

West College Scotland

British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan 2018-2024

Contents

- 1. Contact information and access to our plan**
- 2. Summary of the plan**
- 3. West College Scotland BSL Plan**
- 4. What happens next?**

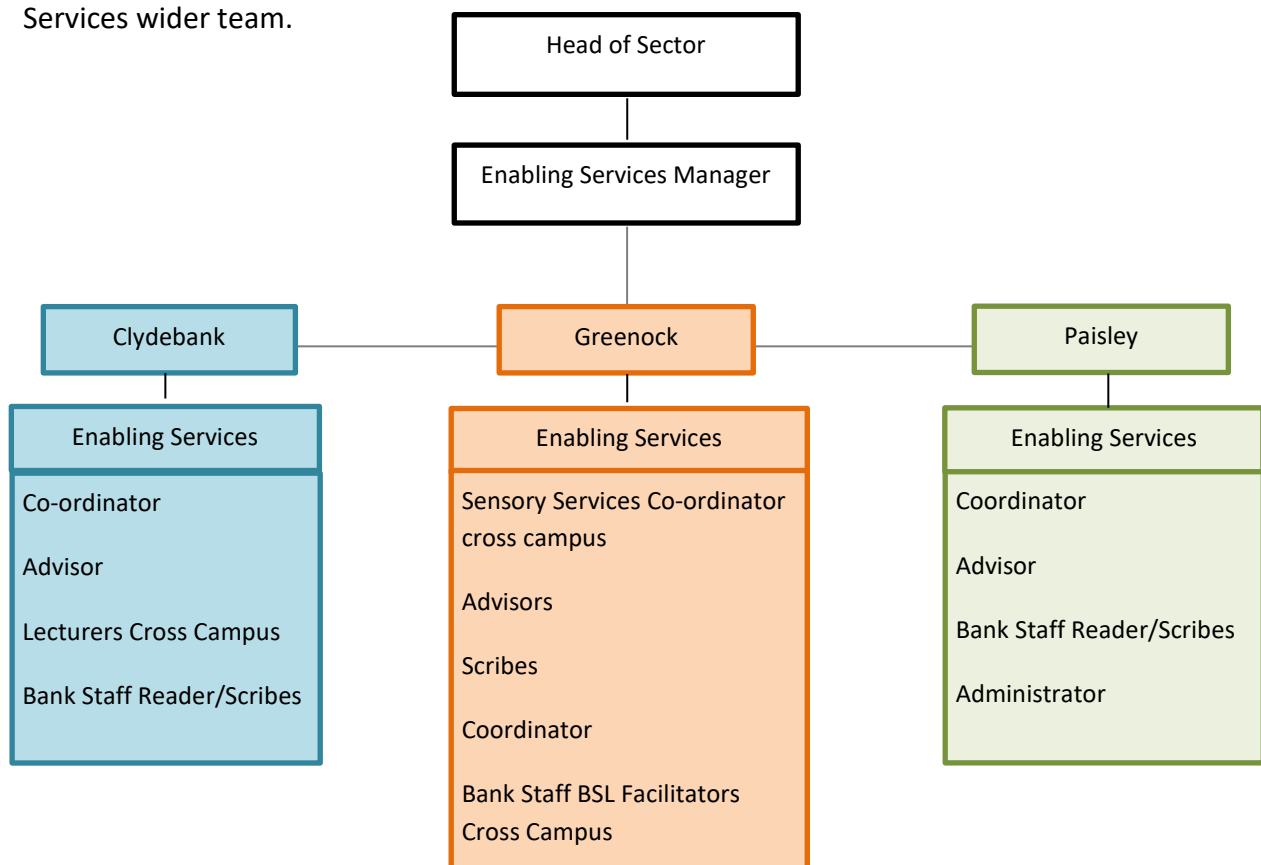
SECTION 2:

Introduction

This is the British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for West College Scotland, as required by BSL (Scotland) Act. It sets out the actions we will take over the period 2018-2024. It follows the BSL National Plan, published 24 October 2017, which was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them. It is framed around the same long-term goals as the national plan, where these are relevant to the work of West College Scotland.

The context for West College Scotland's plan

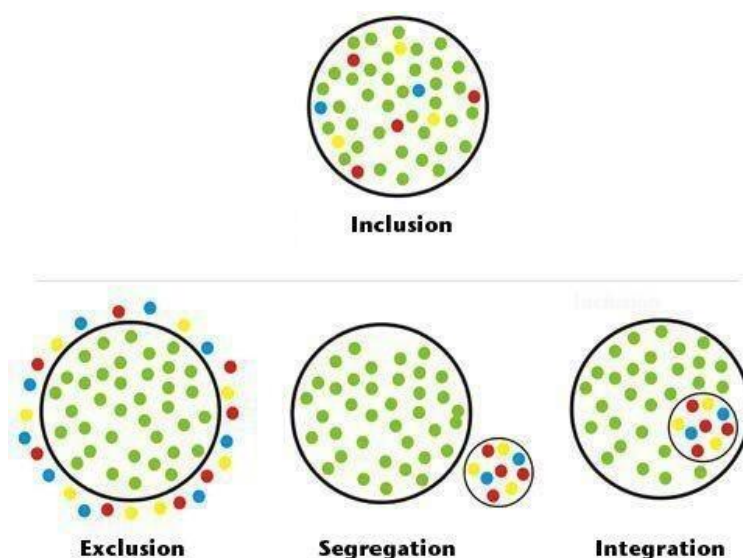
At West College Scotland, we are highly committed to protecting and supporting BSL. In our organisational structure, we have included a BSL team consisting of a 0.62FTE dedicated Sensory Services Coordinator, 4 temp BSL facilitators and 2 further BSL Coordinators with our Enabling Services wider team.



We currently have 7 BSL students on our 2017 – 2018 courses who access our service fully and some members of staff who are D/Deaf Deafblind. Given that the Deaf/Deafblind community seek positive role models, we're keen to embrace appointments such as this.

In addition to this, our Estates infrastructure demonstrates our commitment to BSL enabled the creation of our own ARC Centre at the Greenock Campus – the sensory centre for BSL activities. Having listened to the views of BSL students and staff regarding the environment in which they

would like to interact and feel most supported, it became clear they needed their own integrated space as the research diagram on appropriate approaches below demonstrates.



This Centre provides a designated space for BSL students and staff to learn, be supported, socialise, interact and network with each other in a manner which they prefer. We are committed to supporting those whose first language or preferred language is BSL and are pleased to say that our decision making occurs in conjunction with them and is often driven by them.

The involvement of BSL users in developing/commenting on our Action Plan:

We have held consultation meetings with our Sensory Services Coordinator, BSL students and BSL Facilitators in order to inform the creation of our College Action Plan. This has ensured that we capture their needs and offer solutions to best suit these bespoke needs. Further to this, the BSL internal staff at WCS, have contributed to ensure the approach is the most appropriate, realistic and as visionary as it can be in this key area of the curriculum based on their lengthy experience and knowledge of the area. We hope that this will further raise the awareness of BSL with a wider audience and encourage people to take a proactive approach to becoming involved: be engaged! (Appendix 1)

And finally, we have held a number of local authority community consultation events to capture views and enable links to the wider needs of the local communities we service. We look to support each other in our common ambition with particular reference to strengthening transitions from School to College, from College to University or College to training/Employment. The latter is of particular interest and focus to ensure that our BSL users are supported and informed in their decision making for employment. We commit to prioritising the views of employers to enable our students and staff in realising their potential as best we can.

We are committed to an action plan which is ambitious, responsive, builds on our progress and which is continually shaped by national initiatives, local needs and the priorities of BSL users. Our actions will be embedded into our internal College Review Processes (Self-evaluation and Operational Planning Reviews) and feedback continually sought from students and staff through

informal and formal mechanisms including Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSPs), staff development and workshops sessions.

West College Scotland will commit to contributing to the National Progress Report, in 2020, through submission of data analytics and information requests, as required, to enable us to build on our progress and take us closer to the National long term goals.

We would encourage everyone to be engaged in the process and comment on this draft. We will do this through ensuring that all involved have access to a draft in their preferred format and through a variety of communication methods, including open discussion group sessions for those directly affected and drop in sessions for wider stakeholders. Our priority, at this point, is active listening to capture feedback and discussion points and fully address these in our final approach. We will follow the timeline below:

month	content	involvement
June 2017	CDN Launch Event	WCS team and externals
August	WCS Team Meeting to discuss	WCS team
September	WCS Team Meeting to discuss and plan	WCS team
October	Launch of National Plan	WCS team and externals
January 2018	Template Guidelines issued	WCS team
February	Working up Template	WCS team
March	Road show support event attendance	WCS team and externals
March/April	Working up Draft Action Plan and Consultation Sessions	WCS team and wider student, staff and community
May	Working up Draft Action Plan and Consultation Sessions	WCS team and wider student, staff and community
June	Feedback from sessions and inclusion in Plan	WCS team
July	Final First Draft Plan Final First Draft Plan filmed and signed	WCS team
August	Launch with West College Scotland	WCS team
September	Invite wider interest groups	WCS team and wider WCS
October	Submission to the Scottish Funding Council	WCS team

Should you wish to comment of this draft Plan, please contact our lead officer as indicated below.

Our lead officer is:

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You can find our WCS BSL Action Plan at:

<http://www.westcollegescotland.ac.uk/about-us/publication-policies/?page=2>

SECTION 3:

Summary of the plan

Our West College Scotland Action Plan focuses on improving access, removing barriers, empowering users, expanding opportunities, improving experiences, building skills and removing obstacles through addressing the following eight, key National themes:

- **Family Support, Early learning and Childcare**
(GIRFEC 'Getting it right for every child' approach)
- **School Education**
(Reaching full potential through continual support)
- **Training, Work and Social Security**
(skills development to reach potential and improve progression)
- **Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**
(information access to enable informed choices)
- **Transport**
(inclusive access)
- **Culture and the Arts**
(access to existing services but ability to shape and share with others)
- **Justice**
(equal access)
- **Democracy**
(Active and informed citizens)

In doing so, we set out our aims, commitment and the associated actions to ensure that our D/deaf and Deafblind students are supported in their ability to learn, work, parent, be creative, live life to the full and to make their contributions to our communities, our culture and our economy. We commit to playing our part in the shared Scottish Government vision that Scotland be the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

Our associated key actions centre around heightening awareness within the College and local communities, training staff (particularly front of house staff) and students, consulting with and responding to BSL users' views and creating opportunities for development and growth across the College.

4.1: Across all our services

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

“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of ‘Services’, we were informed that they feel:

- Our services are good (“nothing bad, everything fantastic!”)
- There’s a lack of consistency in the service between all our main campuses
- Video Caption would be beneficial in all classes using multimedia
- Further Deaf Awareness Training is required to alleviate in class communication issues

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

Analyse existing evidence we have about students and prospective students who use BSL in our college; identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.

We will create an open and transparent support service through our Learner Journey Process which will include:

- Changing our 2019 application paperwork/processes to include a field ‘what is your first language?’
- Ensuring that the tracking and monitoring processes for the existing evidence (PLSPs and informal feedback through BSL Coordinator) is robust, systematically analysed and reported on by the BSL Coordinator within the department and reported to the Educational Leadership Team on a quarterly basis

Improve information and services for students and prospective students who use BSL¹, including making our website more accessible to BSL users.

This process will involve:

- signing our Introduction pages and generic information pages on the website
- providing a BSL Facilitator at Interview
- ensuring reasonable adjustments are made to student materials to ensure signing versions are available for all generic services and communications to students
- providing signing for WCS graduations to ensure staff, students and audience members are supported
- conducting a series of raising Awareness Sessions for staff and students to be more DeafAware

- ensuring those staff using videos/multimedia in their classes deploy the close caption facility

Post 2024, we will look to expand the scope of signing throughout our website and support services.

Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’, which allows BSL users to contact public and their sector services and for these services to contact them.

This process will involve:

- An awareness raising campaign to our BSL staff and students and front of house staff
- Providing support, direction and a private space for potential users, to guide them and support them in accessing the above facility

Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL awareness training, and enable them to take up such training.

This process will involve:

- Identifying who the appropriate WCS staff are (front of house and specific BSL staff)
- Identify the level of training required
- Delivering the training
- Supporting the on-going process
- Identify and advertise who the campus specific BSL Facilitators are (in a similar way to our identification and promotion of 1st Aiders on each campus)

Beyond 2024, we would wish to encourage any staff to take up training in BSL as and where appropriate.

Action beyond our control:

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around ‘Services’, we were informed:

- SAAS require direct communication with all applicants and will not accept third party BSL user communication in the presence of the applicant which our students have indicated is an unnecessary barrier

4.2: Post-School Education

We share the long-term goal for post- school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so, and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject(s)”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of ‘Post-School’, we were informed they feel:

- the existing link to Garvel School is beneficial and has helped greatly in the transition to College
- they would want this partnership to continue going forward as saw the benefits of this

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

Take action to ensure that students and prospective students who use BSL are adequately supported.

By having staff with the management and coordination responsibilities for BSL as part of our structure, we will ensure the following identified targets are addressed, actioned and implemented appropriately:

- providing accessible information regarding what BSL users can expect from West College Scotland
- providing campus familiarisation visits and full access to open days for prospective students who use BSL.
- providing BSL users with the appropriate level of support throughout their student journey (including completing application forms, interviews and applying for Disabled Students Allowance)
- providing support during the transition process between the school and college or university. At WCS, our Enabling Services Staff have very close links with Schools and prospective Universities whereby staff attend induction days with students to ensure a smooth transition. We are committed to retaining and enhancing this process.
- providing access to information within the college campus. Our Sensory Services Coordinator has a dedicated mobile device for student texting to ensure communication is always available together with the enabling services direct email address (es@wcs.ac.uk) and finally daily face to face contact with the BSL facilitators.

We will take on board guidance/advice produced by the SFC and others to ensure that across the college, staff are aware of their responsibilities towards BSL users, and that students who use BSL know what to expect.

This will involve:

- Raising awareness sessions/campaigns
- Consultation and discussion sessions
- Acting upon SFC and local guidance through our dedicated Sensory Services Coordinator and specialist staffing structure
- Inviting continuous feedback from students/prospective students and staff who use BSL over the coming year/18 months after adopting this Plan.
- Committing to reviewing/refreshing this Plan which includes more 'local' actions (based on that feedback) after the national progress report (due October 2020).

Our above actions will be embedded into our internal College Review Processes (Self-evaluation and Operational Planning Reviews) and feedback will be sought from students and staff through informal and formal mechanisms including PLSPs, staff development and workshops sessions.

We will provide assistance to students who use BSL to help them complete SAAS application forms.

This will involve:

- Close relationship working with every HN BSL user in the completion of their SAAS application and the required support thereafter

- Building links with Universities and employers
- Ensuring our BSL staff travel with our students for induction, open days and interviews, if required

4.3: Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

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 D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of ‘Family Support Early Learning and Childcare’, we were informed that they feel:

- staff and student Deaf Awareness Sessions would help greatly in making our BSL students feel part of the organisation more
- signers at events would help greatly so the BSL students can be more involved in the life and work of the college

Our Actions

By 2024, West College Scotland will:

Make progress toward the long-term goal for family support, early learning and childcare through:

- enhancing our induction days with one to one interaction between the applicant/applicant’s family and the BSL facilitator (Language Services Professional), if required.
- enhancing our existing school interaction throughout their journey (Garvel School interaction in particular) facilitated by the Enabling Services Manager to ensure a smooth transition to College. This will also include a ‘Study Buddy’ transition venture where pupils drop into our bespoke BSL Centre The Arc.
- training staff to have at least 1 member of staff in each nursery to support BSL users
- the Sensory Services Coordinator and team conducting workshops with nursery staff team and wider front of house staff
- ensuring that our events include family interaction be BSL supported (graduation, open days, interviews, marketing materials user friendly)

At West College Scotland, we have childcare facilities at our Greenock and Paisley campuses which will be further accessible and welcoming to parents and children who use BSL:

- through the use of Contact Scotland

- through training our staff in the above Contact Scotland Services www.contactSCOTLAND-BSL.org
- through a raising awareness campaign internal to staff and students
- through ability to access an on-site BSL Facilitator if and when required
- disability awareness training including deaf etiquette to key staff

4.4: School Education

We share the long-term goal for school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of ‘School Education’, we were informed that they feel:

- accessing the interpreters has resulted in huge benefits to the BSL students as it’s ensured clarity of information and boosted their confidence greatly
- many of our BSL users indicated they would have quitted had it not been for the support and access to the interpreters

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

Progress toward the long-term goal for school education through developing and enhancing our close partnership working with our local school provider, Garvel School*(Greenock) through

- pre-planned, consistent meetings with the school focussing on transitions, sharing of information and resources and addressing individual support requirement
- creation of a mutually beneficial service level agreement

4.5: Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish 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”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of 'Training, Work and Social Security', we were informed:

- 2 BSL students now have cochlear receivers for their implants, purchased by the college, which has dramatically changed their lives (hearing the spoken word and even music for the first time). It's been life changing.
- the students feel strongly that their skills are being developed well at West College Scotland and that they are being encouraged to be independent. Skills mentioned included confidence, self-esteem, independence, more talkative/expressive.

Our Actions

By 2024, West College Scotland will:

Raise awareness of the UK Government 'Access to Work' scheme for students who use BSL towards the end of their course, so that they can benefit from the support it provides when they enter the world of work.

At West College Scotland, we have a very clear ethos as regards fulfilling the potential of all BSL users. We strongly commit to the view that BSL users are encouraged to become self-dependant and empowered members of the community. Our resources support this belief in that we have created 3 Centres for Assistive Technologies which we have at all our campuses. Our strategic direction revolves around independence and empowerment. We support this through the inclusive use of cutting edge digital technologies including cochlear implants, Rodger Pens and Radio Aids.

We will do this through:

- raising the awareness of the opportunities available to BSL staff and students through the Access to Work scheme with key Enabling Services Staff and students.
- framing with BSL staff and student users the concept of what tools, equipment and support they require to be enabled in their work capacity
- creating an Inclusive Classroom following research by audiologists (SoundField System – a further development to our SoundCat system)

We will also progress toward the long-term goal for training, work and social security through:

- developing a support mechanism to ensure work placements in industry are supported appropriately.
- continuation and enhancements of PLSPs to track and monitor the skills being developed and the academic, career and personal goal setting.
- supporting the BSL users in their choice of appropriate course to improve relevant and appropriate skills for employment
- signposting the appropriate support for any social security issues

Action beyond our control:

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around 'Training Work and Social Security', we feel:

- We need to explore the opportunities to influence at Awarding Body level the creation of alternative instruments of assessment for BSL users where appropriate

4.6: Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing 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”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of ‘Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing’, we were informed that they feel:

- that the staff and students would like to see more raising awareness sessions take place in the College
- the workshop block in Greenock was too noisy so quiet space and time required for thinking
- having a key friend is in operational across all campuses but with 1 student exception which will now be rectified
- BSL students are keen to have a Deaf Club! They are keen that this operates in conjunction with the Student Association and that fundraising could occur through it too

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

Take steps to ensure that health/mental health services (including advice and counselling services) within the college are fully accessible to students who use BSL.

This is particularly important given the statistic that deaf people are twice as likely to experience mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

We will support this by ensuring:

- all BSL users have access to all college support mechanisms for health, mental health and wellbeing.
- all staff are invited to attend Deaf Awareness Training
- the BSL students and Student Association set up a Deaf Club
- all support services are publicised in BSL to ensure BSL users are directing appropriately
- individual PLSPs are capturing and supporting any requirements. This will be further supported through the course guidance tutors
- we explore support available and raise awareness of the Scottish Council for Deafness (Mental Health)

Action beyond our control:

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around 'Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing', we were informed:

- the students indicated that when accessing the NHS, your name is called which is inappropriate meaning many appointments are missed as the NHS indicate 'non-attendance at appointment' due to not identifying self when called
- the students have indicated that when attending a doctor or hospital appointment, there is no interpreter there to liaise, consult and feedback on your condition and treatment

4.7: Transport

We share the long-term goal for transport set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

"BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland"

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of 'Transport, we were informed they feel:

- all is fine regarding coming to College
- a wider societal concern beyond our control was raised (below)

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- work with local transport providers to ensure they are aware of our individual travel information requirement and that they are accessible and well-publicised.
- From a long term perspective, we will also include individual one to ones to explore independent travelling requirements, information, support and advice to ensure we are equipping the BSL users with the skills to operate independently and effectively in society. It's our strategy to ensure there is no over-reliance on others.

Action beyond our control:

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around 'Transport', we feel:

- Transport companies need to do more to embrace Deaf/DeafBlind as cancellations to services are usually by announcement which cannot be heard; there are no visual signs on buses to indicate which stop is which hence often BSL users become lost.

4.8: Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland”

Following the consultation sessions with our BSL staff and students around the category of ‘Culture and the Arts’, we were informed they feel:

- we could be better at communicating events within the college and the Student Association role in this would be important
- signers at events would help, not just the BSL students, but any family/friends who are BSL users

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

take action to ensure that extracurricular and recreational activities offered within West College Scotland are accessible to students who use BSL through:

- closer partnership working with our Student Association and Student Experience teams to drive communication forward
- ensuring that all publicity materials for events are communicated to our BSL users (with an ambition to introduce some BSL direct advertising and publicity)
- ensuring that facilitator support can be made available at events including graduation
- ensuring that evening classes have the same support for day time provision
- exploring opportunities and links with the Sign Dance Collective

4.9: Justice

We share the long-term goal for justice 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 2024, we will:

At West College Scotland we will ensure there are clear communication channels between our campus police contact/liaison officers and the BSL users. We will do this through:

- arranging an introductory meeting between all involved to get to know each other and frame both sides' priorities, identifying how we can support each other

4.10: Democracy

We share the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

Progress toward the long-term goal for democracy through:

- closer partnership working with the Student Association and Student Experience teams to ensure equality of representation on forums, student representative councils and parity of ability to engage with voting processes and activities on offer. This close partnership will ensure we fully harness the BSL user voice in all our business
- proactive encouragement of BSL user participation and representation on key College committees and working groups
- The creation of our own West College Scotland BSL Advisory Committee into which all our BSL users can be actively involved in tandem with key external BSL ambassador invited input. This innovation will ensure that there's a vehicle for the BSL user voice, supported by external specialist input, advice and direction. From this we hope to create a Fellowship programme. The WCS BSL Advisory Committee will track and monitor the BSL Action Plan and grow it to its fullest potential.

SECTION 5: What happens next?

➤ **How can you comment on this draft?**

We are keen to take views, comments and opinions through the Lead Contact mentioned in the introduction and below.

In addition to this, during this process we have set up feedback sessions for staff and students which are BSL friendly; conducted a survey monkey; group sessions with the community and sought individual expert advice also.

- Please contact Angela Pignatelli angela.pignatelli@wcs.ac.uk if you want to continue to be involved as we further develop/implement the actions in our plan.

Thank you for engaging with our BSL Action Plan

Appendix 1

Photos from BSL staff and Student Consultation Event



Including Tactile BSL....



"It's a happy home!"

Gaynor Osborne, NC Social Care

Photos from Consultation and Raising Awareness Sessions



BSL Coordinator, Sharon Brophy with NC Social Care BSL student Gaynor Osborne helping teach and explain BSL to West College Scotland Staff

