

British Sign Language

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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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British Sign Language

- Indigenous sign language of UK
- Full and proper language
 - Own distinct grammar
 - Uses full body & space
 - Not just the hands
- Dialects, regional variations, accents
- International signed languages
 - International sign



Spatial & visual cognition

- Spatial/visual modality
- Specific properties expressed – e.g. location of objects in a room, relative positions
- Greater attention to aspects of world
- Differences in brain networks between signers & non-signers when processing language



Brain development

- Language processing centres similar in both signers and non-signers... but not identical
- Signed languages utilise visual parts of the brain more
- Parietal lobe more involved in signed language processing (spatial sense)
- Signed languages do not interfere with other languages



Signed languages vs communication tools

- Signed languages are distinct languages
- Communication tools “borrow” elements & lay them upon other languages
- Eg Makaton – borrows signs from BSL but utilises English structure
- Full benefits of learning a completely new language & fluency do not exist with communication tools



BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

- Aim is to ***promote*** the use & understanding of BSL across the Scottish public sector
- First and so far only country in UK to legislate & recognise BSL in this manner
- One of very few countries in world to specifically legislate for its indigenous sign language

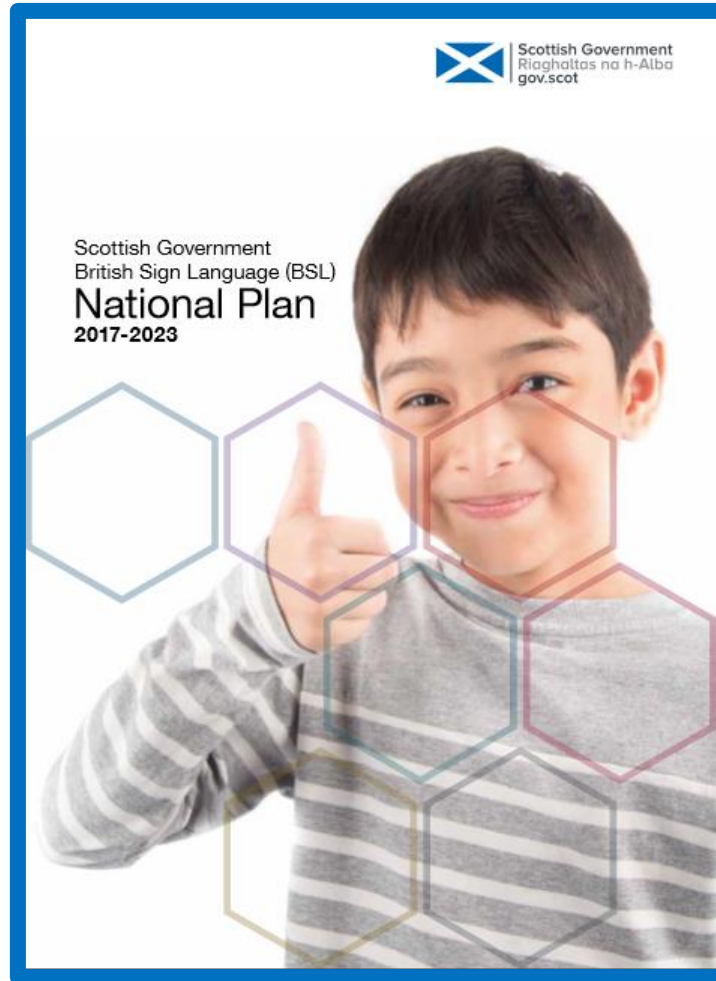


Plans

- 6 year planning cycle
- SG to prepare and publish National Plan every 6 years, with Progress Report mid-way
 - Encompasses national agencies, etc
- “Local” listed public bodies are to produce their own Authority Plans a year after the National Plan (e.g. LAs, NHS Boards, FE/HE)



BSL National Plan 2017-2023



BSL National Plan 2017-2023

- 70 actions
- 10 ambitions
 - Public Services
 - Family Support, Early Learning & Childcare
 - School Education
 - Post-School Education
 - Training, Work & Social Security
 - Health, Mental Health & Wellbeing
 - Transport
 - Culture & The Arts
 - Justice
 - Democracy



Early Years & Education

- 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. This will include consulting with BSL speakers and other stakeholders to assess the most appropriate digital platforms for signposting and disseminating information



Early Years & Education

- Develop BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as 'BookBug' so that parents can be supported to interact with their child during this critical developmental phase



Early Years & Education

- Work with the Scottish Qualifications Authority to develop an initial suite of awards in BSL, which will form the basis for any future development of BSL qualifications up to Level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework



Early Years & Education

- Instruct Scotland's National Centre for Languages to lead a programme of work to support BSL learning for hearing pupils
 - BSL part of language offer under 1+2 policy
 - Information, guidance & sharing good practice
 - Expert advisory group to recommend longer term strategy to support teaching of BSL & measure progress



Over to you

- Questions?
- Thoughts?
- Concerns?
- Good practice examples?
- Ideas?
- What will you do after this?
- No such thing as a stupid question!



Finding out more

- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/british-sign-language-bsl-national-plan-2017-2023/>
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