



Fife College



**British Sign Language
(BSL) Plan 2024-2030**

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* Throughout the plan, we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss. We also accept that the majority of BSL users are deaf and deafblind, as well as the fact that there are many deaf and deafblind people who do not use BSL. This plan will differentiate where appropriate whether an action is applicable to those who do not use BSL.

Section 2: Introduction

National

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 was given Royal Assent in October 2015. The purpose of the Act is to promote the use of British Sign Language (BSL) as a recognised language in Scotland.

In October 2017, the Scottish Government produced Scotland's first BSL National Plan, which Scottish Ministers were required to do by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

Fife College

As requested by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, Fife College first published their BSL Plan in October 2018 which set out actions that were strategically delivered over the period 2018 – 2024. In March 2020, a progress report was also published by Fife College.

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 they 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 Deaf Communication Services, Fife Council, Fife high schools, Deaf Action, Opportunities Fife, SDS and NHS Fife.

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 6th May 2024 (information and date are to be confirmed).

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 which 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 2026.

If you wish to comment on this plan, please email inclusion@fife.ac.uk or submit in writing to the address below. 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, a BSL version of the plan will be added to the Fife College website, www.fife.ac.uk

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Section 3: Engagement and Consultation

Fife College has an ongoing collaborative partnership with Fife Council Deaf Communication Services who have a strong history of partnership working and engagement with Deaf and Deafblind people across Fife. During the consultation for the Fife BSL Local Plan 2024-2029, Fife College will participate in all activities that will raise awareness around the BSL plans for Fife.

During these events BSL interpreters will be present to ensure full participation to suit individual communication needs. Feedback from the event will be used to finalise Fife College BSL Plan.

Further consultation will also be carried out with Fife College Student Association, staff and students to gather feedback specific to needs of BSL users within the college, this will take place alongside the wider local events.

Section 4: Fife College BSL Plan

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

4.1: Outcome 1 - Delivering the BSL National Plan 2023-2029

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.

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 2 & 5 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029, we will:

[Action 2] Work with listed authorities and the BSL community to establish best practice, share knowledge and improve the development and implementation of BSL local plans, as required by the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015.

Fife College will continue to work with Fife Council BSL Local Plan group to collaborate with other service providers to input on the wider regional BSL plan.

[Actions 5] Publish a progress report on the actions in 2026, the midway point for this plan. As a living plan, this will enable us to reflect on what further actions are required to help us meet our longer-term goals and overall vision for BSL in Scotland. In addition to the work being undertaken by the Scottish Government, listed authorities covered by the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 are required to publish their own BSL local plans. As such, individual bodies may commit themselves to other specific actions to promote BSL.

Fife College will work with partner organisations to provide a BSL version and a written update of the Fife College BSL plan, outlining progress made on actions so far.

Fife College will continue to engage with the Deaf Community in Fife (twice yearly) and will provide a progress report in 3 years to update each action and the outcomes delivered.

4.2: Outcome 2 - BSL Accessibility

To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people's awareness of communication tools.

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 6 & 8 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029, we will:

[Action 6] Improve accessibility of the Scottish Government website for BSL users. Information should be in a readily accessible format and be consistent across the platform. We will strengthen our guidance and share our learning across the wider public sector to help increase accessibility standards for BSL users.

Fife College will improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL, including making our website accessible to BSL users. Fife College will continue to add to the library of guidance documents and videos that have been created for BSL students on the application and funding process.

Fife College will request support from BSL users to help us identify any changes that might be required to Fife College's website to ensure accessibility for the BSL community.

[Action 8] Continue to promote the use of Contact Scotland BSL, Scotland's BSL online interpreting Video Relay Service, making improvements to this service to ensure it meets the needs of BSL users.

Fife College will continue to promote Contact Scotland BSL by rolling out staff training to all frontline staff. The Contact Scotland BSL app is currently available on all college mobile devices which will allow BSL user to log in and use the service. Training will be provided to allow staff to assist BSL users on campus registering for the service for the first time.

Fife College will 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. In partnership with Deaf Communication Service (DCS), we will aim to offer Deaf Awareness/BSL Cultural awareness. Training will be available to all staff, to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and promote best practice.

4.3: Outcome 3 - Children, Young People and their Families

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 they can reach their full potential.

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 15 & 21 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029, we will:

[Action 15] Continue to support education authorities who have duties to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their pupils, including those who are deaf under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. This includes the presumption of mainstream which enables children to learn in an environment that best suits their needs. Families are supported through the Scottish advice service for additional support or learning, Enquire, that receives funding from the Scottish Government.

Fife College will continue to provide support to BSL users under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 by supporting the BSL student journey including completing student application forms, interviews, applying for Disabled Student Allowance etc and access to information within the college campus.

[Action 21] Introduce Scotland's first National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy in this Parliamentary term to ensure there is a joined-up approach so all disabled young people can experience a supported and positive transition to adult life. The Scottish Government BSL Policy team will ensure that BSL users' lived experience is fed into the development of the strategy.

Fife College will ensure that all BSL users are provided with the support and advice required to ensure positive transition to Further/Higher Education. Providing accessible information about what BSL users can expect from college and full access to open days for prospective students who use BSL.

Fife College will continue to support BSL users and their families to take part fully in the college experience. 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

4.4: Outcome 4 - Access to Employability

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.

Our Action in this section is the same as action 22 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029, we will:

[Action 22] Develop opportunities for deaf and deafblind young people to learn about transitioning into and navigating the workplace, helping them understand the support available to them and develop their skills. This will include how to work with BSL/ English interpreters.

We will work in partnership with the Fife College Employability 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.

4.5: Outcome 5 - Health and Wellbeing

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

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 26 & 27 in the BSL National Plan. By 2029, we will:

[Action 26] We will work with our partners to implement and measure our core mental health standards. This will include a focus on ensuring information and services are accessible to all individuals, including those who use BSL.

Fife College 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. Fife College will work in partnership with Deaf Communication Service to ensure that interpreters are available at all appointments with the Health and Wellbeing team for BSL Users.

[Action 27] In line with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Action Plan, we will improve equality, inclusion and diversity training for the mental health and wellbeing workforce, including to promote existing BSL training to the workforce.

Fife College will ensure that Fife College's Health and Wellbeing team have access to information and priority for future training sessions. Fife College will continue to share data and information interdepartmentally to ensure that all students are given the most appropriate support. Appropriate staff training will be arranged and refreshed as required.

4.6: Outcome 6 – Celebrating BSL Culture

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 of Scotland.

Our Action in this section is the same as action 32 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029 we will:

[Action 32] Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.

Fife College will continue to work in partnership with the Deaf Communication Service to ensure staff and students have the opportunities to celebrate BSL culture.

4.7: Outcome 7 - BSL Data

To strengthen the evidence and data on the BSL community in Scotland to better inform decision making in public policy and service design

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 37 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029, we will:

[Action 37] Develop and implement a strategic plan for BSL data, building on existing information and research, to set out how we will better understand the BSL community in Scotland relating to demographics and language use, as well as explore issues such as accessibility and access to services.

Fife College will analyse existing evidence we have about students and prospective students who use BSL in Fife College; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.

4.8: Outcome 8 – Access to Transport

BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.

Fife College will continue to work in partnership with the Deaf Communication Service to ensure that any relevant information and updates regarding access to travel are shared with Fife College staff and students.

4.9: Outcome 9 – Access to Justice

BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.

Fife College will continue to work in partnership with the Deaf Communication Service to ensure that any relevant information and updates regarding access to justice are shared with Fife College staff and students.

4.10: Outcome 10 - Democratic Participation

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

Our Actions in this section are the same as actions 45 in the BSL National Plan.

By 2029, we will:

[Action 45] We will facilitate BSL support in electoral campaigns and the election process to ensure BSL users can make informed decisions with access to all relevant information.

Fife College will ensure that all BSL users are able to participate in the college democratic process by ensuring that BSL Users can make informed decisions with access to all relevant information. 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. Encourage BSL users to be involved with Fife College Culture including class representatives and FCSA volunteers.

Section 5: What happens next?

Fife College's second BSL Plan will be made available on the college website in English and BSL Format.

We will continue to contribute to the Fife Council Local Plan meetings to progress with the implementation of Fife's BSL Plan for 2023-2029.

Continue to attend and contribute to the accessible meetings which take place twice annually to enable BSL users to give feedback on how the implementation of the plan is impacting on their lives and discuss areas where further improvement is required in relation to Fife College.

Complete a progression report and present this to the relevant governance groups and submit the progress report to the Scottish Government after three years.

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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