



Item No. 6

Meeting Date

Wednesday 22nd May 2024

**Glasgow City
Integration Joint Board
Public Engagement Committee**

Report By: Gary Dover, Assistant Chief Officer, Primary Care and Early Intervention

Contact: Paul Hull, Health Improvement specialist for the Deaf Community

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Engagement with Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) Users

Purpose of Report:	To provide the IJB Public Engagement Committee with an overview of the role of the Health Improvement Specialist for the Deaf Community and engagement with the Deaf Community.
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Background/Engagement:	The Deaf community, particularly BSL users, often face significant barriers when accessing healthcare due to communication issues with medical professionals. BSL, being a visual and manual language, is the preferred mode of communication for many deaf individuals, contrasting with English, which is verbal and auditory. The Health Improvement Specialist engages directly with the deaf community to gather evidence of the barriers they face. This evidence serves as a foundation for advocating for necessary changes and improvements within the healthcare system to better accommodate the needs of deaf individuals.
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Governance Route:	The matters contained within this paper have been previously considered by the following group(s) as part of its development. HSCP Senior Management Team ☐ Council Corporate Management Team ☐ Health Board Corporate Management Team ☐ Council Committee ☐ Update requested by IJB ☐ Other ☒ GCHSCP Equality Group
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Recommendations:	The IJB Public Engagement Committee is asked to: a) Note the consultation and engagement activity undertaken by the Health Improvement specialist for the Deaf Community; b) Note that Glasgow City HSCP has worked in partnership with NHS GG&C and Glasgow City Council to develop a BSL action plan in line with the BSL (Scotland) Act, following the directive of the Scottish Government; and c) Glasgow City HSCP will produce an annual report for the HSCP Equalities Group, highlighting progress towards delivering the BSL action plan and any areas for improvement.
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Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:
The work outlined in this paper supports Partnership Priority 3: Supporting people in their communities

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	This engagement will directly inform activity to support work towards meeting National outcomes; Outcome 1 – People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer Outcome 4 – Health and social care services are centred in helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services.
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Personnel:	None identified.
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Carers:	None identified.
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Provider Organisations:	None identified.
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Equalities:	The work outlined in this report is directly linked to advancing equalities for Deaf BSL users. Activity is directly linked to the HSCP Equality Outcomes, mainstreaming and progress reporting.
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Fairer Scotland Compliance:	The approaches to engagement with Deaf BSL users actively seeks to reduce inequalities and to ensure that where people may be socially and economically disadvantaged positive outcomes are actively promoted.
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Financial:	None identified.
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Legal:	The work referenced supports meeting the requirement under the BSL (Scotland) Act.
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Economic Impact:	None identified.
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Sustainability:	None identified.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	None identified.
Risk Implications:	None identified.
Implications for Glasgow City Council:	Work will continue to link with officers involved in developing and implementing the Glasgow City Council BSL Action Plan.
Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	Work will continue to link with officers involved in developing and implementing the NHS GG&C BSL Action Plan.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the IJB Public Engagement Committee with an overview of the role of the Health Improvement Specialist for the Deaf Community and engagement with the Deaf Community.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Deaf community, particularly BSL users, often face significant barriers when accessing healthcare due to communication issues with medical professionals. BSL, being a visual and manual language, is the preferred mode of communication for many deaf individuals, contrasting with English, which is verbal and auditory.
- 2.2 Using BSL interpreters during medical appointments can significantly improve communication and understanding between deaf patients and healthcare providers. By facilitating communication in their preferred language, such as BSL, deaf individuals are better equipped to express their health issues and participate fully in their healthcare decisions, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes comparable to the general population.

Glasgow City Context

- 2.3 NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde has the highest number of Deaf BSL users in Scotland. Currently this is estimated at 3,600 people (2011 Census). There are currently approximately 1,717 active users of BSL in Glasgow City. There is also a significant support network who may not necessarily be captured in Census figures and Service estimates.

3. Health Improvement Specialist for the Deaf Community

- 3.1 The role of the Health Improvement Specialist for the Deaf Community is dedicated to breaking down significant barriers for deaf individuals accessing primary care services, ensuring they can communicate effectively with healthcare staff, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes for those who communicate in sign language.

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- 3.2 It's imperative to emphasise to primary care healthcare professionals that sign language is the primary mode of communication for many in the deaf community. To achieve this, it's crucial to provide sign language interpreters in all appointments as a matter of professional obligation and courtesy.

4. Engagement

- 4.1 The Health Improvement Specialist engages directly with the deaf community to gather evidence of the barriers they face. This evidence serves as a foundation for advocating for necessary changes and improvements within the healthcare system to better accommodate the needs of deaf individuals.
- 4.2 The Health Improvement Specialist engages with deaf communities across Glasgow, typically conducting around 6 sessions per year with an average of 40 attendees per session. As a fluent signer and someone who is deaf themselves, The post brings a deep understanding and empathy to these interactions, fostering trust and connection with the audience.
- 4.3 During these sessions, conducted primarily in BSL, The Health Improvement Specialist provides information about available services, educates attendees about their rights, and address potential issues or concerns they may encounter when interacting with medical professionals. It is important to emphasise the building of trust through face-to-face communication and ensure that attendees feel comfortable and empowered to engage with healthcare services.
- 4.4 Sessions serve as a platform for open dialogue, welcoming any BSL users living in Glasgow to join the conversation and access the support and resources available to them.

5. Mental Health and Deafness Group

- 5.1 All public engagements will be documented comprehensively to provide evidence supporting various groups and initiatives. These include the Mental Health and Deafness Group. The remit of this group includes:
- Refine the draft BSL Action Plan for mental health inpatient services outlining the key work deliverables and timescales, to facilitate the agreed outcomes.
 - Develop a method to incorporate patient experience and feedback into service improvements
 - Provide professional guidance, leadership, expertise and support for the implementation of agreed actions.
 - Provide an objective opinion based on professional perspective on behalf of the clinical communities across the participating sites.
 - Provide assurance that each work stream has identified appropriate stakeholders to deliver the service requirements.
 - Provide assurance that engagement with key stakeholders and public partners is integral to each work stream and communication plan.

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6. Development of BSL Local Action Plan(s) 2024 to 2030

- 6.1 The British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies to facilitate the promotion of the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL) within their area of responsibility. The Scottish Government second [BSL national plan for 2023 to 2029](#) was published in October 2023.
- 6.2 Following the publishing of the national plan, public bodies are required to have in place their own BSL Plan. When the first local actions were developed and published in 2018, Glasgow City HSCP worked in partnership with both NHS GG&C and Glasgow City Council to support engagement and action development, with key actions identified within each of the published plans. In line with current ways of working, GCHSCP worked closely with both NHS GG&C and Glasgow City Council to progress the refresh of the local plans, including engaging with BSL users. This partnership approach is in line with other HSCP's. The engagement and relationship with the community, outlined above, was a key tool in developing the new local plans.
- 6.3 The [NHS GG&C](#) and Glasgow City Council action plans can be found on their website. An overview of GCHSCP actions within the NHS and Council plans is available at Appendix 1.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The IJB Public Engagement Committee is asked to:
- a) Note the consultation and engagement activity undertaken by the Health Improvement specialist for the Deaf Community;
 - b) Note that Glasgow City HSCP has worked in partnership with NHS GG&C and Glasgow City Council to develop a BSL action plans in line with the BSL (Scotland) Act, following the directive of the Scottish Government; and
 - c) Glasgow City HSCP will produce an annual report for the HSCP Equalities Group, highlighting progress towards delivering the BSL action plan and any areas for improvement.

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Appendix 1: Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership BSL Actions

1. BSL Accessibility

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

‘To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people’s awareness of communication tools.’

Our Actions

By 2029 we will:

- Increase awareness of the BSL VR Interpreting app through a promotions campaign within the local BSL community and across Primary Care (Lead: BSL Practitioner, Lead for Equalities and Fairer Scotland and Primary Care)
- We will promote the co-design of GCHSCP website and social media platforms with BSL user by incorporating BSL videos. (Lead: sensory services and Communications)
- We will work with NHSGGC to develop a joint health website
- Continue to promote the use of Contact Scotland BSL, Scotland’s BSL online interpreting Video Relay Service, making improvements to this service to ensure it meets the needs of BSL users. (Lead: BSL Practitioner and Lead for Equalities and Fairer Scotland)
 - 2026 - We will lead a campaign to promote the use of Contact Scotland BSL service and review effectiveness of this campaign with GCHSCP staff.
 - 2028 - We will explore whether this campaign should run again as staff awareness of what is available to support small prevalence disability groups can dissipate over time
- Utilise annual funding through the See Hear Strategy to support BSL learning in the workplace. Examples including; Workplace BSL signs, qualification in level 1 BSL. (Lead: sensory services)

2. Children, Young People and their Families

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

‘The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/ deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.’

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Our Actions

By 2029 we will:

- Facilitate the building of partnerships and effective working relationships between NHSGGC teams and our in house interpreters and BSL providers. This will help to ensure that deaf and deafblind children and their families can access the right support from the earliest stages of childhood and in doing so we can strive to get it right for every child.
(Lead: Sensory Services and Children and Families Services)
- Develop a signposting resource for parents of newly diagnosed Deaf children, including access to BSL for babies and children.
(Lead: BSL Practitioner, Lead for Equalities and Fairer Scotland, Sensory Services and Children and Families Services)
- Work with representative groups across Midwifery, Health Visiting, Family Nurse Partnership, Allied Health Professionals and Audiology to help them understand the importance of BSL provision on child and family wellbeing.
 - Deliver a programme of staff awareness plan about the importance of BSL provision on child and family wellbeing
(Lead: BSL Practitioner and Children and Families Services)
- Raise awareness of audiology referral pathways with Community Health Services in to acute.
(Lead: BSL Practitioner, Lead for Equalities and Fairer Scotland and Children and Families Services)
- Increase awareness of adaptations available for Deaf parents of babies. (Lead: sensory services)
- Continue to support Education Services in accessing interpreter support in schools. Including; parent/teacher evenings, school performances and classroom support.
(Lead: sensory services)

3. Access to Employment

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

‘BSL users will receive person- centered support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and enter into the workforce so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.’

Our Actions

- Promote employment opportunities with Deaf People and support availability of Interpreters through the Access to Work Fund.
(Lead: HR NHS and SWS)
- Work with colleges and universities to promote GCHSCP as a work placement opportunity for Deaf students.
(Lead: HR SWS)

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4. Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

'BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives.'

Our Actions

By 2029 we will:

- Work with our partners to implement and measure our core mental health standards. This will include a focus on ensuring information and services are accessible to all individuals, including those who use BSL.
 - 2026 - Building on Deaf and Mental Health Group Action Plan we will commit to rolling out the findings of the review of psychological therapies for BSL users; review of the evidence base of mental health and BSL; an information strategy for BSL users and review the role and funding of the Mental Health Peer Support worker
 - Audit patient information on diagnostic material and Mental Health Services and update staff and patient resources to fill any identified gaps.
 - 2028: A review of BSL SLWG Action for Mental Health action plan will be conducted
 - 'Continue to raise awareness of the commissioned Lifelink Counselling Service with Deaf BSL Users, including access to a Counsellor who uses BSL' (Lead: Health Improvement)
 - Review BSL support information that is available for staff and identify any development needs. (Lead: BSL Practitioner, Mental Health Services)
 - Explore data capture options on EMIS, including capturing BSL Interpreter needs. (Lead: Mental Health Services)
- In line with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Action Plan, we will improve equality, inclusion and diversity training for the mental health and wellbeing workforce, including to promote existing BSL training to the workforce.
 - 2026 - BSL training for mental health staff will be available via NHSGGC Workforce Equality Group action plan and linked to the patient file to prompt staff.
 - 2028 - We will review equality, inclusion and diversity training for the mental health and wellbeing workforce, including to promote existing BSL training to the workforce
 - 2030 - We will assess impact of improvements on our equality, inclusion and diversity training for the mental health and wellbeing workforce, including to promote existing BSL training to the workforce (Lead: BSL Practitioner, Mental Health Services)
- Build on the work set out within the social isolation and loneliness strategy, Recovering our Connections 2023-26, to embed actions related to BSL users and link with existing work at a local and national level to address issues of social isolation and loneliness, including access to services and project

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- Actively promote access to funding linked to tackling social isolation and loneliness to BSL organisations and take steps to a more accessible funding application process.
- Develop and support a targeted BSL campaign as part of Loneliness Awareness week, beginning 2025.
- Raise awareness with staff on the impacts of social isolation and loneliness on Deaf BSL users to support access to services and programmes.
(Lead: BSL Practitioner, Mental Health Services and Health Improvement)

5. Access to Justice

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

'BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland.'

Our Actions

By 2029 we will:

- Roll out a programme of BSL Awareness Sessions for Staff within Social Work Criminal Justice to ensure Deaf BSL users have access to support as part of assessment and supervision in the community.
(Lead: BSL Practitioner and Criminal Justice)