

## Welsh Government position on costs for the BSL (Wales) Bill

September 2025

### **Background**

- The BSL (Wales) Bill is a Private Member's Bill, led by Mark Isherwood MS, which places duties on Welsh Ministers and listed public bodies to promote and facilitate the use of BSL.
- The Bill is a framework Bill about linguistic rights. The Bill does not itself set out the cross-cutting steps or actions that will be required to promote and facilitate the use of BSL by Welsh Government or listed public bodies.
- Mark Isherwood MS formally introduced his BSL (Wales) Bill to the Senedd along with an accompanying Explanatory Memorandum. The Memorandum includes the Regulatory Impact assessment (RIA) on 14 July 2025. Mark Isherwood MS also made a statement in plenary on 16 July 2025 to provide further information on the Bill. The Explanatory Memorandum was published on the Senedd website when the Bill was introduced on 14<sup>th</sup> July : [Development of the British Sign Language \(BSL\) \(Wales\) Bill](#).
- Welsh Government is not responsible for Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for the BSL (Wales) Bill. Responsibility for the RIA lies with the Member of the Senedd, Mark Isherwood MS, and his Senedd team, who prepared the assessment. This includes the costs associated with delivering the duties of the Bill.
- The Member stated in his legislative Oral Statement on the Introduction of the BSL (Wales) Bill on 16 July that the BSL (Wales) Bill is a "framework Bill". This is reflected in the RIA costings, which includes an assessment of administrative costs only. It does not include implementation costs for the delivery of the National BSL Strategy, BSL guidance and BSL plans, which will be developed if the Bill receives Royal Assent.

### **Costs for 2026-27**

- If Royal Assent is granted (Spring 2026), the future financial implications, outlined in the RIA, must be met by future Welsh Governments. There is limited precedent for financing Private Member Bills.
- The Member's RIA sets out an assessment of costs for recruiting and paying both a BSL advisor and assisting panel and administrative costs for the preparation of

the first National BSL Strategy and BSL guidance. The RIA sets out that Welsh Government costs for the first year of the implementation of the Bill in 2026-27 are:

<b>Welsh Government Costs</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
BSL Adviser	£127,400
Assisting Panel	£45,900
Preparation of First National BSL Strategy and Guidance	£41,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£214,300</b>

- In response to Mark Isherwood’s legislative Oral Statement on the Introduction of the BSL (Wales) Bill on 16 July, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip stated that “Welsh Government will provide the costs outlined for the first year in full for 2026-27 of £214,300”. This was based on the figures in the Member’s RIA.
- The costs for the first year of the Bill set out the administrative costs to Welsh Government associated with recruiting and funding the BSL Adviser and assisting panel as well as the costs associated with developing the National BSL Strategy and BSL Guidance. The costs include officials’ time, alongside translation, interpretation and consultation costs.
- Welsh Government considers that the administrative costs set out in the RIA for the first year (2026-27) provide a reasonable estimate of the resource and cost required to begin administrative aspects of the duties outlined in the Bill, in line with existing RIA costs such as the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill.
- The funding for 2026-27 will be allocated to the Social Justice MEG as part of the 2026-27 Draft Budget. The 2026-27 Draft Budget will be a single year budget. It will not contain planning assumptions in place in respect of future years baselines. Funding the costs for future years, beyond 2026-27, will be a decision for the new Government following the election in May 2026.

### **Future costs for 2027-28- 2035-36**

#### **Costs to Wesh Government**

- The estimated annual costs to Welsh Government for the second and subsequent years of the Bill set out in the Member’s RIA include costs for the BSL adviser, assisting Panel and the administrative costs for preparation of the

first national BSL Strategy and BSL guidance, as well as progress reporting against the Strategy every 3 years and updating the strategy every 6 years. The estimated annual costs to Welsh Government for future years to 2035-36 range from £131,700 – £206,900. This reflects the duties placed on Welsh Ministers at different points in time over a 10-year period.

- Welsh Government considers generally reasonable assumptions have been made to develop estimates for annual administrative costs to Welsh Government.

### **Costs to listed public bodies**

- The estimated annual administrative costs to listed public bodies for future years to 2035-36 range from £305,900–£ 633,900. This reflects the duties placed on listed public bodies at different points in time over a 10-year period. Costs that may be incurred through the administration of the development, reporting and reviewing of BSL plans produced by listed public bodies will be dependent upon many variables, for example the BSL guidance produced by the incoming Government and collaboration of listed public bodies.
- Welsh Government considers the administrative costs to listed public bodies for the second and subsequent years of the Bill provide a reasonable estimate of the resource and cost required, in line with existing RIA costs such as the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill.

### **Unquantified costs**

- Additional costs that may be incurred through the implementation of the national BSL strategy and BSL guidance will need to be determined by future incoming governments. Value for money and affordability will be important considerations during the development of the national BSL strategy and BSL guidance. It will be for Welsh Ministers to determine the content and associated costs of the National BSL Strategy and BSL guidance with input from the BSL Adviser and assisting panel. It will be for each of the listed public bodies to determine the content of its own BSL plan, guided by the BSL guidance.
- Welsh Government agrees that it is not possible to estimate the implementation costs accurately at this stage as these costs are unquantified.