

## Education and Culture Committee

### British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill

#### SUMMARY OF BSL SUBMISSIONS – FACEBOOK GROUP

##### Introduction

The Scottish Parliament established a Facebook Group to invite BSL users and members of the Deaf community to contribute their views on the BSL Bill.

The Group has closed, but can still be accessed here: [British Sign Language \(Scotland\) Bill](#).

Now that the legislation has been passed, a new Group has been created and can be accessed here: [British Sign Language \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#).

##### Content of this document

This document is a summary of the BSL videos posted on the Facebook Group in response to the Committee's [Call for views](#) at Stage 1 of the BSL Bill. It is not a full transcription of signed content of all of the videos posted.

The document has been prepared under the Scottish Parliament contract for English/BSL translation.

##### Views on the BSL Bill

As well as through Facebook, people told us their views on the BSL Bill in video submissions and during fact-finding visits. Further information is available on the Committee's webpage, which can be accessed here: [British Sign Language \(Scotland\) Bill](#).

All of these views informed the Committee's scrutiny of the BSL Bill and are reflected in its report, which can be accessed here: [Stage 1 Report](#).

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1. Mark MacQueen  
The Bill is important because this is the language we use in daily life to connect to the world and it should be valued as such.
  2. Moira Ross  
BSL is not a new language and deserves equal recognition with Gaelic and Welsh. Recognition as a language is not enough; it should be seen as a beautiful and powerful language.
  3. Lilian Lawson  
Response to Q1: does the law need to be changed? Yes. In the past, people were ashamed to use BSL but greater exposure in the media has led to greater acceptance. The DDA labelled Deaf people as "disabled" and Deaf people often view themselves as a linguistic minority. The Equalities Act is weak and often ignored by Local Authorities, who would benefit from Deaf and BSL awareness training. Raising awareness of BSL may take time, and just as the campaign to wear seatbelts was often ignored until statutory action was taken.

4. EJ Raymond  
BSL is important for many reasons one of which is that our lives can depend on it. Without BSL, we cannot communicate properly; for example a visit to the GP can be very difficult if trying to communicate via written English and vital information can go misunderstood, leading potentially to deterioration in health and possible even death. Interpreters must be used in medical settings for clear communication.
5. James Colhoun  
Deaf people face many barriers in life. DDA and Equality Act have made no difference. The English text of the Bill is difficult to understand; a BSL translation is needed. Young Deaf people are still facing the same barriers I have been dealing with for 40 years and this has to stop.
6. Scott Campbell  
In NHS services, Deaf people can feel marginalised and isolated, leading to mental health issues. Some may be confident enough to ask questions, but not everyone gets full information in health settings.
7. Lee Robertson  
A BSL Act would take us the extra mile in providing access. Education in Deaf schools was a negative experience, real BSL was learned from our peers rather than from the teachers, whose skill in BSL was at a lower level. They used sign supported English to teach, meaning pupils had to translate as well as learn, severely limiting our learning experience.
8. James Colhoun  
I have a dream of a BSL Bill signed, sealed and delivered! There have been many comments in English on this page; we need more clips in BSL so Parliament can see the groundswell of support from the Deaf community.
9. Scott Campbell  
NHS uses the excuse they have no money to provide interpreters. This is untrue; it may be a matter of staff being unaware or uninterested in finding out how to book communication support. People from abroad are provided with interpreters; Deaf people should be too. Transport is problematic when cancellation announcements are missed by Deaf people. A TV advertising campaign could raise Deaf awareness.
10. David Buxton. (BDA England)  
I'd like to congratulate the Scottish Parliament on presenting the BSL Bill and particularly for this ground-breaking Facebook page which allows Deaf people to share their views and comments in BSL. BDA open evening has been arranged for 12 January to share information.
11. James Colhoun  
I dream of a world where children can learn BSL at a young age enabling them to communicate with Deaf people in everyday situations.

12. Jeff McWhinney

Why do we need a change in the law when we already have the DDA and Equalities Act? These Acts do not cover BSL users as part of a linguistic minority. To challenge discrimination is difficult as all the information is in English. In Equalities Act “Deafness” is seen as a disability but the status of BSL is key. BSL is a full language and not a simplified form of English.

Many Deaf parents find it difficult to communicate with their hearing children due to the lower status of BSL it should be on a par with other spoken languages. These children are often forgotten. Hearing grandparents can often take over the parenting role which can cause disruptions to family relationships, when such children start school, Deaf cultural norms which they have grown up with can be viewed as unacceptable. BSL Bill would offer greater status to language and validate these children’s parenting experience.

Public Services – regularly public information is translated into other languages but not BSL, cost may be a factor in this.

Education in BSL – BSL should be available to a higher level in education. It is compulsory for hearing children to learn English to a high level; this should be the same for BSL. This would mean that Deaf people could have access to a wider range of employment opportunities and hearing people would be able to communicate with Deaf people in everyday situations.

In 2015 hopefully we will be raising a toast to the Scottish Parliament when this Bill is passed!

13. Trevor Borthwick-Hare

Had a bad experience in hospital when they provided an unqualified “signer” instead of an interpreter.

14. Rab Walker

Many Deaf people have similar issues around lack of access. In the past, we used the DDA to raise claims to challenge inequality, but due to legal costs, the additional costs of interpreters and a general lack of confidence among the Deaf Community, it was difficult to make a legal challenge when we faced discrimination. Growing up in a hearing family with very limited signing skills, I missed out on normal family communication and was once taken by my parents to hospital for an operation when I did not understand what was going to happen to me. When letters come I do not understand or I need to make a phone call, interpreter drop-in sessions such as at Deaf Action can be very helpful. When this is not possible, I must use type-talk which can be frustrating.

Every time I have a health appointment, I need to get in touch to make sure an interpreter has been booked. A note on my file to make interpreter booking automatic would be very helpful.

When dealing with the Council (e.g. housing matters) hearing people can sort things out quickly and easily, whereas I must wait potentially 2-3 weeks for an interpreter. Online interpreting services should be more widespread and would help in these settings.

When making a report to the police, access to an interpreter can take hours. In an emergency situation such as when a crime has been committed or reporting a missing person, this delay could be crucial.

Budget cuts should not be used as an excuse. Deaf people pay the same taxes as everyone else and should have the same access to services.

BSL should be taught in schools. This would raise awareness of BSL and Deaf culture and would reduce the stigma of using sign language in public.

15. EJ Raymond

I have found it difficult getting my writing published. Because English is not my first language, I write in plain English and not at the advanced level which seems to be required by publishers. I have my writing proof read before submission but am still advised to improve my English.

16. Bea Webster

BSL classes are expensive which creates a barrier to learning for hearing people. BSL should be taught in the same way as other spoken languages are. BSL and Deaf awareness would make life more comfortable for us in the hearing world. Parents should have free or reduced cost access to BSL classes if they have a Deaf child.

17. Carri Neilson

Congratulations on setting up this historic forum; hopefully this format can be used in other consultations in future. The Scottish Government's recommendation of an Advisory Committee is a good idea, however it should have a majority of BSL users, similar to Gaelic and Welsh language advisory committees as the users of these languages have first-hand experience of the issues we face.

Deaf children should be taught BSL at a young age so their language development can keep pace with their hearing peers. At secondary school, further spoken and/or signed languages could be learned, matching the options available to all other students.

18. Lilian Young

Deaf education is still suffering from the repercussions of the 1880 Milan Conference where sign languages were banned from being used in education in favour of oralism. The BSL Advisory Board would have a majority of BSL users who have been through this education system and able to advise on the changes needed.

19. Kris Bauld

I was taken to hospital with a broken leg (stookie displayed as proof). An interpreter was requested but I was told none were available. Communication was difficult as I was in a lot of pain. Eventually I was able to contact a family member and they used their limited signing skills to communicate for me. It is shameful that the NHS were unable to provide an interpreter.

Similarly, when I arrived for a job interview, no interpreter was provided which meant I lost out on an opportunity for gainful employment.

20. Moira Ross

BSL is valuable as it can make life better for Deaf people. When it is recognised and accepted as a language it will break down barriers, reduce isolation and improve integration into our communities.

21. James Colhoun

I went to school aged 5 and was taught using the oral method. My education suffered as the

teachers used all kinds of methods to try to teach us speech. No BSL was used. Our education consisted of copying words from a blackboard, but we did not understand what we were writing. This led to us giving wrong answers and being chastised (sometimes physically) by the teachers. If the 1880 ban had never happened, life would be so different for Deaf people. Enough is enough and changes need to be made. We can make that happen by supporting each other.

Public services and the information they provide must be accessible e.g. the bedroom tax.

22. Dominic Ravenscroft

The Milan conference in 1880 was attended by an Italian teacher who had spent the previous 6 months intensively teaching speech to Deaf students with no other subjects being covered. At the conference they were held up as an example of what was possible even though it was not a realistic way of teaching children. Because of this decision, BSL has become a hidden language and is illegal, this makes no sense as interpreters are provided in Police and Court situations. If the BSL Bill is passed then the damage caused by the Milan conference will be consigned to history.

23. Tania Allan

I worked in Midlothian for the Deaf Education service which has a strong tradition of oralism. I visited children in main stream schools; often they were the only Deaf child in that environment and were struggling to keep up with the lessons being taught. One child I worked with only started learning sign language at high school and their education improved as a result of this. I would also visit hearing parents of Deaf children to show them what it is possible to achieve as a Deaf person. I would teach simple signs to parents and they would develop language skills concurrently with their child, however teachers of the deaf objected to sign language and pointed to cochlear implants as a solution to all problems. However children have a right to language and even if a baby learns sign language at an early stage this maximises their potential for future bilingualism.

24. Trudi Collier

I feel the BSL Bill is very important yes, however I feel the focus has now turned on to having more interpreters as the only way to improve Deaf people's access. I feel we need a balance. I think we need more Deaf professionals where Deaf people support each other. I'll give an example of advocacy. Aside from the BDA advocacy service provided in that one area, the rest of Scotland is left without access to that service. We don't want to rely completely on hearing people for everything; we want Deaf professionals or professionals who have a background/routes to the Deaf community. I would like to see and feel we need a balance between the two.

25. Richard Carter

I live in the south of England but want to show my support to everyone in Scotland by sharing my experience of teaching in Rio, Brazil. Before I went I expected the children to be oral or have cochlear implants, in fact what I discovered was that all 900 of the children used sign language. They were also able to submit their work in sign language rather than have to give written answers. There were also 22 Deaf professionals there trained each with a MA degree in their chosen subject, geography, science ect. This loads in comparison to the UK where only a few have MA degrees. I think if we are able to implement this in Scotland it would

provide equality and proper access to education.

26. Lilian Lawson

A Bill when it is passed is not necessarily exactly perfect but once it is passed it is possible to make amendments to make it stronger. This is true for lots of Acts including the BSL Bill. It's important to hang in there, have patience and work together to continue this campaign to it can be strengthened for future generations.

27. Carri Neilson

I feel the meeting in Glasgow organised by the BDA was an eye opener as I was uncertain about what was included in the BSL Bill; however, Hilary Third did an excellent job in clarifying this. The question of education came up and this was explained to be a separate matter which caused uproar in the meeting. I myself thought that education would have been included in the Bill and would enable BSL classes and courses to be available to the children at school so BSL would be given the same equal right and status as English. That is my vision, so I'm disappointed. Within the National plans that will be developed from the Bill I hope education can be incorporated into it. It is so important to many of us that it is as we have had negative experiences of education ourselves.

I also have two questions: What is the content and detail of the national plan? Will the BSL community get the opportunity to contribute to the national plan?

28. Rab Walker

I was also very disappointed that education is not included in the Bill. I thought it would be on the top of the agenda because it is vital for all of us.

When you consider how many NHS hospitals and GP's practices there are compared to the enormous amount of schools in Edinburgh, there is a very large difference and I feel it is due to this sheer scale of the issue for education means it has been pushed down the agenda. What exactly is in the national plan? We have to be patient as well, if the Bill is passed then it will take about 3 or 4 possible, 5 years to develop the national plan, however we do hope to see changes within a few months after it is passed. Included in the national plan should be a review and amendment scheme so for example, every 7 years the Bill will keep progressing and improving.

I am looking forward to the Bill being passed but we must remember not to give up. Maybe the national plan will enable new Deaf schools to be set up, you never know. Perhaps after it is passed deaf babies will not have cochlear implants, however I am aware there are differing views on this but hopefully we can agree on the best way for the future.

29. EJ Raymond

I am unsure whether employment is included in the Bill.

I have to include on my job applications that I am a Deaf BSL user and would need to have an interpreter at interviews. I rarely ever hear back.

Employers can often feel that Deaf people are a higher risk (health and safety) but that is not case.

30. Gerry Malley

Watching the meeting the BDA organised in Glasgow live stream was really good and positive. However, the education being a separate matter worries me. If it is enclosed on the

Bill then education will get better and better otherwise I feel it will just be the same old bad education story which is so common. My own experience of being at school was not nice, I was bullied, name called and mocked a lot for being Deaf, leaving me feeling upset and angry. If Deaf children are able to be educated in BSL it would make them equal to their hearing peers and will reduce the bullying for future generations. I agree with James Colhoun and would have walked out of the meeting as well, then taken a breath and kept on fighting. I feel it would make us all equals.

31. Paul Tipling

I think the BSL Bill is magic. A very very good thing!

We do have a lot of different communication breakdowns and it is important to share them, so the parliament can see our day to day difficulties and be more aware of them.

Keep posting your comments and keep a note of everything not matter how little, also if you could please submit them in sign language as English writing is difficult to read.

James Colhoun, don't give up! Your work is good and we need to support one another and keep going strong together. Thank you and carry on BSL carry on!

32. James Colhoun

At the meeting the BDA organised in Glasgow I got angry and walked out. The reason for this is because I believe that education is vital. It is vital for the future generations of Deaf children so they can achieve and not face as many barriers as we do today. And to find out that education is not part of the Bill I felt angry. The NHS, doctors, police, social services, council etc. are all included in the Bill but not education. Hopefully it will become part of the national plan at least and be included.

33. Dominic Ravenscroft

I am from Inverness and attended the BDA meeting held in Glasgow. From this, there were two main points that stuck out to me. Firstly, education and secondly, old peoples care homes. A few years ago when I was working in a team of hearing people as painters and decorators we took a job at an old people's home in Peterhead. A nurse came up and asked us if we would like a cup of tea or coffee, I signed I was deaf and she lifted her hands and made a 'T' and 'C' shapes. I was surprised and impressed by her good facial expressions and wondered where she had learnt to sign or if she knew any Deaf people. When she came back with the drinks I asked her, she said we have a Deaf man here. I asked if I could go and visit him in my lunch break and could. The old man was staring blankly at the TV screen in the living room with the other residents, I went over to him and asked, are you Deaf? His face lit up when I started signing, he was a profound finger-speller and I found it difficult to keep up with him at times but he enjoyed the company. He said that I was one of the only people to visit him in the 20 years he had been in the care home. Have you ever been to the Deaf club up the road? No, my brother and I moved here then he passed away and I ended up living in here we were originally from central Scotland. Later that day I went to the social work department and told them there was a Deaf man in the care home who had never seen a social worker and they couldn't find his name anywhere on the register and thanked me for letting them know. Later after bumping into the social worker I asked how the man was. He is back in central Scotland because he has family there and the Deaf club there know him well and wondered where he had disappeared to so now had plenty of company and was quite happy again all just by luck. This is something that should not have happened.

34. Lee Robertson

Looking at the current sign for 'Bill' I feel it should be changed as the Bill has not been passed yet and the sign is the same one for act so feel it would be more relevant signed as a 'proposal' which it is.

35. Lilian Young

I'm from Glasgow, and going to give a brief history of the BSL Bill. It started in 1999 with the new Scottish parliament and Cathy Craigie along with SCOD, BDA and other Deaf organisations compiled information and gave it to the Scottish Government. I was involved with SCOD in 2000 with Mary Brenan and Liz Scott Gibson. The Scottish Government and Deaf organisations have to work together on the BSL Linguistic Access Working Group. It was agreed that BSL is the priority and how to raise its profile to look at how many BSL users there are and how to increase the number of interpreters. The Cross Party Deafness was set up, and again the Deaf organisations and Scottish Parliament agreed that BSL was the priority in 2000. In 2008 SCOD decided they needed a paper completed on deafness and this became the first draft of the BSL Bill. Everyone agreed Cathy Craigie would respond and take it to parliament. There were three sub groups involved which were NDCS, SCOD and the BDA who all edited and tweaked it to what they would like to see happen. In 2010, there were consultations on the Bill with over 800 supporters and over 40 MSP's to support Cathy. However, the Bill did not pass as it was found to be too expensive and too much was condensed into it. Cathy then lost her seat at the election and Mark Griffin then replaced her. The sub group and the university of Edinburgh tweaked and had legal advice over what to put in the Bill so then in 2014 the Bill was put forward again still with its supporters. One of the major barriers to it being passed is to convince the councils that it will be worth it to spend their money on, because they are concerned with just how much the Gallic Bill cost and this will be just as costly. So persuade them! If it is passed, a national plan will be made and Deaf people will be involved with it and can help and influence what happens after. So carry on and keep supporting this Bill.

36. Lee Robertson

When we are born we embark on a journey of learning and as we get older we just want to be happy and content before we pass away. My Grandmother was a bright and cheerful woman who was Deaf and used sign language however could lip-read and speak well and enjoyed chatting even to strangers on the bus. As she got older she struggled to take good care of herself and so we looked around for a care home which has other Deaf BSL user's residents or staff which could sign. Eventually we settled on one, however due to her age she found it increasingly difficult to lip-read and preferred sign language as there is a larger space. I would go and visit her and she would feel left out as the other residents who were sitting there could hear what someone else was saying and laughed although they were not a part of the conversation and my Grandmother would ask what are they laughing about. She went downhill quickly which was very sad to see, it was as if she had given up on life. We had wanted her to be included however that was not the case and in this setting it was almost a form of abuse as she was not able to communicate and enjoy her last times. This is why we need the Bill to be passed.



37. Graham Dow

After the meeting in Glasgow I want to share my views. I feel the sign for 'framework' that was used is not appropriate for the context instead the sign 'foundation' would be a much better replacement. The reason for this is that the Bill is the beginning and once passed then it can be built on. Firstly I believe that everyone needs Deaf awareness training because I understand that not everyone can learn another language but having that awareness is a brilliant thing to have. It means that hearing people will feel confident in communicating with Deaf people and not panic. In 7 years' time if it is passed then we will have reviews and check that the Bill is matching the needs of the community and can be adapted to suit. I think it is so important the bill is passed things will improve as they have already started in my collage they are doing a Deaf awareness course. One thing that will change is education, I was lucky enough to go to a mainstream school where there was a mixture of Deaf and hearing people where we had someone come and teach us BSL however I know that others education experiences where not so pleasant.

38. Carri Neilson

It is good that so many videos have been uploaded! I agree with the topics which have been discussed especially care homes, education and employment. I also agree that the sign for 'Bill' should be changed as the current sign is the same as act but the BSL Bill has not been passed yet, it is a proposal. And just to clarify that education is a separate issue. Hope it is passed.

39. Graham Dow

People are not generally Deaf aware for example bus drivers. When I put my pass on the scanner the bus driver asks, you deaf? I say yes, and then he says you have to state the full name of where you are going and you have to pronounce it properly. I said how can I? I am Deaf. How do you know if somebody is deaf? It is invisible. If someone knows about Deaf awareness then they will know about the culture and community. If the Bill is passed it will be an amazing opportunity to make a difference. We need to start with some basic level deaf awareness and as Myra Ross says 'communication is key'. It is vital for hearing parents to receive deaf awareness training if they have a deaf child and if deaf parents have a hearing child, bilingualism is important and needed. When there is very little or none deaf awareness it can make us all very frustrated however my collage is going to give deaf awareness training to staff as a result for me asking for it to happen. They have also asked me to sign and upload a video to their website to match the written text next to it so there is total access. These are the first few steps to something amazing and where others can learn about our language, culture and community, I hope BSL is used more widely in Scotland's mainstream education.

40. Audrey Cameron

The meeting showed just how confused people were about what is in the Bill and what it means. The signs are changing and the sign framework could be adapted for a better sign. There are different ways of communicating about the Bill, a preferable way could be to have two people sitting chatting about it, in a question and answer manner, like on the TV. This means that people watch it and can give a clear picture of the Bill; I feel it is better to have this kind of dialog to give a better understanding. Stating the foundation of the Bill and if it is pass the editing and tweaking of it after.

41. Margaret Brannen Phillips  
I am Scottish but live in Canada but have been keeping up and watching these clips and trying to remember the signs. I feel education is very important for children and adults and the Bill should include it. How is it going to improve otherwise? We need it written in law. It does not make any sense to me to be separate. It is vital for children to be able to go to college and university get a good job and enjoy life and employment but can only happen if it is included. If it is included then the world will support this decision as well.
42. James Calhoun  
Now we need your help. Lilian Lawson brief history of BSL Bill with Mary Brenan, SCOD and the BDA with lots of meetings and meeting MSP's and Mark Griffin taking over from Cathy Craigie, a lot has happened from 1999 till now. I thought it had only started recently and I was shocked and impressed to find out it have being going on for a while. I can't imagine the struggles and meeting and processes they have been through to get to this stage. We as Scottish BSL users have a lot to thank them for, their hard work and dedication for us all. So we need to give evidence to this process so come on! We owe them for their hard work, we all need to get behind them and support them.
43. Paul Tipling  
I work as a BSL tutor and give deaf awareness training in various different schools in the Greenock area in both primary and secondary education for about 10 years. When I think about how many people I have taught it must be around 5000! How many of those people have actually met a Deaf person some yes some no. I think MSP's should get the opportunity to meet Deaf people so they can experience the difficulty of communication which is so important to improve and will maybe help persuade them to vote for the Bill to be passed.
44. Ben Fletcher  
Looking at the BSL Bill and how it progresses, and if it is passed, we can then break it down into 4 stages which we can use to mould and adjust the Bill as we feel is right to keep on improving things. These 4 stages are:
1. Promote
  2. Plan
  3. Result
  4. Continue.
45. Bea Webster  
Deaf people can find it very difficult to have counselling. The reason for this is because we need an interpreter, if not it is hard to get information. Even with an interpreter not everybody is comfortable with them there as it adds a new dimension. Unfortunately, a high percentage of Deaf people have mental health or depression and there is nobody they can off-load to and may not feel comfortable having the interpreter there and decide to quite the counselling. For example, a girl gets raped and feels they can't go to the police and talk to someone perhaps they end up blaming themselves, there should be support available in that situation. Perhaps a counsellor who can sign. Hope the Bill if it's passed can provide BSL classes at the level of counsellors so that Deaf people can have access to this service and feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Hearing people have the right to access them but

we don't.

46. Lee Robertson

Deaf people need a good education to be able to be involved in politics and therefore change in the country. Talking about the Glasgow meeting, someone walked out and I felt like doing the same thing as it was emotional but stayed and listened to what was being said, and found that we can add education to national plan. Through personal experience this has made me want to fight and I feel I have an inner desire to achieve more, I already have a couple of degrees in different things. Although Deaf children go to mainstream schools, they are still vulnerable as it is not full integration as these environments are not inclusive. It still makes children vulnerable and lost in the system. Through my teaching I've found that different kids have different hearing aids or cochlear implants and they still end up having bad experiences in mainstream education. If a parent neglects a child then social services come and take the child away, are it not the same in a school environment where the deaf child is being neglected should the school not close down too?

Education needs to be the first thing on the agenda because we are a weak group and we need MSP's support to make us stronger.

47. Paul Tipling

I am a teacher in Clydeview School and I think it is very important that BSL is put on the curriculum in schools as it was put there last year I think it should be continued and people made aware of it. Levels 1 and 2 BSL.

Examples of children learning BSL and signing their names and why they have enjoyed learning the language so they can communicate with Deaf people.

48. George McGowan

The plan for the BSL Bill is taken in three different stages like rooms, and as you go through the doors the rooms become bigger and bigger. The first room is all about discussion. The second is focused on gathering information and evidence, and the final room is the parliament room where the Bill becomes an act.

We should be able to meet the MSP's beforehand, so that they will understand the communication difficulties and more will vote for the Bill to pass which is vital. Perhaps SCOD or the BDA can create a draft letter (as our English is not great) which we could all sign to send to the MSP's. We need to support one another. If it passes, it will benefit the deaf community and will mean that our children who are the future will not have to campaign again for their rights but be included and live fulfilling lives.

49. Dominic Ravenscroft

Freedom of speech. At the meeting in Glasgow education was found to be a separate matter and I think it should be included. In Australia there are only 2 deaf schools left, in Africa there are still deaf schools similarly in South America and Brazil. In America more and more deaf schools are closing down as well as in the UK where children are being sent to mainstream schools. I believe the G& is to blame for it. They only discuss matters such as food poverty and education for an hour each and have to come to a decision by the end of it. Deaf kids in mainstream school, agreed? Then they move on. I blame the G& for mainstreaming the education of Deaf children which has resulted in the issues we have here today.

50. Andrew Harvey  
Looking into the language itself, researchers have found that Britain has its own British Sign Language, and then there are similar types such as SSE (signed supported English), Makaton, Cued Speech and total communication. Now BSL seems to have been dropped and more and more SSE is being used because it follows the English words. But BSL is a complex language which is not only on the hands but includes lots of facial expression as well. Patchet Gorman and Cued Speech have seemed to dried up now and Makaton is a separate thing altogether as it is used with people who have a mental disability. SSE and BSL are still around and BSL should be taught as well as English as it is so important. I am from a Deaf family so my signing was excellent compared to my school friend who was Deaf but with hearing parents. My own children now have been raised with BSL as their first language with English there second as they are hearing. Now the impact of learning BSL has weakened due to cochlear implants but I hope education is part of the Bill, it is too late now for some people but we need to think of the future not the past and BSL is very important for Scotland's future.
51. Dominic Ravenscroft  
Alarm systems in lifts need to have visual aids instead of being forced to speck and ask for help through an intercom where this is not possible for Deaf people.
52. Ann Cuthbertson  
A lot of Deaf people including myself, when someone starts talking to us, we tend to just nod without really understanding what is being said. As I mentioned earlier about the doubts I have of writing things down, for example, the doctor asked me to go and have a mental health assessment, I nodded but was not sure what it was. A few weeks later I received a letter about an appointment but again I wasn't sure what it was. I knew I didn't have any mental health issues just the frustration of an issue with my leg. It was only because I had nodded at one point to which the doctor had taken to be 'yes I want an assessment done'. I had an interpreter at the assessment but refused to go through with it. When I got home I checked the notes I had written with the doctor as I had kept them and realised I had been given medication which impaired my reading and comprehension. I had been given these tablets by the nurse – so should I sue for these mistreatments which resulted in me having to go to a mental health assessment.
53. Ann Cuthbertson  
About 5 or 6 years ago I developed depression, became anxious and lost my confidence. Before this I could walk about everywhere and had a busy life. I started to lost confidence in my mobility and now I am in a wheelchair but it means I can still get about. My friends asked me to go shopping with them and I thought I would be brave and use public transport to get there, it was great! Coming home was a different story, bus stopped at the wrong side of the square it was just very difficult for me to get on and he wanted me to move faster so two passengers had to lift me onto the bus. The bus driver's attitude was terrible and although I complained to SPT I revived no reply.
54. Anna Cuthbertson  
For a long time I've been battling on to North Lancashire Council, I live on the 12 floor tower block. I have various pieces of equipment to help me such as my doorbell and smoke alarm.

There is an intercom system and you need to speak into it. Lots of Deaf people including myself have been on and on to the council for years to change the system to one with a TV screen as I don't know who I am letting into the building.

There seems to be unease in the number of Deaf people with diabetes and most have little awareness of what the illness is. The deaf community need to support each other, the hearing can go to support groups but there is nothing for Deaf people. There really is no information out there in BSL on type 1/2 diabetes, for example what food to eat and how to control it etc. To access a hearing support groups would be difficult and would be better working one on one. NHS needs to think about these types of issues as it would be beneficial and very useful for the Deaf community.

55. Gary Quinn Eden

The Bill is very powerful to all those who use BSL. BSL is a language the same as Gaelic and any other language. English is widely spoken throughout the world which makes it a powerful language and it has laws to back it up. Gaelic speakers were feeling marginalised and so the Gaelic Bill was passed. Now BSL users are feeling the same and are taking the lead from them. BSL has been around for a long time but wasn't formally recognised until 1995 by Mary Brennan. I know these are frustrations to our education and access to opportunities. I feel the same, and I wish the Bill was around years ago but we have an opportunity to change the future but we all need to get behind this and support it.

56. Ann Cuthbertson

Access to public services is what we need to focus on. Recently a new GP had joined my local practice but our Deaf people found him difficult to lip-read. I had to go to him one day and his attitude and body language changed when he knew I was Deaf. Communication was difficult as he kept talking not writing down. On the 4th times having to see him he was very aggressive and grudgingly took my blood pressure and listened to my chest. First time in my life I have come across a bad attitude like this.

57. Stuart Cameron

While I was on holiday in America I was looking around and could see hearing people who could sign in various places, e.g. in hotels and pubs. I was told that they learnt sign language in high school; even basic sign language classes means life would be easier. BSL should be taught in school similarly or instead of French/German as people will be more likely to meet a Deaf person than a German or French person. Also every sign language class should be reasonably priced so hearing people can learn BSL.

58. Ann Cuthbertson

I love football and when to the stadium for a game but you stuck in the turnstiles and panicked, I collapsed when I eventually got out and had to go to the first aid man, my leg was numb I had high blood pressure and needed an oxygen mask and was going to have to go to hospital. I asked if I could be sent to the hospital near my home, and they said yes. After a while feeling had returned to my leg. I've collapsed twice at football stadiums. I was kept in as they needed to know why I had collapsed. I ended up being in hospital for nearly 4 weeks; I was bored and frustrated as there was no communication with staff only when family came to visit. I got very upset and emotional, I felt like I was emotional abuse. Communication was writing things down with some of the questions, which was also upsetting and I felt very

emotional and depressed. I got no emotional support from the nurses unlike the hearing patients. Anyway my hearing mother came to visit, read the written conversation and saw how upset I was, did anything happen. The doctor still continued to write things down and I was surprised by their diagnosis which wasn't related to the numbness in my leg, that seemed to be forgotten about and my concerns weren't listen to. Eventually I had to go to another hospital for an assessment and they provided an interpreter at my request. Sadly it was a few years before a diagnoses happened by a foreign doctor. Doctors need more Deaf awareness training and to be more Deaf aware.

59. Colin Simpson

Hobbies. BSL should be thought in schools to children as well as adults. Children are hungry for information and want to learn so could learn BSL quickly and communicate with Deaf pupils/friends if in a mainstream school, reducing isolation to them and making the environment more inclusive which in turn increases their confidence in the Deaf pupil. If they learn BSL at a young age it could influence their subject choice at high school and at university as well for example BSL linguistics then BSL would have a presence in the wider society and Deaf people would have access in BSL within the community.

NHS. Many pieces of equipment are wheeled about and used throughout the hospital. So why don't we have access to online interpreting services so it can be used by Deaf people in an emergency situation. For example, when I hurt my ankle playing football and had to go to hospital, I couldn't speak, and the doctor couldn't sign so we had to manage by writing things down, however this upset the doctor as it was taking too long. If there was access to an interpreter online then this would have made things easier. Health equipment is expensive but a tablet to access online interpreting isn't and would help so much. Could this be put onto the national plan?

Places to visit. Many historic building and places are of interest and have audio information in other languages for people from abroad visiting but Deaf people would also like to visit these places and have no access to the history or information as there is no interpreter of BSL version available. If this happens it will make us equal with the tourists visiting this country and museums should be included in this as well, will this be in the national plan?

60. Lisa Johnston

On the Trams, if there is a problem with the ticket machine and your money gets stuck the only way to get help is by speaking though the intercom but this is not suitable for Deaf People, I think it needs to be re-thought.

61. Lisa Johnston

There is an issue with the national entitlement travel card. When you board a bus etc. and you have to tell them your destination but because I am Deaf I cannot speak and this then causes problems. I need to use my phone and type out my destination on that. If the card says I'm Deaf then the driver should know. The health visitor when I had my first child came to check up on myself and the baby, both me and my partner are Deaf and when we were asked questions, like how would we know the baby is crying in the night etc. we told her about the equipment available to us that we use. Luckily she had brought an interpreter but still asked lots of questions. Afterwards 9 months I was disappointed because it felt like she didn't believe I could cope and had visited longer than she should have. They don't have any Deaf awareness.

62. Ann Cuthbertson

Westminster cuts are affecting access to work (ATW) meaning that Deaf people's employment and future careers are being put at risk. This is due to fraud cases within ATW and cuts have been made as a result. I support ATW for Deaf people but with the cuts it is blocking people's potential, however, it is good for a few people. Deaf people are capable and can achieve with employment access and it can be given as we can't use the phone but there are always other ways. But ATW seems to block employment for Deaf people to save money as decided by Westminster. If the Bill becomes an Act it will be a huge boost for the Deaf Community. Will the Scottish Parliament continue with ATW or will a similar system for Deaf people.

63. Charles Murphy

I am from England but I am very interested to see this Bill and the comments it had generated. I was on holiday in Florida, America, where there was lots of access to the theme parks etc. in American Sign Language (ASL) whereas in England we would struggle and had to write things down. I am not sure if it was just this area, but I felt the communication was smooth and comfortable. The BSL Act would give more awareness and access to BSL classes etc. and maybe leading to more interpreters. I think a lot of Deaf people have had similar experiences.

64. Leah Kalaitzi

Supporting the Bill would improve access to communication and give equal access to society for Deaf people.

Staff at police stations should have better Deaf awareness. At the moment there seems to be very little or no Deaf awareness amongst the police force.

I was involved in a road accident in which I was injured and had to go to hospital at which there was no communication support. I had to contact the police as the driver who had hit me had driven away. While describing the incident to the police, they had no BSL so they had to make do with writing notes back and forth. The police asked how best to contact me and I specifically asked for text or email not a phone call. One month later the police repeatedly tried to get in touch to update me on the investigation and did so by ringing me. This was so frustrating.

Another area which the police need to improve is their Deaf awareness, when arresting a Deaf person. They must be made aware that by handcuffing a Deaf person they are not only restricting their movement but also their form of communication. Deaf people going through the criminal justice system should have access to an interpreter at every step for equal rights.

However, I did have a very good experience with a bus driver who could sign.

I think it would be a much more inclusive society if everyone (or at least, more in public facing positions) were to have a basic level of sign language.

65. Jaqueline Scott Stevens

I have been sharing my experiences with the bank. One time I noticed that someone was withdrawing money from my account. I asked my son to call the bank to tell them that someone had access to her account. The bank refused to speak through my son no matter how many times he explained that his mother is Deaf and cannot use the phone. I was so

stressed about it and I was suggested to call the bank through type-talk mini-com but what difference does it make? It can encourage fraud. Hit could be anyone typing on the mini-com for me.

On another occasion my husband had a problem with his bank card when he received a phone call from the bank his son had to pretend to be his father – Deaf people are honest who they are and he explained his situation but they refused to do it through a third party, but if they pretend to be someone else it becomes life like fraud like hearing people do. The BSL (Scotland) Bill should be passed in order to promote more Deaf awareness and better access to bank services for Deaf people by text. In some situations it is urgent and if cannot wait so need something done. The BSL Bill could help.

66. Keira Lauren Sutherland

I live in fife and I am 14 years old. I support the BSL (Scotland) Bill as lots of areas need to be improved such as interpreting services, transport, schools. There is a shortage of BSL interpreters (around 60-70 interpreters) there should be more as there are over 3000 Deaf people in Scotland. I feel that at schools Deaf children are not treated equally compared to hearing children, there is no equal access to information. Interpreting service in hospitals need to be improved as well.

67. Gar McCreddie

I believe that BSL tuition should be free because my mother who is hearing started learning BSL in order to have a better communication with her son and gave up in the end because BSL level 6 was very expensive. Some of my brothers went to learn and had to pay for the course too. For parents of hearing parents of Deaf children, courses should be free to reduce the isolation of Deaf people

Also in mainstream education I feel that pupils can feel very isolated because their classmates or leaders don't sign, in the Bill should provide a BSL tutor to them.

68. Dominic Ravenscroft

I am speaking on behalf of someone else who is camera shy. BSL is very important as it helps with everyday life communication.

69. Graham Don

Graham talks about his experience at collage where he is a student there and he had access to interpreters and a note taker because he fought for his rights for them to be provided. In the classroom I am treated equally and not as 'the deaf guy' they seem to be keen to learn about Deaf culture and BSL etc. I also believe the Deaf people could influence and give advice for the BSL (Scotland) Bill as the Scottish Parliament/Government don't have any deaf people influencing their policy's or changes.

70. Dominic Ravenscroft

I feel there is a big lack of Deaf awareness on public transport and some people do not have a pleasant attitude towards you sometimes.

71. Helen Morgans Wenhold

I am really happy I moved to Scotland following my husband's job. BSL is my third language and I have been really lucky that I have had access to good services. My GP can sign



because her daughter is Deaf and my dentist knows some as some of her family are Deaf, at my children's school there had always been a BSL interpreter provided for meetings and shows, and my neighbours are friendly and some of them know BSL. Of course there are barriers that I face. For example, trying to sort out a bus pass through the council, they had to write to one another and this led to a miscommunication with the information; I do worry about this with other Deaf people as well who perhaps cannot write in English very well. At the train station every time I had a problem with the ticket I would ask a member of staff to help but they treated me like I was unintelligent. This is a big lack of Deaf awareness. I feel lucky however that I have good access to different services however it could be improved by having my employees able to sign as well. It is the same for other deaf people in different areas, having people learn to sign a little would make things so much easier.

72. Paul N Nicola Boyle

I support the BSL Bill as it would help to promote more Deaf awareness and more access to information. Public services need to improve accessibility to communication, for instance, for contacting them they don't provide an email address so Deaf people can email directly without needing to rely on a member of family to call for them. Also if deaf people call through a mini-com it can be frustrating because they will often hang up or have to repeat things, it's a very poor service. Lastly, I do disagree with the term service user because it is not accessible for Deaf people.

73. David J Johnston

I feel it would be good to have Deaf actors playing in programmes such as EastEnders and Coronation Street to show others and spread awareness about Deaf people.

74. Amy Dawson

I feel there are not enough interpreters only 60-70 and there are about 3,000 Deaf people in Scotland.

I feel that all hearing people should have level 1 BSL so that they can communicate, for example at the airport, in a restaurant etc. even basic fingerspelling would make life easier. Finally, there is not enough choice for education for Deaf children.

Lots of Deaf children leave school with no qualifications because they haven't had adequate communication support to succeed in school. If the Bill was passed it would help the mainstream schools improve their communication support. Good support would mean CSW's having level 6 or at minimum, level 3 where as currently it is level 1 which is not good enough at all! This would help improve the pass rate of Deaf children in schools and this would prove that Deaf people are not stupid they can achieve just as much with the right support.

My dream is for Scotland to be more like America i.e. more forward-thinking in terms of Deaf awareness and access.

75. Toby Dawson

When I was at school, access was very bad. There was no BSL communication support in the classroom and the teacher just talked all the time. I didn't understand what was being taught. As a child I would just like to daydream and not take anything in. I hope that the BSL Bill will change things in education so that Deaf children going through the school system will not encounter the same barriers as I did.

76. Morgan Colquhoun  
I am Deaf but from a hearing family. My family went to collage to learn BSL but they had to pay a lot of money just in order to communicate! It should be free for families.  
I think that there should be BSL classes in schools because I know that lots of people are interested in BSL. This would encourage more people to become interpreters or work with the Deaf community.  
Schools are currently teaching other languages e.g. French and German, but they don't actually have that many students wanting to learn those languages. It would be more useful for everyone to learn BSL so that they can be more involved in the Deaf community in Scotland.
77. Trudi Collier  
Lots of Deaf people feel isolated, especially if they have a hearing family. I am a councillor and lots of Deaf people come and see me, one of the common things which is discussed is that they are feeling depressed or anxious i.e. feel they have or do have a mental health problem. Many of them feel isolated and separate from their family because they are the only Deaf one. Perhaps their hearing siblings have gone on to do other things and now they feel very alone. The Bill would reduce the risk of Deaf people developing a mental health problem and with it being passed (hopefully) with reduce the number of people who are isolated.
78. Avril Hepner  
There is not enough support for older Deaf people. I want to give some evidence on behalf of them because many of them do not have access to the technology which would allow them to film themselves signing their evidence.  
Care homes: there is a lack of communication access and support. Lots of Deaf people go to care homes and find that everyone else is hearing and they are the only BSL user. If this is the case they feel even more isolated and depressed and even reduces their health and they pass away faster than if they had someone to talk to.  
This is an important issue because we will all get old one day!  
I think that the Bill should say what the public bodies intend to do about the older Deaf people, what their plan is.
79. Natalie Greenall  
I have had a bad experience with ScotRail. The train information changed but I had no way of knowing because the text board did not tell me. I ended up in the middle of nowhere and had to ask a fellow passenger for help, some of which had a very bad attitude. I asked a ScotRail member of staff who also had a bad attitude and refused to write down information. The Bill is so important and will allow us to access to public transport. Maybe in the future everyone or at least more people will be able to sign but for now at least the text boards on trains need to be more accurate!
80. Catherine Hamill Motherwell (signing on behalf of someone else)  
I had a bad experience with the police due to lack of awareness, a bad attitude and no BSL at all.

81. Anne Cuthbertson  
North Lancashire preciously provided a signed video for Deaf BSL users. However, this was cut due to the financial constraints and now people are no longer able to access this vital service. This is unacceptable.
82. Natalie Greenall  
When I was 15 years old at school and my taking exams on modern studies, there was a trip planned with the class visit a court in session, I had explained that I would need communication support for the visit (4 weeks in advance) however on the day there was no communication support and I was told I couldn't attend. I was excluded as there was no communication support but the rest of my class were able to attend, I was left out and that visit was crucial for me to pass my exam.  
I hope with the new BSL Bill it will mean Deaf people will have a right to education and to access services.
83. Rodney Audrey Dawson  
I had a bad experience with the police about 16 years ago about an incident with my neighbour where I was accused of something which I didn't do. I experienced a bad attitude from the police I think because I'm Deaf, resulting in me being charged, however it was later dropped. I therefore feel with the new BSL Bill the services to Deaf people will improve as the police will be more aware and Deaf people won't be as likely to be marginalised.
84. [ ]  
My son was very ill as a baby; he had cancer and was admitted to Yorkhill Hospital in Glasgow where he stayed for some time. It was extremely stressful for myself and my ex-partner as we were given a lot of medical information for my son's condition which was hard to understand. There was no interpreter provided at the hospital and the staff there even resorted to drawing pictures of the stomach to try aid our understanding. Eventually my sister was able to come and stay and aid the communication. Despite asking repeatedly for a SCI interpreter and notices about advertising SLI services the hospital was not forth coming in booking any. It is extremely important that we as Deaf parents were fully informed of our son's condition. It really shouldn't be for parents to find an interpreter, our focus and concentration is on our child.  
I watched TV recently about a Pakistani family where a member of the family was ill and the family were flown to the UK for specific medical treatment. This was at the request of a Glasgow MP and interpreters were provided for the family.  
I feel that's so unfair to Deaf people! I hope within the new BSL Bill public services will provide complete access to Deaf people.
85. Adam Nichol  
When I was about 16, I was looking for a job and I applied to one for Asda. I completed the application form but was side-lined because I was Deaf. I feel it was due to a lack of Deaf awareness.  
Around this time I saw a job advert on the internet for a kitchen assistant in a local McDonalds. My dad was helping me with my job search and sent off an email to them. I had experience working in the similar environment. I ws called for an interview and I asked McDonalds to book an interpreter for the interview. I dressed up in my suit and arrived at the

interview, the interpreter was there and my interview went well as I had full access. A few weeks later I received an email from McDonalds with bad news stating that I was unsuccessful in my interview for health and safety reasons. McDonalds is a large organisation and surely they could provide access for me, for example a pager system or flashing fire alarms in the work place.

86. Gerry Malley

I was taking part in a dart tournament and went into a pub I had never been into before. When I arrived the landlady asked me to leave as she had had bad experiences of Deaf people in the past. Apparently the Deaf people had been causing a disturbance in the pub. I was discriminated against because I was Deaf even though I had never been in the pub before, I challenged it. Using written notes I was given an apology and allowed to stay in the pub and was even given a few drinks on the house.

87. Kimberley Graham

Regarding TV and cinemas, I don't often get to go to the cinema as there are very few subtitled films. I often have to wait until the film is released on DVD /with subtitles. I feel its unfair s I may want to see the most recent films at the cinema at the same time as my friends but I cannot access it without subtitles.

Also I'm hoping when the new BSL Bill comes into being that it will be able to offer BSL classes as part of the curriculum. This would mean I could communicate with everyone in my team.

If BSL was taught more widely I would be able to order food in restaurant myself rather than relying on my hearing friends to do it. If the BSL Bill gets passed I would like to see more Deaf awareness.

88. Donna Shaw

My children are Deaf. We as parents had to attend to audiology department at the hospital for their hearing tests. I felt I was pressured to have a cochlear implant for my son. I felt my rights as a parent were not heard, we were also pressured for my son to ear hearing aids to try improving his speech even though the language of our home is BSL. We had a similar experience when my daughter was diagnosed as being profoundly Deaf but this time the professional's attitude was slightly more focused to the parents' wishes.

89. Lee Robertson

I'm angry. I'm well qualified and a have level 2 English qualification (both spoken and written parts) I am angry with the present day education systems in schools. I am also a qualified teacher which I have gained recently and want to work in mainstream schools teaching children. I've applied for the job and after the interviews I was told by the head teacher that I had wasted their interview panel's time. I'm confused, the head teacher wanted to employ a hearing teacher with the lever 1 BSL to work with Deaf children and I have level 2 English which is deemed not good enough for hearing mainstream education. Double standards if you ask me!

90. Lindy Loo Crowther

I have had a mild stroke (TIA) and have attended the hospital for a CT scan. I have been told that I could expect a TIA attack at any time. I went to the hospital but no interpreter was

booked, my friend who has some good speech and hearing was able to assist with communication. The doctor told me to stop my medication while I was fine but after a while I became ill again. I was taken into hospital again and saw a different doctor who said I should continue with the medication. If I'd had an interpreter in the first place I would have been fine. It's important to have an interpreter present for any health appointment.

91. Jean Pentland

I have worked all my life and contributed to the tax system, all my life as well, and to gain what? No access! I wanted to share my experience and perhaps with the BSL Bill access for BSL users will improve.

92. Denise Ryan

I wish to support the Bill as I'm a BSL user myself, it is my first language. I see that we are asked to put forward ideas to improve access to public services. The idea that I had in mind was to employ Deaf people to work in the NHS local council etc. who could then campaign for Deaf people advice the best practice and therefore improve the service access for Deaf people.

93. Natalie Johnston

Hello Scottish Parliament, my name is Natalie Johnson and I am 10 years old. My mother is Deaf and I am hearing. Mum had always wanted to go swimming but it is hard going because she keeps asking what are they instructors saying? I am fed up seeing that. Where there is better communication a bit of fingerspelling or signing my mum is happy. I am happy too when my mum is happy and when she is sad I am sad too because they ignore her and don't include her. Please consider the BSL (Scotland) Bill. Thank you.

94. Jaqueline Scott Stevens

I am sharing my experiences with you to show the frustrations involved because she was refused to have an interpreter from the council. They reason why I was needing an interpreter was to explain to the council that her next door neighbour was accusing her of things she wasn't responsible for. Eventually after a long meeting with the council the chief executive and a social worker of the Deaf (who helped me to write and report) what was going on. I urge the council to take on some Deaf awareness training. I hope the Bill will be passed because it will help promote more deaf awareness and need of interpreting services.

95. Moira Ross

I had an awful experience in court and had no access to an interpreter but someone who finger-spelled everything. It was really hard. My dad who was there who tried to help her court threatened him if he carried on signing to me he would go to jail. This incident was a long time ago and I hope this Bill will improve awareness and access to interpreters in the court and for police and also to promote equal access to communication.

96. Rose Moira Ross

I feel family support should be included on the BSL Bill as it is important. 12 years ago I gave birth to my child who was born profoundly Deaf. Afterwards, doctors and professionals came to my house to give and explain to me the types of support which were available for my child. All they talked about and focused on was his ears and the fact they 'didn't work'. All the

information and support available was focused again on his ears and not him as a person. There was no support available in sign language. This really upset me. I feel their support is not enough because what my child needs is BSL to communicate as he was born Deaf. As there is no signed support available Deaf people in the past have grown up isolated in their own families, I find this very upsetting. One of my friends gave me some books and videos in sign language and baby sign too, there was lots of information and I am so grateful to him for them. I feel that all parents Deaf or hearing should be able to be given these resources and they should be available to all who have a Deaf child. There are signed stories, BSL BT, hands on and a number of other ones that parents should be offered. This should be included somewhere on the Bill, to have signed support and materials available and offered to parents.

97. Audrey Cameron

I have a hearing daughter and when she was small she was ill and I took her to the doctor. I felt like I wasn't able to be a worried mum as my daughter had to explain what was wrong with her and then interpret to me what the doctor was saying. As a mum it is my responsibility to talk to the doctor about my daughter and able to speak for her. I am sure lots of parents have felt the same way with their children. It is vital to have an interpreter there. If I am ill the doctors provide me with an interpreter it should be the same when it's my child who is ill and I need to be there and make sure she is okay. To know what the medication is for, how it works, when to take it etc. and to know exactly what the doctor has said. Not to have to ask my child what the doctor has said. It's not fair. If the Bill is passed it means that we will be treated equally to hearing parents and able to express our concerns easily.

98. Lisa Cameron

I have had health problems for a long time and go to the hospital regularly, last year however I was in hospital for 2 weeks, I always ask for an interpreter and I am always denied one. This time was no different. The doctor wanted me to have an MRI scan, I asked him if I could as I have a cochlear implant, there reply was 'yeah be fine, be fine'. I didn't fully trust him as I have heard that MRI scans can damage the cochlear implant and the sounds. Anyways I went downstairs for the scan and a lady came in and asked me some questions before I had the scan, we wrote notes to each other on paper. She asked if I had a cochlear implant, I said yes, her face was a look of shock, you can't have the scan with a cochlear implant it could cause you brain damage or even death! I was shocked and terrified. The doctor had just brushed off what I had said and it could have cost me my life! I was so upset I went back to the ward and demanded an interpreter and once again was not allowed one. I started getting angry. The doctors should know better! And provide better services. I lost all my trust in that hospital and have stopped going there.

I feel all the doctors and NHS staff should learn some sign language, I know some Deaf people can lip-read but this is not fully communication. I cannot always lip-read if I am in pain or tired and ill, plus I don't wear my cochlear implant 24/7. The doctors said that I didn't need and interpreter I could just lip-read. Their attitude is so wrong!

I am still ill and still in pain, I don't know how to cope with it and who knows what will happen next, but there is no way I am ever going back to that hospital again!

The BSL Bill needs to improve things like; having NHS staff trained in sign language, more awareness and better attitudes. I wrote a complaint letter to the hospital but they haven't bothered to get back to me, not even the doctors who knew I was upset to say they were

sorry.

Another bad experience of mine is going to the doctors and being given tablets to take, I don't know what these tables are, when to take them, what they have inside them, what the side effects are, if I am allergic to anything or what is an allergic reaction to them how will I know it's not just how the tablets are supposed to work. I know nothing.

They are not aware of Deaf people's needs.

Their decision to deny me an interpreter could have cost my life.

99. Rose Ross

Hello talking about the BSL Bill and education – I'm Moira Ross and I am with my son who will talk about Primary and High School.

Son: In class I couldn't understand the teacher but I knew what was going on, it was simple – when moved to P7 in mainstream I did not have PSA teacher (Personal Support Assistant (transcribers term – may be referring to Personal, Social and Health Education – PSHE)) I did not understand what was being said. When moved to High school I learned more

Moira: In Primary you didn't have regular access to a/the PSA with signing – is that right?

Son: No not regular, about once or twice a month that's all – not much.

Moira: In High school did you achieve a lot?

Son: Yes at top of the English class, at Science test/exam achieved 100% on the first and 97% on the second – all teaching/learning/tests in sign language and understood it all – when relaying on speech did not understand anything.

Moira: Also do you feel communication was better at high school compared to primary?

Son: At primary there was no communication – had to rely on oral methods. At high school I had the choice, it wasn't chosen for me and I chose signing and it was offered which gave me understanding.

Moira: Do you feel your work dramatically improved in high school compared to primary?

Son: Yes it did, when in primary I was 'lower down' I could have done more but not given the chance. Now in high school I'm top of 5 classes, even music which I didn't expect – music!

100. Rose Ross

Hello I'm talking about the BSL (Scotland) Bill – Deaf Education – I'm Moira Ross, and want to talk about my son, who is going through education at the moment.

At first he went to a deaf school which had full communication available – with 'not bad' education, however, communication is of most importance – the deaf school closed which 'trapped' us and had great concerns about communication – I strongly believe that you need clear communication to learn better and receive education.

After that he went to mainstream school and went through hard times with poor communication – teachers could sign a bit but not fluently or not at all.

My son struggled, having to adapt and 'internally interpret' what was being said/taught. We campaigned all this time.

One day my son came home, really sad and frustrated and the outcome and question was that why was he going to school? For education or as an interpreter!

Of course he should be going for education – his response was that he felt he was an 'interpreter' as being always asked what's the sign for this and what's the sign for that – and to translate for other people.

I felt that this was not appropriate for a child to be used as an interpreter – which made me angry and attended many meetings about this.

There was a teacher with Level 3 (signing skills/qualification) and communication, being

important to me, was good.

This was in a mainstream class this was in PSA [may be referring to Personal, Social and Health Education – PSHE] which was very enjoyable, but not regular, where at times my son was bored and not participating and in-between times having to catch up on lessons/work where standard of work improved slowly.

Not happy with this as it was a lot of ‘catch up’ between times of having support and not which was additional work to do compared to ‘hearing’ peers.

After that my son wanted interpreters and became determined to have access. Which was not clear cut.

I then asked for support from BDA ‘Advocacy’ (British Deaf Association) and work to this aim for forthcoming/rest of high school.

It then became clear that with communication access my son could learn and attain at the same pace as hearing peers – without having to have extra time to try and catch up – which is a waste of education.

From then on in high school my son achieved and has done well for 8 months or so working well in mainstream class with full time support, achieving a great deal and his education as increased a great deal/markedly

This is because of clear communication which has rapidly moved things on.

My dream for the future is to make sure that teachers have communication skills and to work together with the same vision to achieve this.

And not where the child has to adapt and ‘internally interpret’ what’s going on and just having the chance to learn and gain from education.

#### 101. Kenneth Johnstone

Hello my name is Kenneth Johnstone and I would like to talk about Scotland’s BSL Bill and education and talk about my experience.

My first experience of 10 years in a deaf school which was fantastic with teachers in different subjects having communication skills. Communication is very important.

My second experience is when the deaf school closed and I went through mainstream school for two years.

I found this very difficult and having deaf and hearing mixing (integration) with problems of sharing the right information between both groups.

This is where standards have to be improved – for example in PSA [may be referring to Personal, Social and Health Education – PSHE] with teacher for the deaf and hearing teacher – we need more information and research into this. Which shows that there are different languages (BSL/English) – I taught for 2 years which hopefully those hearing people would have realised.

Hopefully this will improve with more research and working together, developing and improving. And we should see this as ‘part of a team’ approach.

When I left primary school and went to high school, this is difficult for both groups (Deaf & hearing) and have to improve skills (communication) for teachers in many different subjects, maths, sciences etc.

We need BSL teachers, there are not enough BSL teachers, which means that all deaf children will struggle and will have to wait a long time to get numbers increased.

#### 102. Sally Work

I would like to talk about my experience at deaf and at mainstream schools and make a comparison.



I attended a deaf school from nursery and right through end of primary school. Where we communicated in sign with the teachers and built up a lot of confidence within the classroom setting.

Whereas in the mainstream school, high school, and yes I found it hard in mainstream school and my confidence dropped.

In the classroom in mainstream school I relied on the teacher of the deaf (ToD), for example in break and dinner time there were few friends who could sign. At times when back in class I waited anxiously for the ToD to arrive, even after the 'hearing' teacher started I couldn't understand until the ToD arrived but even this wasn't right – in the deaf school there was free communication in the class.

Even when we were waiting for the teacher to arrive we could communicate with each other. In mainstream school education is of course at a higher level (meaning more education) than in the deaf school but communication was not an issue there. In my experience, a deaf school is better than mainstream school.

Mainstream school education is at a faster pace, whereas in a deaf school it is more at the pace required to suit and learn better – in mainstream there is no way to put a hold on learning and no time to catch up or wind back. It is so difficult to catch up even with the deaf unit.

I think there should be both deaf schools and mainstream schools as options. Now there is no choice, mainstream or nothing – that's it!

Where are children's' rights?

Those who can cope, like children with cochlear implants and cope orally can choose mainstream, where those who have a deaf identity and use BSL should go to deaf school where they would be better, that's my belief.

I have two girls going through this at the moment and I can see real problems with mainstream schools.

#### 103. Sally Work

Hello my name is Sally Work and I'm talking about my daughters' experience in education, both aged 10, the other one is too young.

They attended two mainstream schools, one for primary 1 year and the other for the rest. The first (Primary 1) looked positive and had communication support in class with signing and there were a few other older deaf children which was good for during play and dinner times. This as well as having support in class was really good.

Things started to change in Primary 2, there was less, no communication support in class at starts leaving children bored until the arrival of support worker.

Support was not for all the time, it was on and off over the classes. I queried this and was told it was to do with the numbers and the support had to be divided between children/years, which I felt wasn't right.

I realise that they were young but still very important to learn and not sitting there doing nothing (as there was no access). And not being able to understand the hearing teacher.

In the deaf unit for say English or Maths the teacher of the deaf (ToD) would first work with P1s, P3s and P4s – one group at a time while others waited.

It was a waste of time! Teachers were working between different levels/topics.

With this I complained with the help of the social work and wrote to my council complaining about the lack of communication support. Appreciated and valued what was there but it was not enough.

The council wrote back saying they would look into this.

After months and months nothing came back, no visits to the school to see. Nothing! Seems as if my concerns were ignored, as far as I know.

In P4 I took my children to another council (moved) where they had better communication support – all the time. Ok some subjects like PE for example had to wait for them to arrive but eventually did attend.

The signing skills were not great, not fluent or at Level 3 or Level 6 (BSL qualifications). Had this teacher for 2 years who was from England. The children came home with some strange signs for example one sign for 'factory' which I have never seen and my partner, who is English, also had never seen!

Also other signs like 'take' (similar but different to BSL sign) – luckily we could back up signs at home and assist.

Also there were little to none friendships – in the old school there were many deaf children in various years, whereas in the other school there were only three, two of them being my daughters. This meant they had no friends – this doesn't seem right!

Friendships are important!

I told them about my experience at school with other deaf children and being able to sign with teaching staff – even in the corridors and playgrounds.

My children really wanted the same for themselves.

I know that deaf schools are closing down with only one left that include disabled children, but a signing school.

This means that the girls will grow up with a different experience as to me where I could pick and choose friends. My children won't develop the same experience by having just one friend!

Teaching and friendships are both important.

Teachers need higher level of signing abilities/skills as all children are different, some with cochlear implants, some oral and some with deaf identity that use signing.

Teachers should be able to adjust to suit the needs of the children and not stick to one level of communication where children won't learn/absorb enough.

It's a shame my two girls won't experience the same as I did with my parent/s being deaf passing experience to me and I to them, now I have another boy, the fourth child, who's also deaf.

So I have concerns now about nursery and schooling, what's going to happen there?

Schooling needs improvement – both mainstreaming and deaf schools meaning that parents can decide as to which would match their child, no matter if they can cope orally in mainstream or by signing on a deaf school.

#### 104. Alastair Young

Years ago I went to a deaf school with many deaf pupils – it was great. There was one problem when I moved to mainstream school where I mixed with hearing pupils.

I would be in a class full of hearing pupils and I would be waiting for the interpreter to come – sometimes late, sometimes they would say that they were in a meeting and say sorry – meaning that the meeting came first and was more important than me! When I needed to learn for my future!

When I was doing work or whatever, at times I would ask for meanings and sometimes the interpreter would give me the answer I would submit the work and pass! And get congratulated for it when it wasn't really me it was the interpreter! So I couldn't build up experience.

Also at break times, lunch times and mix with the hearing pupils, they were just interested in swearing and so on – I wasn't interested in that so I went with 4,5 or 6 deaf pupils, numbers would change as they moved away and new ones came in – this became boring as it was the same old thing – Monday to Friday, Monday to Friday for months and months.

So when school finished I would go home and after dinner want to go out and meet deaf friends – my parents didn't allow this as the travel involved to see them (it was too far).

This was different for mainstream hearing pupils they could meet each other after school easily. We were trapped.

Couldn't sign with the local hearing pupils as they at times laughed/joked about my signing.

Other thing about school is learning French. You can learn French, get a medal or certificate or whatever from SQA.

Problem is that after learning it and not meeting any French people you forget it and what use is that?

It would be better changing things for people to learn BSL because how many deaf people are in the UK.

We should replace French with BSL as an option and learn that for 4 or 5 years then after going to college or university then working as Police, hospital, dentist doctor etc.

When a deaf person, say, needs to go to hospital with a sore leg they can communicate directly, that could be within accident and emergency where you wouldn't need an interpreter as you can sign direct. The same with the police etc. That would be perfect.

This could happen throughout the UK by having BSL in schools. Then communication with deaf and hearing people would take place.

If planned well just now this would work for all deaf people with good communication between deaf and hearing people and even London (Westminster) should look at this as it would save money, by paying interpreters, paying for travel.

It would be better if everyone in the UK could learn to sign from school.

#### 105. Andrew Harvey

My name is Andrew Harvey and I'm talking about my experience of school in Scotland. I live in Paisley, just outside Glasgow.

I went to Glasgow School for the Deaf – Milton School.

I was there from 5 to 10 years old. The school used TC (Total Communication) which used speech and sign. We used BSL – at that time I didn't know it was called BSL – we just signed.

There were many deaf pupils. The classes had about 10 pupils in each.

The secondary school was upstairs, they were older.

Not like now with mainstreaming – with some schools with one some with four deaf pupils and some with 10 which would be good.

The age groups are from primary to secondary.

At that time with TC and at the age of 10 I moved to England due to my parents splitting up and had a new life in Liverpool.

I went to a similar school that used sign and TC. We were not forced to have speech therapy and encouraged to use sign which was very comfortable.

I had learned a lot from the Glasgow school.

One year later a teacher said I should go to Mary Hare, just outside London.

I went and was shocked as it was purely oral.

Mary Hare had 200 pupils – it was like my world, my people. Just like my deaf family.

I stayed there for 2 years – and started to struggle with the oral approach – but the teachers could understand me with my voice.

But when out with hearing people they couldn't understand me. And realised that the teachers were used to me saying my voice was good (they were lip reading me).

Years later I went to 'Southport' another oral school. Where communication was different using some strange gesture with speech.

Education at this school was set lower in comparison.

After leaving school and looking back a signing class was more enjoyable and school was more interesting – the oral school was not as interesting, falling asleep at times.

Looking back I put up with five years at oral school!

Comparing schooling now – deaf children should be offered what's best for them depending on their hearing and ability to speak or prefer to use BSL and not pressurised or forced in an oral way with speech training etc.

This affects learning and affects confidence

At the end they will be depressed, have mental health problems.

Some will have cochlear implants, some successful, some failing and those continuing to sign.

Deaf children should have a choice to use and develop their BSL through their parents or friends being deaf.

Some hearing parents of deaf children can't sign, some are lucky some are not and have communication barriers at home with interest at school but not at home.

Some deaf people would become used to this and see it as normal, it's not normal and it needs more research into this.

At the moment we have cochlear implanted children, signing children, partially deaf children – with numbers of signing children being small and communication barriers between all groups.

I would like this looked into more. More research for the future of our children.

106. Andrew Harvey

Hello my name is Andrew Harvey – and I would like to add (to previous) comment about BSL skills of teachers which are low, not very high standard.

If your right handed this is the dominant hand for signing and if your left handed that is the dominant hand. As shown by these examples (on video).

With fingerspelling it is the same – keeping to the dominant hand and not mixing between right and left dominant hand when fingerspelling, this is confusing.

I have seen teachers 'jumping' between right and left handed signing and asked if they are left or right handed and suggest that they keep to that when signing. Teachers are completely unaware of this.

Also, some teachers have brought English (BSL regional variations) to Scotland with children picking these up when my children come home I see this and show them our signs for these – I tell them to tell the teacher to adapt to our local sign variation as it would not be fair when they leave school and be found difficult to be understood – again lowering confidence.

Teacher should have higher BSL skills/standards and be prepared to learn and 'listen'/share signs.

Signing skills of teachers are weak (inappropriate use of signs shown as example on video – 'guide'/'liff').

Skills need to be improved.

107. Loretta McColl

I want to share my life experience – I live in Scotland. I was born profoundly deaf.

I made deaf friends in primary school (P1,P2,P3) – I didn't sign in Primary school it was 'oral'.

I then went to another school (unsure of which school) where teachers signed.

I want to have both signing and oral. And be able to sign with my deaf friends and be able to speak/lip-read with my hearing friends.

I would like to have both, be oral at home and be able to sign at school/with friends.

108. Connor Hamilton

My name is Connor Hamilton and I would like to share my experience (life story) because I think it is important.

I was born in Australia and I was born deaf but my parents thought I was hearing anyway ...

We moved to Scotland from Wales – started school early in England, different starting age here ...

To help understanding in school we were provided with free interpreter in Wales which helped me understand.

I am good at lip-reading and speaking but want and need someone to sign giving me access to both – which is easier for me.

The problem is when we moved to Scotland we had to pay for the interpreters. Which isn't fair! I needed some support.

After explaining I was moved to another school which I still found hard to understand as no interpreters it was still rubbish.

I then move to secondary school ('J' school) which was the worst school ever as it was difficult to understand.

I think it is unfair having to pay for interpreters (Scotland) and having them free (Wales/England).

I don't think it's fair – why the need to pay when it should be free – it should be the same/fair.

109. Brian McCann

My name is Brian McCann, I grew up as a Deaf BSL user.

Comparing deaf schools, where deaf children can communicate in BSL with mainstream/integrated schools.

Within deaf school with 10 deaf children in class using BSL and interacting, although the lesson was oral based we benefited from being able to converse with each other. My parents did not sign, however, there were other parents from school who were BSL users and that influenced and built confidence in me. It allowed me to express emotions, develop storytelling, humour, share experiences and culture – for that I am thankful.

Within mainstream/integrated based schooling, where, I worked for 5 years, I was able to see both sides, the benefits and disadvantages of each.

My initial impression of mainstream/integrated was good, where I was teaching both pupils and hearing staff in BSL. Albeit for those who were hearing it was a basic introductory course which allowed for basic conversation to take place.

At this time there was a Deaf Unit with small numbers which was different from a Deaf school which had greater numbers.

Also, the Unit was not the same as a class (staying together), individuals attended classes as required with a teacher of the deaf (ToD) who 'translated' which was a problem. ToDs did not have the communication or adaptive skills with varying language use appropriate to the child.

When married and with deaf BSL using children who attended a deaf school and communicated with others in BSL, Knowing that deaf education was poor, but preferred the communication ethos. This school closed, with pupils being mainstreamed/integrated with only some of the staff coming from the school who had lower level signing skills.

There would be perhaps one deaf pupil in a class where they would be left out of and excluded from in-depth discussion. Those who were hard of hearing for example would have been better placed to cope with this situation where it is different for a Deaf BSL user with these communication barriers.

As mentioned, my initial impression was good, however, not now as when my children return home they tell me of problems faced, negative experiences, frustrations, anxieties, barriers, being ignored etc.

When looking back when I worked in mainstream, these problems still exist.

Within deaf education support, teachers etc. it is assumed that all is well and in truth it is not. Teaching hearing pupils BSL and deaf awareness, what about deaf pupils?

With my children telling me what happens, it's evidently so that Deaf parents know better as to what is needed for the future of our deaf children.

#### 110. Paul Tipling

I worked as a BSL teacher for many years in Garvel School. The deaf unit closed and moved to mainstream provision.

I have been teaching classes from P1 – P7 and has been fantastic with all hearing children learning to sign – it's been really positive – all my teaching has been positive.

With other disabilities, wheelchair users, autism, mental health issues and their schools closing down and being mainstreamed and I asked if they would like BSL and all said yes.

I also work in High Schools, having asked head teachers and explaining about BSL and getting Secondary 5th and 6th Years to take on BSL Levels 1 and 2 which are now finished – it was like having BSL on the curriculum really good/impressive.

I've been in schools teaching and encouraging P1 to P7 classes where deaf pupils are and all have 'absorbed' the language.

I've seen hearing teachers, teachers of the deaf and interpreters all signing – it has been really positive.

Like other schools (needs) where they have closed down and have had to integrate with 'hearing' schools, we just have to put up with it and take one step at a time.

You can ask for more BSL to be taught to pupils.

I now see, in my area, five deaf children fully signing with hearing children playing and talking with each other being really happy and building confidence.

I wish that had been the same for me when at school/growing up!

This can be achieved with some persuasion, taking small steps and taking time.

#### 111. Anna-Mari McCann

Anna-Mari: Hello, regarding the BSL (Scotland) Bill and in relation to deaf children's education. Two of my children (here in video) first attended a Deaf School for four years. This school was closed, we had no choice in this and had to move into integrated/ mainstream schooling. Which they attend again for some years. They themselves would like to provide brief overview/comments on this:

Younger child: My experience attending a deaf school and mainstream school was different. In the deaf school I had friends but the education and signing ability of teachers was not good. In primary school (P6) I went to mainstream schools – again support and signing skills

was low, which I could not understand, had no friends, which wasn't good.

Older child: My experience in primary school was the same, the teaching staff had very low signing ability. Communication with other deaf pupils was perfect, although low numbers, I wish there were more but there were six I think in the same class or thereabouts (or varied class to class). With the closure of the deaf school, I went to S1 in the high school, which was mainstreamed. Teachers of the deaf (ToD), also had low signing/BSL skills/ability, far lower than ours. This should be the other way round, with teachers being more capable. While in class, we were excluded from classroom chat, laughter, discussions, group work etc, even when asked what was being said, the reply often was "don't know what they are saying, just get on with your work". I was not happy about this and it felt wrong. When I didn't understand something I asked and all I got was repetition (repeated sign) of what was being said when suggested to ask another ToD for clarification, I was told no! It was impossible for deaf and hearing children to meet and mix well. Would never integrate. Work teachers we were doing did not match that of other hearing children, teachers should be able to adapt to both. Not a good situation.

Anna-Mari: This is true and we hope the Scottish Parliament by using the Bill will and must ensure teachers have high level BSL communication skills as it is vitally important, to improve the learning of deaf children.

112. Audrey Cameron

*[This post relates to the Committee's inquiry into the Attainment of pupils with a sensory impairment, but is still relevant to the BSL Bill]*

Hello – in relation to the Education and Culture Committee request for evidence and its enquiry into deaf education.

So why do we have an inquiry? As you know the Scottish Parliament requested evidence for the BSL Bill and through that knew about deaf education has not been good.

Recent research found that deaf education is below that of for hearing children and of achieving qualifications.

Research in England has found that around 36% achieve qualifications when leaving school compared to around 60% of hearing peers. Why the difference?

We know that being deaf does not mean we have learning disabilities – we're just deaf, that's it! We have ability, so why the difference?

I'm sure we share the dream that deaf children will achieve more in the future.

113. James Colhoun

My experience is that when I was at school I was forced down the oral education route.

Putting that aside my focus is on deaf children of today.

My aim is deaf children who can be supported by sign language interpreters or with deaf teachers. If nothing else, deaf children need to be supported by interpreters.

The aim is for deaf children to achieve qualifications. In my time there was nothing but being oppressed through the oral system. I don't want to pass that on to deaf children of today.

I want to see deaf children on equal terms with hearing children, achieving by being supported by interpreters or other methods to meet their needs.