

Board of Management Students, Staff & Equalities Committee

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 24 October 2018
Paper No.	SSEC2-J
Agenda Item	13
Subject of Paper	British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Gillian Plunkett – Student Experience Director
Date of production	17 September 2018
Action	For Noting

1. Recommendations

The Student, Staff and Equalities Committee (SSEC) is asked to note the City of Glasgow College British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan at Appendix A which was approved by SMT on 26 September 2018.

2. Purpose of Paper

This paper provides background information and context to raise awareness among the SSEC of the College's obligations under the British Sign Language National Plan.

3. Strategic Context and Key Points

- 3.1 Promoting equality of opportunity and outcome remains a key national priority for the Scottish Government and the College positively shares this commitment through its Strategic Priority 2 – **'To enable individuals to excel and realise their full potential'**. This is also reinforced and delivered through our Student Experience Strategy and Access and Inclusion Initiatives, where 'Individual needs are anticipated at every step of the student journey and are met in a proactive and meaningful way.'
- 3.2 The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act was passed in October 2015 with the subsequent publication of the 'British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023'. The BSL National Plan sets out Scotland's ambition to be the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.
- 3.3 The Act requires local BSL Action Plans to be developed and published by all Local Authorities, Colleges and Universities, and National Public Bodies where relevant to their function. The National Plan is framed under ten long term goals with 70 actions to be achieved by 2020.
- 3.4 National guidance on the initial development of local plans was provided via a template on the understanding that ongoing feedback from BSL users would be used to reshape and revise local plans as necessary.
- 3.5 The City of Glasgow College BSL Plan takes into account the long-term goals of the National Plan, where these are relevant to our work in the College and is committed to further development and improvement to support BSL users.

4. Impact and Implications

- 4.1 The College will be required to contribute to the national progress report in 2020 and it is essential that the College is prepared to respond positively to this policy direction.

- 4.2 The cost of producing the Welcome Video and BSL version of the College BSL Plan is £2,520. The professional services of an ITV crew who provide BSL translation services for ITV programmes and produce their own productions, has been procured. The company have also offered student work experience as part of their engagement which will be taken forward separately.

- 4.3 One of the actions within the College BSL Action Plan is to consider the cost implications of BSL interpretation services required to implement some areas of the Action Plan and ongoing costs. It should also be noted that there is a significant shortage of Sign Language Interpreters in Scotland and as a result of the requirement to develop local plans across public services this is likely to be exacerbated.



**British Sign Language (BSL)
College Action Plan 2018 - 2023**

Contents

Section 1 - Introduction	3
1.1 Overview - British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan	3
1.2 College Overview	4
1.3 Current BSL Provision	6
Table 1	7
Table 2.....	7
1.4 Lead Officer	8
Section 2 - City of Glasgow College BSL Action Plan 2018-2023	8
2.1: Across all our Services	8
2.2 Post-School Education	10
Section 3 - Our contribution to the other relevant long-term government goals	11
3.1. Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare	11
3.2. Training, Work and Social Security	12
3.3. Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing	12
3.4. Democracy	13

Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Overview - British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act was passed in October 2015 with the subsequent publication of the 'British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023'. The BSL National Plan sets out Scotland's ambition to be the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

BSL is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary, with its own dialects and rich variation. Wherever we refer to 'BSL users' we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss, and who's first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

The BSL National Plan is framed around ten specific long-term goals covering:

- Scottish Public Services;
- Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare;
- School Education;
- Post-School Education;
- Training, Work and Social Security;
- Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- Transport;
- Culture and the Arts;
- Justice and;
- Democracy.

The Act requires local BSL Action Plans to be developed and published by all Local Authorities, Post-Education establishments such as colleges and universities, and National Public Bodies. The City of Glasgow College BSL Plan will take into account the long-term goals of the National Plan, where these are relevant to our work in the College.

1.2 College Overview

City of Glasgow College is the largest and most diverse college in Scotland welcoming over 30,000 students annually and offering a wide range of educational and training opportunities at levels ranging from foundation courses through to Higher National Diplomas in Building degree programmes, in association with our Higher Education partners, Engineering and Energy, Business, Creative Industries, Education and Society, Leisure and Lifestyle and Nautical Studies.

Approximately 41% of our students are from Glasgow, with the remainder from other parts of Scotland, the UK, and from many other countries across the world.



A strategic priority for City of Glasgow College is ‘to enable individuals to excel and realise their full potential’. To this end the College is committed to meeting the challenge of social and economic inclusion, by ensuring that applicants and students are met with fairness and equality. At City of Glasgow College we aim to anticipate individual need, identify barriers to participation and eliminate or mitigate these to ensure that everyone gets a fair and equal opportunity to an outstanding student experience.

Our BSL Action Plan focuses on the whole of the student journey from pre-entry through to graduation and beyond, recognising the importance of personalised



learning and support that meet the needs of a diverse student community. We have collaborated with our students, staff, Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs), and specialist organisations such as Action on Hearing Loss and Deaf Connections to inspire, influence and shape our approach. We will continue to invite feedback from students, staff and prospective students who use BSL to help us further develop and progress our work in this area.

Our BSL Action Plan will be reviewed bi-annually, and we will record progress and feedback on actions which will in turn inform the National Progress Report in October 2020 and further influence our long-term actions to be undertaken before 2023.

1.3 Current BSL Provision

The College's current BSL provision primarily reflects our responsibilities to enable access for students with disabilities under the Equalities Act, including those who are BSL users. Current services to BSL users include;-

- Admissions procedures and selection criteria that support fair access. The College guarantees all applicants who meet the course entry qualifications an interview where there are places available including BSL users. College entry requirements and selection criteria are reviewed annually to ensure there are no barriers to entry.
- Student funding procedures that support students with a disability ensuring that adequate time off for medical and other appointments do not affect funding payments.
- Support from a Sign Language Interpreter during interviews and pre-entry events for all applicants who require this support.
- Careers advice, support and guidance for applicants who are BSL users and who may be unsuccessful in gaining entry to the course of their choice.
- Specific fire alert arrangements are in place for all BSL users.
- Individual needs assessments are undertaken for BSL users and a Personal Learning Support Plan is created (PLSP).
- Specific support is available to complete a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) application.
- Sign Language Interpreters are available in class and note-taking is available.
- Alternative assessment arrangements are put in place where required.
- Equipment loan is available together with specialist software.
- An assigned lecturer within the Learning Support team, who provides a single point of contact for all referrals and support for BSL users.
- Evening classes in BSL language Levels 1 and 2 delivered generally and promoted for staff.

Table 1 below shows the total number of students at City of Glasgow College, over the last four years, who have declared as Deaf or Hard of Hearing and required a Personal Learning Support Plan.

Note: There will be students who have declared and who do not require a PLSP.

Table 1. Total students who declared Deaf or Hard of Hearing over last 4 yrs

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Total Deaf/Hard of Hearing students each Session	41	38	24	30

Table 2 below shows those students who declared Deaf or Hard of Hearing and who used a Sign Language Interpreter in class to allow them to access the curriculum.

Table 2. Total students who were BSL users and had SLI in class over last 4 yrs

Faculty	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Building, Engineering & Energy	1	2		2
Business		1		5
Creative Industries	6	5	8	6
Education & Society	3	3	4	1
Leisure & Lifestyle	10	9	7	1
Students who a Sign Language Interpreter (SLI) in class	20	20	19	15

Approximately 50% of students each year were evening class students in Decorative Glass and Cookery classes and there is evidence that the same students return year on year. Overall the College spent £120,000 to Sign Language Interpreters the majority coming from Bursary Funds and a smaller amount from Disabled Students Allowance for HE students.

1.4 Lead Officer

Comments on this BSL Action Plan are welcome and should be directed to the Lead Officer:

Dianne Gallacher
Head of Student Development
City of Glasgow College
190 Cathedral St
Glasgow G4 0RF
Tel. 0141 375 5363

Email: Dianne.gallacher@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk

British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)*

** contactSCOTLAND-BSL is the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service which enables BSL users to contact public services and for these services to contact BSL users, with the support of an interpreter.*

Section 2 - City of Glasgow College BSL Action Plan 2018-2023

2.1: Across all our 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 - by 2024 we will:

Point	Outcome & Related Actions	Lead	By
2.1.1	Analyse existing evidence regarding students and prospective students who use BSL to establish a baseline upon which to develop KPIs.	Learning Support	Dec 2018
2.1.2	Develop a BSL Welcome page on the website for students	Learning Support / Marketing	Jan 2019
2.1.3	Promote the Scottish Government's nationally-funded BSL online interpreting video relay service 'contact SCOTLAND-BSL' and offer training for front-line staff in its use	Learning Support	Oct 2018

2.1.4	Incorporate BSL online interpreting video relay service's logo into the college website and materials	Marketing	Dec 2018
2.1.5	Provide BSL awareness and communication training for the wider Student Services team	Learning Support	Completed July 2018
2.1.6	Offer all members of the Student Services team the opportunity to gain a Level 1 BSL qualification	Learning Support	July 2020
2.1.7	Deliver CPD opportunities in BSL to all staff who work with BSL users	Learning Support	June 2019
2.1.8	Deliver CPD opportunities to all lecturers in 'working with Sign Language Interpreters in class.	Learning Support	July 2019
2.1.9	Develop a Deaf & BSL Awareness Information pack for the wider college staff	Learning Support	Oct 2018
2.1.10	Deliver CPD in BSL awareness raising with the college's SMT and BoM	Director - Student Experience	June 2019
2.1.11	Raise awareness of Scottish Government policy regarding BSL, National and Local BSL Plans and their requirements, at the college Senior Management Team and the Board of Management	Director - Student Experience	June 2019
2.1.12	Discuss the possibility of HR including on Applications 'competence or a qualification in BSL as a desirable criteria for all public-facing college posts	Human Resources	July 2020
2.1.13	Ensure the provision of BSL interpreters for key specific College events, including our Graduation Ceremonies.	Marketing	Nov 2018
2.1.14	Ensure that the cost implications of BSL interpretation services and associated staff training are considered in annual budgets.	Finance	July 2019
2.1.15	Discuss with HR the inclusion of BSL information on staff recruitment documentation and the website, to highlight support available for employees	Human Resources	Aug 2021
2.1.16	Work with local transport providers to provide travel information which is accessible and well-publicised	Learning Support	Dec 2018

2.2 Post-School Education

We share the long-term goal for all 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 post-school education if they wish to do so, and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject’

Our Actions - by 2024 we will:

Point	Outcome & Related Actions	Lead	By
2.2.1	Produce the college BSL Action Plan in an accessible BSL format for the college website.	Learning Support	Oct 2018
2.2.2	Ensure access for BSL users to open days, welcome and orientation events who are BSL users, with Sign language Interpreters and a Quiet Zone area available if required.	Learning Support/ Events Marketing / Student Services	Complete Aug 2018
2.2.3	Ensure promotional and marketing materials for all college events include the statement ‘please contact us if you require a BSL Interpreter via contact SCOTLAND-BSL’	Marketing & Design	June 2019
2.2.4	Invite BSL users to orientation and ‘Getting Ready 4 College events’ before the start of their course	Student Support & Wellbeing	Aug 2019
2.2.5	Ensure Sign Language Interpreters have access to presentations, handouts and glossaries of technical and significant vocabulary in advance of classes, to better assist them in preparation for in-class student support	Learning Support	Aug 2019
2.2.6	Discuss the possibility of all college student surveys or focus groups being available in BSL format or have an SLI in attendance	City SA/ Performance / Learning Support	May 2020
2.2.7	Hold a feedback event for BSL users each block to gather opinions and comment regarding inclusion, support, teaching and the general college service delivery, further influencing our future BSL actions.	Learning Support / Student Engagement	June 2023

2.2.8	Help to facilitate a regular social meeting/gathering for BSL users, so that students from different college courses have an opportunity to meet and socialise.	Learning Support / Student Association	June 2019
2.2.9	Review Alternative Assessment Arrangements (AAAs) for BSL users, to discuss demonstrating their knowledge, skills and expertise in a way that is accessible to them.	Learning Support	June 2020
2.2.10	Ensure BSL users take part in transitions planning and other moving-on and employment opportunities offered by the college.	Student Support & Wellbeing	June 2020
2.2.11	Assist BSL users to complete their university Statement and help submit SAAS application if required.	Student Support & Wellbeing	June 2019

Section 3 - Our contribution to the other relevant long-term government goals

We will also address other BSL National Plan delivery areas which are relevant to our college learner journey and which will enhance the student experience.

3.1. Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

We share the long-term goal for family support, early learning and childcare 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'

Point	Outcome & Related Actions	Lead	By
3.1.1	Discuss the promotion of opportunities to learn BSL to students on the College's early years and care provision.	Learning Support/ Careers	June 2019

3.2. 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’

Point	Outcome & Related Actions	Lead	By
3.2.1	Raise awareness of the UK Government ‘Access to Work’ scheme for BSL users, for employees and students entering the workplace.	Learning Support/ Careers/HR	June 2019

3.3. 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’

Point	Outcome & Related Actions	Lead	By
3.3.1	Take steps to ensure that health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) within the college are fully accessible to students	Student Support & Wellbeing	June 2019

Cont. Our contribution to the other relevant long-term government goals

3.4. 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”

Point	Outcome & Related Actions	Lead	By
3.4.1	Review the availability of key college documents such as Strategic Plans and Regional Outcome Agreements, being produced in BSL format	Learning Support / Corporate Development	June 2019
3.4.2	Arrange for SLIs to be in attendance if required at Student Association events and functions such as Class Rep meetings or hustings events, to ensure BSL users are part of the wider college community.	Learning Support / Student Association	June 2019

