

Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal
Argyll and Bute Council British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030

Intended outcome of proposal
The purpose of the plan is to reduce barriers experienced by users of British Sign Language.

Description of proposal
<p>Following the publication of Scottish Government's second National British Sign Language plan, we have produced our second local British Sign Language plan. We have aligned our actions with the Scottish Government's National BSL Plan (2023-2029).</p> <p>Note that we are not trying to contribute to every one of the Scottish Government's goals. The council is only one organisation. Other organisations, such as the NHS will contribute other actions.</p> <p>We have tried to balance the needs of BSL users with what is realistic for us to resource.</p> <p>While some actions in the British Sign Language plan may benefit deaf people more widely, the plan focuses on BSL users. Services offered to non-BSL users are out of scope of this plan.</p>

Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes
The goals and actions in the Argyll and Bute Council Sign Language Plan 2024-2030 align with the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan 2023-2029.

Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Chris Carr
Job title	OD Project Officer
Department	
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Jane Fowler
Job title	Head of Customer Support Services
Department	
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	15 July 2024

Who will deliver the proposal?
Officers from across the council will be responsible for delivering actions in the plan.

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement

Discussions took place with officers from Live Argyll, NHS, HSCP, Education, Employability, Governance and Law, Community Justice during the development of the draft plan. Any actions in the draft plan which subsequently went out to public consultation were agreed by the officers responsible for their delivery.

In preparing the plan, we encountered a number of barriers including the identification of our Deaf community within Argyll and Bute. Unlike other areas, we do not have a Deaf Club or other organisation which can be used as a focus for consultation activity. (We tried several approaches to identify members of our Deaf community, none of which yielded positive results.)

Given we were unable to identify groups or individuals to target, we carried out a short, online consultation on the draft plan in an attempt to gather feedback on our proposals. This consultation was carried out over a six-week period in May/June 2024.

The draft plan and consultation questions were posted on the website along with links to the British Sign Language translation of the consultation. Translations of both the draft plan and the consultation questions were uploaded to YouTube.

The consultation was promoted on the council's consultation webpages and via the council's Keep in the Loop communications channels and social media.

We received two responses to the consultation.

Data

The 2011 Census and 2022 Census questions relating to British Sign Language are not directly comparable.

In 2011, the Census question asked: 'Do you use a language other than English at home?' with BSL being offered as a tick-box option.

- 152 (0.2%) people aged 3+ were recorded in the Census as using BSL at home within Argyll and Bute.
- This figure compares with 0.2% nationally.

In 2022: the Census question asked: 'Can you use British Sign Language (BSL)? (Yes/No.)

- 2,137 (2.5%) people age 3+ were recorded as being able to use BSL.
- This figure compares with 2.2% nationally.
- There is some variation in ability to use BSL by age group, with the age group 3-15 having the highest rate of ability (5%). The 65+ age group has the lowest rate of ability at 1%.

The difference in the questions undoubtedly helps to explain the difference in responses.

Other information

None.

Gaps in evidence

It would be helpful to obtain more information about levels of BSL use within Argyll and Bute. The headline figure for 2022 should be treated with a degree of caution; it is unlikely to be a true indicator of the level of demand for services.

Section 3: Impact of proposal**Impact on service users:**

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		✓		
Disability			✓	
Ethnicity		✓		
Sex		✓		
Gender reassignment		✓		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy and Maternity		✓		
Religion		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		✓		
Island populations		✓		
Low income		✓		
Low wealth		✓		
Material deprivation		✓		
Area deprivation		✓		
Socio-economic background		✓		
Communities of place		✓		
Communities of interest			✓	

If you have identified any impacts on service users, explain what these will be.

The purpose of the plan is to reduce barriers experienced by users of British Sign Language; the plan should therefore have a positive impact on Deaf and Deaf/Blind users of BSL.

While the BSL plan focuses on the Deaf community, some actions may have positive impacts on other. For example, benefits to other groups may arise from the following actions:

- Compliance with Scottish Government's inclusion communication regulation when this comes into effect.
- Continuing to provide the Electoral Commission's training information to all relevant electoral staff, and we will signpost staff to materials about accessibility.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

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Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		✓		
Disability		✓		
Ethnicity		✓		
Sex		✓		
Gender reassignment		✓		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy and Maternity		✓		
Religion		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		✓		
Island populations		✓		
Low income		✓		
Low wealth		✓		
Material deprivation		✓		
Area deprivation		✓		
Socio-economic background		✓		
Communities of place		✓		
Communities of interest		✓		

If you have identified any impacts on service deliverers, explain what these will be.

N/A

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

N/A

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

N/A

Section 4: Interdependencies

<p>Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?</p>	<p>No</p>
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<p>Details of knock-on effects identified</p>
<p>N/A</p>

Section 5: Monitoring and review

<p>How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?</p>
<p>The BSL plan is a high-level document. One of the first actions is to produce a more detailed implementation plan. This will enable more robust timelines for deliver of actions and performance monitoring arrangements to be put in place.</p> <p>The BSL plan will be a standing agenda item for meetings of the Equality Forum. This will ensure progress is monitored across the life of the plan. While we have not opted for having a joint plan with NHS Highland, progress with both plans will be reported to the Forum. This will enable awareness of and coordination between the two.</p> <p>In addition, we have committed to producing a progress report in 2027, half-way through the life of the plan to ensure activity continues across the life of the plan and isn't concentrated at either its commencement or at its end.</p>