or who

have additional support needs. Sign can be used with babies as young as six months and supports early language and communication skills.

- Learn the finger spell alphabet so nursery practitioners can communicate more effectively with Deaf families.

School Education:

Action Point	Success Measure
3.3	<i>Review lessons learned from a pilot project to teach BSL101 to Primary 4 hearing and deaf students at a primary school within Argyll & Bute, and share examples of good practice with SCILT.</i>

BSL101 is an Introduction to British Sign Language course which teaches learners how to meet and greet; understand basic conversation and numbers, and to give and follow simple directions and information. In the 2018-19 school year, the Teacher of the Deaf is undertaking a pilot with Primary 4 children at one of the larger primary schools in Argyll and Bute to introduce BSL as part of the 1+2 Language arrangements. This is being offered to both hearing and deaf children who will be assessed using the BSL101 course and outcomes. If the decision is made to go for formal accreditation, this will cost approximately £350 in total, otherwise it will be delivered within existing resources. This pilot is expected to give deaf children increased opportunities to communicate, feel included and respected within the school, and to give hearing children skills to communicate better with their deaf friends.

Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

Action Point	Success Measure
5.8	<i>Investigate the potential to create an online community forum for BSL users to communicate with each other, and with the Council</i>

The Deaf community across Argyll & Bute is very dispersed with little in the way of access to meet other signers. It was evident from the recent drop-in consultation events in Lochgilphead and Tarbert that BSL users appreciated the opportunity to meet new people, and to communicate with each other.

There is one deaf club in Argyll which meets most Wednesday evenings in Dunoon. This was started by a local organisation which also reached out to the hearing community. Hearing people do attend as it has an educational element to it. BSL is taught free of charge to a degree to interested parties. The distances to travel to the Dunoon club from some parts of Argyll mean it is almost impossible for some BSL users to get to this event.

Argyll and Bute covers a large rural area and social isolation is a major risk/concern for BSL users. This can also negatively affect a person's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Technology can reach out across a large area. The Council's web team have been approached with an idea which, at this early stage, may have potential. The proposal is to connect BSL users via the internet using Council facilities. This would give the Council's Sensory Impairment Team another means of keeping in touch with people, and gives clients the opportunity to sign to the team's social worker should the need arise. However, the real idea is to put signers (who may not know of other BSL users within their local area) in touch with each other. Each person would require to use a PC, Tablet or smartphone and have internet access. They would also need to download an app, for example SKYPE or an alternative free open source software. Ideally the online community would have a specific date and time to meet every week to ensure optimum participation.

Similar forums already operate within the ASL community within America.

Action Point	Success Measure
5.8	Create a "loop capital" as a pilot project in Dunoon so that hearing loops are available in all shops/businesses in the town.

Argyll & Bute has a See Hear strategy; part of which is to make Dunoon a 'Loop Capital'. The Sensory Impairment Team are currently in consultation with Dunoon Presents (an organisation which represents local businesses in the town), to gauge interest. The project is currently at the planning stage, but the aim is to get loops into all shops/ businesses in Dunoon. This will help BSL users and deaf people who use either a Hearing Aid or a Cochlear Implant with a loop.