

ARGYLL AND BUTE JOINT BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN 2018 – 2024
PROGRESS REPORT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide a progress report to the Policy and Resources Committee on the actions contained within the Argyll and Bute Joint British Sign Language Plan 2018 – 2024.

The Council approved the Plan on 18 October 2018. This report outlines the work Argyll and Bute Council has carried out since then to put the Joint British Sign Language Plan into practice.

Of the seven success measures identified within the period, one has been delayed but will be rescheduled, and the remaining six are either complete or have been started and are ongoing. Further information is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

It is recommended the Policy and Resources Committee:

- Note the progress that has been made by Argyll and Bute Council between October 2018 and August 2019;
- Note that a further update will be given to the Committee in October 2020
- Note Argyll and Bute Council will provide regular progress reports to the Scottish Government. The timing and means of doing this is still to be confirmed.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides details of the progress made by Argyll and Bute Council between October 2018 and August 2019 to implement the actions contained within the Argyll and Bute Joint British Sign Language Plan 2018 – 2024.

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish local plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support the use of British Sign Language (BSL). Argyll and Bute's first plan was approved by the Council on 18 October 2018.

The aim of the plan, which is shared by Argyll and Bute Council, Live Argyll and the Health and Social Care Partnership, is to improve access for deaf and deafblind BSL users to information and public services including healthcare and mental health support

- 2.2 The BSL plan is adaptable and flexible to the priorities set out by all of the organisations involved in its delivery, particularly when circumstances may change. It is important to note that since the Plan was adopted, Argyll and Bute Council has undertaken an organisational restructure resulting in a reduction in the number of senior management posts and a change to the roles and responsibilities of some Heads of Service. The senior officer with operational responsibility for overseeing the preparation and monitoring of the Plan within the Council is now known as Head of Customer Support Services. Delivery of the individual actions in the Plan remain the responsibility of the named services, though the personnel and remits of some of those previously identified have now changed. Accordingly, some success measures and targets may require to be adjusted over the life the Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended the Policy and Resources Committee:

- Note the progress that has been made since October 2018;
- Note that a further update will be given to the Committee in October 2020
- Note Argyll and Bute Council will provide regular progress reports to the Scottish Government. The timing and means of doing this is still to be confirmed.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Before it was approved, the Council consulted over the actions that should be included in the BSL Plan and the majority of the suggestions made were accepted. Education was by far the single most important issue to those who responded to the Council's survey; in particular the need for training in BSL and the idea that children, (both deaf and hearing), should be taught BSL from a young age. Respondents believed these activities would increase awareness; allow greater inclusion and engagement of deaf children, and promote a more inclusive society more widely. Education is therefore one of the key themes in the BSL Plan, and the area where most work has been carried out in the ten months since the Plan was adopted.

4.2 A summary of the actions which were due to be carried out between October 2018 and August 2019 is provided in Appendix 1 together with an update on progress made. Of the seven success measures, one has been delayed but will be rescheduled, and the remaining six are either complete or have been started and are ongoing.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 This report provides a summary of the significant steps Argyll and Bute Council has taken to support and promote the use of BSL in the ten months since the Council approved the Joint BSL Plan.

The one action point which was delayed by the management restructure will be rescheduled by the new Head of Customer Support Services in consultation with the Customer Service and Engagement Board.

5.2 Argyll and Bute Council will submit frequent progress reports to the Scottish Government to assist the Scottish Ministers to meet their legislative requirements to report on progress made by Public Authorities. The timing and preferred method of updating the Scottish Government is still to be confirmed. Notwithstanding this, the intention is to bring the Policy and Resources Committee up-to-date in October 2020.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - The Council ensures any new and current policies are in line with the BSL Plan by identifying any interdependencies through the Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment process.
- 6.2 Financial - The Plan utilises existing resources, taking account of the current challenging financial position which the Council faces.
- 6.3 Legal – Under the 2015 Act, the Council has a statutory responsibility to publish a BSL Plan every six years from October 2018 onwards. The Council also has a separate legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people under the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.4 HR – The Council will continue to promote the BSL Plan and its associated actions to employees.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – Deafness is considered to be a disability which in turn is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Furthermore, under the Equality Act, the Council has an Equality Duty to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work - in shaping policy, in delivering services, and as an employer.
 - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - The BSL Plan will help to make sure that people whose first, or preferred language is BSL can be fully involved in daily and public life in Scotland as active, healthy citizens who are able to make informed choices about every part of their lives.
 - 6.5.3 Islands – None arising directly from this report
- 6.6. Risk – None arising directly from this report
- 6.7 Customer Service – The actions which form part of the BSL Plan should result in improved access to services, information and communication for BSL users

Pippa Milne,

Executive Director with responsibility for Customer Support Services

Policy Lead - Councillor Rory Colville, Policy Lead for Corporate Services

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3 September 2019

Appendix 1 - Extract from Argyll and Bute Joint British Sign Language Action Plan showing the actions which were due to be carried out between October 2018 – August 2019

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1 Across All Our Services						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead	Comments
1.3	Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to staff and to local BSL users. This is a free service which allows BSL users to contact public and third sector services and for these services to contact them.	Add a link to the service into our email signatures	5	June 2019	Head of Customer & Support Services	This has been delayed due to the management restructure but will be rescheduled by the new Head of Customer Support Services in consultation with the Customer Service and Engagement Board
2 Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead	Comments
2.1	Provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child.	Produce a pack containing deaf friendly educational resources and information about deaf culture for parents, nurseries and	10,11,12	January 2019	Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support	Completed

2.1	(D - people born deaf, d - those who become deaf) Provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child.	health visitors which will also include links to additional online resources Provide Early Years' employees with access to training on basic BSL and fingerspelling		August 2018 onwards	Head of Education – Lifelong Learning & Support	Completed - Training course delivered November 2018 Ongoing signing support provided by the Teacher of the Deaf to 6 nurseries/Pre5 units
3 School Education						
	We will:	Success Measure	National Plan Action Point(s)	Timescale	Lead	Comments
3.1	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, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.	Carry out a survey every year in schools to collect information on the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff	17, 18	From April 2019	Head of Education - Learning and Teaching	2019 Survey Completed. 7 schools have some staff who hold the Level 1 qualification with 4 of these schools also having employees who are qualified to Level 2. Other staff are currently studying for their Level 2.

3 School Education						
3.1	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, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.	Keep up to date records on where and how BSL is being offered in schools and report this to the Scottish Government		From April 2019	Head of Education - Learning and Teaching	Signing is currently being used in four education establishments on a daily basis.
3.3	Contribute to the Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance.	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.		August 2018 – June 2019	Head of Education - Learning and Teaching	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. 7 pupils have passed BSL 101 to date. A review of the pilot has taken place and the school concerned is continuing with the project in 2019/20.

3	School Education					
3.3	Contribute to the SCILT programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance.	Make BSL online resources readily accessible to practitioners through the Argyll and Bute Education blog		January 2019	Head of Education - Learning and Teaching	Completed