

Food Standards Scotland British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2020-2024

October 2020



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1. Introduction and context

1.1 Background

Welcome to Food Standards Scotland's (FSS) draft British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, which is under consultation and available on FSS's website from 22 October until 6 November 2020 (www.foodstandards.gov.scot/).

FSS, along with all public bodies across Scotland, is required to publish a BSL plan setting out how it will promote and support the [Scottish Government's BSL National Plan 2017-23](#).

This plan aims to improve the accessibility of its services and information to BSL users¹. It details the goals and specific actions that FSS aims to carry out and implement by 2024 to ensure there are no barriers to BSL users in accessing information.

It follows the goals set out in the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan (published 24 October 2017), which was developed following extensive consultation and engagement with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and those who work with them.

FSS's draft plan was previously consulted on in 2019. Since then, the internal FSS BSL Steering Group has undertaken in-depth research, engagement with BSL and Deaf organisations and awareness training to gain deeper knowledge to ensure the actions outlined in the plan meet the requirements of BSL users.

The plan has evolved and changes have been made to the original version. In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the environments in which we work and live. Therefore, it is necessary for us to seek feedback from BSL users (and those who represent them) on the latest version of the plan prior to final publication.

FSS recognises the importance of BSL to Scotland and we're committed to ensuring that BSL users can easily access the information they need.

1.2 About FSS

FSS was established on 1 April 2015 by the Food (Scotland) Act 2015 as a non-ministerial office, part of the Scottish Administration, alongside, but separate from, the Scottish Government.

FSS is the public sector food body for Scotland. Its duty is to protect the interests of Scottish consumers in relation to food. We provide information and advice on food safety and healthy eating and nutrition. This information needs to be easily accessed by all to make sure that we protect public health and help all people in Scotland to have diets conducive to good health.

¹ *Wherever we refer to 'BSL users' we mean D/deaf and/or Deafblind people (those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss) whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

FSS puts consumers' interests first and aims to be a credible, consistent and trusted voice on food matters in Scotland. Earning and keeping consumers' trust is central to ensuring people in Scotland listen to and act on our advice, which is evidence-based, and we act independently on their behalf. Protecting consumers means we also work closely with and regulate the food industry.

FSS is mainly funded by government, with a budget this financial year (20/21) of £20.2m. We also charge fees to recover costs for functions we carry out, such as meat inspection and providing vets in abattoirs. The organisation has around 250 staff, located in our head office in Aberdeen and field-based staff.

FSS has a five-year strategy to 2021 which aims to deliver our vision, which is "to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers."

To deliver our vision we have identified the following six strategic outcomes:

- 1. Food is safe**
- 2. Food is authentic**
- 3. Consumers have healthier diets**
- 4. Responsible food businesses flourish**
- 5. FSS is a trusted organisation**
- 6. FSS is efficient and effective**

Development of a new strategy is currently underway and will be published by April 2021.

FSS have a statutory objective to improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health.

This includes providing advice in relation to diet and nutrition, with a particular focus on how we can help people in Scotland have diets that support good health, thereby reducing the impact of diet-related ill health such as conditions related to overweight and obesity.

We have also run several successful healthy eating and food safety marketing campaigns and are committed to helping raise awareness and change behaviours and attitudes to address Scotland's obesity crisis and protect public health.

1.3 Consultation and giving feedback

We welcome your views and feedback on our work and BSL plan which is available on our website: www.foodstandards.gov.scot. The consultation will run until Friday 6 November 2020.

Feedback can be given by:

Telephone: 01224 285100

Email: accessibility@fss.scot

(Please put *BSL Plan* in the subject line)

Post: BSL Plan Consultation, Food Standards Scotland, Pilgrim House, Old Ford Road, Aberdeen, AB11 5RL

[contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

BSL users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

2. BSL plan

FSS shares and supports the goals set out in the Scottish Government's BSL National Plan 2017-23. In particular FSS's plan will align with and contribute to the following goals:

- Scottish Public Services
- Training, Work and Social Security
- Health
- Democracy

Scottish Public Services

Scottish Government's long-term Goal:

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

Develop, test and share a set of guidelines to help Scottish public services to improve access to information and services for BSL users. This will include advice on how to involve BSL users in the design and delivery of Scotland's public services.

Action 1: Monitor uptake of BSL services and improve FSS's understanding of BSL use. This will include continual tracking of requests for BSL/English translations and interpretation services, as well as downloads of BSL/English materials from the FSS website.

Action 2: Improve accessibility to information on FSS's website by:

- conducting an audit of the FSS website by an independent body
- creating a dedicated section on the FSS website for all BSL/English materials, making it visible on the homepage and promoting it externally.

Action 3: Seek feedback and ensure continuous engagement with the BSL community throughout FSS's BSL plan's implementation and lifetime.

Action 4: Ensure that consumer marketing campaigns are developed to take account of BSL users' needs and requirements during the development stage, where feasible.

Action 5: Provide BSL/English interpretation at events/Board meetings when requested, where possible.

Action 6: Provide a summary of the Annual Report and Accounts in BSL/English when requested, where possible.

Action 7: Raise awareness of FSS being BSL-friendly through internal and external communications channels such as social media.

Promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service (VRS) called 'contactSCOTLANDBSL', which allows BSL users to contact public and third sector services and for these services to contact them, and explore the potential for its greater use.

Action 8: Promote the use of Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service contactSCOTLAND-BSL for access to FSS's services and information.

Encourage public bodies to access BSL awareness training for staff who may work with BSL users, and signpost to appropriate training.

Action 9: Develop awareness amongst FSS staff through training and all staff meetings to encourage a BSL knowledgeable workforce.

Action 10: Explore the opportunity for ongoing training for members of FSS to become proficient in BSL to support any staff and visitors at FSS who are BSL users.

Training, Work and Social Security

Scottish Government's long-term Goal:

BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland's economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.

Action 11: Ensure BSL users have equal opportunity to join the FSS workforce by ensuring that recruiting managers always consider a role and its suitability for BSL users. Recruiting managers will ensure job opportunities are promoted among the BSL community via key BSL stakeholders/groups.

Action 12: Support staff in their respective roles (office and field based) by making reasonable adjustments and providing specialist equipment, when required.

Health (including social care, mental health and wellbeing)

Scottish Government's long-term Goal:

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

Action 13: Ensure significant information relating to healthy eating and nutrition, public health, food safety advice and advice to industry is accessible to BSL users, where possible i.e. website and social media.

Democracy

Scottish Government's long-term Goal:

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

Action 14: Ensure BSL users have equal opportunity to become FSS Board members and provide tailored support to them. The opportunities will be promoted among the BSL community via key BSL stakeholders/groups.

3. What happens next?

We will consider all of the feedback received through the consultation and use this to inform and develop our final BSL plan.

The final version of the plan will be published in written English and BSL versions by the end of December 2020 on our website.

We will continue to engage with BSL users throughout the plan's implementation and its lifetime to ensure that we're working towards delivering the goals and actions.

Please contact accessibility@fss.scot if you have any questions or would like to continue to be involved in the plan's development and future.