



NHS Orkney British Sign Language (BSL) Plan

What NHS Orkney wishes to achieve to promote BSL over the next 2 years

This document is also available in large print and other formats and languages, upon request. Please call Nigel Firth on (01224) 552245 or email Nigel.firth@nhs.net or call Roda Bird on (01224) 551116 or by email Roda.bird@nhs.net

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1. Foreword by the Chairman

NHS Orkney has been at the forefront of equality and diversity in healthcare in Scotland since 2005. This innovation and leadership also applies to the field of British Sign Language (BSL) provision. The challenge we now face is to maintain the excellent progress we have made to date, while at the same time seeking to further increase service provision. We also have a duty to further increase awareness of BSL and its importance, both within NHS Orkney and the wider community.

The progress we have made to date, has only been made possible by the hard work and commitment of all NHS Orkney staff, the support and close involvement of local BSL users, their representative organisations, partner agencies and other interested parties. I am confident that with their continued support, further progress will be achieved, to the benefit of local BSL users, who we serve.

Mr Ian Kinniburgh,

Chair,

NHS Orkney

August 2018

2. The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 17th September 2015 and received Royal Assent on 22nd October 2015.

The Act:

- Requires Scottish Ministers to facilitate the promotion of, the use and understanding of the language known as British sign Language
- “(2) In furtherance of that duty, the Scottish Ministers are to prepare, lay before the Scottish Parliament and publish national plans in relation to British Sign Language in accordance with this section (such a plan being in the Act referred to as a “National Plan”)”
- Requires Scottish Ministers: “(b) to set out what the Scottish Ministers consider that relevant public authorities (see section 7) should or could do to promote, and facilitate the promotion of, the use and understanding of British Sign Language within their areas of responsibility.”

As a result of this latter requirement public bodies in Scotland such as NHS Orkney are required to prepare and publish a BSL Plan which:

- Sets out measures to facilitate the promotion and understanding of BSL
- Sets out timescales for this work
- “contain such other information (if any) at the Scottish Ministers may by order require.”
- Must be as consistent as possible with the most recently published National Plan
- Must first be published in draft format and consulted upon
- When in draft, ensures that those persons likely to be directly affected by the Draft Plan are consulted, namely BSL users and their representative organisations
- When consulted upon, the consultation must be carried out in a way that is accessible to BSL users and people who are deafblind.
- Takes into account representations arising from the consultation

The Scottish Government published the National BSL Plan on the 24th October 2017. Public bodies are required to have in place their own BSL Plan within 12 months of the date of publication of the National Plan. Local BSL Plans should be consistent with the National Plan.

This is the Consultation Draft of the NHS Orkney BSL Plan. Details are shown at Section 3 on how to make comment on this Draft BSL Plan.

An NHS Orkney representative was fortunate to have had the opportunity to discuss the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 with Mark McDonald MSP, who had a major role in the creation of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. The information obtained from this discussion and his insights have been extremely useful in helping us to shape this document.

3. The Consultation Draft BSL Plan

The Draft Plan went out for consultation for a six week period from Monday 10th September to Sunday 14th October 2018.

The main response came from a local BSL user who submitted an in-depth four page critique of the current arrangements which they felt had scope for improvement. Some positive suggestions for improvements were made including a warm welcome for Video BSL which they felt should be introduced immediately.

The suggestions for improvements have been taken on board where possible.

4. BSL users on Orkney

In the 2011 Census, 40 Orkney Island residents indicated that they used BSL at home. This is an indicative rather than definitive figure of people on Orkney who are Deaf. Some of the BSL users may not be deaf themselves, but use BSL to communicate with family members who are. Orkney had the lowest number of BSL users of any Council area in Scotland. However, access to BSL interpretation for every person who is Deaf is vitally important.

5. BSL initiatives

NHS Orkney has been proactive in the BSL field for many years. Below is a resume of our work:

a) Provision of BSL interpretation

Whenever healthcare is provided, it is vital that we have in place effective two way communication. For patients with a sensory impairment, communication poses specific challenges which we work hard to overcome.

Until recently, NHS Orkney used the services of the one qualified BSL interpreter on Orkney. They provided an excellent service. However, recently the interpreter has spent much of their time off-Island and there is an urgent need to put in place more readily available professional BSL interpretation for members of our local deaf community when they access healthcare.

Video BSL interpretation as detailed at 6a) below, will now be implemented across NHS Orkney commencing in November 2018.

b) Sensory awareness training as part of our Equality and Diversity Seminars

Equality and Diversity Seminars are an important part of our sensory awareness work. In 2018/19, our staff will continue to have access to “face to face” Equality and Diversity Training at a level appropriate to their role in the organisation.

Each Seminar covers all 9 “protected characteristics” in detail. In addition, all Seminar participants receive their own personal copies of:

- The Seminar presentation
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The booklet: “Religions and Cultures”
- The Guide for Staff to help them Meet the Needs of Transsexual Patients Attending for Hospital Care
- **The NHS Education for Scotland “Z” Card entitled: “Sensory Impairment, Points for Good communication”.**
- The Police Scotland leaflet: “Human Trafficking, Reading the Signs”.

The topic of sensory impairment is covered in detail. It is stressed that staff must be sensitive to the needs of patients, their relatives, carers and co-workers in the healthcare environment who might have a sensory impairment. The content of the NHS Education for Scotland “Z” Card: “Sensory Impairment, Points for Good communication” is covered in detail and a number of anonymised practical examples are discussed. The latest round of Equality and Diversity training took place on-Island on Thursday 30th August 2018.

c) Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

The aim of Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment is to avoid policies, strategies or re-organisational proposals being introduced, with the best of intentions, which discriminate against anyone with a “protected characteristic”. The Equality Act 2010 defined the 9 “protected characteristics as;

- Disability
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex (male or female)
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

On the 31st August 2018, 6 NHS Orkney staff successfully completed on-Island training to become trained Equality and Diversity Impact Assessors.

6. Future initiatives

a) **Video BSL**

Video BSL is a new service piloted by NHS Grampian in Aberdeen from February 2018. The pilot has been successful and Video BSL is now a permanent service in the Acute Sector in Aberdeen from August 2018.

Video BSL will now be implemented for NHS Orkney. It is an extremely useful communication tool and:

- Provides qualified BSL interpreters online in 2-3 minutes
- Is available 8am-12midnight Monday to Friday and 8am-6pm Saturday and Sunday
- Is a cost effective service

Video BSL can use the existing NHS Orkney IT infrastructure. Orkney Health and Care and Orkney Islands Council can be invited to become equal partners in the use of Video BSL and share costs.

An event will be held on Orkney in November 2018 to demonstrate Video BSL to BSL users, staff and other interested parties.

b) **The Contact Scotland On-Line Language Video Relay Service (VRS)**

This is a free service which operates 8am-12midnight 7 days a week. It gives BSL users the ability to contact public bodies such as NHS Orkney, Orkney Health and Care and Orkney Islands Council, voluntary organisations and charities.

The BSL user connects to an on-line Video interpreter who relays messages and back. NHS Orkney will actively promote the use of the VRS service to all BSL users on Orkney.

c) **BSL Video Clips on the NHS Orkney Website**

NHS Grampian will shortly introduce Video BSL clips onto its website. Should this development prove popular, NHS Orkney will also introduce Video BSL clips onto our website and consult our local BSL users on the types of information they would find useful. It is also hoped to create links to the websites of partner agencies where further BSL video clips will be available.

C) **Other initiatives**

It is possible that more suggestions for future BSL work come from our BSL users when they see the above work being progressed. All further suggestions will be given the fullest consideration. These can be made:

By email to: ork-hb.feedback@nhs.net

By post to:

Feedback Service,
NHS Orkney,
Garden House,
New Scapa Road,
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1BH

If you are registered with Contact Scotland, voice mail messages can be left on:
(01856) 888221.

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16th October 2018