

South Lanarkshire College

British Sign Language (BSL) Local Plan

2023-2029

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1.0	May 2024	Equality Group	To facilitate and promote the use and understanding of (BSL).

Quick Links

South Lanarkshire College is inclusive and diverse, and this is one of the College values.

¹South Lanarkshire College Vision, Mission and Values.



The College is committed to the FREDIE principles of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement.



If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact: humanresources@slc.ac.uk

¹ <https://www.slc.ac.uk/media/hwj2tq/strategy-2020-25.pdf>



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British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2023-2029

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 requires listed authorities in Scotland to publish British Sign Language Plans every six years, showing how they will promote, and facilitate the promotion of the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL) in Scotland. These plans will take account of local circumstances and consider how best to respond to BSL users' needs within local communities, organisations or services.

²The British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan set out the following ten priority areas to tackle barriers faced by British Sign Language (BSL) users. The vision is to help make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work, visit and learn.

BSL National Plan – Priority Areas

1. Delivering the BSL National Plan 2023 – 2029, focusing on:
2. BSL Accessibility
3. Children, Young People, and their Families
4. Access to Employment
5. Health and Wellbeing
6. Celebrating BSL Culture
7. BSL Data
8. Transport
9. Access to Justice
10. Democratic Participation

Due to the nature of the organisation, South Lanarkshire College (SLC) will focus on seven out of the ten national priorities, which are relevant and appropriate to the purpose of the College within the community. These are detailed the report below.

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/bsl-national-plan-2023-2029/>



British Sign Language (BSL) History

Scotland has a proud Deaf community who have continuously campaigned for the Rights of the Deaf community and BSL Users.

British Sign Language or BSL is one of three languages with legal status in Scotland. It gained legal status in Scotland in 2015 at the Scottish Parliament.

³For South Lanarkshire College the focus as a Further Education Establishment is on the use and advancement of BSL in an educational setting. Deaf education in Scotland can be traced back to the opening of the first School for the Deaf in Edinburgh in 1760 by Thomas Braidwood. However, the history of Deaf Education has not always been a positive one.

South Lanarkshire College is mindful of that contentious history and hope that the BSL Local Plan is respectful of the struggle that many Deaf people have experienced, to get recognition of their own language and to be allowed to use BSL for the advancement of their own Education, and for the advancement of Education, for all BSL users that follow.

³ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/british-sign-language-history/early-deaf-education/thomas-braidwood-braidwood-school>



South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

South Lanarkshire College is a diverse and inclusive community of people. The College welcomed this opportunity to develop a British Sign Language (BSL) Local Plan (“the Local Plan”) that shows commitment to ensuring that the Deaf Community, BSL users and those with specialist BSL skills are valued and at the heart of the College community.

The College’s (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029 mirrors the BSL National Plan’s overarching objectives with a tailored approach to recognise specific local needs and address barriers.

This BSL Local Plan has been developed in consultation with the community who use College services. The College remains open to feedback and creating spaces to help continue to make improvements.

The plan spans from 2023-2029 and is a dynamic document. While the primary objectives will stay the same, methods and initiatives will adapt as necessary. The action plan will be regularly reviewed and updated to demonstrate progress.

⁴This BSL Local Plan is aligned with the South Lanarkshire College 2020 – 2025 strategic framework and mission to ‘Prepare learners well for their future, in an outstanding learning environment and inclusive community.

⁴ <https://www.slc.ac.uk/media/hwj2tq/strategy-2020-25.pdf>.



Accessibility

South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government which is “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.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Reviewing South Lanarkshire College's resources to ensure that for BSL users, they are accessible and equitable. This will include the College website, digital and educational materials, technological resources, guidance, and support services.

Assessing that accessibility needs for BSL users are considered at both internal and external events involving the College community.

⁵Continuing to promote and support usage of Contact Scotland BSL, the on-line Sign Language Video Relay Service (VRS).

⁵ <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/#>



Children Young People and their Families

South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government which is “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. This 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 that they can reach their full potential.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Continuing to deliver BSL courses to the College community, in both formal and informal settings, to raise awareness around Deaf culture and the communication barriers and challenges faced by BSL users.

Additionally, SLC will gather feedback from participants to continually improve the content and delivery of these courses which will contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all.

Evaluating the needs of BSL users, during student and staff recruitment processes and continuously consider relevant and suitable adjustments throughout their journey as employees or learners.



Access to Employment

South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government which is “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.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Continuing to collaborate both internally and externally, with employability services, partner agencies and services, that support individuals to overcome barriers to entering and sustaining employment.

Continuing to tailor SLC’s person-centred approach to BSL users, ensuring they have access and support to achieve their goals both within the College environment and in future employment.

Engaging with industry partners to encourage increased employment opportunities for BSL users.



Health & Wellbeing

South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government 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.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Evaluating the needs of BSL users, during student and staff recruitment processes.

Continuously consider relevant and suitable adjustments throughout their journey as employees or learners.

Continuing to collaborate both internally and externally with Health and Wellbeing information and support services to ensure BSL users have access to inclusive support and information.

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Celebrating BSL Culture

South Lanarkshire College Local (BSL) Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government which is

“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.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Maintaining positive relationships, by celebrating D/deaf culture, by providing opportunities for BSL users and non BSL users to get together to share language and experiences. For example, during internal, informal signing evenings.

Continue to foster good relations by promoting awareness days and events ensuring that these events are both accessible and equitable for everyone.

Develop staff knowledge of BSL users, D/deaf culture and content for their curriculum development, as appropriate.

⁶Please note that the College uses Deaf with a capital D to refer to people who have been deaf all their lives, or since before they started to learn to talk. They are pre-lingually deaf. It is an important distinction, because Deaf people tend to communicate in sign language as their first language. For most Deaf people English is a second language, and understanding complicated messages in English can be a problem.

⁶ <https://signhealth.org.uk/resources/learn-about-deafness/deaf-or-deaf/>



BSL Data

South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government which is “To strengthen the evidence and data on the BSL community in Scotland to better inform decision making in public policy and service design.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Continuing to collect both qualitative and quantitative internal data from BSL users to inform best practices and identify areas for improvement.

Access and consider external data and insights on BSL users.

Use data and insight for strategic planning for the College as well as data and insight sharing with key stakeholders.



Democratic Participation

South Lanarkshire College (BSL) Local Plan 2023-2029

SLC shares the long-term goal set out by the Scottish Government 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 public bodies.”

To achieve this, actions include and are not limited to:

Develop and embed resources to enable BSL users to get involved in democratic life, engaging with local government / public bodies.

Offer support to the College’s Student Association to ensure BSL users can make informed decisions on elections within the Student Association remit.

Engage with public services and support the communication of their collateral with BSL users.

