

The British Sign Language (BSL) report 2025

1. Introduction

The [British Sign Language \(BSL\) Act 2022](#) ("The BSL Act") received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022. It legally recognises BSL as a language of England, Scotland and Wales, but not Northern Ireland, where equality law is devolved. It also requires the government to report on the use of BSL by the ministerial departments named in the schedule to the BSL Act, in their public communications.

The government is strongly committed to continuing to improve the accessibility of government communications for everyone, including the Deaf community and BSL users.

Everyone in our country should have access to important information from the government and should be able to engage with the government on issues that will affect them. That is why it is crucial to make sure that government communications are as inclusive and accessible as possible.

The [first report](#) was published on 31 July 2023. Although the BSL Act requires that a report is published every 3 years, the government of the day committed to reporting on an annual basis for the 5 years up to 2027. This is a commitment which this government is continuing.

The [second report](#) was published on 17 December 2024 and was voluntary (not required by law). Publication was delayed due to the UK General Election in July 2024.

This third publication formally reports the data for the period between the first report and this report (1 May 2023 to 30 April 2025). These data tables can be found in the Annex. The [second report](#) provided case studies from the period between 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024. This report will share case studies from the period between 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025.

2. Context and background

2.1 Deafness and BSL use in the UK

According to the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID), 1 in 5 people (or 12 million people) in the UK are Deaf or hard of hearing.¹ The British Deaf Association (BDA) estimates there are 87,000 Deaf BSL users in the UK.² They can face social exclusion as a direct result of linguistic exclusion, negatively impacting their employment, education, access to healthcare, and navigation of the justice system and victim support.

2.2 Equality legislation

The BSL Act legally recognised BSL as a language of England, Wales and Scotland. The Act works alongside existing legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010, which requires ‘reasonable adjustments’ to be made by a wide range of people and sectors to ensure that disabled people have equal access to goods and services. The BSL Act preserves the architecture of the Equality Act while also placing a new BSL reporting requirement on the government. Read the first [BSL report](#) for more information.

2.3 BSL Advisory Board

A non-statutory board of 17 mainly BSL users was established in March 2023 to advise the government on matters of importance to Deaf people and on the implementation of the BSL Act. The BSL Advisory Board is co-chaired by Craig Crowley MBE FRSA and a senior civil servant.

Between 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025, the BSL Advisory Board met 3 times, including once with the Minister for Social Security and Disability soon after the general election. It continues to identify and discuss issues faced by the Deaf community through a number of sub groups focused on specific themes. During this period, the Board, through its sub groups, has focused on education, health and social care, technology and issues faced by Deafblind people.

The education sub group has focused on issues relating to early years Deaf education. In September 2024, it held an Early Years Education Summit, attended by the Minister for Social Security and Disability, at Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children. The summit

¹ RNID, [Prevalence of deafness and hearing loss](#), 2025

² BDA, [BSL Statistics](#), 2025

brought together headteachers and leaders from Deaf schools, policy-makers and sector experts to identify issues affecting Deaf children in education and to consider how these might be addressed.

The Health and Social Care sub group has hosted discussions to gain insight from over 60 Deaf organisations, professionals, including frontline health and social care staff, and academics to better understand a range of experience and barriers faced by the Deaf community in relation to their experience of health and social care services. A comprehensive report will be published later in 2025.

The Deafblind working group was set up in 2025 to understand the issues faced by those who are both blind and Deaf. The working group is specifically focusing on the lack of Deafblind interpreters and is working with the regulatory bodies to remedy this.

The technology working group has also been set up to run throughout 2025 with a primary focus on technologies that support Deaf people across a range of settings, including AI translations and Video Relay Service (VRS) / Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) systems.

The Board has also provided expert advice to a range of government departments, including:

- the Department of Education on the consultation for the new BSL GCSE
- the Department for Work and Pensions on BSL adjustment planners
- the Government Digital Service on driving theory tests

Following direct engagement with the Board in September 2024, the Office of the Public Guardian has produced new BSL communications regarding [Lasting Power of Attorney](#).

3. Reporting requirements for government departments

The BSL Act requires that named ministerial government departments must report on how they are promoting or facilitating the use of BSL in their communications with the public.

The BSL reporting duty states that:

- only 'core' departments need to report their use of BSL
- non-departmental public bodies and other arm's-length bodies are not in scope – they are encouraged to use BSL translation and interpreting where needed
- the reporting data specifically covers any public announcement on policy or changes to the law, publication of plans, strategies, policies, and consultations and

responses – it also mentions press conferences, social media, and government websites

- it is not intended to capture detail about individual requests for BSL interpretation services in front-facing operational delivery as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010
- it does not require the government to report on any personal communications which may have been translated into BSL, such as ministerial letters, or meetings with individuals where there has been a request for a BSL translator

The reporting duty is primarily focused on information intended to be shared with the wider public. It requires the government to report on the use of BSL, rather than an absolute requirement to provide BSL translation in all public communications.

4. Good practice and case studies by department

The 2 previous BSL reports, the [first published in July 2023](#) and the [second published in December 2024](#), showed that government departments and organisations already create a range of accessible communications, including increasing use of BSL translations and interpreting. Departments produce different amounts and types of public communications. It is clear from the data shared in this report that this can vary year on year. However, it also shows that there is still more to do to ensure that government departments and organisations improve the experience of Deaf people when they interact with the government.

This third report shows an increase in the use of BSL by government departments in public-facing communications since reporting started in 2023. The overall number of new BSL communications produced by government departments has not gone up since the last reporting period – it was 176 in the second reporting period, and went down to 140 in this reporting period. This was partly due to a pause in government activity during the pre-election period in 2024. There has been an overall increase since the first reporting period, where overall numbers were 76.

Although they are not counted in the data for the third reporting period, it is important to note that some of the content and publications produced in earlier reporting periods remain valid, and are continuing to provide up-to-date information to BSL users. Examples of these include BSL content on the [Make Things Right campaign website](#) for social housing tenants, and the published Home Office guidance and support for victims of domestic

abuse, forced marriages or coercive and controlling behaviour. More detail about some of these examples is set out below.

It is encouraging that some departments, like the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), have published BSL activity for the first time, with the FCDO's posts across the campaign receiving over 25,000 views. However, there is still more that can be done.

This year, each ministerial department has been asked to produce a 5 year BSL Plan, setting out how they plan to improve the use of BSL within their departments. For many this includes increasing awareness of BSL across their departments through staff training and increased engagement with the Deaf community. These plans are published alongside this report.

The rest of this section provides some case studies and examples of how the government used BSL during the 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025 reporting period. Data from this reporting period and the [second reporting period](#) are set out in the Annex of this report.

4.1 Cabinet Office

The Cabinet Office, which includes 10 Downing Street, continues to produce the highest volume of public-facing BSL communications of any department during this reporting period.

10 Downing Street enabled the provision of in-vision BSL interpretation for the Prime Minister's major government speeches. This included the Prime Minister's press conference following the [2024 general election](#), on [Ukraine and National Security](#), at the [security leaders' summit](#) and on the [Southport attacks](#). It also included public announcements on [reforming the state](#), [tackling NHS waiting lists](#) and [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#).

In March 2025, the Office for Opportunity and Equality (OEO) [published a consultation](#) seeking views on how to implement mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting for large employers in the UK. The consultation was made available in a range of accessible formats, including:

- [BSL video translations](#) with subtitles
- Easy Read

- large print
- Braille and other formats

The OEO developed a range of products to announce the consultation that were available in BSL. This included [videos featuring the Minister for Social Security and Disability](#), which received over 4,100 views.

The consultation sought views on how ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting could work in practice. It invited responses from anyone interested and particularly welcomed views from those who may be most affected by the measures, including:

- employers
- public sector bodies
- people from ethnic minority groups
- disabled people.

The responses to the consultation helped to shape proposals which will be included in the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, which was first announced in the King's Speech in July 2024.

The launch of the consultation was followed by the publication of the [Equality Law call for evidence](#) which was also published in a wide range of accessible formats, including BSL and Easy Read. The call for evidence invited responses from employers, disabled people's organisations and other stakeholders with relevant evidence to support consideration of a range of areas. These included steps to make the right to equal pay effective for women, people from ethnic minority groups, and disabled people. The OEO also issued a [BSL press notice](#) to national and disability specialist media outlets.

4.2 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

DWP continues to be a department leading the way for BSL communications. For Sign Language Week 2025, the DWP collaborated with Tasha Ghouri, an activist and influencer who was born Deaf and has a cochlear implant. Tasha has appeared as a contestant on Strictly Come Dancing and Love Island. With her support, DWP created content to promote the importance of BSL to the public. This helped demonstrate the government's support for the Deaf community, and how employers can help Deaf people to apply for and remain in their roles.

This resulted in 3 different videos that included BSL signing and were shared across

multiple social media platforms. As far as DWP were aware, this was one of very few recent examples of BSL signing being included with the spoken word in the 9x16 video format published on Instagram and TikTok.

The main video was created for Tasha to share on her [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#) accounts (over 1.4M followers on Instagram and 924K followers on TikTok) to promote the importance of there is still more to do to ensure that government departments and organisations improve the experience of Deaf people when they interact with the government.

Plan

BSL, and encourage awareness of and participation in Sign Language Week. By collaborating on the Instagram post by Tasha Ghouri, it was also possible to share it to the DWP and UK Gov accounts on the platform. The total number of video views was 846,000 with engagement of 22,000.

Two more videos were created for sharing on DWP channels, which resulted in a total of 22,000 video views. This included a video featuring the Minister for Social Security and Disability on a visit with Tasha Ghouri to the Blanche Neville School for Deaf Children (published on the DWP's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) accounts, and reposted by the Blanche Neville School on their accounts).

Another video featured them at the same school discussing the support provided by the government, and how employers can support deaf people at work (published on the DWP's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) accounts).

4.3 Department for Education (DfE)

DfE has continued to champion engaging content around the BSL GCSE, building on its previous year's activity. This year, the DfE social media team partnered with Arsenal Football Club – the only Premier League club fully integrating BSL into their matchday experience – to create collaborative content that extends the message of BSL inclusivity to a broader audience.

Working closely with Arsenal, DfE developed content that explains the importance of BSL inclusivity. It explores career opportunities through interviews with the club's BSL interpreters. Arsenal midfielder Jorginho shared his personal journey of learning BSL to foster inclusivity among football fans. Campaigner and BSL user Daniel Jillings was invited to a Premier League match, where his experience was shown through [social media videos](#)

and photography. The resulting content, shared across both Arsenal and DfE's main social media channels, generated over 650,000 impressions.

DfE also created accessible content to support the publication of the [SEND Futures discovery report](#), a two-year pilot study examining the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. To ensure accessibility for Deaf audiences, BSL videos were produced to highlight the report's main findings and were published on GOV.UK and [YouTube](#) and shared with stakeholders. These included [SEND futures: lives at age 12-13 - BSL Summary](#) and [SEND Futures: parental perceptions of school support for pupils with SEND at age 13-14 – BSL Summary](#).

Moreover, the SEND team prepared a guide to support colleagues in creating more accessible publications.

4.4 Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

DHSC added a BSL translation to a video announcing Stephen Kinnock MP as the department's Lead Minister for Disability. The department recognised the need to make sure this announcement was accessible to the BSL community.

The video featured the minister explaining the responsibilities of the role with visuals of his recent visit to an autism and learning disability support centre. It was published on DHSC's [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#) profiles, generating 6.6k views on X and 5.3k on LinkedIn.

The government is developing a 10 Year Health Plan as part of its mission to build a health service fit for the future. It launched 'Change NHS' to have the biggest ever conversation on the NHS in its history, with over 270,000 contributions from the public, health and care staff, and partner organisations helping us to develop the plan.

A primary objective of the engagement was ensuring that as many people as possible could have their say from across England, particularly those from seldom-heard groups. The department did this by providing easily accessible surveys on change.nhs.uk and through in-person and online events with the public, health and care staff and partner organisations.

DHSC launched the Change NHS website in October 2024 to collect views from the public and health and care staff. Surveys were open from 21 October 2024 until 14 May 2025. The website included [BSL translations of the content](#), including information [about the](#)

[engagement](#), and BSL translations of the surveys. It also launched [BSL translations of videos](#) of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the CEO of NHS England asking people to take part. In total, videos on the Change NHS website with BSL translations have had over 14,500 views.

In November 2024, DHSC launched a ‘workshop in a box’ – a toolkit of resources to allow partner organisations and local health systems to run engagement with their own communities. It commissioned BSL translations of the resources so that the workshops could be as accessible as possible.

In February 2025, DHSC launched a further survey on change.nhs.uk to show what it had heard so far, and to ask people for their views on emerging ideas from the engagement to date. This survey was made available in BSL. BSL formats of the surveys were published on a dedicated page on the site for accessibility and alternative formats. This page included details of how people could respond in alternative formats to enable people to submit their views in BSL and other formats.

DHSC was also able to offer BSL interpreters to anyone requesting them at the events with health and care staff and the public.

In March 2025, the Prime Minister announced major reforms to the NHS, bringing NHS England back into the Department of Health and Social Care to drive efficiency, remove duplication, empower NHS staff and put patients first.

The Health and Social Care Secretary made a statement to the House of Commons on the changes to NHS England. They set out plans for a much leaner top of the NHS, allowing more money to go to frontline services. There are also plans to help local NHS providers innovate and develop new, productive ways of working and providing better care for patients.

DHSC integrated BSL into its social media coverage of the [announcement on X](#), with over 50,000 views.

4.5 His Majesty’s Treasury (HMT)

HMT has worked with government-approved BSL interpretation providers, such as Barefoot and Sign Solutions, to improve their BSL communications. BSL is now part of Treasury-owned social media live streams and conferences, ensuring someone signs in real time and it is built directly into the video. This enables HMT’s main live streams to be

accessible to a broader audience.

For the Chancellor's speech at the Siemens Factory in January 2025, HMT worked with Sign Solutions and Barefoot to provide a BSL compliant stream that ran on HM Treasury's social media channels. This allowed hundreds of thousands of people to engage with the stream across Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, as well as X.

A BSL compliant live stream was also provided for the Chancellor's post Spring Statement speech. HMT signposted to BSL compliant communications for the Chancellor's speech to the House of Commons on the same day.

4.6 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)³

MHCLG produced 6 new pieces of BSL content during the reporting period.

5 videos were posted on the department's social media channels with the aim of explaining government policies to the public. The videos covered:

- commitments on [renters' rights](#),
- commitments on [leasehold](#) and [building homes](#)
- the [Make Things Right campaign](#) for social housing tenants
- [a tenant's story of renting](#)

MHCLG supported the production of a [video from the Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner](#). She signed a message of support for Sign Language Week 2025, celebrating sign language as a culture, community and a place to belong. The Deputy Prime Minister posted it on her social channels, as did the department on its own channels.

While it is not part of this reporting period, a previously published video with sign language is still live and used on the [Make Things Right campaign website](#). This marketing campaign for social housing tenants has continued into 2024 to 2025, with all adverts pointing tenants to the page with the video. The video remains an important resource for tenants who reach the website.

4.7 Ministry of Defence (MoD)

MOD continues to create more BSL content where there is opportunity to do so. In this reporting period, BSL translations were provided for departmental videos which translated

³ At the start of the reporting period, the department was known as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Following the July 2024 general election the department is now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

the public safety campaign '[Respect the range](#)', highlighting the dangers of accessing military land.

BSL translations were also provided for Ukraine-focused communications as part of our '1000 Days of War' series, including:

- [The volunteer keeping Ukrainian culture alive](#),
- [The Linguist](#)
- [The Teacher](#)
- [The Activist](#)
- [Inviting 3 Ukrainian Military Linguists to Dinner](#)

4.8 Department for Transport (DfT)

The Department for Transport used in-vision BSL to help promote its plans for rail reform, which were announced in the King's Speech. A BSL interpreter signed parts of the King's Speech focusing on how legislation would reform rail franchising, establish Great British Railways, and bring train operators into Public Ownership.

The video was posted on both [X](#) and [Instagram](#). The post on X received 12,100 impressions and 315 engagements. On Instagram, the video was played 2,100 times and made 1,400 impressions.

BSL content also shared during this period included:

- a social media video for the [It's Everyone's Journey](#) campaign, highlighting the campaign's goals
- [Blue Badge Rights and Responsibilities Booklet](#), explaining how the Blue Badge scheme works in England, including the rights and responsibilities of badge holders
- [the department's Air Passenger Travel Guide](#), explaining the rights and responsibilities of passengers when flying
- [Is Pushing It Worth it?](#) – a video explaining facts related to people driving above the speed limit

4.9 Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

DBT worked with its content agency Tag to create a new British Sign Language advert for this year's [National Minimum and Living Wage campaign](#), targeting worker audiences.

DBT sought advice on the best use of BSL, which provided insightful guidance and tips.

These helped inform the BSL script and the choice of BSL signer who fitted the younger demographic of the campaign's target audience. It also included campaign branding and an effective call to action.

DBT included [a BSL page](#) in the [worker toolkit](#) which has been shared with stakeholders, encouraging them to post content through their channels.

4.10 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

FCDO provides information on actions British people can take when travelling abroad to minimise risk and stay safe. They reshared their main messages in BSL across multiple channels, to coincide with Sign Language Week in March 2025. The messages gained 13,000 views on [Facebook](#), 9,200 views on [X](#), 3,000 views on [LinkedIn](#), and 80 views on [YouTube](#).

FCDO uploaded the Foreign Secretary's growth speech, held on 20 March 2025 at the British Chamber of Commerce, in BSL to [YouTube](#) to ensure departmental policy messaging was available to as wide an audience as possible.

It also published a [Global Disability Summit wrap-up video](#) following the Global Disability Summit held in Berlin between 2 to 3 April 2025.

4.11 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

In February 2025, DSIT officially [launched the Digital Inclusion Action Plan](#). The plan sets out the first actions the government will take to break down barriers to digital inclusion, affecting 1 in 4 Britons. Given disabled people are one of the main groups in the UK most likely to be digitally excluded, the Deaf community were especially considered for the plan and Call for Evidence. Scoping work began to consider how best to meaningfully include Deaf people through the communications approach.

As using BSL in communications was still quite a new area within DSIT at the time, the digital inclusion policy team proactively contacted the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit. The aim was to understand the preferred communications mediums and formats to engage the community with the new proposed plan, and to promote the opportunity for them to have their say. BSL was incorporated into the publication of the [Digital Inclusion Action Plan](#) and [Digital Inclusion Call for Evidence](#), with accessible text summaries and BSL translation videos published alongside the HTML web versions of both products.

The videos and summaries were created by Deaf-led organisation Remark over a period of 2 weeks and published on GOV.UK for the plan launch. Changes were required to the plan itself before launch, after the BSL-accessible comms products had been finalised. The DSIT digital team stepped in to make some minor edits to the videos, to ensure the final products were accurate and up to date. This highlighted the importance of building in BSL product production timelines wherever possible after the complete finalisation of policy documents and plans.

Since February, the Digital Inclusion Action Plan summary video has received 41 views. The Digital Inclusion Call for Evidence translation has received 126 views. Ensuring the accessibility of the Action Plan and its initiatives is a core priority of the digital inclusion team. Both the communications and policy teams are committed to exploring future opportunities in this space to engage and reach a wider subsection of the community in future milestones.

4.12 Home Office

In May to July 2024, the Home Office was seeking views on an [updated version of the domestic homicide review statutory guidance](#).

It wanted to consult with:

- people and organisations involved in coordinating, conducting and participating in domestic homicide reviews
- people who have been affected by fatal domestic abuse and may be contributing to a domestic homicide review

It produced 29 small [BSL videos](#) to break down the content material and ensure that BSL users could access the consultation in an accessible manner.

In the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the government legislated for:

- a new civil domestic abuse protection notice (DAPN) to provide immediate protection following a domestic abuse incident
- a new civil Domestic Abuse Protection Order (DAPO) to provide flexible, longer-term protection for victims

In April 2024, the Home Office held a consultation on whether the DAPN and DAPO statutory guidance for police is clear and comprehensive, and it [produced BSL content](#) to support it.

4.13 Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

The family court system can be a confusing and overwhelming experience for children and young people. The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), an arm's length body of the MoJ, has produced a series of films to help children and young people going through the family court system to understand the process, and give them a voice in decisions affecting their lives.

The second film in the series is called 'Taking Me Seriously: Sharing Recommendations With You'. To better support Deaf children and young people Cafcass produced a [version with BSL translation](#).

Having BSL-interpreted versions provided a way to demonstrate representation for the Deaf community in family courts. It also showed the BSL translation services which Cafcass can offer in cases with Deaf or hearing-impaired children and families.

Since 'Taking Me Seriously: Sharing Recommendations With You' was published in January 2025, the BSL-translated version attracted 4.5% of the visitor numbers attracted by the standard version.

4.14 Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

DESNZ has focussed on communicating the [Warm Home Discount](#), a benefit for which 3 million homes are eligible.

This BSL post achieved 1,301 views and 33 engagements (including 26 likes) on Instagram. These are typical amounts for the DESNZ Instagram channel.

On Facebook, this BSL post achieved 393 impressions and 14 engagements (including 5 likes). This is slightly lower than DESNZ Facebook averages but not significantly so.

4.15 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Defra has signed a memorandum of understanding with a specialist agency, Sign Solutions, to provide BSL translation for its public-facing digital content on [Do you know what to do in a flood?](#)

Its first publication in BSL was published in April 2025 on the Environment Agency YouTube channel. It will be used on social media channels when significant flooding is expected.

4.16 Scotland Office⁴

The Scotland Office promoted and facilitated the use of BSL in a video with Deaf Action, a Deaf-led charity based in Edinburgh that supports and celebrates Deaf people.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Kirsty McNeill MP, visited the centre to hear more about what they offer to their hard-of-hearing and Deaf service users. Deaf Action helps those dealing with isolation through social clubs and also supports its users getting into education or employment.

Following this visit, Scotland Office created a video highlighting the work Deaf Action does in supporting Deaf or hard-of-hearing people. The video was published in April 2025 on [Instagram](#) and [X](#), totalling over 1200 views and highlighting the Scotland Office's commitment to supporting the deaf community in their careers and everyday lives.

⁴ During the first reporting period the department was known as the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Following the July 2024 general election the department is now known as Scotland Office.

5. Summary and next steps

The duties in the BSL Act encourage government departments to improve how they communicate with the Deaf community. Different departments will approach, and have approached, implementation of the BSL Act differently to suit the needs of their specific audiences.

The Cabinet Office and DWP are the departments which have produced the most BSL content in this reporting period.

There were 5 government departments which reported not having produced any BSL communications during this third reporting period. This is still significantly lower than the first report, where 11 departments produced no BSL communications. It should be noted that a number of departments create a limited amount of external-facing communications.

The departmental 5 year plans that accompany this report show that all government departments are committed to making their content accessible to BSL users. The Minister for Social Security and Disability, and the Government's Disability Unit, will continue to support departments across government to go further to improve how they communicate with Deaf people.

5.1 Statutory guidance

Part 3 of the BSL Act also requires the government to issue guidance promoting the facilitation and use of BSL, including:

- advice for relevant departments on best practice to support BSL under both the Equality Act 2010 and BSL Act 2022
- advice on best practice for communicating with BSL users (both when interacting with individuals and when communicating with the general public), including case studies to show the value of providing BSL interpretation in communications with the public

The BSL Advisory Board will advise the government on the guidance detailed in the BSL Act, and its implementation to best represent the Deaf community. This external guidance will be published in due course with support from the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit.

5.2 Issue internal guidance to civil servants

The Government Communication Service (GCS) [published guidance](#) in October 2023 on how to plan and create better British Sign Language (BSL) content where it is needed to meet the needs of Deaf BSL users. It covers best practice and things to consider when planning communications for BSL users, creating a BSL translation or using BSL interpreters, as well as advice on how to procure BSL translation or interpreting.

5.3 Ministerial responsibility to improve BSL use

In December 2024, the Minister for Social Security and Disability chaired the first meeting of the newly formed group of [Lead Ministers for Disability](#), which represents the interests of disabled people, and champions disability inclusion and accessibility across each government department. The group has discussed the duties to government resulting from the British Sign Language (BSL) Act 2022 and the importance of accessible communications, in particular for consultations.

The group will continue to push for improvements for Deaf and disabled people across government policy, and help monitor the outputs of departments' BSL 5 year plans.

6. 5 year plans to improve BSL communications

Each ministerial department has been asked to produce a 5 year BSL Plan, setting out how they plan to improve the use of BSL within their departments. These plans have been published alongside this report.

Departments have been encouraged to be ambitious in their plans, and consider how they could engage their workforce in understanding the importance of producing BSL communications across their departments. It is possible that departments will want to review their plans once the Disability Unit publishes its statutory guidance.

The Minister for Social Security and Disability, the Cabinet Office, the Disability Unit, and the BSL Advisory Board will continue to support departments with their plans.

7. Annex: BSL activity by ministerial department

2nd Reporting period: 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024

3rd Reporting period: 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025

Government department	Public announcements about policy or about changes to the law in BSL		Publications (plans, strategies, consultation documents or consultation responses) in BSL		Press conferences, social media or government website use to publicise activities or policies in BSL		Total	
	2ND ⁵	3RD ⁶	2ND	3RD	2ND	3RD	2ND	3RD
Attorney General's Office	0	0	0	0	8	0	8	0
Cabinet Office	1	4	1	5	43	35	45	44
Department for Business and Trade ⁷	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	0	0	0	0	15	0	15	0
Department for Education	0	1	4	3	4	12	8	16
Department for Energy, Security and	0	0	0	0	5	1	5	1

⁵ The number in this column relates to the reporting period covered by the Second BSL Report, 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024

⁶ The data in this column relates to the reporting period for this Third BSL Report, 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025.

⁷ Department for Business and Trade's (DBT) first year submission was included as part of the Department for International Trade (DIT) as DBT was established in a 'Machinery of Government' change 2 months before the end of the first reporting period.

Net Zero⁸								
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government⁹	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	6
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology¹⁰	2	2	0	0	4	0	6	2
Department for Transport	1	0	2	0	2	5	5	5
Department for Work and Pensions	13	7	20	11	5	8	38	26
Department of Health and Social Care	0	3	0	6	6	3	6	12
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
His Majesty's Treasury	2	0	0	0	0	10	2	10
Home Office	0	0	27	2	0	0	27	2
Ministry of Defence	0	0	0	0	3	6	3	6

⁸ Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) first year submission was included as part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as DESNZ was established in a 'Machinery of Government' change 2 months before the end of the first reporting period.

⁹ During the reporting period the department was known as the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Following the July 2024 general election the department is now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

¹⁰ Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's (DSIT) first year submission was included as part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as DSIT was established in a 'Machinery of Government' change 2 months before the end of the first reporting period.

Ministry of Justice	0	0	3	0	1	2	4	2
Office of the Leader of the House of Commons	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Office of the Leader of the House of Lords	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland Office¹¹¹²	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Wales Office¹³¹⁴	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹¹ During the first reporting period the department was known as the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Following the July 2024 general election the department is now known as Scotland Office.

¹² The Scottish and Welsh Governments are not subject to the reporting duty and communications about matters that are devolved are outside the scope of this report

¹³ During the first reporting period the department was known as the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales. Following the July 2024 general election the department is now known as Wales Office.

¹⁴ The Scottish and Welsh Governments are not subject to the reporting duty and communications about matters that are devolved are outside the scope of this report