



# **NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde British Sign Language (BSL) Plan**

October 2018

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## **Foreword**

### **John Brown CBE, Chairman, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde**

I am delighted to present NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde's British Sign Language Plan.

The Plan forms part of the organisation's wider work on Equality & Human Rights and reflects our commitment to providing fair and equitable services for all.

Produced in response to the British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015, this document will align with the Scottish Government's national plan.

However, this is by no means the start of our work around BSL.

We are already involved in a range of activities to help raise awareness of BSL as a language and culture and to make sure our patients have access to BSL interpreting whenever they need it. These include -

- Our in-house BSL interpreting service and the introduction of BSL Online Interpreting across all sites
- A health improvement practitioner for Mental Health and the Deaf community
- A dedicated You Tube channel for information in BSL
- Staff training in BSL and communication skills
- The establishment of BSL Health Champions

These important developments have been the result of active engagement with the Deaf BSL community and we are indebted to the many individuals and groups who have worked with us. The action plan outlined in this document will also be subject to continued consultation to ensure we provide the best service possible for our Deaf BSL patients.

We look forward to delivering the many varied elements of this BSL Plan with an ongoing commitment to high standards and the empowerment of our Deaf and Deafblind community.

## 1. Introduction to the British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015

1.1 The British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015 requires Ministers to ensure that public authorities facilitate the promotion of the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL) within their area of responsibility. Public bodies such as NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) are required to prepare a plan which:

- sets out measures to facilitate the promotion and understanding of BSL
- sets out timescales for this work
- is as consistent as possible to the national plan

1.2 The Scottish Government plan was published on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Public bodies are required to have in place their own BSL Plan within 12 months of this date.

The organisation must also:

- publish a draft plan and consult on it with BSL users<sup>1</sup>;
- ensure the consultation is accessible to Deafblind people;
- take into account representations arising from the consultation in the final plan.

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<sup>1</sup> ^ Whenever we refer to 'BSL users' we mean D/deaf and /or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language

## **2. Consultation with BSL Users and Staff**

### **2.1 BSL Users**

NHSGGC worked in partnership with 4 of the 5 local authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) in our area to consult with BSL users. NHSGGC already engages with Deaf people and this informed the consultation events. At each event we highlighted what was in our draft BSL Act Action Plan to gather feedback on the proposals and to seek other suggestions for actions.

10 events were held over a 5 month period:

- two in Glasgow City;
- one each in Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire;

In total, more than 100 BSL users participated in these events. The views and ideas of participants were used to inform the final NHSGGC BSL Action Plan.

In addition, an event was held on the 23rd May where eight mental health professionals and 8 Deaf service users met to discuss psychological therapies for Deaf people. A well known Deaf comedian, John Smith, worked with the group to deliver this innovative approach to engagement and consultation.

Deafblind people were present but in small numbers in the consultations. We will continue to involve Deafblind people during the implementation phase of our BSL Act Action Plan.

BSL users fed back on each theme in the National Plan as follows:

### **2.2 Early Years**

- The promotion of a bond between hearing parents and Deaf children is very important
- Health Visitor should support this bond through learning basic BSL and signposting hearing parents to Deaf organisations / BSL classes
- Cochlear implants should be described as a choice not a recommendation by NHS staff
- A lot of Deaf people don't know what the Health Visitors role is so more information on this should be made available

## **2.3 Training, Work and Social Security**

Lack of employment contributes to poorer mental health for Deaf people and higher levels of poverty

- **Provision of information**

- Use of technology such as QR codes (to link to video material on a mobile phone or tablet) is a good development to make information accessible to Deaf people
- Use of chat room / open forum / informal drop in to discuss health information would be useful
- Where information is located is important so that Deaf people can access it easily and know it is from a reliable source
- Deaf people view NHS as trustworthy source of information
- The Deaf community should be involved in the production of information in BSL

## **2.4 Access to Services**

- **Patient Records**

- Electronic records need to be flagged to health staff in primary care and acute services
- so that staff can prepare for Deaf patients if they have no knowledge about Deafness
- to prompt staff to book an interpreter
- to indicate if the patient can read English or not e.g. where BSL is the persons first language
- to schedule appointments

- **Psychological Therapies**

- There is a lack of choice for BSL users to be able to access a BSL specialist, such as a psychologist who signs, in mental health services generally
- Having an interpreter in an appointment is essential
- Online BSL resources are limited
- Getting to an appointment is difficult as people don't understand how NHS systems work
- Health improvement information is a key priority
- Staff seem keen to learn BSL to support Deaf clients (friendly sign) and this should be encouraged e.g. providing training and time to do the training

- Having access to the same interpreter at allocated appointments who is trained for working in mental health settings would improve the service
  - Mental health services do not have an awareness of BSL and Deaf culture and this can lead to misunderstandings
  - Constant, clear communication and an awareness of BSL culture is the key for the best service for Deaf BSL users
- **Staff training**
    - To promote BSL culture more staff should learn to sign to be welcoming to BSL using patients
    - Deaf culture should be included in the training
    - There should be training on how to work with interpreters
    - A 'protocol' is needed on how to engage with Deaf people in services – do's and don'ts
    - There must be greater awareness of the policy of using the online interpreting service
- **Interpreting**
    - Family are still being used as interpreters by health staff
    - The online interpreting service relies on WiFi being available
    - Quality of interpreters is an issue with some not being as proficient as others in health appointments
    - Appointments are still being missed because interpreters are not there
    - When interpreters are being booked, staff should inform the interpreting service of the likely duration of the appointment as interpreters are not being booked for long enough in some instances
    - Interpreters do not necessarily get information about the patient appointment

## **2.5 Consultation with Staff**

NHSGGC formed a staff group made up of representatives which included Glasgow City HSCP to bring a service perspective to the BSL Act Plan. The staff had a series of themed meetings reflecting on feedback from BSL users and Deafblind people from the public events.

The staff represented the following areas: Children Services; Psychology; Medical Records; Speech and Language Therapy; Health Improvement / Mental Health, Public Health information and the Equality and Human Rights Team.

This group of staff was able to reflect on what BSL users said at our public meetings from a service provider's point of view to inform the actions in the plan.

### 3. BSL initiatives already in place

NHSGGC has engaged BSL users for over 5 years to improve services in NHSGGC. Many initiatives have been ongoing to ensure we have created continuous feedback from this community. These include:

#### 3.1 BSL Champions

The BSL Health Champions work with NHSGGC, acting as advisors from the BSL community to inform us of the continuing issues for Deaf people in accessing and using healthcare services. The Champions pass on information about healthcare related issues and NHS services to Deaf people in BSL.



The Champions have produced resources such as a leaflet entitled 'Your Rights to an Interpreter' leaflet for Deaf BSL patients and a poster for NHS waiting areas to encourage Deaf people to ask for a BSL interpreter and inform staff of their responsibilities in ensuring interpreting provision.

They have also developed a BSL Health Champions Facebook page which has improved interaction with BSL service users and support organisations.

With regards to training, the Champions have delivered 4 training sessions to University of Glasgow nursing students and 2 training sessions at Maryhill Health and Care Centre for staff.

#### 3.2 Interpreting Service

Since 2013 NHSGGC Equality and Human Rights Team (EHRT), along with the Interpreting Service, have engaged with BSL users to improve the service. This involved more than 200 Deaf people feeding back on their experience of the interpreting provision in NHSGGC.



To increase staff awareness of the need to book BSL interpreters, NHSGGC has produced two videos for staff; one to show how and when to book interpreters for BSL users, the other a guide to using online interpreting.

The EHRT established a BSL Patient Reference group to assist in reviewing and evaluating feedback to improve the Interpreting Service. The group has 13 members who have established terms of reference over the two meetings held. Actions agreed from the meetings have been implemented e.g. staff guidelines for working with BSL interpreters and the promotion of BSL online interpreting.

### 3.3 Online BSL interpreting

The development of online interpreting for BSL users has been a welcome development for staff and some of our Deaf community. The mini laptops have been used in our Emergency Departments as planned but also in Acute wards as they have followed the patient through their patient journey. This has now been rolled out and there is at least one laptop for online interpreting in every site across NHGSSC - 35 in total.



Staff and patients have given positive feedback on using online interpreting. Limitations on WiFi provision are the only negative comments received so far.

### 3.4 BSL Drama

NHSGGC have worked with volunteers within the Deaf Community to use drama as a means of improving awareness of BSL as a language and culture. This work was supported by 3 students studying on the Bachelor of Arts course in Drama BSL in and English at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Performances are delivered in working NHS environments such as hospital foyers and health centre waiting areas providing an opportunity for staff to meet Deaf people in a non-clinical setting.



To date the group have worked on 5 different drama projects with 22 separate performances, including 2 pantomimes and a play about mental health and Deafness.

### 3.5 BSL Classes for staff

Since October 2016 NHSGGC has offered staff a 10 week course teaching basic conversational and health related signs. The course content includes

signs specifically relating to the working practice of the participants and the classes include BSL awareness. On completion of the short course staff are encouraged to take up further training in BSL, including level 1 courses as part of Personal Development Planning. More than 150 staff have participated so far.

### 3.6 BSL Mediator

The BSL Mediator's role is to meet Deaf people to ensure they have equal access to NHSGGC's feedback and complaints systems. The Mediator is Deaf and supports people to feedback or complain on the online system. In 2017–18 our BSL Mediator received direct



feedback from 55 Deaf people. The majority of issues raised were about staff not booking interpreters (33%), Deaf people checking if their interpreter had been booked (26%) and quality of the interpreter (26%) e.g. not being able to access a preferred interpreter (as the Deaf community is relatively small interpreters are often known and this can cause issues of confidentiality or preference).

### 3.7 Deafness and Mental Health post

Following on from a mental health awareness event facilitated by the BSL Champions, NHSGGC funded a post to explore how we could improve Deaf people's access to mental health services.



The role of the post is to:

- Improve Deaf people's knowledge of mental health services
- Establish a good practice model in relation to Deafness and mental health by holding public events
- Increase mental health services' understanding of Deafness and mental health
- Improve BSL interpreting provision in mental health services
- Tackle stigma and discrimination relating to mental health in the Deaf community

The post will enable NHSGGC to find out what works in terms of access to services, information provision on health improvement and self management and options for Deaf sensitive interventions.

In-house BSL interpreters have been trained on how to work in mental health appointments and a glossary of mental health terms has been published for Deaf people to use. Three short films have been produced with a media company to address stigma and promote information about mental health for Deaf people.

### **3.8 Staff Training**

All staff in NHSGGC are mandated to carry out e-learning on the Equality Act 2010 which provides a context for specific training on BSL and the needs of Deaf people. In 2017 – 18, 188 staff watched a DVD on how to book BSL interpreters. 187 completed the Deaf Awareness e-learning module and 193 completed the 'How to Work with an Interpreter' e-learning module. This means a total of 568 staff completed an online learning tool related specifically to Deafness. An additional 12 classroom based sessions were delivered to Acute staff on Deaf and BSL Awareness.

### **3.9 Specialist Speech Language Therapy Service**

NHSGGC has a Specialist Service for Hearing Impaired Children (aged 0 to 3 years old) staffed by a specialist Speech and Language Therapists (SLT), fluent in BSL and a profoundly Deaf Bilingual Co-worker (BSL/English). This ensures that families meet a Deaf person at their very first appointment. The SLT co-worker can provide immediate and individualised sign language support at the point of identified need, build in deaf awareness and appropriate language support strategies to enhance the child's sign language development and provide sign language training for nursery staff when required. The service promotes BSL as an option for all families, which they are made aware of from the start, as well as onward referral to National Deaf Children Society for Family Sign Language Courses.

## **4. NHSGGC BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2024**

### **Long Term Goal**

**Across all of NHSGGC, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.**

#### **By 2024, we will:**

- Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our organisation and identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure progress.
- Improve access to information and services for BSL users, including making websites more accessible to BSL users.
- Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services (VRS) called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to staff and local BSL users.
- Ensure full access for BSL patients to the Board's complaints process, including making complaints in BSL, and incorporating appropriate technology
- Signpost staff that work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training (also see individual actions).

### **Early Years**

**NHSGGC will provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a Deaf, deaf or Deafblind child.**

#### **By 2024 we will:**

- Target all Health Visitors for on line Deaf Awareness and BSL Awareness training and deliver face to face training for those with Deaf children on their caseload.
- Use electronic note system to trigger link between Speech Language Therapy and Health Visitors.
- Ensure information is available in BSL for Deaf parents of Deaf or hearing babies.
- Review 30 month assessment to ensure sensitivity to the support needs of Deaf BSL children.

- Produce information in BSL on the role of the Health Visitor.

## **Training, Work and Social Security**

### **NHSGGC will ensure that BSL users can access employment training opportunities**

#### **By 2024, we will:**

- Ensure our employability activity is accessible to BSL users internally and with partners.
- Raise awareness locally of the UK Government's 'Access to Work' (AtW) scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides.

## **Health and Social Care and Mental Health and Wellbeing**

### **NHSGGC will ensure that 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:**

##### **Provide access to Information**

- Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL (to be produced by NHS Health Scotland and NHS 24)
- Translate NHSGGC information into BSL and develop an advisory group made up of BSL users to advise on translation
- Review the accessibility of the Board's website and other NHSGGC service specific websites.
- Promote our Clear to All Policy so that Deaf people know they can make requests of NHSGGC for local information in BSL.
- Utilise technology such as QR codes to deliver BSL information to improve its visibility in our services.
- Explore the use of chat rooms for local information and in partnership with national Boards for national information.

- Ensure those who cannot access technology are able to access information e.g. older people, children and / or those with additional vulnerabilities

### **Access to Services**

- Work with Local Authorities, providers and service users to improve the way that adult social care is delivered for BSL users, including how residential care is commissioned and how care and support is delivered to people at home.
- Work in partnership with Local Authorities to take steps to improve access to information about sport, local sports facilities and sporting opportunities through health improvement initiatives.
- Promote the Patient Access App with the Deaf community to enable them to make GP appointments by booking online.

### **Patient Records**

**NHSGGC will improve individual patient health records so that they clearly show when the first or preferred language is BSL and a BSL Interpreter is needed.**

#### **By 2024 we will:**

- Work with NHS Patient Records to make sure that the patient's BSL status is recorded and, when the patient is a Deaf child, on their parent's record.
- Provide appropriate support and training for medical records and administrative staff and health and social care staff, to ensure that they are aware of responsibility for recording that the patient is a BSL user.
- Work with Deaf people to promote how to get their health record changed.

### **Psychological Therapies**

**NHSGGC will ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users by considering treatment options and access for those options.**

#### **By 2024 we will:**

- Ensure the Crisis Team is available to BSL users through utilising Contact Scotland or other appropriate communication method and encouraging BSL patients to register for the service.

- Develop communication policies / protocols on communicating with Deaf patients utilising the electronic patient notes system to inform staff.
- Train staff who deliver therapeutic group work on how to work with interpreters.
- Explore different psychological therapies with Deaf service users to understand what would make each method more accessible for Deaf people.
- Enable partnership working between Deaf and Deafblind organisations and mental health organisations.
- Explore the feasibility of sensitising assessment tools by producing them in BSL.
- Develop plans to improve mental health for Deaf community members, including enhanced support for self-care and positive mental wellbeing, as well as improved early intervention support and increased access to mental health care.
- Explore the use of online counselling service in BSL based in England.
- Develop a training strategy for mental health staff to meet their training needs at the right time when a Deaf patient is in their service.
- Explore the role of advocates in mental health appointments with BSL users.
- Improve the Deaf community's knowledge of mental health services by providing information resources in BSL, including continually developing the glossary of mental health terms and promoting a suite of films to address stigma and knowledge about mental health services.
- Ensure that the NHSGGC Five Year Strategy for Adult Mental Health takes account of the needs of BSL users.

## **Loneliness**

**NHSGGC will tackle social isolation explicitly considering the needs of BSL users in partnership with stakeholders.**

**By 2024 we will:**

- Engage with partners on strategies to address loneliness to ensure it is accessible to BSL users.

## **Staff Training**

**NHSGGC will signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate training.**

**By 2024 we will:**

- Signpost health and social care staff to an online learning resource toolkit to raise awareness of BSL and Deaf culture (this will be led by NHS Health Scotland and will be rolled out across Scotland by 2018).
- Consolidate and target training on sensory impairment in acute setting through the Patient and Carer Engagement Groups.
- Continue to deliver BSL classes for staff including developing specific training for different staff groups which will include learning signs related to their particular role and function.
- Develop a strategy for targeting which staff should learn BSL and support them to attend the appropriate course.
- Target training by using electronic case notes to create an alert if a staff member is working with a Deaf person to direct them to e-learning and protocols on BSL and Deaf awareness.

## **Interpreting**

**NHSGGC will ensure that information and services are accessible to BSL users.**

**By 2024 we will:**

- Support and work with NHS Health Scotland to implement a new national Interpretation and Translation Policy which includes BSL provision. The guidance will be provided to support delivery across all NHS Boards by 2018.
- Work with training providers and NHS Health Scotland to deliver and evaluate two training programmes aimed at supporting BSL / English Interpreters to work within the health sector, with a view to informing a longer term approach.
- Promote Contact Scotland for Video Relay Service (VRS).

- Create and maintain a strong and skilled pool of BSL interpreters.
- Promote the use of online interpreting across all services as an adjunct to face to face interpreting.
- Scope out through the NHS National Interpreting Policy the role of trainee interpreters in non clinical settings.
- Develop a protocol online interpreting.
- Explore how we can maximise continuity of interpreters for appointments.
- Explore a process for an annual review of in house interpreter competency and development.
- Provide advice for staff on how to book enough time for a BSL interpreter supported appointments.

## **Democracy**

**NHSGGC will ensure that we involve BSL users as active and informed citizens in decision making processes open to the public.**

### **By 2024, we will:**

- Take opportunities to promote public appointments to NHSGGC's board to BSL users.