



University of Dundee

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-2029

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SECTION 1 – Introduction

1.1 Overview

This is the BSL Plan for the University of Dundee. This document provides an update from the 2018-2024 action plan and indicates where we intend to progress or roll forward many of the actions.

It follows the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan, published on 24 October 2017, and the subsequent [BSL National Plan](#), published 6 November 2023, both were developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users* and those who work with them.

It is framed around the same long-term goals as the National Plan, where these are relevant to the work of the University.

The BSL version of the University's BSL Plan is available on the [University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion website](#).

** Wherever we refer to 'BSL users*' we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.*

1.2 University Context

The University of Dundee is one of the UK's leading universities, internationally recognised for its expertise across a range of disciplines including science, medicine, engineering and art. The University has almost 18,000 students and over 3,300 staff, and regularly attracts visitors from the local community and beyond.

The University has three campuses (in Dundee City, Kirkcaldy and Ninewells Hospital), and consists of eight [Academic Schools](#) and ten [Professional Services](#).

We are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable environment that fosters a positive experience of the highest quality for our students, staff and all other members of the University community.

The [University's strategy 2022-27](#) outlines our identity which is to deliver social purpose through our core values: valuing people, working together, integrity, making a difference and excellence. To ensure this happens we have five enabling strategies, key to the BSL Plan are the Education and student experience strategy, People and talent and Digital strategies.

1.3 Current BSL Provision

The University's current BSL provision primarily reflects our responsibilities to enable access for disabled people under the Equality Act, including those who are

BSL users. This provision is managed by Disability Services and includes:

- Providing confidential information and advice to disabled students and staff, including prospective students and applicants.
- Undertaking individual needs assessments for disabled students
- Supporting applications for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Arranging BSL/notetaking/other support for students (on campus or remotely)
- Sharing individual students' reasonable adjustments with University staff, with the student's consent
- Providing Deaf awareness training for University staff & Students
- Providing assistive technology and associated training for students
- Liaising with external support providers e.g., BSL interpreters, Tayside Deaf Hub, NDCS

Disability Services' staff have completed Deaf awareness training. In addition, the University's School of Humanities offers two BSL Certificate Courses for students and staff through their 'Languages for All' programme, one of which enables students to gain credits towards their degree course.

The University's Students' Association (DUSA) has a Sign Language Society which offers free lessons for those interested in learning introductory BSL, and also hosts a range of social and fundraising events for the Tayside Deaf Hub and other deaf charities.

1.4 Consultation

It is intended to circulate the progress updates and actions with a wide range of stakeholders and BSL community.

SECTION 2 - Summary of BSL Plan

2.1 Overall Aim

This BSL Plan is one of many policies and procedures which the University has in place to support its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

It sets out how the University intends to meet the statutory obligations of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

Specifically, the University is committed to:

- Promoting and supporting the use of BSL, including in its tactile form
- Improving access to services for Deaf and Deafblind people
- Involving BSL users in developing and providing feedback on our BSL plans
- Implementing actions and providing updates on our progress

2.2 Key Actions from 2018 Action Plan

- Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and

other members of the University community who use BSL and provide updates on our response.

- Promote the use of the Scottish Government's BSL online interpreting video relay service, contact SCOTLAND-BSL.
- Establish a central web resource for BSL information, including the University's BSL Plan, contact SCOTLAND-BSL details, and links to BSL interpretation services.
- Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events, including our Graduation Ceremonies.
- Provide Deaf awareness training for students and staff and promote access to BSL training, particularly for staff in front-line roles.
- Ensure the cost implications of BSL interpretation services and associated staff training are considered in annual budgets.
- Ensure key student information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on our academic courses, student life and support facilities, and our key student policies and regulations.
- Ensure that students who use BSL are supported throughout their student journey, including at transition into University, for all aspects of learning and teaching, and into further study, training or employment.
- Ensure students who use BSL have access to student support services, including financial and careers advice.
- Ensure key staff information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment and training opportunities, and our key staff policies and procedures.
- Ensure the University's health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use BSL.

Progress on these actions is outlined in the action plan in section 3.

2.3 Key Actions from the 2024 Action Plan

Many of the BSL actions as set out in the original plan are relevant to new and incoming BSL users as both student and staff. However, it is noted with staff turnover and the impact of the COVID, progress in some area may have not happen with the pace and desire as intended. We therefore intend to roll forward many of the actions outlined in the original plan as their purpose and intention have not changed.

SECTION 3 – BSL Plan – Action Table

No.	Relevance to BSL National Plan, 2023-2029	Action No.	Action	Lead Responsibility	Timescale (by end of)	Progress March 2024
3.1	Delivering the BSL National Plan 2023-29 - Our long-term goal: To improve outcomes for BSL users by embedding BSL in relevant Scottish Government policies, plans and strategies in order to develop solutions to the barriers faced by BSL users in their daily lives.	3.1.1	Analyse the existing evidence on BSL users in the University community, including students and prospective students, staff, and visitors	Director of Strategic Planning	AY 25/26	ONGOING – our move to a new system did not include this functionality and this will be implemented from 2025.
		3.1.2	Invite regular feedback on their University experience from students, staff and other members of the University community who use BSL, and provide updates on our response	BSL Working Group	ONGOING	ONGOING – in academic year 2023/24 we have no BSL using students or staff.
		3.1.3	Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s BSL online interpreting video relay service, contactSCOTLAND-BSL	Deans and Directors	ONGOING	
		3.1.4	Establish a central web resource for BSL information, including the University’s BSL Plan, contactSCOTLAND-BSL details, and links to BSL interpretation services	Deputy Director EDI	AY 24/25	ONGOING
		3.1.5	Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key University public events, including our Graduation Ceremonies	Director of ER and Director of Registry	AY 18/19	COMPLETE – BSL interpreters available or graduations.

3.1	Delivering the BSL National Plan 2023-29 - Our long-term goal: To improve outcomes for BSL users by embedding BSL in relevant Scottish Government policies, plans and strategies in order to develop solutions to the barriers faced by BSL users in their daily lives. (cont.)	3.1.6	Provide Deaf awareness training for students and staff and promote access to BSL training, particularly for staff in front-line roles	Deputy Director EDI	AY 24/25	ONGOING - SL Course provided through Open Courses . Investigating course available to front facing staff. Disability Services have provided awareness training multiple time a year.
		3.1.7	Support staff and students to practice the use of BSL, including by providing informal BSL practice sessions	Deputy Director EDI	AY 25/26	
		3.1.8	Ensure the cost implications of BSL interpretation services and associated staff training are considered in annual budgets	Director of Finance Deans and Directors	AY 19/20	COMPLETE delegated in School/ Directorate budgets.
		3.1.9	Consider the implications for BSL video communication when procuring new digital systems	Director of UoD IT Director of Library and Learning Centre	AY 18/19	ONGOING
		3.1.10	Ensure the University's BSL Plan is linked to our annual Outcome Agreements for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)	Director of Strategic Planning	AY 18/19	A link to the BSL plan was made in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Outcome Agreements, the requirements of the Outcome Agreement have since changed and will change again this year.

		3.1.11	Respond to guidance and communication from the Scottish Government, SFC and the Deaf Sector Partnership to support the development, monitoring and review of the University's BSL Plan	BSL Working Group	AY 18/19	ONGOING Head of Disability Services and DD EDI attended and participated in online community.
3.2	Access to Employment - Our long-term goal: 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.	3.2.1	Ensure key student information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on our academic courses, student life and support facilities, and our key student policies and regulations	Director of Future Students Director of Academic and Corporate Governance	AY 19/20	COMPLETE webpages are accessible. Disability Services videos have BSL. All central videos are subtitled, although we recognize this if different to BSL interpretation.
		3.2.2	Provide access to University Open Days and Visit Days for prospective students and applicants who use BSL	Director of Future Students	AY 18/19	COMPLETE - event sign up process offers the opportunity to identify any access needs.
		3.2.3	Provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants who are BSL users in BSL format on request	Director of Future Students	AY 19/20	ONGOING
		3.2.4	Ensure that students who use BSL are supported throughout their student journey, including at transition into University, for all aspects of learning and teaching, and into further study, training or employment	Director of Student Services Associate Deans (Learning & Teaching)	AY 18/19	ONGOING - Students will be support through transition and each stage of their academic journey through Disability Services, a named advisors who will collaborate with Schools and Professional services.

		3.2.5	Consider the provision of pre-sessional BSL classes for students with limited experience of communicating outwith their immediate local community, or for those students who are users of other sign languages	Director of Future Students Director of Student Services	AY 20/21	ONGOING - Students are offered the option to partake summer school placement with the support of Disability Services
		3.2.6	Ensure students who use BSL have access to student support services, including financial and careers advice	Director of Student Services	AY 18/19	ONGOING – this will be provided when the need arises.
3.2	Access to Employment - Our long-term goal: 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.	3.2.7	Ensure the University's virtual learning environment and other online teaching and assessment systems have the capacity for BSL video output	Director of the Library and Learning Centre	AY 19/20	ONGOING - Existing platforms and new platforms for 2024/25 supports BSL inclusion in video
		3.2.8	Ensure teaching and assessment materials that rely on audio output are provided in BSL for Deaf students who are BSL users	Deans	AY 19/20	ONGOING
		3.2.9	Ensure that University staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect from the University	Director of People Director of Academic and Corporate Governance	AY 18/19	COMPLETE – EDI training is mandated; therefore, staff understand responsibilities.
		3.2.10	Champion the support and use of BSL across the University	Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching)	AY 18/19	ONGOING

3.3	Children, Young People and their Families - Our long-term goal: The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.	3.3.1	Ensure the University's childcare facilities are accessible and welcoming to parents and children who use BSL, including providing key service information in BSL	Director of Student Services	AY 18/19	
		3.3.2	Ensure the University's sport and exercise events for children are accessible to BSL users	Director of the Institute of Sport and Exercise	AY 18/19	ONGOING – process to identify need within enrolment for classes.

3.4	Children, Young People and their Families - Our long-term goal: The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.	3.4.1	Promote the University's initial teacher education courses to BSL users who are interested in becoming teachers	Dean of School of Humanities, Social Science and Law	AY 19/20	ONGOING – BSL – Languages for all class is available to internal and external participants – this can be free for UG students.
		3.4.2	Provide Deaf awareness training and promote opportunities to learn BSL on the University's initial teacher education courses	Dean of School of Humanities, Social Science and Law	AY 19/20	
		3.4.3	Consider access for BSL users to the University's other professional education courses	Dean of School of Humanities, Social Science and Law	AY 19/20	
		3.4.4	Liaise with local schools to raise awareness of the University's provision for BSL users for pupils considering higher education, and to support their transition	Director of Future Students	AY 18/19	COMPLETE -Admissions and Recruitment team have conducted a review of information for disabled applicants and are reviewing how the support is articulated on website and in pre-matric material. This includes how we share with schoolteachers.
3.5	Access to Employment - Our long-term goal: 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	3.5.1	Ensure key staff information on the University's website is accessible to BSL users, including information on recruitment and training opportunities, and our key staff policies and procedures	Director of People	AY 19/20	ONGOING -Plan welcome message will be signed.
		3.5.2	Raise awareness of the UK Government's 'Access to Work' scheme	Director of People	AY 18/19	ONGOING – In Staff Disability Review.

	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.	3.5.3	Support students and staff who are BSL users to apply for jobs or further training	Head of Careers Service	AY 18/19	COMPLETE - Careers Service developed Employment resources for Disabled Students We partner with EmployAbility to provide dedicated support for students. Students can book individual appointments, and ask for application support online
3.6	Health and Wellbeing - Our long-term goal: 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.	3.6.1	Ensure the University's health, mental health and wellbeing services, and associated information and advice, are accessible to staff, students and other members of the University community who use BSL	Director of Student Services; Director of People.	AY 18/19	ONGOING – as and when needed.
3.7	Celebrating BSL Culture - Our long-term goal: BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, and equal opportunities to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and deaf culture with the people	3.7.1	Ensure that the University's extracurricular and social activities are accessible to BSL users	Director of Student Services Director of External Relations	AY 19/20	ONGOING - Disability Services provide funding for BSL students to attend Student led events on request. BSL users are informed of this during support meetings.
		3.7.2	Ensure promotional material for all University events includes the statement 'please contact us if you require a BSL interpreter'	Director of External Relations Deans and Directors	AY 18/19	COMPLETE - text is inclusive and requests contact if you have any accessibility requirements

	of Scotland.	3.7.3	For events that run for a week or more, identify one night when a BSL interpreter will be present	Director of External Relations Deans and Directors	AY 18/19	ONGOING
3.8	Democratic Participation - Our long-term goal: 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.	3.8.1	Promote opportunities for BSL users to be members of University committees and student/staff representative groups	Director of Academic and Corporate Governance	AY 18/19	ONGOING