

# British Sign Language

**Draft plan 2018-24**

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. We help the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission check that organisations spending public money use it properly, efficiently and effectively.

---

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Giving us your feedback.....	4
<b>About us</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Our audit work</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Making our work accessible .....	6
<b>Audit Scotland as an employer</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Supporting colleagues.....	7
Supporting potential colleagues .....	7
<b>Future work</b> .....	<b>8</b>
What happens next? .....	8
Links to other relevant documents.....	9

# Introduction

1. This is our draft British Sign Language (BSL) Plan. It sets out how we will promote and support BSL in accordance with the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. It also sets out the actions we have already taken and those we propose to take over the period 2018-24.
2. We have developed the plan in the context of the BSL National Plan. This was published by the Scottish Government in October 2017 after extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them, including support workers.
3. Our plan sets out how we will make our audit work and our organisation accessible:
  - We are committed to making all our work as accessible as possible, making best use of technology to enable us to do this.
  - We will continue with the promotion and support of BSL, including in its tactile form.
  - We will engage with BSL users to develop the proposed actions in this draft plan and consider other ways in which we can continue to communicate our work.
  - We are committed to providing support to our colleagues, visitors and potential future employees.
4. The draft plan is also available in BSL on our website: <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/contact-us/bsl-consultation>

## Giving us your feedback

5. We welcome feedback from organisations and individuals with an interest in our work.
6. You can respond to us by 28 August 2018 to the addresses below:
  - Email: [bslconsultation@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:bslconsultation@audit-scotland.gov.uk)
  - Post: Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh EH3 9DN
  - British Sign Language users can contact us via <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

# About us

7. Through our work for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission, we provide independent assurance to the people of Scotland that public money is spent properly and provides value. We aim to achieve this by:
  - carrying out relevant and timely audits of the way the public sector manages and spends money
  - reporting our findings and conclusions in public
  - identifying risks, making clear and relevant recommendations.
8. We audit organisations across the whole of the public sector in Scotland; this provides us with a unique insight into how effectively public money is spent. These organisations currently spend over £40 billion of public money annually.
9. While we are not a direct service provider, we engage and communicate frequently with members of the public and our key stakeholders. We do this in a variety of ways – face to face, through our website, social media channels and by email.
10. We recognise how important it is that the public, our stakeholders and other individuals and organisations with an interest in our work, can find out about what we do and contact us when they need to.
11. All our information is available in a wide range of formats and we will continue to develop the range of accessible options.
12. Our plan aims to help us ensure that anyone who engages with us in BSL or any other language/format, should be able to do so, at a time and place that best meets their individual needs.
13. This plan is in two parts: our role as a public auditor and as an employer.

# Our audit work

## Making our work accessible

14. We work hard to ensure that our work, our services and our workplaces are accessible:
- Audit Scotland's website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 level AA and has been awarded 'two ticks' accreditation for web accessibility by the Digital Accessibility Centre (DAC). The DAC audits our site every year to ensure we maintain our standards and the website is accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including those with hearing difficulties.
  - Audit Scotland provides information in a variety of formats for all audiences, helping ensure this information is accessible to stakeholders with hearing difficulties. This includes PDFs and RTF formats.
  - All our podcasts are available as MP3s and have a transcript to ensure they are available and accessible.
  - All our videos and animations on YouTube are captioned to ensure they are available and accessible.
  - Contact details to enable members of the public to request alternative formats/languages, including BSL, are available on the back of all our published reports and stated on our website.
  - We promote the use of the Contact Scotland BSL service, which gives access to an online interpreter who can communicate with us using sign language.
  - When we are contacted to provide a BSL interpreter for a meeting, interview etc, we would arrange and pay for this service.
  - Our main office, in Edinburgh, has hearing induction loops in meeting rooms and reception.

# Audit Scotland as an employer

## Supporting colleagues

15. We are committed to supporting all colleagues in the workplace, including colleagues who are deaf. We work with colleagues to ensure their individual needs are met.
16. With support from our contracted third-party occupational health and wellbeing provider, we make reasonable adjustments to provide suitable equipment or changes to meet individual needs. This would include consideration of the use of additional technology, BSL solutions and/or adjustments to job content. Wider support for managers, team members and clients would also be considered. We would also take advice from Access to Work in relation to providing further support to our colleagues.

## Supporting potential colleagues

17. All of our recruitment adverts and information is available on our website.
18. In our recruitment and selection process we routinely check with all candidates if they have any communication preference and requirements, to ensure we can provide the correct support before interview. This is done through an equality questionnaire.
19. Under the Disability Positive scheme, we make reasonable adjustments to support candidates through the recruitment process. This includes providing additional technology and a BSL professional, as appropriate.
20. Any candidates who are deaf are welcome to bring a preferred person to provide support. We can also:
  - book relevant communication support via a relevant agency, eg interpreter, captioner or lip speaker
  - prepare information in advance for the communication support provider, eg agenda or candidate questions
  - provide information and guidance to colleagues on the interview panel, which includes ensuring the panel are aware of a candidate's preferred communication style.
  - provide additional support before and during any group exercises, eg ensuring the candidate can clearly see the speaker and has access to typed instructions if necessary.
21. We will also review the service the relevant agency has provided after each use, including using candidate feedback.

# Future work

## 22. Over the period covered by this plan:

- our Diversity and Equality Group will continue working with our established, external Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group, ensuring we take the needs of people who are deaf into consideration. This will include exploring expanding membership of the group to ensure representation from other organisations, including those representing the deaf community
- we will engage with people who are deaf where this is clear and relevant to a specific audit
- we will continue to work to ensure that all our social media and additional outputs, including video, are fully accessible. For example, ensuring all our videos are captioned and provide transcripts
- have available an on-demand service to provide a BSL interpreter in our offices, audit sites and other relevant locations as required
- arrange for our front of house and reception team, as well as other interested colleagues, to be trained in British Sign Language. This also supports our ambition to 'giving something back' to the local communities in which we live and work. For example, colleagues trained in BSL can use this knowledge in volunteering roles out with work
- we are currently undertaking all the core actions of a Disability Confident employer and ensuring that disabled people and those with long-term health conditions have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. Our Disability Confident Employer status (level 2) is due for renewal in August 2019 by which time we will have attained Disability Confident Leader (level 3) status
- we will regularly review the text on the back of our publications, informing members of the public the various formats in which our work can be made available.

## What happens next?

### 23. We will consider the feedback we receive on this draft as we develop our final plan, which will be approved by the Audit Scotland Board in September 2018.

- We will publish the final version of the plan on our website, in English and in BSL, by 24 October 2018.
- We will progress the actions detailed in the plan and continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we can provide information in a range of formats, including BSL.
- Provide updates in our annual equalities update reports.
- Audit Scotland will also be contributing to the national BSL progress report in 2020.



## Links to other relevant documents

24. You can find out more about Audit Scotland and our work on our website: [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)
25. You will find our diversity and equalities reports here: [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/reports](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/reports)
26. You can access our employment policies here: <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/employmentpolicies>