OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator

British Sign Language Plan

OSCR – 2026 to 2031

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and context

Welcome to the Scottish Charity Regulator's (OSCR) second British Sign Language (BSL) Plan.

This plan sets out the actions we will take to promote and support the use of BSL in connection with OSCR's functions. It follows the second BSL National Plan, which the Scottish Government published in November 2023. The National Plan's ambition is for Scotland to be the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. It sets out ten priority areas, including accessibility for BSL users.

British Sign Language, or BSL, is a language in its own right. For many Deaf people in Scotland, BSL is their first or preferred language. Some Deafblind people also use BSL or other forms of signed communication. We want BSL users to be able to access information about OSCR, understand what we do, and contact us when they need to.

This plan reflects on the period covered by our first BSL plan before setting out the actions we will take over the next planning period.

Our plan was developed with contributions from representatives from the BSL community. We will continue to engage with BSL community throughout the lifetime of this plan and will report back on our progress against identified actions.

1.2 Our work and what we do

OSCR regulates and is the registrar for Scotland's 25,000 charities. We are a non-ministerial office directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament. We work to ensure that the Scottish public has confidence that the country's charities are well run.

OSCR is a regulator. Its role is therefore different from public bodies that provide public services such as education, healthcare or housing. For that reason, this plan focuses on where OSCR can make a practical contribution: improving BSL accessibility to OSCR information and services, supporting appropriate communication with BSL users, and increasing staff awareness of BSL and accessible communication.

2. Our BSL Plan

2.1 Building on our previous plan

OSCR's first BSL plan set out our commitment to improving access to our information and services for BSL users. Since then, we have taken several steps to support that aim.

We have published BSL versions of selected OSCR guidance and information, including material about OSCR, charity trustee duties and governance. We have also raised awareness of contactSCOTLAND-BSL both on our website and internally for staff.

We provided BSL awareness training for staff. This helped them better understand BSL, communication support and the importance of accessible information and contact routes.

We recognise that not all the commitments set out in our previous BSL Plan have been fully achieved and that further work is required during this period of the plan. In developing this plan, we have considered which commitments remain relevant and how we can best meet the needs of the BSL community with respect to our work. We also recognise that there have been changes in our staff since the introduction of our first BSL plan. As a result, we consider it appropriate to repeat some training and awareness-raising activities and to ensure that consideration of BSL is routinely incorporated into the induction of new staff.

This plan builds on the steps we have already taken and focuses on practical actions that are relevant to OSCR's role. It sets out how we will continue to improve access to our information, contact routes and staff awareness over the next planning period.

2.2 BSL Accessibility

What we want to achieve

We want BSL users to be able to access clear information about OSCR, understand how to use our services, and communicate with us when they need to.

This supports the National BSL Plan aim of removing accessibility as a barrier for BSL users and making sure information is available in the right format at the right time.

We have taken account of feedback from BSL users and representative organisations when developing this plan. We will continue to use feedback to help

us understand what is working well and where further improvements may be needed.

To achieve this, we will:

- Regularly review the OSCR website to make sure it is as accessible as possible, and that BSL users can easily find information about how to contact OSCR.
- Continue to promote the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service called contactSCOTLAND-BSL on our website so BSL users know they can use the service to contact OSCR.
- Produce content in BSL explaining how someone can raise a concern about a charity with OSCR and how to make a complaint about OSCR.
- Consider if any other guidance or content would be beneficial to translate into BSL, engaging with BSL users to better understand this.
- Review the existing BSL content on our YouTube channel to ensure that it remains up to date and relevant for our stakeholders.
- Use feedback from BSL users and representative organisations to understand whether OSCR information and services are accessible and what would make the biggest difference to improving accessibility.
- Raise staff awareness of contactSCOTLAND-BSL so staff can provide clear information about this option when needed.
- Arrange introductory BSL and Deaf awareness training for all staff to improve understanding of BSL, Deaf culture, communication needs and practical steps staff can take when engaging with BSL users.
- Ensure that we have access to registered BSL/English interpreters, and that staff understand when they may be needed for meetings or discussions.
- Consider the accessibility requirements of BSL users as we update our Equalities Policy and when we develop Equality Impact Assessments.

2.3 Monitoring and reporting

We will monitor and report on progress through the following process:

- Review progress against the actions in this plan.
- Identify the reasons for any actions that have not been completed.

- Review feedback received from BSL users, representative organisations and other stakeholders.
- Consider whether any changes are needed to the plan or to how we deliver the actions.

We will also use information from this process to support any reporting required by the Scottish Government.

3. Contact us about this plan

We welcome comments on this plan at any time.

- Email: info@oscr.org.uk – please put BSL plan in the subject line
- British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL