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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: British Sign Language (Wales) Bill
Ein cyf/Our ref: JH/PO/488/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Equality and Social Justice Committee

10 October 2025

Dear Jenny

British Sign Language (Wales) Bill – Stage 1 Scrutiny

Thank you for your letter dated 30 September 2025, regarding the Stage 1 scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill and for sharing the annex of questions.

I note your request for a response to questions 11 and 12. Please find my responses to those questions below. I trust these will support the Committee's consideration ahead of our upcoming evidence session.

Question 11

Does the Welsh Government expect that all content and services it, and other listed public bodies provide, will need to be available in BSL routinely or is the approach likely to be more discretionary and targeted?

Welsh Government recognises the importance of deaf BSL signers being able to access public communications in BSL and are committed to ensuring that any future approach supports meaningful access to information and services. Where possible, we would encourage public bodies to make key communications available in BSL—particularly where they relate to public health, safety, rights, or other essential services.

Listed public bodies, including Welsh Government, must adhere to their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments, and—should the BSL Wales Bill receive Royal Assent—any additional statutory obligations arising from that legislation. The BSL (Wales) Bill does not require Welsh Government or listed public bodies to provide all content and services those bodies provide in BSL.

Accountability will be a key principle underpinning the implementation of the BSL Wales Bill. The proposed role of a BSL adviser, supported by an assisting panel, will help guide public bodies in meeting their duties and in identifying areas where BSL provision is most needed. This approach allows for targeted and effective use of resources, while promoting inclusion and equality for deaf BSL signers across Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government established a BSL Stakeholder Task and Finish Group in January 2025. The final recommendations of the Group have been published on the Welsh Government website ([British Sign Language \(BSL\) Stakeholder Group: recommendations | GOV.WALES](#)). The group have recommended a short-term recommendation for Welsh Government to strengthen its BSL provision and create a Welsh Government process for the provision of BSL in relation to public documents and consultations materials. This will be considered through the development of the BSL Route Map, which will be published in Winter 2025.

Question 12

Please can you clarify the different implementation scenarios you are currently planning for and on the basis outlined above, provide us with illustrative estimated costs modelled on ensuring all Welsh Government communications are accessible in BSL?

To ensure that future policies are meaningful and cost effective, we must understand the needs and priorities of the deaf BSL signing community. Understanding the lived experiences of the deaf community is essential in shaping our cross-government policies.

The costs associated with our BSL Stakeholder Task and Finish Group, which met monthly from January 2025 to July 2025, was approximately £2,700 per meeting. This included two BSL/English interpreters, one palantypist, BSL translation of supporting documents and venue hire. An appropriate venue was secured to support hybrid working, with the necessary technical infrastructure and a layout conducive to BSL being the primary language of the group. This helped create a more informal, welcoming setting where stakeholders felt comfortable and engaged. Meetings were two hours in duration. The group was made up of 30 members. The terms of reference for that Group are published on the Welsh Government website: ([British Sign Language \(BSL\) Stakeholder Group: recommendations \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)).

The cost to listed public bodies of engaging with the deaf BSL signing community will depend on volume, frequency, format, and delivery mechanisms, all of which will be determined through the development process of the BSL Plans, guided by the National BSL Strategy and BSL guidance. It is reasonable to assume that listed public bodies may work in collaboration when engaging with the BSL community and preparing their BSL plans.

Should you require any further clarification, I would be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,



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