



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

British Sign Language (BSL) Plan

2018 – 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 About this plan

This is the BSL Plan for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), as required by the BSL (Scotland) Act. It sets out the actions we will take over the period 2018-2024.

It follows the BSL National Plan, published on 24th October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

Our plan is framed around the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to the work of the Conservatoire and sets out our ambitions for BSL.

This plan supports our Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2020 *“Delivering a Defining Performance”*. The cornerstones of this strategic plan are our ‘Four Pillars’: Focused Excellence, Equality and Diversity, Lifelong Learning, and being a National and International Conservatoire – all of which are aligned with our vision and values.

The Royal Conservatoire is Scotland’s national centre of professional vocational training in performance arts and we lead the way as one of Europe’s top conservatoires, offering a rare breadth of artistic disciplines.

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland graduates will enrich the performing arts with new work and will create the future of performance for generations to come. Our curriculum is designed to make that happen. We believe that a conservatoire should provide much more than an intensive, demanding education: the conservatoire experience is one of total immersion to discover and develop optimum potential.

As a unique national institution, we recognise the importance of the performing arts to the cultural, economic and social well-being of Scotland, as well as to our profile internationally. Evidence of this is our ground-breaking BA Performance in British Sign Language and English programme, the first cohort of which graduated this summer and are already having an impact on the performing arts industry.

Through this plan, the Conservatoire is furthering our commitment to protecting and supporting BSL, including in its tactile form.

Central to this is our commitment to involving and engaging BSL users in developing our BSL Plan, as well as continued engagement around implementing actions and providing feedback on progress. We will also contribute to the national progress report in 2020.

1.2 RCS BSL contacts

The RCS contacts for any questions or feedback in relation to the BSL plan are:

- Roz Caplan, Equality and Diversity Officer, r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk
- Rita McDade, Sign Language Interpreter Coordinator, r.mcdade@rcs.ac.uk (BSL User)

Additionally, BSL users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#) or may choose to use any of the following alternatives: NGT (Next Generation Text), AVA.com, FaceTime, SKYPE or CAMFROG.

1.3 Where to find the BSL version of this plan

The BSL version of Conservatoire's BSL plan can be accessed at the following link:

www.rcs.ac.uk/bsl

2. Summary

2.1 Summary of RCS's BSL Plan 2018-2024

This British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, sets out the actions the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland will undertake during the period 2018-2024 to achieve the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to the work of the Conservatoire.

Throughout this plan, we have highlighted the actions we will take to achieve our goals, together with identifying the role of the lead person responsible for fulfilling the actions. Where additional initials are contained within brackets next to the lead, these indicate an additional designated role lead for the action.

Although at this time the Conservatoire has not included any actions toward the long terms goals of 'Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare', 'School Education', 'Transport' and Justice, this will be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

Additional actions towards other long terms goals may also added through the lifetime of this living document.

3. Royal Conservatoire of Scotland BSL Plan 2018-2024

3.1 Across all our services

RCS shares 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”

By 2024 we will:

3.1.1 Analyse existing evidence we have about students, staff, prospective students and prospective staff who use BSL; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish where we are now and measure our progress.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Scope existing mechanisms for collecting BSL user data (quantitative and qualitative) and implement required changes to systems and processes.	By 2019	<i>Assistant Registrar (SA) Director of HR (E&DO)</i>	Clear overview established of BSL users in the RCS community.
Include data on BSL users routinely in relevant internal and external reports and use the data to inform equality impact assessments of decisions, services and activities.	By 2020	<i>Assistant Principal Director of Human Resources</i>	Data on BSL users is used to inform planning and development of RCS activities for both students, staff and visitors.

By 2024 we will:

3.1.2 Improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Identify the key information and services to be improved over the cycle of the first BSL plan. Work to secure resources and expertise to develop and deliver improvements to information and services, including our website	By 2019	<i>Delegated responsibility to the BSL Plan Working Group, with ultimate responsibility lying with Assistant Principal and Director of External Relations</i>	Evidence of BSL in our provision of information and services, and on our website and other media channels.

By 2024 we will:

3.1.3 Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, which allows BSL users to contact public and their sector services and for these services to contact them.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Use all internal channels such as Principal’s Newsletters, (student and) staff email, manager briefings and team meetings to cascade information on ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to all staff.	By 2019	<i>Director of External Relations</i>	Evidence of staff aware of, and trained in use of ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, supported by relevant technology.
Identify relevant frontline staff and provide tailored training sessions on using ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’.	By 2019	<i>Director of Human Resources</i>	As above

We will also make students and staff aware of alternative means of communication in addition to this, such as <i>NGT (Next Generation Text), AVA.com, FaceTime, SKYPE and CAMFROG., through email and poster campaign</i>		<i>Director of External Relations</i>	Evidence of awareness of and knowledge of how to use alternative means of communication
<p>By 2024 we will:</p> <p>3.1.4 Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training, and enable them to take up such training.</p>			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Continue to provide range of BSL and deaf awareness training internally for staff and students, including customised training for targeted staff teams as appropriate.	Ongoing	<i>Director of Human Resources (E&DO)</i> <i>Director of DDPF (SLIC)</i>	Sessions delivered and increased numbers of staff and students across RCS with enhanced knowledge and practical skills in BSL. Regular reports to be received by Equality & Diversity Forum.
Consider training more staff to BSL Foundation Level or equivalent and Intermediate Level or equivalent. Undertake an audit of staff to produce a baseline dataset of skill levels during first year, and report against this on an annual basis.	By 2020	<i>Director of Human Resources</i>	Increased number of staff with BSL qualifications.
Develop calendar of training to deliver to relevant staff and students over the cycle of the BSL Plan.	By 2024	<i>Director of Human Resources (E&DO)</i> <i>Director of DDPF (SLIC)</i>	Established programme for staff and student in house training to run over cycle of BSL Plan

By 2024 we will:			
3.1.5 Take steps to ensure that our campuses and facilities are fully accessible to BSL users.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Embed BSL considerations in next review/update of Estates Strategy.	By 2024	Director of Finance and Estates	Annual reporting to the Conservatoire Senior Management Team to demonstrate that BSL users can fully access our campuses/facilities.

3.2 Post-School Education			
The Conservatoire shares the long-term goal for post- school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:			
<i>“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)”</i>			
By 2024 we will:			
3.2.1 Take action to ensure that students and prospective students who use BSL are properly supported in all aspects of their learner journey.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Provide accessible information about what BSL users can expect from RCS	By 2019	<i>Director of External Relations (MCM)</i>	Our web pages are accessible to BSL users and there is visibility for users of BSL.

Provide full access to open days for prospective students who use BSL.	By 2020	<i>Assistant Principal (AR-RA)</i>	Our open days consider and support the needs of BSL users, including D/deafblind tactile BSL users
Provide support throughout the student journey for students who use BSL (including completing application forms, interviews, applying for Disabled Students Allowance, SAAS etc., learning and teaching, placements, exams and graduation).	By 2024	<i>All Directors Academic Registrar</i>	BSL users are supported throughout the student journey through accessible information, the use of 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' and having access to BSL interpreters as required.
<p>By 2024 we will:</p> <p>3.2.2 Take on board guidance produced by the SFC and others to ensure that across RCS, staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect.</p>			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Use all internal channels such as the Learning & Teaching Conference, Principal's Newsletters, staff email, manager briefings and team meetings to cascade information on guidance and good practice.	By 2019	<i>Assistant Principal Director of DDPF (SLIC) Director of Human Resources (E&DO)</i> <i>Director of HR (E&DO) Director of DDPF (SLIC)</i>	Evidence of information circulated, briefings developed and sessions delivered to staff. Workshops delivered to staff groups on specific responsibilities related to roles.

By 2024 we will:

3.2.3 Over the coming 18 months invite continuous feedback from students/prospective students and staff who use BSL after adopting this plan.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Collect feedback through a survey, focus groups and 1 to 1 meetings to inform future activities.	By 2019	<i>Director of HR (E&DO)</i> <i>Director of DDPF (SLIC)</i>	Evidence of channels being used to collect feedback to inform future developments.
Make BSL users who are not on the BA Performance programme in the RCS aware that they can request a slot on the interpreter drop in session on Wednesdays from 10 – 12 to feedback on the BSL Plan.	Ongoing	<i>Director of HR (E&DO)</i> <i>Director of DDPF (SLIC)</i>	Feedback gathered through drop in sessions and collated to inform development of Plan.

By 2024 we will:

3.2.4 By October 2020 the Scottish Government will produce a national progress report, after which we commit to reviewing/refreshing this plan.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Use feedback collected from BSL users and also consult with Directors and Heads of Departments to develop more 'local' actions.	By 2021	<i>Academic Registrar</i> <i>Director of HR (E&DO)</i> <i>Director of DDPF (SLIC)</i>	Evidence of feedback being used to inform future versions of this plan.

Our contribution to other relevant long term goals will include:

3.3 Training, Work and Social Security			
<p>The Conservatoire shares the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:</p> <p><i>“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”</i></p>			
<p>By 2024 we will:</p> <p>3.3.1 Raise awareness of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ scheme for students who use BSL towards the end of their course, so that they can benefit from the support it provides when they enter the world of work.</p>			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support in relation to Access to Work (A2W) for students.	By 2019	<i>Academic Registrar (C&DA)</i>	Publication of findings of real life experiences
Identify appropriate mechanisms to provide feedback to DWP about (in)accessibility to A2W for BSL users	By 2019	<i>Academic Registrar (C&DA) Director of HR (E&DO)</i>	Improvement of accessibility to A2W for BSL users
<p>By 2024 we will:</p> <p>3.3.2 Take steps to ensure that HR policies and processes in relation to the staff experience are fully accessible to people who use BSL.</p>			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
	By 2019	<i>Director of Human Resources</i>	

Review policies and processes in relation to key stages of the staff experience. Develop action plan based on findings with actions that are embedded into HR plans and processes.		(DDHR)	Feedback demonstrates that applicants and staff who are BSL users can access information and support.
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3.4 Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing			
The Conservatoire shares the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan, which is: <i>“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”</i>			
By 2024 we will:			
3.4.1 Take steps to ensure that our health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) are fully accessible to students who use BSL.			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support of mental health services and identify gaps in relation to BSL support.	By 2018	<i>Academic Registrar (C&DA)</i>	Feedback and evidence demonstrates that BSL users can fully benefit from services to support their health and wellbeing.
Include BSL provision in the provision of counselling and support services (including the availability of a d/Deaf counsellor whenever possible)	By 2018	<i>Academic Registrar (C&DA)</i>	

<p>By 2024 we will:</p> <p>3.4.2 Take steps to ensure that our staff support services, including our Employee Assistance Programme, are fully accessible to staff who use BSL.</p>			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision of staff support services and identify gaps in relation to BSL support.	By 2019	<i>Director of Human Resources (HRM)</i>	Feedback demonstrates that applicants and staff who are BSL users can access information and support.
Include BSL provision in the development and implementation of future staff wellbeing policies and provision.	By 2020	<i>Director of Human Resources (HRM)</i>	
<p>By 2024 we will:</p> <p>3.4.3 Take steps to ensure that wellbeing classes and activities are fully accessible to people who use BSL.</p>			
Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in wellbeing classes and activities.	By 2019	<i>Director of Human Resources (HRM)</i>	Feedback demonstrates that applicants and staff who are BSL users can access classes and activities.
Include BSL provision in the planning of wellbeing classes and activities.	By 2020	<i>Director of Human Resources (HRM)</i>	

3.5 Culture and the Arts

The Conservatoire shares 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, 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”

By 2024 we will:

3.5.1 Take action to ensure that extracurricular/recreational activities offered within the Conservatoire are fully accessible to students who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in relation to student events and activities, including Fresher’s Week, clubs and societies.	By 2018	<i>Academic Registrar Students’ Union President</i>	Feedback to demonstrate that intersectionality is recognised and groups/societies are accessible to all. E.g. LGBT BSL users are able to access the LGBT society. BSL users are informed and up to date with developments and activities within the Conservatoire
Include BSL provision in the planning and delivery of student events and activities.	By 2019	<i>Academic Registrar Students’ Union President</i>	
Schedule regular information and update sessions for students who are BSL users by Student Union, Library, Health & Safety, Department Heads etc., to ensure students are completely involved and aware of what is happening within the Conservatoire community.	By 2019	<i>Head of BA Performance Key colleagues</i>	

By 2024 we will:

3.5.2 Take action to ensure that our artistic output is more accessible to students, staff and customers who use BSL with either BSL interpretation or captioning of an increasing number of performances being programmed over the lifetime of this Plan.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Look for opportunities to expand the pool of interpreters who work on the BA Performance programme and find opportunities for those wishing to expand their skills in accessible performances, including the use of graduates where appropriate	By 2020	<i>Assistant Principal Head of BA Performance</i>	BSL users will be able to enjoy more productions at the Conservatoire each academic session
Explore the viability of training relevant staff to develop skills and capacity to enable captioning of performances in-house	By 2020	<i>Director of DDPF Director of HR</i>	
Introduce a number of signed Family Performances within the School of Music, to develop a D/deaf audience	By 2020	<i>Director of Music Artistic Planning Manager</i>	

3.6 Democracy

The Conservatoire shares the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan, 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”

By 2024 we will:

3.6.1 Take steps to ensure that the policies and processes in relation to recruiting and supporting members of our Board of Governors, which is our governing body, are fully accessible to people who use BSL.

Steps	Timescale	Responsibility	Success measures
Review current provision and support for BSL users in relation to recruitment of governors to the Board.	By 2019	<i>Conservatoire Secretary</i>	Evidence of access to opportunities and services to BSL users.
Include BSL provision in the delivery of future recruitment of governors to the Board.	By 2020	<i>Conservatoire Secretary</i>	
Consider having a co-opted member who is a BSL user on the Board of Governors	By 2019	<i>Conservatoire Secretary</i>	

By 2024 we will:

3.6.2 Take steps to ensure that students who are BSL users are encouraged and supported in standing for election to the Student Union Executive.

<p>The Executive will provide the necessary support in order to help prospective candidates from the BSL community to run for executive positions within the SU e.g.: objective support in effective campaigning, means of sharing information and other areas which may require the support of the SU Executive to assist BSL users in campaigning.</p> <p>This outcome could stem from having a strong BSL presence on the SU Council, which is achieved through the existence of BA Performance in BSL and English student experience representative roles.</p>	<p>By 2019</p>	<p><i>SU Executive</i></p>	<p>Evidence of BSL users on SU Executive taking an active role</p>
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