

**Inverclyde Council**  
**Final British Sign Language Plan 2018/24**

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#### **Introduction**

Inverclyde is located on the west coast of Scotland and is one of the most attractive places in Scotland to live, work and visit, with breath-taking scenery, excellent transport links to Glasgow and Edinburgh, some of the best walking and sporting activities in Europe and the best school estate in Scotland.

The main towns of Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow sit on the Firth of the Clyde. The towns provide a marked contrast to the coastal settlements of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay, which lie to the South West of the area, and the picturesque villages of Kilmacolm and Quarrier's Village, which are located further inland and offer a further dimension to the area's diversity, particularly in social, economic and physical terms.

A strong sense of community identity exists in Inverclyde and in local neighbourhoods in particular. Local citizens are rightly proud of Inverclyde and its history which is steeped in centuries of maritime and industrial endeavour.

Inverclyde's population in 2017 was estimated to be 78,760 while the results from Scotland's 2011 Census indicated that there are 212 people aged 3 years or over who use British Sign Language (BSL) in the local area.

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#### Background to Inverclyde Council's Final BSL Plan 2018/24

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 promotes the use of BSL in Scotland and requires Inverclyde Council to develop a BSL Plan for the period 2018/24 which will outline how it will promote and raise awareness of the language.

This is the Council's Final BSL Plan 2018/24 which sets out improvement actions we will take during the next five years.

This document follows the BSL National Plan 2017/23 which was published in October 2017 and developed through extensive engagement with D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users<sup>1</sup> and those who work with them. The National Plan includes 70 actions that the Scottish Government will take by 2020 to help it make progress towards its ambition of making Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

The improvement actions in our Plan are framed around the same long-term goals as the National Plan 2017/23 and grouped under the following themes:

- Across our services
- Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare
- School Education
- Training, Work and Social Security
- Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and the Arts
- Democracy.

The *National Action Plan* numbers referred to in the Council's Plan should be cross-referenced to the BSL National Plan 2017/23 which is available to view on the Scottish Government's website.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to produce a National Progress Report on its Plan in 2020 and the Council will make a contribution to that document, as appropriate.

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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 a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is BSL.

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#### **How to provide feedback on the Final Plan**

We would be grateful if you would give us your views on this Final Plan. By providing your opinions, you will play an important part in shaping the Council's BSL Plan 2018/24. The more people who provide feedback, the better the Plan will be and we can ensure that we take the views of local people into account.

A consultation event took place on 7 August 2018 to gather views on the first Draft of the Plan. Feedback from that event has been incorporated into this document.

Interested parties can comment on this version of the Plan by:

- sending an email to [corporatepolicy@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:corporatepolicy@inverclyde.gov.uk)
- sending a BSL video to [corporatepolicy@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:corporatepolicy@inverclyde.gov.uk)
- writing to The Corporate Policy Team, Organisational Development, Policy and Communications Service, Inverclyde Council, Municipal Buildings, Greenock, PA15 1LY.

The closing date for submissions on this document is 29 October 2018.

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

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#### Section 1: Across all our services

The Council shares the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, which is:

- ***across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users.***

National Action No.	
2	<p><b>Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in the Council; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.</b></p> <p>We will take steps to improve the data we hold on BSL users by completing a review of our Equal Opportunities Form to establish if the wording for current and potential employees could be improved. Thereafter, any changes made to the Form will be replicated in our payroll/human resource management system, as appropriate.</p> <p>We will carry out a training needs analysis across the Council to establish the number of BSL users we have and what level of qualification they hold.</p>
3 4	<p><b>Improve access to our information and services for BSL users, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.</b></p> <p>We will consider the results of the Society for IT practitioners in the public sector (SOCITM) review of our website earlier this year to establish how it may be adapted to improve access for BSL users.</p>
5	<p><b>Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally-funded BSL online interpreting video relay services <i>contactSCOTLAND-BSL</i> to staff and local BSL users.</b></p> <p>We will explore what action is required to provide the <i>contactSCOTLAND-BSL</i> service for our customers<sup>2</sup>.</p>
6	<p><b>Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training.</b></p> <p>We will investigate how we can raise our employees' awareness of BSL and the other services available to interact with our customers who are BSL users.</p>

<sup>2</sup> This improvement action should be cross-referenced with National Action Numbers 21, 34 and 65.

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## Section 2: Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

The Council shares the long-term goal for Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, which is:

- ***the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL.***

National Action No.	
10	<p><b>Improve access to early years' services for parents whose child is diagnosed as D/deaf or Deafblind by developing information about BSL and deaf culture for service providers who support parents, such as health visitors.</b></p> <p>Garvel Deaf Centre works with Audiology and Speech and Language Therapy services which share information on newly-diagnosed/identified babies and children. Garvel also offers information and the services of a Teacher of the Deaf to support families and provide access to a deaf role model.</p> <p>We will explore how we can strengthen existing relationships with health services such as Audiology and Health Visitors and improve systems for information sharing.</p>
11	<p><b>Assist families of D/deaf and Deafblind children by ensuring that they have access to BSL resources as early as possible in their child's life.</b></p> <p>The Garvel Deaf Centre's BSL Tutor produces DVDs and <i>You Tube</i> videos of children's stories and books for early years.</p> <p>Staff at the Hillend Children's Centre use BSL and sign-assisted English which is grammatically correct for hearing children with communication difficulties; this provides a multi-sensory approach to communication which gives children alternative methods of interacting.</p> <p>We will work with other stakeholders to introduce the most appropriate digital platforms for signposting and disseminating information on these resources.</p>
12	<p><b>Develop BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as <i>BookBug</i> so that parents can be supported to interact with their child during this critical developmental phase.</b></p> <p>The Garvel Deaf Centre staff work alongside library colleagues, signing <i>BookBug</i> books in Moorfoot Primary School classes that have deaf children. The <i>Oxford Reading Tree Scheme</i> has signed books in Level 1-4 which we send home to</p>

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	<p>parents to ensure they can learn alongside their children and provide support with homework.</p> <p>We will consider the possibility of deaf adults (or children) producing the <i>BookBug</i> books in BSL in an appropriate digital format so that they could be accessed by schools across Inverclyde.</p>
13	<p><b>Work with partners to determine the best way of enabling families and carers to learn BSL so that they can communicate effectively with their D/deaf or Deafblind child in the crucial early years (0-8 years).</b></p> <p>The Garvel Deaf Centre's BSL Tutor offers family sign classes in the Garvel base and/or at home or in a local community hub. We will look at increasing the number of classes we can offer to parents and families (especially out with school hours).</p> <p>We will also work closely with deaf organisations such as the National Deaf Children's Society to direct parents to BSL classes/support offered.</p>

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## Section 3: School Education

The Council shares the long-term goal for School Education set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, which is:

- *children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child's education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school.*

National Action No.	
17 18	<p><b>Contribute to the Scottish Government's investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.</b></p> <p>Inverclyde Council recognises that the level of BSL training undertaken by the appropriate employees in its educational establishments is a key area of interest for the families of our D/deaf and Deafblind pupils. We will therefore consider how we can support the Scottish Government's investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools. Once the results of the investigation become available, we will take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL and thereafter implement any recommendations arising from the investigation, as appropriate.</p>
19	<p><b>Work with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to develop an initial suite of Awards in BSL which will form the basis of any future development of BSL qualifications up to Level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Network.</b></p> <p>The Garvel Deaf Centre's BSL Tutor has been part of the SQA Steering Group which is developing new curriculum materials for a National 3 and National 4 qualification in BSL. We note that, in 2019, the SQA will develop National 5 and Higher resources.</p> <p>We aim to offer National 3 and 4 qualifications in BSL at Clydeview Academy. We are also considering rolling out the qualification to other secondary schools in Inverclyde.</p>
20 21	<p><b>Take forward advice developed by Education Scotland to:</b></p> <p><b>a. improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL</b></p>



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	<p><b>b. ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child's education.</b></p> <p>All assemblies and school shows are interpreted in BSL, where required. Report Cards are signed and put onto DVDs for deaf parents. A yearly Celebration of Sign event is held in the Garvel Deaf Centre at Moorfoot Primary School and invitations are extended to deaf adults, deaf organisations and deaf and hearing children.</p> <p>Deaf awareness training is currently offered to all schools in Inverclyde which have a deaf child. The training is delivered by the Garvel Deaf Centre's Teacher of the Deaf and the Educational Audiologist.</p> <p>We will aim to ensure that schools know how to book a BSL Interpreter for any school events involving deaf parents. We will also ensure that schools with deaf parents consider having a signed performance of events such as presentations or school shows.</p> <p>We plan to make the Celebration of Sign event a bigger and more widely publicised initiative across the Council.</p> <p>We will look at offering deaf awareness training more widely to Council employees, including Education Services' staff.</p>
21	<p><b>Work with BSL users to develop information and advice about how parents who use BSL can get further involved in their child's learning (this work will be led by Education Scotland).</b></p> <p>We plan to include BSL video links for school information on the Moorfoot Primary School/Garvel Deaf Centre website.</p> <p>We will publicise the Contact Scotland-BSL website to enable parents to make contact with their child's school.</p> <p>We will explore how we can include information in BSL on the television screens in school reception areas.</p>
23	<p><b>Contribute to the Scottish National Centre for Languages programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance.</b></p> <p>BSL is currently taught to all Moorfoot Primary School pupils from Nursery to Primary 7. By the end of Primary 7, almost all children have a SQA Qualification in BSL.</p> <p>Primary 7 pupils from the feeder primaries to Clydeview Academy are taught an Introduction to BSL.</p> <p>We will raise awareness in Inverclyde primary schools of BSL as an option in the 1+2 languages programme and offer tasters in other Inverclyde schools.</p>

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	<p>We will consider producing on-line BSL tutorials that all Inverclyde schools could access.</p> <p>We will share the Garvel Deaf Centre/Moorfoot Primary School model as an example of good practice.</p>
24	<p><b>Assemble an expert advisory group to support this work (of action number 23). This will include recommendations for a longer term strategy to support the teaching of BSL to hearing pupils, and gathering data to measure progress. This will be led by the Scottish National Centre for Languages, and will report to the Scottish Government by 2020.</b></p> <p>We will work with the advisory group and provide input to the longer term strategy to support the teaching of BSL to hearing pupils.</p>

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#### Section 4: Training, Work and Social Security

The Council shares the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, which is:

- ***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.***

National Action No.	
28	<p><b>Signpost pupils and students to a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.</b></p> <p>If a pupil is attending West College Scotland post-school, we notify the Head of Enabling Services at the College. An assessment of need is then arranged and the appropriate support provided.</p> <p>In circumstances where a pupil requires information and support, we refer them to our partners at Skills Development Scotland to facilitate the process and help them access services using their Provider Resource guide which outlines what services are offered.</p> <p>Support for pupils who move to an Activity Agreement post-school would be commissioned to meet their needs, for example, if someone is required to sign for the pupil, when required.</p>
34	<p><b>Work with partners who deliver employment services, and with employer groups already supporting employability to help signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users.</b></p> <p>We will raise awareness of <i>Contact Scotland-BSL's</i> Video Relay Service with our employability pipeline contract provider and our wider partner networks including the Inverclyde Regeneration and Employability Partnership (IREP) and Employer Engagement Plus (EEP). This will initially be achieved by organising a demonstration/presentation from Contact Scotland-BSL at scheduled partnership meetings. Thereafter, it will be included as a regular item for the groups to review.</p>
35	<p><b>Raise awareness locally of the UK Government's <i>Access to Work</i> scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides.</b></p> <p>Through the various employability partnership groups, the UK Government's</p>

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	<p><i>Access to Work</i> scheme is communicated with all employability partners across Inverclyde on a regular and as required basis. This is facilitated by key partners at Jobcentre Plus in the provision of <i>Access to Work</i> scheme awareness sessions and as part of the IREP and EEP agenda.</p> <p>The EEP partners work directly with employers and on a no wrong door approach, ensuring that, whichever partner engages with an employer, the employer offer is fully inclusive of all available support and activity, including the <i>Access to Work</i> scheme provision and support. The EEP partnership group includes representation from the Inverclyde Chamber of Commerce, providing direct links to local employers in the group.</p>
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#### Section 5: Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing


The Council shares the long-term goal for Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, 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.***

National Action No.	
40	<p><b>a. Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL (to be produced by NHS Health Scotland and NHS 24).</b></p> <p>We will signpost BSL users to Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) information on social media. We will arrange a BSL Interpreter for Deafblind tactile BSL users. We will ask Deaf Action, a charity which provides a range of services to people in Scotland who have sensory support needs, to help signpost people to events and direct BSL users to BSL information.</p>
	<p><b>b. Develop complementary information in BSL about local provision, as appropriate.</b></p> <p>Complementary information in BSL about local service provision can be viewed on the plasma screens located in HSCP waiting areas.</p> <p>We will design an easy-read leaflet for BSL users which includes details of useful websites, the local Sensory Impairment Team (SIT), as well as information about BSL Interpreters for Deafblind manual communication. The leaflet will also have information about the See Hear Strategy which is designed to suit both visual and hearing service users, together with details on how to arrange an appointment with the SIT.</p> <p>In line with our Registration requirements and our Annual Inspection by the Care Inspectorate, we will explore how we may build on the training already carried out with HSCP staff to enable them to promote service users' health and wellbeing and support them in meeting their outcomes.</p>
45a	<p><b>Through the Integration Boards, ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users.</b></p> <p>This improvement action will be delivered by the HSCP.</p>
48	<p><b>Take steps to improve access to information about sport, and to local sports facilities and sporting opportunities.</b></p> <p>We will continue to promote and signpost people to the <i>Disability Sport Finder</i></p>

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	<p>which allows people to search for information on physical activity sessions and events for people with a disability in Inverclyde and other local authority areas:   <a href="http://www.disabilitysportfinder.org.uk">www.disabilitysportfinder.org.uk</a>.</p> <p>We will also work closely with organisations for deaf people at both a local and national level to direct parents to sporting opportunities in our communities.</p>
49	<p><b>Ensure that any local work to tackle social isolation explicitly considers the needs of BSL users.</b></p> <p>We will be able to welcome and communicate with BSL users following deaf awareness training for HSCP staff and other partner agencies that provide group work in Inverclyde, as well as services including day care, respite, social hubs and Your Voice (the Inverclyde Community Care Forum).</p> <p>We will explore the provision of formal, certified BSL training for front-line HSCP staff that could come into contact with BSL users. Training would start at the basic level, followed by Level 1 and 2, with the aim of upskilling staff to communicate with BSL users in their first language.</p> <p>We will encourage and support the setting up of a local BSL Group.</p>

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#### Section 6: Culture and the Arts

The Council shares the long-term goal for Culture and the Arts set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, 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.***

National Action No.	
54	<p><b>Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.</b></p> <p>We will work in partnership with providers of cultural events and activities across Inverclyde to enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals, through the increased use of volunteers trained in BSL and signed video.</p>
55	<p><b>Encourage and support BSL users to consider a career in culture and the arts.</b></p> <p>We will work in partnership to encourage and support children and young people to consider a career in culture and the arts. BSL users would be afforded the same opportunities as any other pupils with the relevant support being put in place to allow them to fully participate.</p>
56	<p><b>Increase information in BSL about culture and the arts on relevant websites and at venues.</b></p> <p>We will work in partnership with providers of cultural events and activities across Inverclyde to increase the availability of information in BSL about culture and the arts to help promote opportunities and information to the deaf community.</p> <p>Explore the use of technology to enhance the experience of BSL users when visiting exhibitions or accessing museum collections.</p>
57	<p><b>Improve access to the historical environment, cultural events and performing arts and film for BSL users.</b></p> <p>We will work in partnership with providers of cultural events and activities across Inverclyde to increase the availability of signed performances and enhance individuals' access to, and engagement in, cultural activities.</p>


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#### Section 7: Democracy

The Council shares the long-term goal for Democracy set out in the BSL National Plan 2017/23, 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 our public bodies.***

National Action No.	
65	<p><b>Take opportunities to promote the <i>Access to Elected Office Fund</i> locally, which can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections</b></p> <p>We will provide information on, and signposting to, the <i>Access to Elected Office Fund</i>, which is run by Inclusion Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government, through the Council's website at  <a href="http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/elections">www.inverclyde.gov.uk/elections</a>.</p> <p>We will include information on the <i>Access to Elected Office Fund</i> in Nomination Packs.</p> <p>We will take steps to raise awareness among Elected Members of <i>ContactScotlandBSL</i>.</p>