



British Sign Language (BSL)
COLLEGE ACTION PLAN
2018 – 2024

CONTENTS

Section 1 - Introduction	1
1.1 Overview – British Sign Language National Plan 2017-2024	1
1.2 College Overview	1
1.3 Current BSL Provision	2
Section 2 – North East Scotland College BSL Action Plan 2018 - 2024	3
2.1 Strategic Theme: NESCol’s Responsibilities as a Scottish Public Service (across all our services)	3
2.2 Strategic Theme: Post School Education	5
2.3 Strategic Theme: Training, work and Social Security	6
2.4 Strategic Theme: Health (including social care),	7
2.5 Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategic Theme: Culture and the Arts	8
Section 3	
3.1 Name and contact details of lead officer	9

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE PLAN (BSL)

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE ACTION PLAN 2018 - 2024

Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Overview – British Sign Language National Plan 2017 - 2024

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act was passed in October 2015 in order to promote the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL)¹. The Act led to the publication of the BSL National Plan in 2017 and subsequently authorities, including all colleges in Scotland, to prepare and publish their own BSL Plan. The National BSL Plan sets out the ambition for Scotland to be the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. In order to achieve this the plan consists of ten long-term goals and covers the following areas:

- 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
- Democracy



North East Scotland College will frame its BSL Plan as closely as possible around these long-term goals to improve the experience of BSL users when applying, studying and transitioning to and from the College.

1.2 College Overview

North East Scotland College is the single largest provider of vocational education and training in the North East of Scotland. The College offers a wide range of courses across diverse subject areas and at various levels ranging from introductory SCQF² level 3 to higher education at SCQF level 7 and 8 courses.

The College's vision is to "transform lives and support regional development" and we are committed to providing a learning and working environment which advances equality, diversity and inclusion and where everyone is respected, valued and supported.

¹ Wherever we refer to 'BSL users*' we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

² SCQF - The Scottish Credit & Qualification Framework.

1.3 Current BSL Provision

Student success is central to the activities and ambitions of North East Scotland College and the College strives to make the learner journey as positive an experience as possible. The College's current provision for BSL users reflects our responsibilities to students with disabilities under the Equalities Act. The College acknowledges, however, that we could be doing more to engage effectively with BSL users to make them aware of what services we offer and how they can access them. The current services to support BSL users include:

- **Providing assistance when applying to College. This includes the provision of detailed course information, including key facts, pre-entry requirements and future pathways which are available on the College's website and in other publications. The College's admissions procedure ensures that all those who apply for a place on a course will be treated fairly in terms of equality of opportunity at each stage of the admission process.**
- **Providing support (where requested) from a BSL Communicator/ Interpreter at pre-entry (Open Days, Clearance) and graduation events, course interviews and induction.**
- **Providing up to date, accurate information and advice to College students in the areas of welfare and careers advice to maximise their potential.**
- **Conducting learning support needs assessments which are undertaken for BSL users and from which a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) is created. In the case of students undertaking an advanced level course, an application for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) funding would be applicable.**
- **Providing access to Sign language Communicators/Interpreters in classes where possible given the challenges of limited resources in the North East of Scotland. Learning Support Assistants/Communication Support Workers are provided in classes where appropriate.**
- **Providing additional support including coursework and study skills support and equipment loan to students and where required alternative assessment arrangements are agreed with the student and put in place.**
- **Providing a dedicated Academic Tutor on all courses in order to deliver positive student experience and to encourage attendance and retention.**
- **Offering a part time introductory, SCQF 4 and 5 BSL language course delivered in the city and other centres.**

The College has approximately 7000 full time and 14000 part time enrolments per annum. The table below details the numbers of students who declared as Deaf/or hard of hearing from academic sessions 2015/16 to 2018/19.

Table 1.

Number of Hearing Impaired Enrolments								
	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	FE	HE	FE	HE	FE	HE	FE	HE
Full-time	24	6	21	7	21	6	12	6
Part-time	32	9	30	5	25	2	13	1

Across these academic sessions, a Communicator/ Interpreter was put in place for one BSL user and this support was supplemented by the support of a Learning Support Assistant/ note-taker where the College was unable to source an appropriate Communicator support.

Section 2 - North East Scotland College BSL Action Plan 2018 - 2024

The College's BSL Plan sets out to establish clear guidance, objectives and actions relating to the support of BSL users setting out on their College journey and all the way through their studies and transition to higher education or employment. In order to develop and progress in this area we have consulted with the local authorities, community, the two local universities, North East Sensory Services (NESS), Sign Language Interpreters (SLIs), students and staff.

The Plan outlines the actions the College will take between October 2018 and June 2020 when the first National Progress Report is required and covers the following long-term goals:

- **Scottish Public Services**
- **Post School Education**
- **Training, Work and Social Security**
- **Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- **Culture and the Arts**

2.1 Strategic Theme: NESCol's Responsibilities as a Scottish Public Service (across all our services)

National BSL Plan Long-term goal:

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 to achieve this by 2024:

Point	Actions	Lead	By
2.1.1	Make effective use of student data to strategically plan services for BSL users.	Senior Management Team	October 2020
2.1.2	Improve information and services for learners and prospective learners who use BSL, including making our website and "MyNESCol" student portal more accessible to BSL users.	Marketing and Communications Team/ IT Action Team/ Digital Futures Team	October 2020
2.1.3	Promote the use of the Scottish Government nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL', which allows BSL users to contact public services.	Marketing and Communications Team	January 2019
2.1.4	Provide introductory BSL awareness and communication courses for all staff as part of the staff development days. Provide courses/ guidance to all teaching staff on accessible classroom materials and teaching materials etc.	Human Resources and Organisational Development Team	January 2019
2.1.5	Invite feedback on the College's BSL provision on regular basis from applicants, students and staff.	Student Advice and Support Team	Ongoing

2.2 Strategic Theme: Post School Education

National BSL Plan Long-term goal:

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 post-school education if they wish to do so and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s)."***

Our Actions to achieve this by 2024:

Point	Actions	Lead	By
2.2.1	Produce the College's BSL Plan in BSL format and make it available on our website.	Marketing and Communications Team/ Student Advice and Support Team	January 2019
2.2.2	Include a statement 'please contact us if you require a BSL/ English Interpreter' in all promotional and marketing materials advertising any College events such as Open Days, graduation days etc.	Marketing and Communications Team	January 2019
2.2.3	Align the College's BSL Plan to the Access and Inclusion Strategy.	Senior Management Team	July 2019
2.2.4	Make digital course content more accessible by design.	Digital Futures Team	October 2019
2.2.5	Align the College's BSL Plan to the Learning and Teaching strategy e.g. Universal Design for Learning principles.	Senior Management Team	July 2019
2.2.6	Strengthen transition support arrangements for BSL users with local secondary schools including assistance at targeted events e.g. school careers events, schools' visits etc.	Learning and Quality Team/ Student Advice and Support Team/ Marketing and Communications Team	Ongoing
2.2.7	Provide bespoke support to BSL users at further points of transition i.e. progression within college, college to employment, training opportunities, and/ or university.	Student Advice and Support Team/ Marketing and Communications Team/ Teaching Faculties	Ongoing
2.2.8	Increase awareness of all support available to students including BSL users e.g. funding streams, learning and study skills support, employability and progression.	Student Advice and Support Team/ Marketing and Communications Team/ Teaching Faculties	Ongoing

2.3 Strategic Theme: Training, work and Social Security

National BSL Plan Long-term goal:

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 to achieve this by 2024:

Point	Actions	Lead	By
2.3.1	Align the College's BSL Plan to the Learning and Teaching strategy e.g. 21st century skills development.	Senior Management Team	October 2019
2.3.2	Raise awareness of Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) scheme - work placed learning opportunities to BSL users	Teaching Faculties/ Learning and Quality Team	Ongoing
2.3.3	Raise awareness of Access to Apprenticeship family e.g. Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships.	Learning and Quality Team / Teaching Faculties/ Business and Community Development Team	Ongoing
2.3.4	Work closely with community planning organisations, SDS and other key stakeholders to support BSL users where required	Digital Futures Team	Ongoing



2.4 Strategic Theme: Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

National BSL Plan Long-term goal:

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.”***

Our Actions to achieve this by 2024:

Point	Actions	Lead	By
2.4.1	Link the College's BSL Plan to NESCol's "Mentally Healthy College" initiative/strategy	Student Advice and Support Team	September 2019
2.4.2	Link the College's BSL Plan to NESCol's Student Partnership Agreement to encourage collaboration between staff and students, including BSL users, to develop meaningful activities and resources.	Student Association/ Student Advice and Support Team	September 2020

2.5 Strategic Theme: Culture and the Arts

National BSL Plan Long-term goal:

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, and 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.”*

Our Actions to achieve this by 2024:

Point	Actions	Lead	By
2.5.1	Work with the Student Association to ensure that extracurricular/recreational activities offered within the College are accessible to BSL users.	Student Association/ Student Advice and Support Team/ Teaching Faculties	September 2020
2.5.2	Ensure College events and student exhibitions and performances are accessible to BSL users.	Student Association/ Student Advice and Support Team/ Teaching Faculties	September 2020

The production of this plan has assisted us to reflect further on what we currently do and what we set out to do across the institution over the next six years in order to promote and support BSL users. The plan details our ambitions and progress made on the above actions will be included within our Outcome Agreement as required by the Scottish Funding Council.

The College will continue to review, and welcome any feedback on, the plan from all stakeholders including the Deaf community.

The Plan will be reviewed bi-annually and in 2020 we will produce a progress report on our actions, how those action points are implemented and also contribute to the National Progress report.

Section 3

3.1 Name and contact details of lead officer

If you have any questions or comments regarding our British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, please contact:

Robin McGregor
Director of Learning (Enhancement, Support and Fraserburgh Futures)
North East Scotland College
Gallowgate
Aberdeen
AB25 1BN

Direct Dial: **01224 612081**
Email: r.mcgregor@nescol.ac.uk
British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via



The BSL version of this plan is available on the College website, where you can also leave feedback.