

British Deaf Association – British Sign Language Charter

Brighton & Hove City Council Self-Assessment (updated February 2018)

BSL Charter commitments	Results from BHCC Review
<p>Pledge 1 - Consult formally and informally with the local Deaf community on a regular basis</p> <p>Deaf people who use BSL are able to have input into consultations either separately or alongside other forums and user groups, thus enabling the Deaf community to be a resource that can be used to improve the design of services for Deaf people and the wider community. Organisations that have a contractual obligation to provide public services should ensure that this is included as part of their business activity.</p> <p><i>Benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services has better focus and it reduces the likelihood of poor access for Deaf people which often leads to wastage of resources • Deaf people are more involved in any decision-making processes, with knock-on benefits such as improvements in access to services for Deaf people • In turn, Deaf people are empowered by improved access to services, freeing them to contribute more to the local community 	
<p>Consulting with local Deaf communities on a regular basis to ensure that services are responsive to local needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2017 the Communities, Equality & Third Sector Team held an engagement event at Hamilton Lodge School for Deaf children specifically to ask for views and experiences using council services and particularly those for Deaf young people and their parents relating to the BSL Charter. There was a good turnout of approx. 50 people, a fifth of whom were young people. • Generally our consultation events tend to be across a range of protected characteristic groups in the community and voluntary sector rather than a specific group. There have been occasions when the views of Deaf people have been sought specifically, although these have not necessarily included BSL Users. • Hamilton Lodge School holds an annual survey for parents/carers – the results of which are examined and action taken by school governments as appropriate. • Some examples of general consultations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adult Social Care – August 2016 Review of needs assessment for adults with physical and sensory disabilities to see if there were any particular issues/themes arising for people with sensory needs or if they had the same top presenting issues of finance/benefits and housing. Possability People (Get Involved Group) carried out the survey. Some of the respondents were Deaf or had hearing impairments. – Library Services – detailed service review and needs analysis in 2015 carried out via interviews and exit surveys with library users; Lapsed Borrower survey; focus groups and interviews; Systems Thinking research involving open conversations; Equal Access Services involving interviews with people in residential homes and sheltered

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	<p>housing; feedback from service users such as Home Delivery recipients, participants in activities and events; feedback from project partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Housing – Star Survey – this is a perception based survey of tenants which provides social housing landlords with the means to compare satisfaction results with each other. No specific consultation with Deaf and BSL users – however, a sample of 3,000 tenants was taken from the council’s tenant database and this highlighted where there was a disability so it would have covered a broad range including, for example, physical disability, mental health, visual and hearing impairments. We received 829 responses of which 59% indicated that they had a disability (includes tenants and household members). – Education - SEN Team sends out bi-annual questionnaires to families of all pre-school children on their caseload to receive feedback. They also hold termly Children’s Hearing Services Working Group meetings which include Health and two parent reps.
<p>28 Supporting Deaf people and their representatives so that they can engage fully in the consultation process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2013 the Communities Equality & Third Sector Team commissioned disability engagement work as part of their first Communities & Third Sector Prospectus. Critical to this work was the role of DeafCOG and other Deaf representative groups to develop a more effective understanding of how the council and voluntary sector could begin to work with deaf people. • In the Communities & Third Sector Prospectus monitoring return (April – September 2016) DeafCOG reported sustained and improved engagement and communication with the Deaf and BSL Users community; stronger relationship building with Action Deafness, and improved and raised profile of Deaf and BSL users at various meetings held with local organisations. • Other disability engagement hubs taking place across the city under the Prospectus include working with LGBT HIP, who have been providing support to LGBT disabled people to enable ongoing engagement and consultation leading to co-production. This engagement activity has had some key results in terms of building links between groups supporting LGBT people and as a result of this five people have attended No Holds Barred and are now part of the organising committee, which offers a variety of activities, such as sign language, yoga and circus skills to people from marginalised groups including LGBTQ and disabled people. • During 2017 members of the Communities Equality & Third Sector Team met with various Deaf representatives to build relationships and seek advice on the way forward to engagement with the wider Deaf community including meetings with DeafCOG, Surdi, Action on Hearing Loss and Action for Deafness.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also during 2017 the Communities Equality & Third Sector Team held two engagement workshops with Deaf people, representative groups, voluntary & community sector and service providers and commissioners to explore a framework for engaging with D/deaf people and BSL Users, 31 people attended. Sessions at the workshop included the questions - What makes good services good/bad?; What improvements could be made?; How can we make sure people who are D/deaf have a good experience every time they use a service?; How can we ensure D/deaf people are involved so we can work together to make this a reality?. These workshops have led onto the establishment of the Deaf Services Liaison Forum and future engagement events/activities. • On 10th June 2017 the council signed the BSL Charter at Hamilton Lodge School for Deaf Students during their summer fete. The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Warren Morgan, pledged to take a BSL course during the year.
<p>Pledge 2 - Ensure access for Deaf people to information and services</p> <p>Deaf people face many barriers when trying to access information or services, either through lack of awareness or language barriers. Many Deaf people are often unable to access written information. Information linked to their health in England under NHS England is covered by the Accessible Information Standard.</p> <p>Objective: The organisation recognises and values all its customers, including those who use BSL. It aims for its Deaf customers to have the same quality of provision, information, standards and right to be informed as others in the wider community. Services should ensure that all contracts involving provision of information or services have clauses stipulating equality of access including access through BSL.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are accessible to a wider section of the local community, including those lacking good English • Customer care is improved with stress on staff and customers reduced • Deaf people can access services independently • Effective communication between the service and Deaf BSL users is maximised • Services become compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and SCC11605 	
Ensuring staff receive BSL Awareness/Deaf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Workforce Development Team commissioned two courses in October 2017 and January 2018 for staff to learn basic skills in BSL. There is also a Level 1 accredited course proposed – subject to funding.

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Equality training, including information about how to communicate with Deaf people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Workforce Development Team has provided this training in the past and consideration of any future training opportunities would be subject to availability of budget and demand. • Our corporate training encompasses all protected characteristics including disabled people but is not specific to any one impairment or condition.
Using qualified and registered BSL/English interpreters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council uses qualified and registered BSL interpreters. The council's Communication Team uses the council's Intranet to provide information to staff on interpreting, translation and hearing impairment services (Appendix 2) http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/communications/TranslationsInterpreting/Pages/default.aspx.
Adapting public information to be more BSL accessible, for example on DVD or websites, and using technology such as SMS messaging ¹ , textphones ² , faxes and ideophones ³ /webcams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's website does not currently conform to Level AA of the <u>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0</u>, and is currently undergoing modernisation to improve access to information and services through self-serve forms (2 year timescale). • Signposting on the council's website to information to support people with hearing loss to aid communication, mobility and access to information - including specialist information, support, advice, equipment and adaptations, needs assessments, contact details for Access Point and local support groups and useful websites. http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/social-care/health-and-wellbeing/support-people-hearing-loss • BHCC used BSL signed DVDs to convey key public messages e.g. the Fairness Commission⁴ and webcams for public council meetings. • BSL translation videos were commissioned for the Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equality Committee on 13th March 2017, and to promote the "Working Together" workshop in June 2017 and BSL Charter signing at Hamilton Lodge School on 10th June 2017.

¹ SMS = Short Message Service and is also commonly referred to as a "text message". With a SMS, you can send a message of up to 160 characters to another device. Longer messages will automatically be split up into several parts. Most mobile phones support this type of text messaging

² Textphones can be used to communicate if you are unable to hear on an amplified telephone. You can either type or speak your part of the call and receive text back that you can read on the textphone's screen.

³ Ideophones are marked words that depict sensory imagery - they are found abundantly in Asian and African languages, as well as in some Amerindian languages. As a class of words, they are relatively rare in Indo-European languages

⁴ Interpretation, editing and producing approx. £750 – provider was DeafCOG

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<p>Ensuring all public information is accessible to Deaf and BSL Users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSL Interpreters are booked for events where it is anticipated Deaf people will attend, otherwise they are booked on request. Before attending interviews, training, conferences etc. all people are asked if they have any access needs. • Corporate training available for all staff – Accessible Information Course – which includes how to communicate more clearly; ensuring written information is accessible and producing accessible materials with a focus on people with learning disabilities; disabilities/impairments and sensory loss • This is a sample of what is currently available in civic buildings and across the council directorates (there is an audit due in 2018): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brighton Town Hall Switchboard/Reception – hearing loop installed at reception; TypeTalk operated assisted telephone service; how to communicate with Deaf customers guidance for staff. – Bartholomew House Customer Services – portable hearing loops on request; SignLive trial starting March 2018. Currently reception staff communicate with Deaf customers via the PCs in the Customer Service Centre by typing questions and then moving the screen and keyboard between the officer and the customer – alternatively using pen and paper. – Hove Town Hall – hearing loop – Council chambers have hearing loops/webcam provided at committee meetings. BSL signers are booked on request for school admission appeals. – Leisure Centres – some fitted with hearing loops. There is a hearing loop proposed for the new Aquarium station at Volks Railway. – Brighton Centre – the venue has achieved Gold Status with the Attitude is Everything Charter, which covers the whole process a Deaf or Disabled customer will make from seeing the show announced/advertised, through buying a ticket, getting to and around the venue, watching the show, and then leaving; this has involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making the website accessible and including a comprehensive access statement which is also available in easy read format ▪ Changing the process of buying tickets for Deaf and Disabled customers, including introducing an address book system where customers can register their specific details for three years to speed up their buying process and no longer capping the amount of free Personal Assistant tickets offered on a performance ▪ Where there are long running shows of five performances of the same event in one week, working with the promoter to include assisted performances including BSL interpreted, Captioned and Audio Described.

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32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing staff with a video showing basic sign language to assist customers – this has been produced with Amaze (community & voluntary sector group). ▪ Induction loops at all “spoken word” areas i.e. box office, wristband exchange, information desk, security desk, merchandise stand, bars. ▪ Contracts have been rewritten with promoters to include a statement that ‘should a customer get in touch and request an accessible facility put in place within a reasonable timeframe’ the Centre would do it with their support (e.g. needing a BSL interpreter) ▪ Providing Disability Awareness training to all staff at the venue, including casual stewards, show control, bar staff etc. (150+ people) ▪ In addition all public telephone staff (Box Office and Information Desk) are trained in and accept calls from customers using Type Talk, and hearing loops are made available in the main auditorium for all shows – Registrars - BSL trained Registration Officer who is able to register births, deaths and officiate at marriages using basic skills. Hearing loops installed in Regency and Fitzherbert ceremony rooms. – Adult Social Care: a number of services are commissioned all of which are listed on My Life Brighton & Hove - an easy to use online directory listing local and national organisations and services to support everyday living including providing support and information for Deaf and BSL Users. All of the services have BSL trained staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action on Hearing Loss – provide community support to people in their own homes. They also provide social groups but these are not funded by the council. ▪ Sussex Deaf Association – provide community support to people in their own homes. They also provide advice and a range of equipment but this is not funded by the council. ▪ About Me Care & Support – provide community and specialist assessment to Deaf people and Deaf/Blind people (recently withdrawn in the Brighton & Hove area due to not being able to recruit into support worker post). ▪ Under section 250 of the Health & Social Care Act 2012 the Accessible Information Standard aims to be included in all 0commissioned services contracting processes. – Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing has an account with Action on Hearing Loss to provide specific services to meet individual needs ▪ Portable hearing loops are available in local housing offices and at the Housing Centre ▪ Provision of a portable hearing loop for resident meetings

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33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaising with Dimensions, specialist supported housing for profoundly deaf adults with additional needs. – Library Services – a number of services are provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly BSL signed Storytime for under 5s and their parents/carers at Jubilee and Hove Libraries ▪ Tactile Bag Book sets available to loan for disabled children or adults ▪ Space in libraries available for community groups to meet – Brighton Deaf Café meets at Jubilee Library on alternate Tuesdays ▪ Titles to support Deaf people and their families and titles for learning BSL and Makaton purchased and available for loan ▪ Hearing loops in all libraries ▪ Library staff who deliver Baby Boogie and Storytime have had Makaton training and use some Makaton signs during these sessions (some Deaf children/adults use Makaton instead of BSL if they have additional needs e.g. learning difficulties) – Life Services (Funerals): Co-ordinated by private funeral directors - the council provide equipment and space including hearing loops installed in the chapels. – Parking Services: 1 member of staff has training in BSL, another is due to be trained – Revenues & Benefits: Minicom – Welfare Rights – 8 different Welfare Rights training courses and bespoke training are offered by the team – there is no cost to community and voluntary groups and BSL interpreters are provided on request. – Royal Pavilion & Museum Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access Advisory Group (includes Deaf and BSL Users) meets every 3 months (since 2011) originally to assist in the development of the World Stories Gallery, but continuing in the role for other consultation and feedback projects including the development of the audio and BSL guides and ‘A Night at the Deaf Museum’ event. ▪ Website access information ‘Planning your visit’ has full information on making visits fully accessible. Full access statements can also be downloaded from the website. ▪ Basic BSL is currently being learnt by 2 museum curators – Active for Life/Healthy Lifestyles: On request, Action Deafness interpreters are used for clients with hearing loss in order to access service. Active for Life report that Deaf people do take part in services including Healthwalks.

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Ensuring buildings are accessible with clear signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new or altered council buildings requiring building approval, comply with 'Access to and use of Approved Doc M to the building regulations and good practice guidance'. The council's visual identity guidelines are designed as a practical tool containing the rules council services should follow when producing communication materials and signage and approved by RNIB. The guidelines are in place to make it easier for residents to recognise and understand what we do and how to access our services.
Ensuring staff receive BSL Awareness/Deaf Equality training, including information about how to communicate with Deaf people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Workforce Development Team commissioned two courses in October 2017 and January 2018 for staff to learn basic skills in BSL - so far this training has been available for 30 members of staff. There is also a Level 1 accredited course proposed – subject to funding. No specific Deaf Awareness training is currently carried out corporately or through Adult Social Care/Education commissioned services or through eLearning. However, our corporate Workforce Development Team have provided this training in the past and consideration of any future training opportunities would be subject to availability of budget and demand. Our corporate training encompasses all protected characteristics including Disabled people but is not specific to any one impairment or condition.
Using qualified and registered BSL/English interpreters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council uses qualified and registered BSL interpreters. The council's Communication Team uses the council's Intranet to provide information to staff on interpreting, translation and hearing impairment services (Appendix 2) http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/communications/TranslationsInterpreting/Pages/default.aspx.
<p>Pledge 3 - Support Deaf children and families</p> <p>Deaf children and their families require good communication from when the diagnosis of deafness is made and throughout their formative years. The BDA believes that the majority of Deaf children will realise their potential through a bilingual/bicultural approach to learning using both BSL and English. 40% of Deaf children and young people have additional needs requiring intensive communication support. Organisations that provide information or services need to be mindful that they should not exclude children who are difficult to reach. In particular, services that have a responsibility for safeguarding issues must meet legal requirements.</p> <p>Objective: Services that work with children and young people recognise the importance of Deaf children and young people being able to access information</p>	

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<p>and support on a par with their hearing peers. Some services will be able to provide a bilingual/bicultural approach enabling full access for all children and young people meeting the aims of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf children and young people have choices in how they can communicate and contribute to their local communities The family life of deaf children is enhanced by the improved communication between the child and their parents/carers and siblings More Deaf children and young people will achieve academically on a par with their hearing peers leading to more Deaf young people progressing to further and higher education and accessing job opportunities Services such as police, health and social services will be able to deal with safeguarding issues by offering access for deaf children who need support or want to report issues 	
<p>Providing opportunities for parents/guardian to learn BSL with their children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's SEN specialist teachers and Family Support Worker provide 6-8 week training in BSL to parents, siblings and grandparents as part of the National Deaf Children's Society Sign Language curriculum.
<p>Ensuring teachers, teaching assistants, communication support workers and other staff working closely with Deaf children have, or are working towards, advanced BSL signing skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's Educational Psychology and Learning Support Services provides specialist advice and support where needed, especially in the areas of autism, hearing impairment and visual impairment. Bevendean School has a specialised hearing support facility for moderate to profoundly deaf children who may also have significant language delay or other educational needs. Many profoundly deaf children from an early age are able to have cochlear implants which allow them to enter mainstream schools with age appropriate levels of speech and language, but some families may choose to use BSL in the pre-school years. Pre-school children's families are offered BSL support and children will have access to Makaton at nursery.
<p>Providing opportunities for Deaf children to meet with Deaf peers and role models</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEN Team Family Support Worker is a Deaf role model for the mainstream children. Bevendean School and Balfour Primary both have a Deaf teaching assistant. The team also promote National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) activities which give children opportunities to meet other deaf children and run the 'springboard' and 'time out' events for deaf children across the city.

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Ensuring Deaf young people are offered the opportunity to improve and accredit their BSL Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEN Team will support BSL supported and statemented students who wish to accredit their BSL learning but this is offered on a one to one basis as required. For example, our Family Support Worker is supporting a student from Cardinal Newman School to progress in BSL and also providing one to one support for child/family i.e. teaching a child's peers BSL at Hertford School
Raising awareness of BSL and Deaf culture within children's services and education	<p>Our specialist SEN teachers and Family Support Worker also provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed library stories to children/parents in Jubilee and Hove libraries monthly Springboard for pre-schoolers to encourage them in BSL at Blatchington Court Trust Time Out for key stage 2, 3 and 4 once every half term at various venues, e.g. pizza making at Pizza Express Coffee morning every half term at Dottie's café (run by Deaf people) with families who have done the NDCS Family Sign Language course to continue support BSL classes weekly for staff at Bevendean Hearing Support Facility BSL taught to families in their homes
Ensuring parents who are Deaf are fully involved in our strategies for improving parenting skills down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's Integrated Team for Families and Parenting Services have parenting DVDs for deaf parents produced by a charity for deaf people. They have used Triple P with a family where they had a signing interpreter who was filmed so that the family could then refer to the parenting information on their own. Triple P also has a DVD that is subtitled in their training programme. BSL signers would be provided if requested to allow access to other courses. The SEN team hold termly Children's Hearing Services Working Group meetings which include Health and two parent reps.
<p>Pledge 4 Ensure staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language</p> <p>All staff working in public services or local authorities that interact with the public should be able to communicate with all sections of the local community including Deaf people.</p> <p>Objective: Staff providing frontline services can feel confident in being able to communicate with Deaf people and respond appropriately. Members of staff at all customer service points will have basic BSL skills and know how to call upon other staff with higher level skills or BSL/English interpreters using remote access such as Skype, FaceTime or VRS where available. Specialist workers with Deaf people should aim for their own skills to be extensive enough to enable them to deliver a high level service to a wide range of Deaf people without needing BSL/English interpreters in non-</p>	

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<p>complex situations.</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is good customer care • There is a reduced need for BSL/English interpreters in specialist services for Deaf people • Quality staff development for Deaf and hearing staff members contributes to good customer care 	
<p>Identifying relevant posts where BSL skills are needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are only a small number of posts within the council where it is an essential requirement for the postholder to have BSL skills e.g. SEN posts detailed above. In most cases, services rely on a few individual members of staff who have received BSL training since joining the council to enable Deaf people to access services.
<p>Ensuring staff that have daily or involved contact with Deaf people have, or are working towards, advanced BSL signing skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Workforce Development Team has commissioned two courses in October 2017 and January 2018 for staff to learn basic skills in BSL - so far this training has been available for 30 members of staff. There is also a Level 1 accredited course proposed – subject to funding. • The following departments report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Housing – Trained BSL signers have now left the department and this resource is now accessed via Action on Hearing Loss. – Adult Social Care – 1 social worker in the Assessment Team uses BSL and carries out assessments with Deaf and BSL Users – Libraries - There are currently four members of library staff who had BSL training in 2014. However, due to lack of opportunity to use these skills they have lapsed, other than using for a simple greeting. Another member of staff has studied BSL up to Level 2 and can cope with basic conversation, but would like more practice. – Revenues & Benefits – 1 x Benefits Officer (Deaf and BSL User) can assist users who call in to the office and require a signer. – Royal Pavilion & Museums – 2 currently being trained – proposal to train 12 front of house staff in Basic BSL in 2017 – Active for Life/Healthy Lifestyles Service –1 BSL speaker – Brighton Centre – 1 member of staff is a Basic BSL speaker and approx. 7 members of staff have had very basic supportive training (and access to a training video described on page 4)
<p>Providing opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are currently no opportunities in house to retain and develop BSL skills other than contact with other BSL User

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for staff to retain and develop their BSL skills	customers and staff
Recruiting Deaf staff and ensuring their professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is not legally able to advertise specifically for Deaf people to carry out job roles unless a Genuine Occupational Requirement applies. However, the council is committed to recruiting disabled staff, including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, at all levels of the organisation. To facilitate this, the council is committed to making any reasonable adjustments a Deaf person may need during the recruitment and selection process and, if appointed, to enable them to perform their job effectively. In addition, disabled applicants are guaranteed an interview where they meet the minimum essential criteria for the role for which they are applying. The council was accredited with the ‘two ticks’ disability symbol which has now been replaced with the Disability Confident Scheme. The council is currently at Level 2 and will be required to submit a self-assessment under Disability Confident in 2018. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564822/disability-confident-employer-pack-level-2.pdf.

Pledge 5 - Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language

There is a need for more BSL courses in order that more people have the opportunity to learn BSL.

Objective:

The organisation recognises that it is essential to support the local infrastructure of teaching and assessment of BSL. It tackles this in conjunction with local economic development agencies and funding bodies. This is to ensure that anyone who wants to learn BSL, whether they are parents/guardians of deaf children, young people, local authority or public service employees, can do so. Everyone learning BSL should receive excellent quality teaching in BSL.

Benefits:

- There are more BSL courses on offer leading to a range of opportunities for people wishing to learn BSL.
- More people using BSL leads to greater opportunities for Deaf people to be integrated within the wider community and have improved

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<p>access to public services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family members/guardians/carers of Deaf children and young people have an opportunity to learn BSL which will improve bonding and communication with their own deaf children and young people 	
<p>Ensuring that we employ BSL teachers who are native/fluent in BSL and actively engaged with the Deaf community with a comprehensive knowledge of Deaf culture. They should possess relevant qualifications, have undertaken recognised teacher training and are committed to their own Continuing Professional Development (CPD).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sensory Educational Needs (SEN) Team within Brighton & Hove’s Inclusion Support Services (BHISS) supports approx. 250 deaf children from 0 – 19 with varying degrees of impairment from mild to profound, most of whom are in mainstream provision. The SEN specialist teachers and Family Support Worker are either native/fluent in BSL or have BSL Level 1. They work with caseload children, parents and families of Deaf children in the city’s mainstream schools and pre-school settings. All families are offered BSL with a child at pre-school age. Hamilton Lodge, an independent special school in Brighton, specialises in educating and caring for pupils who are Deaf or hearing impaired and provides a continuum of provision. The school have trained teachers of the Deaf, Speech and Language Therapists and BSL tutors with qualifications ranging up to BSL NVQ Level 6 who deliver BSL courses for Level 1, 2 and 3, as well as holding the Assessor’s qualification to assess candidates up to BSL Level 3 standard. The school aims for students to achieve up to Level 3 in BSL and this gives them a qualification equivalent to GCSE, using “Signature”, a national body accredited by the Office of Qualifications and Examination Regulations (Ofqual).

