

Equality and Diversity Toolbox Talk

ED006/2025: Contact Scotland BSL (Online Video BSL Interpreter)



A Deaf BSL user is a person who is Deaf* and uses British Sign Language (BSL) as their primary or preferred language for communication.

Contact Scotland BSL is Scotland's national BSL video interpreting relay service funded by the Scottish Government's. The Video Relay Service (VRS) allows access to online BSL interpreters. BSL Interpreters are available 24/7 and the service is highly professional, confidential and impartial.

The service is primarily for any Deaf person to make free calls to any Scottish services. This allows Deaf people to communicate with hearing people anywhere in the UK.

The Contact Scotland BSL VRS should not be used for healthcare appointment. For healthcare appointments, NHS staff must book a BSL interpreter or use Convo Now for an online BSL interpreter.

How to use the service? A Deaf person can use Contact Scotland BSL on a computer, smartphone or tablet. They can access via web browser or download the free Contact Scotland BSL app.

Should Deaf people register to use the services? If a Deaf person want to receive a call-back or call from a hearing person, then it is ideal to register.

For more information about Contact Scotland BSL, please visit <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

How it works?

- The BSL interpreter will relay the conversation in turn by interpreting (speaking) when Deaf person signs and signing when the hearing person is speaking.
- A Deaf person can make a call to a hearing person
- A Deaf person registered with the service can receive a call from a hearing person.

For NHS Grampian staff who wish to make a call to a Deaf person

(Note: Ask your patient if they are registered with Contact Scotland because you can only call them if they are registered):

- Dial 0141 530 8113
- Give email address or SMS of the person you wish to call and the interpreter will check their registered details.

For NHS Grampian staff receiving a call from a Deaf person

using the service, simply answer the call your usual way and a BSL interpreter will introduce the service and the Deaf person before they begin to relay the conversation.

Roda Bird, roda.bird@nhs.scot
Interim Equality and Diversity Manager
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Update on Contact Scotland BSL from the Scottish Government (November 2025)

The Scottish Government are pleased to inform you that, effective 1st December 2025, Contact Scotland BSL service will be provided by Sign Solutions. This follows from the procurement process undertaken by the Scottish Government to secure a new supplier for this service, based on feedback from BSL users, listed authorities and the wider public using the service. This email outlines important information for you to note for the change to the new supplier.

Established in 1998, Sign Solutions has over 25 years of experience in providing interpretation and translation services nationwide. Their mission is to provide access and combat inequality by enabling people of different languages, cultures, and communities to communicate effectively. Sign Solutions are proud to be supporting the Scottish Government in the delivery for Contact Scotland BSL and provide continuity for the Scottish Deaf Community.

Action Required

From 1 minute past midnight Deaf and Deafblind BSL users can access the service by:

- Downloading the new Contact Scotland BSL app (available in Apple and Android app stores from 1st December);
- Visiting contactscotland-bsl.org

If you have the Contact Scotland BSL website link embedded within your own website or other communication materials you do not need to update these – the link to contactscotland-bsl.org will remain valid as it will transfer to Sign Solutions. If you have a direct call link this will need to be updated to a link to contactscotland-bsl.org as direct call links will route to the previous service supplier.

Returning calls to Deaf BSL Users

To return a call to a Deaf person you will now need to dial ****0141 530 8113**** and provide the user's email address or SMS details.

Promotional material

Attached to this email are marketing material the Scottish Government are encouraging partners to share via relevant channels. This includes:

- A social media flyer making service users aware of the change over on the 1st December and the need to download a new app.
- A video in BSL that explains the switch over and what action service users must take - <https://youtu.be/X8LtrhmN1OI>
- A social media flyer relating to the new call back number.

The Scottish Government will also communicate these messages and we are encouraging partner organisations, including those closely engaged with the Deaf and Deafblind communities in Scotland, to disseminate the message further.

The service will continue to provide Scottish interpreters and has a dedicated Community Liaison Officer (who is a Scottish BSL user with strong links to the community) to support BSL users engage with the service.

We value your support and look forward to your feedback on the new service.

Kind Regards,

Andrew

Andrew Godfrey-Meers (he/him)

BSL & Social Isolation Policy Manager
Directorate for Equality, Inclusion, & Human Rights
Scottish Government
07721238225