British Sign Language Plan

2026–31

Consultation draft



AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared under Sections 2 and 3 of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

November 2026

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Accessibility

You can find out more and read this report using assistive technology on our website www.audit.scot/accessibility.

Introduction

1. This is Audit Scotland's draft British Sign Language (BSL) Plan. It sets out how we will continue to actively promote and support BSL in accordance with the British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015 Act.

2. This draft BSL plan is produced in compliance with sections 2 and 3 of the Act. This follows actions completed under our first BSL Plan, covering the period 2018–24.

3. Throughout this draft plan we refer to BSL users. This includes all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss.

4. It details the actions Audit Scotland, alongside the Accounts Commission and the Audit Scotland Board, will take over the next five years to improve accessibility – to our online reports, outputs, meetings and workplaces, and recruitment processes – for BSL users in the Deaf and Deafblind communities, and the wider BSL community.

5. The plan sets out how we intend to:

- build on our ongoing commitment to using digital technology to make our work as accessible as possible, continue the promotion and support of BSL, including in its tactile form, with support from Contact BSL
- engage with BSL users and the wider community to consult on our plan, develop any further proposed actions and consider additional ways in which we can continue to communicate our work
- provide support to our colleagues, visitors and potential future employees, as well as at meetings or interviews conducted during our audit work or operations.

This plan is in two parts: how we will deliver our BSL commitments through our audit work, and how we will deliver our commitments as an employer.

About us

6. Our vision is that public money is well spent to meet the needs of Scotland's people. Through our work for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission, we provide independent assurance on how public bodies are using public money, and help drive improvement in services.

7. Our organisational values of equality, independence, innovation, integrity and respect are at the heart of all that we do.

8. While we are not a direct service provider, we engage and communicate frequently with members of the public and other stakeholders in a variety of ways.

9. Our work is available in a wide range of formats and we will continue to improve on this, particularly as technology develops.

A strategic approach to diversity, equality and inclusion

10. Our plan exists in the context of our wider Diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) strategy. Through this strategy we are committed to being leaders in the Scottish public sector, with a workforce that is representative of Scotland's people, a culture where everyone feels included, and ensure our scrutiny of spending decisions considers impacts on people from an equalities and human rights perspective.

11. Our BSL plan and our DEI strategy are about more than meeting legal obligations. We believe these are the right things to be doing for our colleagues and stakeholders and to help improve public services.

12. This means our reporting and recommendations support public bodies to tackle inequalities and are more person-centred and relevant to protected and minority groups, including:

- considering all protected characteristics as part of equality considerations at key stages of the audit, recognising not all characteristics will be relevant or applicable
- considering the impact of spending and budget decisions on equalities and human rights
- embedding lived experience and public participation in our performance audit work
- identifying relevant equality issues across our performance audit work programme, aiming to include a wider range of protected characteristics in our reporting.

Our audit work

Making our work accessible

13. We ensure that our work, our services and our workplaces are accessible to everyone with an interest in what we do by:

- making our website and our outputs accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018
- ensuring our website is regularly audited to ensure it is accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including those with hearing difficulties. This includes accessibility tests across key pages of our website. Our pages are also monitored internally by using automated testing tools
- providing a tool for users to simplify and magnify the layout of our web pages and PDFs so they are easier to read, and can be translated into a range of languages
- providing information in a variety of formats, helping ensure this information is accessible to all stakeholders, including those with hearing difficulties. This includes documents in PDF format, Easy Read summaries and, on request, alternative formats such as BSL and large print. Our contact details are available throughout our website and in published reports
- ensuring animations and videos across our digital platforms are captioned and accompanied by transcripts
- continuing to promote the use of the Contact Scotland BSL service, which gives access to an online interpreter who can communicate with visitors to our website using sign language
- providing a BSL interpreter, if required, for meetings or interviews conducted during our audit work or operations. Induction loops are available in reception areas and meeting rooms in our offices in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Future development under this plan

14. Through the term of this plan, we will:

- engage with people who are deaf or deafblind or representative organisations where this is relevant to our audit work

- consider additional ways in which BSL users can participate in our audits and audit fieldwork. This would include participating in advisory groups and interviews or focus groups with people using services, in line with our inclusive language guide
- ensure guidance to Audit Scotland colleagues, including audit, communications and front of house staff include explicit reference to our revised BSL plan
- have available an on-demand service to provide a BSL interpreter in our offices, audit sites and other relevant locations as required
- continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we can provide information in a range of formats, including BSL
- review our internal policies and procedures to make them consistent with our BSL commitments
- consider how AI technology can safely support increased accessibility to Audit Scotland's work.

15. We will continue working with our external Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group to consider the needs of people who are deaf or deafblind where appropriate.

Audit Scotland as an employer

Supporting our colleagues

16. We are committed to supporting all colleagues in the workplace, including colleagues who are deaf or have sight or hearing loss. We work with colleagues to ensure their individual needs are met.

17. We have a wide network of staff-led network groups. These give a voice to influence organisational policy and provide a safe space for colleagues who share protected characteristics. Evidence shows that diversity network groups can have a positive impact on employee engagement and retention.

18. We encourage all colleagues to be involved with the diversity network groups, as an ally or as active members.

19. In 2025, we launched our voluntary employee passport scheme. This enables anyone in Audit Scotland to set out the impact of personal circumstances, so suitable adjustments can be made to help them deliver work to their best and be their true self at work.

20. This helps us create an inclusive approach, tailored to personal circumstances and needs. The scheme is in addition to our legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and formal processes to agree contractual changes, such as flexible working arrangements.

21. With support from our contracted third-party occupational health and wellbeing provider, we will continue to make reasonable adjustments to provide suitable equipment or changes to meet individual needs.

Future development under this plan

22. Through the term of this plan, we will:

- arrange for interested colleagues to be trained in British Sign Language through a mix of online and face-to-face training. This will support Audit Scotland to remove barriers to communications and deepen understanding of the needs of groups and individuals who both work with and engage with us
- always consider the use of additional technology, BSL solutions and/or adjustments to job content.

Recruitment and selection process

23. In our recruitment and selection process, under the Disability Confident scheme, we make reasonable adjustments to support candidates through the recruitment process.

24. Candidates are invited to complete a diversity monitoring form when submitting any job application with us. Through this form, candidates are invited to disclose any disability that may be impacting them and request any adjustments they would like to be considered at assessment/interview stages. This includes providing additional technology and a BSL professional, as appropriate.

25. Audit Scotland also participates in the Guaranteed Job Interview Scheme. This means all applicants with a disability, who meet the minimum essential criteria for their vacancy, will be invited to interview.

26. Any candidates who are deaf or are impacted by sight or hearing loss, are welcome to bring a preferred person to interview to provide support. We can also:

- book communication support via a relevant agency, eg interpreter, captioner or lip speaker
- prepare information in advance for the candidate and communication support provider, for example, the 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.

27. We will also review the service the relevant agency has provided after each use, including using candidate feedback.

28. We currently undertake all the core actions of a Disability Confident employer, ensuring that disabled people and those with long-term health conditions can fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations. We have Disability Confident Employer status (level 2).

29. We will continue to provide updates on the delivery of our BSL Plan in our annual equalities reporting. These reports are published on our website.

Sharing your feedback

30. We welcome feedback from organisations and individuals with an interest in our work.

31. You can complete the short survey online at: BSL consultation

32. You can respond to us using the addresses or telephone number below:

- Email: info@audit.scot
- Post: Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh, EH3 9DN
- Phone: 0131 6251500.

33. British Sign Language users can contact us via: contactscotland-bsl.org

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