

# **British Sign Language (Wales) Bill**

## **Statement of Policy Intent for Subordinate Legislation to be made under this Bill**

July 2025

# **BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (WALES) BILL**

## **STATEMENT OF POLICY INTENT FOR SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION TO BE MADE UNDER THIS BILL**

### **Introduction**

This document provides an indication of the current policy intention for the subordinate legislation that the Welsh Ministers are empowered or required to make under the provisions of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill ('the Bill'), as introduced on 14 July 2025.

It has been prepared in order to assist Senedd Committees and Senedd Members during the scrutiny of the Bill and should be read in conjunction with the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum and Explanatory Notes which accompany it.

### **Overview of the Bill**

The main purpose of the Bill is to promote and facilitate the use of British Sign Language (BSL) in Wales.

The Bill does so by placing a statutory duty on Welsh Ministers to promote and facilitate the use of British Sign Language (BSL) and to prepare and publish a strategy which sets out how it will fulfil this duty and to report on its progress. The Bill also places a duty on listed public bodies to prepare and publish a BSL plan.

In summary, the Bill makes provision for:

- Welsh Ministers to promote and facilitate the use of BSL and, in order to fulfil that requirement, produce a national BSL strategy that describes both how they themselves intend to promote and facilitate the use of BSL, and how they intend to encourage certain public bodies to do so;
- Welsh Ministers to issue those public bodies with guidance about promoting and facilitating the use of BSL;
- those public bodies listed in the Bill to produce plans describing how they intend to promote and facilitate the use of BSL;
- Welsh Ministers and the listed public bodies to report on progress made in promoting BSL under the provisions of the Bill;

- Welsh Ministers to appoint someone as the BSL adviser, and appoint a panel of people to assist the adviser.

### **Subordinate legislation making powers in the Bill**

The Bill contains regulation making powers in the following sections:

- Section 4(1)(c)
- Section 8(2)

The information contained in this Statement on the subordinate legislation making powers in the Bill corresponds to the information provided in Chapter 6 of the Explanatory Memorandum (Power to make subordinate legislation).

Section 9 of the Bill (Regulations) sets out that regulations under section 4(1)(c) are subject to the Senedd’s annulment (negative) procedure; and Regulations under section 8(2) are subject to the Senedd approval (affirmative) procedure.

Section 10 of the Bill (Coming into force) specifies that the Act in its entirety will come into force on the day after the day the Act receives Royal Assent.

### **Section 4(1)(c): Regulations to prescribe such ‘other information’ required in BSL plans**

This provision places a duty on a listed public body to prepare and publish a BSL plan that—

- (a) describes how it intends to promote and facilitate the use of BSL in the exercise of its functions; and
- (b) describes how it intends to follow guidance issued under section 3, or explains why it does not intend to do so.

It would be reasonable to expect that the detail and content of BSL plans may need to change over time to reflect changing circumstances. Section 4(1)(c) of the Bill therefore enables Welsh Ministers, by regulations, to prescribe such other information that a listed public body must include in its BSL plan. In doing so, the discretion of the Welsh Government over the content of the regulations is limited as any ‘other information’ prescribed by the regulations will have to relate to BSL.

Regulations under Section 4(1)(c) cannot change the requirements set out in the Bill.

## **Section 8(2): Regulations to amend the list of listed public bodies**

This provision enables the Welsh Ministers to make regulations to alter which bodies are included as “listed public bodies” under Section 8(1) of the Bill. The Regulation making power enables Welsh Ministers to do this by:

- (a) adding a devolved Welsh authority,
- (b) removing a listed public body, or
- (c) amending the description of a listed public body.

It is reasonable to expect that those listed public bodies may need to change over time to react to changing circumstances. As such it is appropriate that this should be done through regulations. Before making regulations under this section, the Welsh Ministers must consult with the BSL Adviser and such other persons as the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate.

Regulations made under this section are to be made using the affirmative Senedd procedure, so will be brought to the Senedd’s attention and subject to debate and a vote.

For the purposes of section 8(2)(a), “devolved Welsh authority” has the meaning given in section 157A of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (c. 32).