



Fife College

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan
2018-2024



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

1. Introduction

This is our BSL plan for Fife College as requested by BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. It sets out our actions which we will strategically deliver over the period 2018 – 2024 and is framed around the relevant long term goals as detailed in the BSL National Plan.

The BSL National Plan, published 24 October 2017, was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

This plan aims to ensure equal access to services and support for BSL users at Fife College. As stated in the Fife College Regional Outcome Agreement and the Access and Inclusion Strategy, this plan will be completed in its final format by October 2018.

Fife College is committed to working with people who are D/deaf and Deafblind in order to support their contribution to the Fife College plan by consulting with BSL users and working towards protecting and supporting BSL, including in its tactile form.

Fife College will continue to engage with its partners and this include Fife Council, Deaf Action, Opportunities Fife, Skills Development Scotland, Fife College Student Association, NHS Fife, BSL users and their representatives during the implementation of the plan with ongoing monitoring. Fife College will contribute to a National Progress Report in 2020.

If you wish to comment on this plan please email learning@fife.ac.uk or submit in writing to the address: Fife College, Stenton Campus, Glenrothes, KY6 2RA.

If you prefer to submit a filmed BSL response we can also arrange for you to do this. Once we have a complete first draft we will add a BSL version of this plan to our website www.fife.ac.uk.

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BSL users can contact us via <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>

2. Short Summary of the Plan

By supporting the BSL National Plan, Fife College will target the appropriate actions that will improve the way BSL users find out about Fife College and ensure users have equal access to our services including, transition, admission and progression. We will also engage more with BSL users so they can provide guidance on making services accessible. The Fife College BSL plan will help us work with key external partners such as Fife Council, Fife High Schools, Deaf Action, Opportunities Fife, SDS and NHS Fife.

Some of the key actions we plan to put in place:

- Fife College will investigate the barriers BSL users feel impact their college experience.
- Fife College will work with BSL users to make the Fife College website and other digital engagement areas more accessible.
- All Fife college staff will be given the opportunity to take part in contactSCOTLAND–BSL online interpreting service training. This will initially be developed with the Student Experience and Engagement Department with a view to being rolled out college wide.
- All Fife College staff will be given the opportunity to take part in awareness sessions regarding BSL culture.
- All Fife College staff will be given the opportunity to access the BSL level 1 and 2 courses as part of their Continued Lifelong Professional Learning.

- Support staff will learn how to work collaboratively with schools regarding BSL users and their transition process.
- Support staff will learn how to improve engagement with parents who are BSL users/parents of BSL users so they can get further involved in their child’s transition between school and Fife College.
- Fife College will take action to ensure that current and prospective students are supported effectively throughout their learning journey.
- Fife College will use the responses from BSL users to develop actions for future plans.
- Fife College will provide a BSL/English Interpreter for Graduation if requested and provide a recording on the Fife College Website.
- Fife College Employability and Partnerships team will provide exit guidance and support
- Fife College Student Association will assist in raising awareness of BSL issues.

Fife College BSL plan refers to 8 areas of the National BSL plan:

- Scottish Public Services
- Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare
- School Education
- Post-School Education
- Training, Work and Social Security
- Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and the Arts
- Democracy

All ten areas of the national plan can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/10/3540>

3. Scottish Public Services

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

“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users”

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2024, we will:

- [Action 2] Analyse existing evidence we have about students and prospective students who use BSL in our college; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.
- We will do this by analysing trends in public data (i.e. Scottish census), looking at previous student engagement, investigating areas that BSL users feel are barriers to them attending Fife College, analyse BSL student performance indicators and also speaking with partner organisations about their experiences.
- [Actions 3, 4] improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.

- This will be done by producing guidance documents and videos for BSL students on the application process, funding process, wellbeing and Inclusion. We will also ask BSL users to help us identify any changes that may be required to our website to make it more accessible to the BSL community.
- [Action 5] Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, which allows BSL users to contact public and their sector services and for these services to contact them.
- By inviting ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to do awareness sessions for all front line staff and repeat these sessions each year for staff working with BSL users.
- [Action 6] Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training and enable them to take up such training.
- By making sure training materials are available on the Fife College staff gateway, we will also promote the accredited Level 1 and 2 BSL course at Fife College.

4. Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

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

“The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL”

By 2024, we will:

- Ensure that current and potential students have access to information in BSL regarding funding for childcare.
- Work collaboratively with our partners to identify families who may require BSL training by offering information and support on accessing our provisions.

5. School Education

We share the long-term goal for school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school”

By 2024, we will:

- In conjunction with Fife College Developing Young Workforce (DYW) Partnership team we will ensure a tighter transition process for young BSL users leaving school. This will include an extended transition, awareness sessions for new staff and facilitating interpreting services as and when required in partnership with the Deaf Communication Services.
- We will also explore how Fife College can work in partnership with local High Schools to offer BSL as a curriculum choice within our School College Partnership.

6. Post-School Education

We share the long-term goal for post- school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to postschool education if they wish to do so, and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s)”

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 25, 26 and 27 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2024, we will:

[Action 25] We will take action to ensure that students and prospective students who use BSL are properly supported. **This could include:**

- Providing accessible information about what BSL users can expect from the college.
- Full access to open days for prospective students who use BSL.
- Support throughout the student journey for students who use BSL (including completing application forms, interviews, applying for Disabled Students Allowance etc.)
- Support during the transition process, which needs to be agreed between the school and college.
- Access to information within the college campus.
- Provide an interpreter for Graduation, and if requested, provide a recording on the Fife College Website.
- [Action 26] Take on board guidance/advice produced by the SFC and others to ensure that across the college, staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect.
- Invite continuous feedback from students/prospective students and staff who use BSL over the coming year/18 months after adopting this plan.
- Commit to reviewing/refreshing this plan which includes more ‘local’ actions (based on that feedback) after the national progress report (due October 2020).
- [Action 27] Provide assistance (including examples) to students who use BSL to help complete SAAS application forms.
- By working with Deaf Community Services to provide interpreters to work with Fife College staff and the student to complete SAAS application forms.

7. Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish 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 Actions in this section are the same as action 35 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2024, we will:

- [Action 35] Raise awareness of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme for students who use BSL towards the end of their course, so that they can benefit from the support it provides when they enter the world of work.
- We will work in partnership with the Fife College Employability & Partnerships Team to signpost students to a range of information, advice and guidance in BSL. A BSL interpreter will also be provided, if requested, for exit reviews. We will also work with employers to provide advice on the needs of BSL users.

8. Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“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”

By 2024, we will:

- Take steps to ensure that health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) within the college/university are fully accessible to students who use BSL.
- Ensure web pages are accessible to BSL users and ensure visibility for users of BSL.
- Ensure the service is accessible through use of Contact Scotland/having BSL interpreters available.
- Ensure that Fife College’s recently employed Mental Health Adviser has access to information and priority for future training sessions.

9. Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland”

By 2024, we will:

- Take action to ensure that extracurricular/recreational activities offered within the college/university are accessible to students who use BSL.
- Ensuring that Fife College continue to promote their culture of Inclusivity and ensuring that all activities are accessible to all.

10. Democracy

We share the long-term goal for democracy 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”

By 2024, we will:

- Work in partnership with Fife College Student Association (FCSA) to ensure that all inter-college elections are accessible to BSL users, having interpreters for commencement speeches and/or election campaigns, if requested.
- Encouraging BSL users to be involved with Fife College Culture including class representatives and FCSA volunteers.

11. What Happens Next?

- The first draft of this plan was available for initial consultation in June.
- Fife College did attend the consultation organised by Fife Council held in Kirkcaldy Town House, City Chambers on 28th June 2018. A first draft version was available for consultation
- A final draft version was available for comment in August before it was considered by Fife College Senior Management.
- A final version of the Plan will be published by October 2018 in English and BSL.
- Fife College will contribute to a National Progress Report in 2020.

Please contact Michelle Sweeney michellesweeney@fife.ac.uk if you want to be involved as we further develop/implement the actions in our plan.

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