

British Sign Language (BSL) fourth report 2026

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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.

Everyone in our country should have access to important information from the government and should be able to engage with it on issues that will affect them. The government recognises the need for continuous improvement in the accessibility of government communications for everyone, including the Deaf community and BSL users.

The government is committed to making sure that its communications are as inclusive and accessible as possible. While the BSL Act requires that a report will be published every 3 years, the government has committed to report on an annual basis for the 3 years up to 2027.

To accompany the publication of the [third statutory BSL report](#), each ministerial department was asked to produce a 5 year BSL plan. These plans set out how they will improve the use of BSL within their departments. An update is published alongside this report.

The first 3 reports were published on the following dates:

- the [first report](#) – 31 July 2023
- the [second report](#) – 17 December 2024 (delayed due to the July general election)
- the [third report](#) – 21 July 2025

This publication formally reports the data for the period between 1 May 2025 and 30 April 2026 and includes case studies from the period. The data tables can be found in the Annex.

2. Context and background

2.1 Deafness, deafblind 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 hearing¹. The British Deaf Association (BDA) estimates there are 151,000 BSL users in the UK and 87,000 are Deaf². Around 450,000 people in the UK are deafblind or have dual sensory loss³.

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

² BDA, [BSL statistics](#), 2026

³ [Deafblindness statistics in the UK](#), Sense

They can face social exclusion as a direct result of linguistic exclusion. This negatively impacts their education, employment, 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, most notably the Equality Act 2010. Read the [third BSL report](#) for further 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 and Deafblind people, and on the implementation of the BSL Act.

The first board's term ended in December 2025. A new board was then appointed through an open and transparent recruitment process to continue the previous board's work and identify new opportunities. The [BSL Advisory Board](#) is now co-chaired by Dr Joanna Atkinson and Alexandra Gowlland, a senior civil servant. Read an overview of the [achievements of the first board](#).

During the period 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026, the board met 5 times, including 4 times with the Minister for Social Security and Disability. The board continued to identify and discuss the issues faced by the Deaf and Deafblind community through a number of sub-groups focused on specific themes.

The areas of focus were:

- health and social care
- education
- issues faced by Deafblind people
- technology
- employment
- translation and interpretation

The education sub-group largely focused on issues relating to early years Deaf education. In June 2025, the group also hosted a call about [Ofqual's consultation](#) on the BSL GCSE qualification. The event brought together Deaf education experts and the general public, with over 200 attendees.

In July 2025, the sub-group met with Stephen Morgan MP, then Minister for Early Education, discussing curriculum accreditation, funding for Teachers of the Deaf and BSL for families.

In November 2025, members of the sub-group visited [Percy Shurmer](#) – a mainstream primary school in Birmingham – to meet with staff, parents and pupils. They saw how the

school's Deaf learning base is integrated into the school to give Deaf children their deaf identity, space and support.

In November 2025, the health and social care sub-group published their report [Locked Out: Exclusion of deaf and deafblind BSL users from health and social care in the UK](#). It was the result of 3 years of work collating evidence and research from over 60 Deaf organisations, professionals, academics and frontline health and social care staff. The aim of the report was to better understand the community's experiences and barriers in health and social care. The report was launched at an event in parliament on 27 November 2025, attended by the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP (Minister for Social Security and Disability) and Dr Zubir Ahmed MP (then Minister for Health Innovation and Safety).

The Deafblind working group focused on addressing the lack of Deafblind interpreters across the UK. They worked with [NRCPD](#) – the regulator for language service professionals – and [Signature](#) – the awarding organisation for BSL qualifications. They also created a job description for communication support workers and started to develop a Deafblind leadership programme.

In June 2025, the board set up the technology working group who convened an artificial intelligence (AI) technology forum. This brought together representatives from the Deaf community and sector experts to discuss issues around BSL and AI.

In June 2025, the technology working group co-chair, Ahmed Mudawi, took part in a panel discussion on [AI and Innovative Inclusive Communication](#) alongside Minister Malhotra during the [18th session of the Conference of State Parties to the CRPD](#) at the UN headquarters.

On 10 September 2025, [the Women and Equalities Committee](#) held an evidence gathering session on [Access to British Sign Language](#). They heard evidence from a panel of witnesses including Craig Crowley MBE FRSA (then co-chair of the BSL Advisory Board) and Dr Jo Atkinson (then member, now co-chair of the BSL Advisory Board) and Rebecca Mansell, CEO of the [British Deaf Association](#). The main focus was to gather evidence on the progress towards access to BSL since the BSL 2022 Act. The committee explored the reported data on government BSL communications, and where improvements could be made. It also asked questions on broader issues of concern to the Deaf signing community. You can read a [transcript of the September 2025 meeting](#).

During this reporting period, the board also engaged with:

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on its consultation [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper](#), and the Access to Work scheme
- Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on its [Men's Health Strategy for England: call for evidence](#), hosting a discussion which looked at the biggest issues faced by Deaf men in healthcare settings and which included a follow-up report
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) on its [Census 2031 topic consultation](#)

- DWP's call for evidence for the [Young People and Work Report](#), seeking feedback to understand drivers of the increase in the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- DHSC's consultation on the [Down Syndrome Act 2022](#), which was seeking views on the draft statutory guidance issued under the Down Syndrome Act 2022
- the Independent National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation's [call for evidence on the experiences of maternity and neonatal services](#)
- Baroness Casey, presenting evidence and recommendations from the board's [Locked Out](#) report to the [Casey Commission on adult social care](#)
- [Ofcom](#), writing to highlight the importance of strengthening the provision of BSL content, subtitling and other forms of accessibility under the [Media Act 2024](#)
- Department for Media, Culture and Sport to support the recognition of BSL and Deaf culture as part of the UK's [Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)

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:

- only core departments need to report their use of BSL and non-departmental public bodies and other arm's-length bodies are not in scope
- 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 as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010

More information on the [reporting duty can be found in the third BSL report](#).

4. Good practice and case studies by department

The 3 previous BSL reports show that government departments and organisations create a range of accessible communications. This includes an increasing use of BSL translations and interpretations. However, it is clear from the data that the number and type of public communications differ depending on the department and the year.

This fourth report demonstrates an increase in the usage of BSL by government departments in public-facing communications since last year, and the highest number recorded since reporting started in 2023. The overall number of new BSL communications produced by government departments has gone up by:

- 41% since the last reporting period, from 140 to 198
- 161% since the first reporting period, where overall numbers were 76

It is particularly encouraging to see that the increase in reporting numbers for BSL translations has been mainly due to the increase in the number of government publications that have been translated into BSL. This includes plans, strategies, consultation documents or consultation responses. There has been an increase in the total number of these types of communications produced since the last reporting period – from 26 in 2025, to 87 in 2026.

By providing Deaf BSL users with direct access to government's plans and consultations, this increase in accessible communication supports the government's commitment to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to engage with it on issues that will affect them.

Examples of consultations or calls for evidence that have been published with BSL translation during this period include:

- Department for Transport's [Reviewing the law for powered mobility devices](#)
- Home Office's [Identifying Victims of Modern Slavery](#)
- DHSC's [Down Syndrome Act 2022 Draft Statutory Guidance](#)
- DWP's [Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment: Call for Evidence](#)
- Ministry of Justice's [The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \(Victim's Code\)](#)

It is important to recognise that there is still more that can be done. Some BSL translations of calls for evidence and consultations are still not published until weeks after the written English version has already been made available. Departments understand that publication dates should be synchronised.

It is also important to note that much of the content and publications produced during earlier reporting periods remain valid, and are continuing to provide up-to-date information to BSL users.

Last year, each ministerial department was asked to produce a [5 year BSL plan](#). Updates on those plans, and what departments have achieved in this first period, 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 2025 to 30 April 2026 reporting period.

Data from this reporting period is included in the annex of this report.

4.1 Cabinet Office

The Disability Unit (DU), in its role as secretariat of the [BSL Advisory Board](#), supported the publication of [Locked Out](#). This was an independent report which presented the findings and recommendations of the BSL Advisory Board's health and social care sub-group on the barriers that BSL users face in navigating the UK's health and social care systems.

DU approached the translation of this report in a uniquely different way to previous translations. The report had been written and guided by academic research, and was over 140 pages long. There was a need to make it more accessible to a wider BSL audience. Previously, translations would have been made using the written documents and translated directly into BSL using the BSL syntax and pace, but a direct translation.

Following discussions with the BSL Advisory Board and the report's author, DU commissioned a deaf-led translation⁴ team with specialist knowledge in the subject area of health. Rather than signing exactly what was written on the page, the translation team read and summarised it and then created the BSL version. The translation does not sign the written report word for word, but rather creates a deaf-led 'easy read', summarised version. This ensures greater accessibility of the information being presented.

[⁴]: Deaf-led translation is where the translation and communication services are solely provided and managed by Deaf individuals, ensuring cultural nuance, accuracy and an understanding of the lived experience of the Deaf community.

The report received a lot of attention following a launch event in parliament in November 2025. The event was attended by the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP (Minister for Social Security and Disability) and Dr Zubir Ahmed MP (then Minister for Health Innovation and Safety).

A [press release](#) including details of the report had nearly 400 views on YouTube, with a subsequent 340 views of the report's foreword and 160 views of the report's summary.

4.2 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

During the reporting period, DWP published BSL-supported explainer and announcement videos to support BSL users to access information about their services and policy changes. Videos were shared across a range of DWP digital channels, including YouTube, Facebook,

⁴ Deaf-led translation is where the translation and communication services are solely provided and managed by Deaf individuals, ensuring cultural nuance, accuracy and an understanding of the lived experience of the Deaf community.

LinkedIn and X, providing BSL users access to information about changes that may affect them.

- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [X](#)

DWP continue to use its dedicated [BSL DWP sign](#) channel as the main platform for publishing BSL translations. During the reporting period, content on this channel received around 46,000 views.

DWP's North London Deaf Hub is a cross-district specialist service supporting Deaf claimants across the North London District. Based at Barnsbury Jobcentre, the Hub provides support to Deaf claimants from all 12 North London jobcentres

The Hub was established to improve access to DWP services for Deaf BSL users by reducing communication barriers. It proactively promotes and embeds the use of BSL across departmental communications, ensuring Deaf BSL users could fully understand, engage with, and act on DWP information. Written communications were explained in BSL, and BSL-inclusive requirements were embedded into local guidance to ensure consistency and sustainability of accessible practice.

This approach directly supported Deaf BSL-using customers to navigate DWP services, including understanding Move to Universal Credit notifications. It also reduced the risk of misunderstanding or exclusion arising from communications delivered mainly in written English. By prioritising language access, the Hub strengthened customer confidence, compliance, and engagement.

During the reporting year, the Hub delivered tangible outcomes, including supporting 2 Deaf BSL-using claimants into employment following participation in Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs). The Hub also provided BSL-based explanations of Move to Universal Credit letters, delivered Deaf Information Day sessions for Deaf BSL users, including school leavers, improving awareness of employment pathways, benefits, and available support.

4.3 Department for Transport (DfT)

DfT's Digital Team developed a case study video to highlight how BSL screens have helped a passenger on her commute. This was created to mark Sign Language Week, and featured a person using BSL while travelling on UK trains. This was posted on DfT's [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) as a collaboration with Network Rail in March 2026.

Across both channels, the video received a combined total of 9,600 video views. 67% of its Instagram views were from non-followers of DfT's accounts, showing that it reached a wider audience. It also received 250 likes and a number of positive comments on Instagram, showing that the video was positively received.

4.4 Department for Education (DfE)

BSL content was provided for a consultation on [assistive software funded through Disabled Students' Allowance](#).

This policy directly impacted the BSL community. As such, ministers and officials agreed that allowing appropriate time to consult, and carefully agreeing the framing and timing of the announcement, were essential.

Ministers requested that a BSL version of the consultation be published to coincide with the announcement, alongside targeted engagement with sector and parliamentary stakeholders. This was to ensure the tone and approach were appropriate. This was due to the risk that the announcement could be misinterpreted as a government cut to services, rather than a modernisation of funding criteria to reflect advances in freely available software and online tools that support disabled students.

The announcement required early clearance and ministers requested further stakeholder engagement with peers in the House of Lords. This led to the redrafting and re-recording of the BSL video. The consultation launched in March. As of 1 May, it had received 113 responses, with a fuller review planned for 2026.

4.5 HM Treasury (HMT)

HM Treasury prioritised accessibility through BSL provision for the Chancellor's scene-setting press conference before the Autumn Budget 2025. This formed part of HMT's wider approach to ensuring that high-profile fiscal events are accessible to Deaf audiences in real time.

For this event, HMT worked with government-approved providers Barefoot Communications and Sign Solutions to deliver a fully BSL-compliant live stream across their social media channels. The interpreter was embedded directly within the video, ensuring seamless access to the Chancellor's remarks without users having to navigate to separate feeds.

The BSL-enabled content was published across multiple platforms to maximise reach:

- [X](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [YouTube](#)

This approach ensured that information about the government's fiscal plans and cost of living support was accessible at the same time as the main broadcast.

The BSL-compliant stream reached more than 20,000 people, demonstrating strong engagement with accessible formats for major economic announcements. This represents a meaningful step forward in ensuring Deaf audiences are included in national moments of economic significance.

This case study reflects how HMT is embedding BSL into the planning and delivery of major communications, working with specialist partners to deliver high-quality, accessible content at scale.

Over the next 12 months, HMT intends to build on the work it has already done in embedding BSL into communication of key announcements, speeches and publications.

4.6 Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

DBT produced a BSL video to support the launch of the new [business growth service](#). The service helps businesses start, grow and succeed by connecting them to tailored advice, funding and support in one place.

DBT identified that event roadshows, planned to take place from summer 2026, would feature video screens displaying information about available business support services. Recognising that Deaf BSL users may be among the business owners and entrepreneurs attending these events, DBT took the proactive decision to produce a BSL version of the promotional video. This ensured that Deaf attendees would have equal access to information about the service at the point of delivery, rather than having to seek out accessible content separately.

The BSL video on [free UK government training to start, grow and scale your business](#) is available in 2 ways:

- on screens at the business growth service roadshow events
- on the DBT YouTube channel as part of their BSL playlist

The BSL video has received over 550 views during this reporting period. Roadshows from summer 2026 will extend this reach further, taking BSL-accessible information directly to business audiences across the country.

Addressing wider systemic improvements, this video is one part of a broader effort to embed BSL into DBT's communications. During this reporting period, DBT has worked with production agencies to reduce the unit cost of BSL content, with agreed rates now on their price card. They have communicated guidance to communications professionals on how to create and access BSL content, and added BSL as a standing category in their communications and marketing forward look.

4.7 Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

As reported in the [third BSL report](#), the government is developing a 10 Year Health Plan as part of its mission to build a health service fit for the future.

During this reporting period, DHSC added an additional [BSL translation to a video announcing the 10 Year Health Plan](#). The video featured archive footage of the NHS with

secondary footage of current staff, and subtitles for accessibility. It was published on DHSC social media channels, with total views (across [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)) of 81,000, and 1,610 views on YouTube.

From November 2025 to March 2026, DHSC sought views through a consultation and call for evidence on the [Down Syndrome Act 2022 draft statutory guidance](#). Through the implementation of the act, the government is looking to improve life outcomes for people with Down's syndrome. It aims to raise awareness and understanding of their needs, and break down barriers to opportunity that they, and other disabled people, face.

DHSC produced [31 BSL videos](#) to break down the content of the draft guidance and ensure that BSL users could access the consultation in an accessible manner. These videos generated 91 views in total.

DHSC also published the findings of the national call for evidence conducted to inform the draft guidance. This included [BSL translations of the learnings from the call for evidence](#), with 19 views across 9 videos.

DHSC published a [BSL version of the call for evidence](#) for the Men's Health Strategy for England to inform the strategy and seek views from the public and those with lived experience of being directly affected by men's health issues.

The videos included information on the survey, questions and how to respond. They were [published on DHSC's YouTube channel](#), with 153 views across 5 videos. DHSC also heard the views of the BSL Community directly via a BSL-led discussion, hosted by the BSL Advisory Board.

4.8 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)⁵

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

4 were created for government campaign websites. They each provide practical information for the public about housing issues, with paid marketing campaigns promoting the advice. This is in line with an objective in [MHCLG's BSL 5-year plan](#), also published in BSL this year, to automatically include BSL in funded public information campaigns.

The videos published were:

- [Awaab's Law dangerous damp and mould](#)
- [Awaab's Law emergency hazard](#)
- [Get on top of the renting changes \(BSL\)](#) about private renting
- [Fire Kills: Get covered \(BSL\)](#) to encourage the public to ensure they have enough smoke alarms in their home

⁵ In previous BSL reports, the department was known as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The department was renamed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in July 2024.

Further [guidance in BSL about Awaab's Law for social housing tenants](#) was also published.

MHCLG is continuing to produce BSL content for its funded public information campaigns, with more due in 2026.

4.9 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 4 departmental videos and 1 press briefing. These are as follows:

- [Gravehawk: How the UK adapted old Soviet missiles for Ukraine](#)
- [British Army Boxer vehicle: Revolutionising armoured warfare](#)
- [Life on the Royal Navy's Flagship – HMS Prince of Wales Tour](#)
- [Where Cold Builds Capability: Elite Royal Marines Arctic Training in Norway](#)
- press briefing from Defence Secretary John Healey MP

While there may be less opportunity for MOD announcements in comparison to more customer and public-facing government departments, MOD continues the aim of creating more engaging BSL content.

4.10 Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

DCMS continues to champion BSL communications.

This was demonstrated in communications for the [national Remembrance Sunday service](#). It was also shown in the content for the [COVID-19 Day for Reflection](#), which takes place annually. DCMS wanted to ensure that this event was accessible to communities across the UK, as it highlights an important and sensitive area of government policy that needs to be reflected in their public communications.

DCMS produced a video to explain more about what the day is and how people can engage and reflect. This was scripted, filmed, voiced and subtitled by DCMS teams and shared across [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Recognising the importance of BSL-accessible content, DCMS also produced a version with a BSL interpreter embedded over the original footage, to offer consistency in look, feel and branding. This content was adapted for use on a range of social media platforms.

DCMS continues to listen to BSL communities and take these learnings forward to further develop and refine accessible communications for BSL users.

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

The Warm Home Discount provides a £150 discount off energy bills to 6 million households on means-tested benefits. Eligible households receive a letter. Some people may have been

told to contact the Warm Home Discount helpline to confirm their details before the 27 February 2026 deadline.

To improve accessibility, Relay UK was added to the helpline to enable BSL users to call. 6,086 phone calls were received by the helpline from BSL users using the Relay UK service between October 2025 and February 2026.

To promote this benefit to BSL users, DESNZ created a [video for YouTube](#) which included details about Relay UK.

To extend the reach of the video, DESNZ worked with colleagues at DWP to share it with their disability charity stakeholders, distributing it to nearly 100 organisations.

To date, there have been 90 views of the video, 1,432 impressions, and an average view length of 27 seconds, slightly below the channel's usual duration. 24.9% of the impressions were from YouTube recommending the video to users. 32% of the people who watched the video were new to the channel, 52% of the viewers were 'casual' viewers (meaning they have watched something on the channel in the last 5 months), and 16% were regular viewers.

4.12 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

FCDO continues to use BSL for speeches and travel advice.

At the Locarno Speech in December 2025, FCDO had a BSL interpreter in the room for any guests in attendance. They also made the [full speech available in BSL](#) on YouTube, which has had 415 views.

Throughout this period, FCDO continues to promote its travel advice in BSL through Instagram and Facebook, signposting to a video about [top tips for travelling abroad](#).

4.13 Home Office

The Home Office consulted with representatives from the Royal National Institute for Deaf people (RNID) and the BSL Advisory Board in June 2024. This consultation allowed them to identify and prioritise gaps in their services including how they can improve their passport application guidance to better the needs of Deaf citizens.

The Home Office continues to consult and work to address these gaps. During this reporting period, the Home Office published BSL video guidance to support Deaf citizens when applying for a UK passport, specifically how to correctly take a passport photo and upload this online. This guidance has been made available on both [GOV.UK](#) and [YouTube](#).

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

Defra has published a BSL translation of the [Environment Agency's complaints procedure](#). This helps give access to a procedure that ensures the D/deaf community has a right of reply on their work. Defra also intends to go further in BSL translation and submission of complaints by BSL.

Defra ensured the video adhered to best practice by:

- including captions throughout
- using the same interpreter as other Defra BSL videos for continuity
- adding time stamps in the description on YouTube to assist with navigation
- ensuring URLs are in the description on YouTube
- embedding the video at the top of the GOV.UK page so it can easily be found
- avoiding distracting visuals

During user research sessions with BSL-first users, Defra received positive feedback on this video, with useful suggestions on what would improve Defra's BSL offering in the future.

4.15 Ministry of Justice (MOJ)

In February 2026, MOJ launched a consultation seeking views on proposed updates to the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\)](#).

The code sets out what victims can expect to receive from criminal justice agencies. It provides an important baseline for how the criminal justice system can support victims to engage with the criminal justice process if they choose to do so.

As part of the consultation, MOJ wanted to hear from:

- victims and their families
- criminal justice partners and agencies
- professionals who work with victims

To make the consultation as accessible as possible, and to invite views from the Deaf and hard of hearing communities, the consultation was produced in BSL and other formats.

Across the consultation period, MOJ recorded 14 users who accessed the BSL version of the Victims' Code consultation, which is 0.62% of all users who viewed the consultation online. Despite being a small percentage, this shows there is a receptive audience for BSL communications on this important issue.

MOJ is committed to continuing to make content accessible to all user groups and will continue to use BSL in future consultations where appropriate.

4.16 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

DSIT is leading a national conversation on further measures to prepare children for the future in an age of rapid technological change. This includes potential age restrictions on social media and other services, such as gaming sites and AI chatbots.

DSIT welcomes responses from everyone, including children and young people, whose voices are central to this process. To help ensure the consultation is widely accessible, DSIT translated the video into BSL for:

- [X](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

DSIT encouraged Deaf community organisations to promote the video on their social media channels to increase its reach. DSIT is also considering how best to communicate to the BSL community the outcomes of the consultation.

4.17 Scotland Office⁶

On 7 August 2025, former Secretary of State (SoS) for Scotland, Ian Murray MP, hosted a [speech in the Edinburgh Filmhouse](#). In the keynote speech, Ian Murray confirmed the UK government's Brand Scotland campaign is partnering with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. Around 100 guests were in attendance, including the various festivals and associated creative industries. During the speech, the SoS was accompanied by a BSL and English interpreter from Deaf Action.

On 27 November 2025, Kirsty McNeill MP, Minister for Scotland, hosted a Lothians Business and Community Reception in Queen Elizabeth House. The event aimed to engage with communities across Scotland, communicating government priorities and gathering input and feedback from local people.

The focus included business and economic growth, recognising the Lothians' significant contribution to Scotland's economy and its role in delivering the UK government's missions. There were around 80 attendees, including from Deaf Action, as they are based in Edinburgh. This was together with various business and community stakeholders from across the Lothians region. For the [ministerial speech](#), there was a BSL and English interpreter from Deaf Action.

⁶ In previous BSL reports, the department was known as the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Since July 2024 the department is now the 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 remain the departments that produced the most BSL content in this reporting period. DfT has made a huge effort to increase their production of BSL-supported communications compared to previous years.

This report shows that, for the first time since reporting began, all ministerial departments who produced external communications during this period have reported producing BSL translations. Only 2 departments produced no BSL content in this reporting period, both of which did not produce any external-facing communications.

The updates to the departmental 5-year plans that accompany this report show that all government departments continue to be committed to making their content accessible to BSL users. The Minister for Social Security and Disability and the government's Disability Unit, with the assistance of the [BSL Advisory Board](#) when required, will continue to support departments to deliver their commitment to go further to improve how they communicate with Deaf citizens.

5.1 Statutory guidance

In addition to the reporting requirement, part 3 of the BSL Act also requires the government to issue guidance promoting the facilitation and use of BSL, including:

- advice for relevant government departments on best practice to support BSL under both the Equality Act 2010 and BSL Act 2022
- advice more broadly on best practice for communicating with BSL users, both when interacting with individuals and communicating with the general public, including case studies to illustrate 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 Internal guidance to civil servants

The Government Communication Service [published guidance](#) in October 2023 on how to plan and deliver better 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.

5.3 Ministerial responsibility to improve BSL use

During this reporting period, the Minister for Social Security and Disability has twice met with the [Lead Ministers for Disability](#). Their roles are to represent the interests of disabled people, and champion disability inclusion and accessibility across each government department. At each meeting, they have discussed:

- the duties to government resulting from the BSL Act 2022
- the importance of accessible communications
- the departmental 5-year plans

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

6. Five-year plans to improve BSL communications

In July 2025, each ministerial department was asked to produce a [5-year BSL plan](#). These were published alongside the third BSL report. An update has been published alongside this report, and departments have summarised the most significant progress they have made. Some departments have reported that they have achieved longer-term commitments earlier than planned.

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

7. Annex: BSL activity by ministerial department

Third reporting period: 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025

Fourth reporting period: 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026

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	
	3RD ⁷	4TH ⁸	3RD	4TH	3RD	4TH	3RD	4TH
Attorney General's Office	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Cabinet Office	4	4	5	28	35	21	44	53
Department for Business & Trade ⁹	0	0	0	1	3	7	3	8
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	0	2	0	1	0	3	0	6
Department for Education	1	4	3	5	12	1	16	10
Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero ¹⁰	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	5

⁷ The data in this column relates to the reporting period covered by the Third BSL Report, 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2025

⁸ The data in this column relates to the reporting period for this Fourth BSL Report, 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government¹¹	0	0	0	1	6	5	6	6
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology¹²	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	2
Department for Transport	0	0	0	16	5	8	5	24
Department for Work and Pensions	7	6	11	16	8	19	26	41
Department of Health and Social Care	6	2	3	4	3	1	12	7
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	0	0	0	1	3	4	3	5
His Majesty's Treasury	0	0	0	1	10	8	10	9
Home Office	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	5
Ministry of Defence	0	0	0	1	6	5	6	6
Ministry of Justice	0	0	0	3	2	0	2	3
Office of the	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹¹ Prior to the July 2024 general election, the department was known as the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and was listed in previous reports as such. The department is now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

¹² 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.

Leader of the House of Commons¹³								
Office of the Leader of the House of Lords¹⁴	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland Office¹⁵¹⁶	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	3
Wales Office¹⁷¹⁸	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

¹³ The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons produced no external-facing communication during the reporting period.

¹⁴ The Office of the Leader of the House of Lords produced no external-facing communication during the reporting period.

¹⁵ Prior to the July 2024 general election, the department was known as the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and was listed in previous reports as such. The department is now known as Scotland Office.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Prior to the July 2024 general election, the department was known as the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales and was listed in previous reports as such. The department is now known as Wales Office.

¹⁸ 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