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British Sign Language

Action Plan

2018-2024

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# 1. introduction

This is the British Sign Language (BSL) plan for Edinburgh College, as required by the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 which sets out draft actions that Edinburgh College will take over the period 2018 - 2024 to fully support BSL users during their time studying on campus or interacting with Edinburgh College in any form.

The draft plan follows the BSL National Plan, which was published on 24 October 2017, and was developed through extensive engagement with Deaf and Deaf Blind BSL users and supporting agencies.

It is the Scottish Government’s ambition to make Scotland the most inclusive place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. To make this goal a reality, the National Plan has 10 long term goals for which over 50 national bodies and Scottish ministers are responsible.

Edinburgh College is proud and determined to take on this collective responsibility while striving towards making Edinburgh College one of the most inclusive colleges in Scotland for Deaf people to study and work by promoting equality and diversity.

Since 2013, Edinburgh College has enrolled over 55 students each academic year who are Deaf or are hard of hearing. We also have staff members who have declared Deafness or hearing loss. Where necessary, students have received personalised assistance to ensure their learning has been supported. In line with our Vision and Strategic Plan, it is our aim to develop a culture of Deaf Awareness within the organisation, break down barriers to learning for this group of students to ensure that the goals of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 are met and exceeded, where possible, to improve the learning experience for these students. This action plan is overseen by our Widening Access Group (WAX), which has cross-college and regional representation.

They have considered the actions in line with our outcome agreement priority measures and ensured that they are focused on our regional priorities. This plan also links in with our Equality outcome and mainstreaming work.

Edinburgh College is committed to protecting and supporting BSL, including its tactile form, to improve the quality of life by empowering Deaf and Deafblind students, staff and visitors.

BSL users have been actively engaged in developing and commenting on this draft and we are committed to continued stakeholder engagement around a) shaping provision, b) implementing actions, c) providing constructive feedback on progress and, d) developing further actions and future evaluation. We will contribute to the National Progress Report in 2020.

# 2. NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER

The lead officer for Edinburgh College’s BSL Action plan is Craig Gammack and can be contacted if there are in questions or comments in relation to the college’s BSL Action Plan.

Craig Gammack (Granton Campus)

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# 3. WHERE TO FIND THE BSL VERSION OF THIS PLAN

The English and BSL version of this Action Plan is available to view on the Edinburgh College website - <http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/Welcome/Governance/College-Policies/Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion>

# 4. SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

The consultation process began with key stakeholder involvement. Current Deaf students, interpreters and Communication Support Workers (CSWs) were asked to review the current provision and contribute their ideas and suggestions to shape the start of Edinburgh College’s Action Plan. Staff members were invited through the College Bulletin to provide their input as well as requesting feedback from specific centres who already have shown great initiative in supporting their Deaf and hard of hearing students. External agencies and associations were invited in to discuss specific challenges not previously considered and develop methods of supporting the Deaf community more holistically.

While there are pockets of excellent practice where BSL and Deaf students are supported in the college, it is a crucial first step for Edinburgh College to improve the culture and accessibility for all students, staff and visitors to the college. This is reflected in the plan whereby Deaf Awareness training will be rolled out to frontline staff from August 2018 with a view to introducing online Deaf Awareness training for all staff from August 2019. This will help to achieve our shorter term goal reflecting Edinburgh College’s ambition to create an accessible and supportive college for the Deaf community, students and staff.

Our longer term goal of introducing BSL courses to our curriculum is reflective of Edinburgh College’s ambition to support the wider Deaf community across Edinburgh and the Lothians. As one of the main education providers in the region, Edinburgh College’s provision of BSL courses will meet demand for staff from public bodies that are required to up skill in response to their own BSL Action Plans.

# 4. actions

The table below details the actions that Edinburgh College will take to improve life in the college for the Deaf community between 2018 and 2023.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aim** | **Action** | **Timescale** |
| To increase awareness of BSL Scotland Act 2015 amongst college staff and of Edinburgh College’s Action Plan. | * Newsletter to be sent out in ‘all staff bulletin’
* Examples of Best Practice to be delivered through internal communications
 | By August 2018 / Ongoing / AchievedOngoing |
| To make the college more accessible to pre-enrolled Deaf students | * To pilot the introduction of a College Prep course for Deaf / hard of hearing students
* To offer one-to-one support for course, bursary or SAAS applications
 | By June 2018 |
| To identify students who use BSL/SSE at application stage | * Drop down menu to be available to indicate BSL/SSE/lip reading when applicants select Deaf or Hard of hearing in Edinburgh College Application
 | By August 2019 |
| To make the website accessible to Deaf people | * BSL translations of key pages of website eg Welcome page, Student Support
* BSL dedicated section of college website containing important BSL translations of main pages eg Guidance, Learner Support etc
* Contact Scotland-BSL logo to be added to the Contact Us section and main page of website
* Text-based course information to be written in Plain English and presented in an optimal way for readers whose first language is not English.
 | By August 2019 |
| To improve the transition of Deaf students into college | * One-to-one meeting with Learning Support Adviser to discuss and agree on support needs before academic session begins considering not only communication support, but also literacy and study skills support, and appropriate assistive technology
* Opportunity to meet CSW/interpreter for familiarisation session before academic session begins
 | OngoingFrom August 2018 |
| To make front line staff more easily contactable /approachable | * ContactScotland-BSL to be promoted to all Student Experience staff
* Frontline staff and lecturers with Deaf students to incorporate the ContactBSL-Scotland logo in to email signatures.
* ContactBSL-Scotland to be promoted and encouraged to be used by Deaf students
 | By December 2018 |
| To make learning and teaching methods more accessible for Deaf students | * Videos used in learning and teaching to have full subtitles or a transcript provided
* Notes / teaching materials to be given in advance for interpreters/CSWs to prepare
* Glossaries of subject-specific vocabulary to be made available in advance to the student and communication support professionals.
* Prioritised reading lists, where appropriate, made available to students who may require more time to process written English.
* Lecturers to be made aware of key information for creating an inclusive classroom e.g. awareness of: managing noise and turn-taking; where best to stand; optimal classroom layout; pacing of speech; working with communication professionals; and using wearable microphones.
* Lecturers offer students the option to complete coursework in modes other than written essays e.g. signed presentations; posters; infographics; video; animation (in accordance with exam bodies and required core competences).
 | From August 2018 |
| Improve one-to-one support service for Deaf students / parents / visitors | * Bring CSW/interpreting support in-house
* Communication support professionals are included in the support team and supported to continue their professional development
* Good working practices are understood and observed e.g. regular breaks, professional standards
* A complaints procedure that enables a student to raise concerns without needing to use the communication support professional concerned to do so
 | By August 2019 |
| To increase Deaf Awareness amongst staff and students | * Deaf Awareness and Deaf Blind training to be made available to all frontline staff
* Deaf Awareness training to be made available to lecturers with Deaf students
* Deaf Awareness training to be delivered in LDT classes on all courses with a Deaf student
* Online Deaf awareness course to be made available as part of compulsory continued professional development
 | From August 2018By August 2019 |
| To build relationships with external agencies such as Deaf Action and Action on Hearing Loss to ensure the needs of the Deaf community are continually met | * To host cross agency meeting on campus each academic year
 | By May 2019 |
| To provide specialist careers advice for Deaf students on campus | * Appointments to be made available for all Deaf students with
* Deaf Action (over 25 years)
* Action on Hearing Loss (under 25)
 | From August 2018 |
| To make college counselling service fully accessible to Deaf students | * Suitably qualified interpreters to be provided who do not normally work with the student
* Longer and/or more sessions to be offered to BSL users to account for the longer communication times
 | From August 2018 |
| To improve transition of Deaf pupils coming to college from school | * Create link with local councils to identify Deaf students at an early stage
* Provide interpreting service at college open evenings
* All Deaf students to be given one-to-one needs assessment before commencing their course during which a qualified interpreter will their level of BSL/SSE in order to match them to appropriate support
 | From August 2018 |
| To ensure Edinburgh College’s BSL National Plan is meeting the demands and requirements of the Deaf community | * Annual consultations to be held with current Deaf students and other key stakeholders
 | From March 2019 |
| To ensure appropriate assistive technology is in place for Deaf students | * Hearing loops to be in place and in-use at all campus receptions and Student Services areas and staff are aware of how they operate
* Provision of radio aids to reduce the need for one-to-one support for users of hearing aids / cochlear implants
* Improve signage to indicate use of hearing loops
* Information available on Moodle about personal listening systems and routes through which these can be obtained e.g. DSA; NDCS extended loan scheme (for <25s).
* Students who require support with using written English given information at needs assessment stage about assistive technology to support note taking, essay planning, spelling and word-choice e.g. Inspiration mind mapping software; Texthelp Read and Write Gold; Global Autocorrect. On-going training and support offered in college.
* Potential of providing electronic note taking is investigated and new technologies evaluated in partnership with students
 | By August 2019By August 2019 |
| To increase accessibility of BSL across Edinburgh and the Lothians  | * To embed BSL classes within the curriculum at Edinburgh College
 | From August 2019  |
| To investigate use launch of fire alarm alert system for Deaf students / staff /  | * Appropriate fire alarm warning system to be installed (eg pager system / mobile alert system)
 | By August 2020 |