

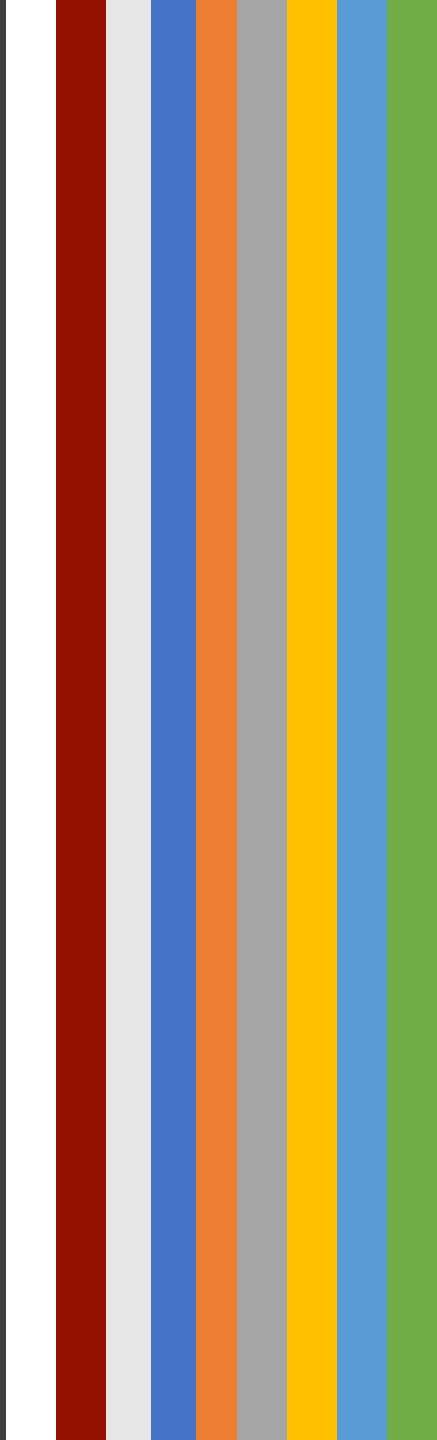
# The impact of the BSL (Scotland) Act on deaf children and young people's education: transformative equality?

## Researchers:

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*Previously worked together on a chapter about the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015*





## Research question

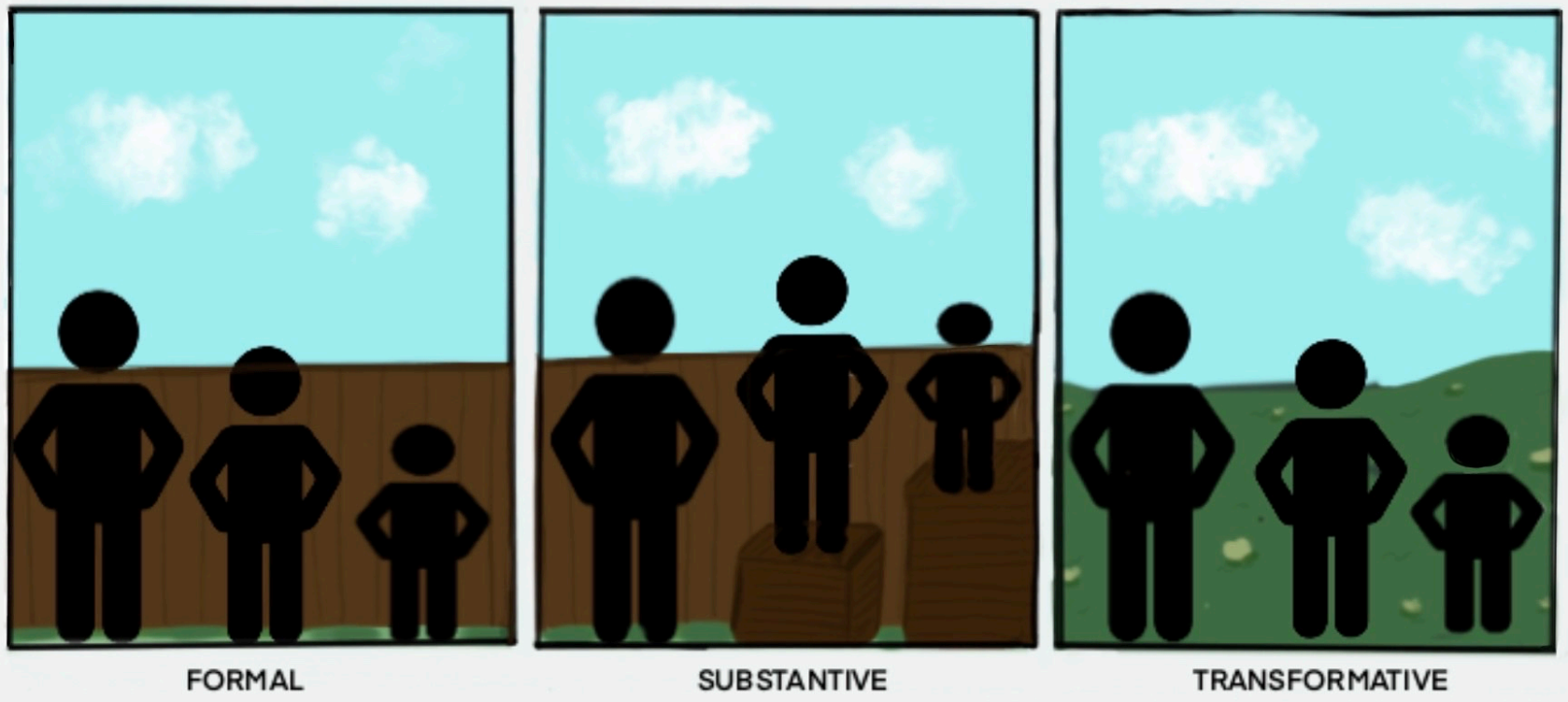
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To what extent has the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 had a positive effect on the education of deaf children and young people in Scotland in their use of BSL?

Has the effect been transformative?

# Precepts of equality

## THE PRECEPTS OF EQUALITY



# Sources for documentary analysis

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BSL national and local plans

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Submissions from consultations on BSL Bill and national plan

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BSL Act Facebook groups

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Deaf Teachers Group – WhatsApp

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Job descriptions of education staff

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Websites

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Adept/National Association for Tertiary Education for Deaf People newsletters

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Charity project reports/reviews



# British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

2015 asp 11

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Explanatory Notes have been produced to assist in the  
understanding of this Act and are available separately

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£6.00

## BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

- Aims to promote use and understanding of BSL (section 1(1))
- Government prepares and publishes national plan in relation to BSL (section 1(2)) setting out strategy (section 1(3)(a)).
- Public authorities prepare and publish own BSL plans (section 2(1)) how will implement national plan (section 2(2)(a))

**Analysis: De Meulder et al (2019); Wilks (2020)**

# What do deaf people want?

hearing pupils to learn bsl  
improve quality of communication professionals

bsl to be a taught subject

more choice of schools

bring back deaf schools

increase number of qualifications deaf children have

prevent abuse of deaf children

# National BSL Plan

11 Assist families by ensuring access to BSL resources as early as possible

12 Develop BSL resources and advice for parents

14 Support older deaf children and young people and their families to learn BSL

16 More BSL teachers become registered with GTCS

17 Survey level of BSL for ToDs and support staff

18 GTCS guidance for teachers of BSL users

19 SQA to develop initial awards to level 6 SCQF

20 / 21 Education Scotland: support for parents who use BSL

22 Parents who use BSL – consult about parental involvement

23 SCILT – programme of BSL for hearing pupils

24 Expert group BSL for hearing pupils

25 Colleges and universities to publish BSL plans

26 Scottish Funding Council to establish a steering group to help colleges and universities with BSL plans

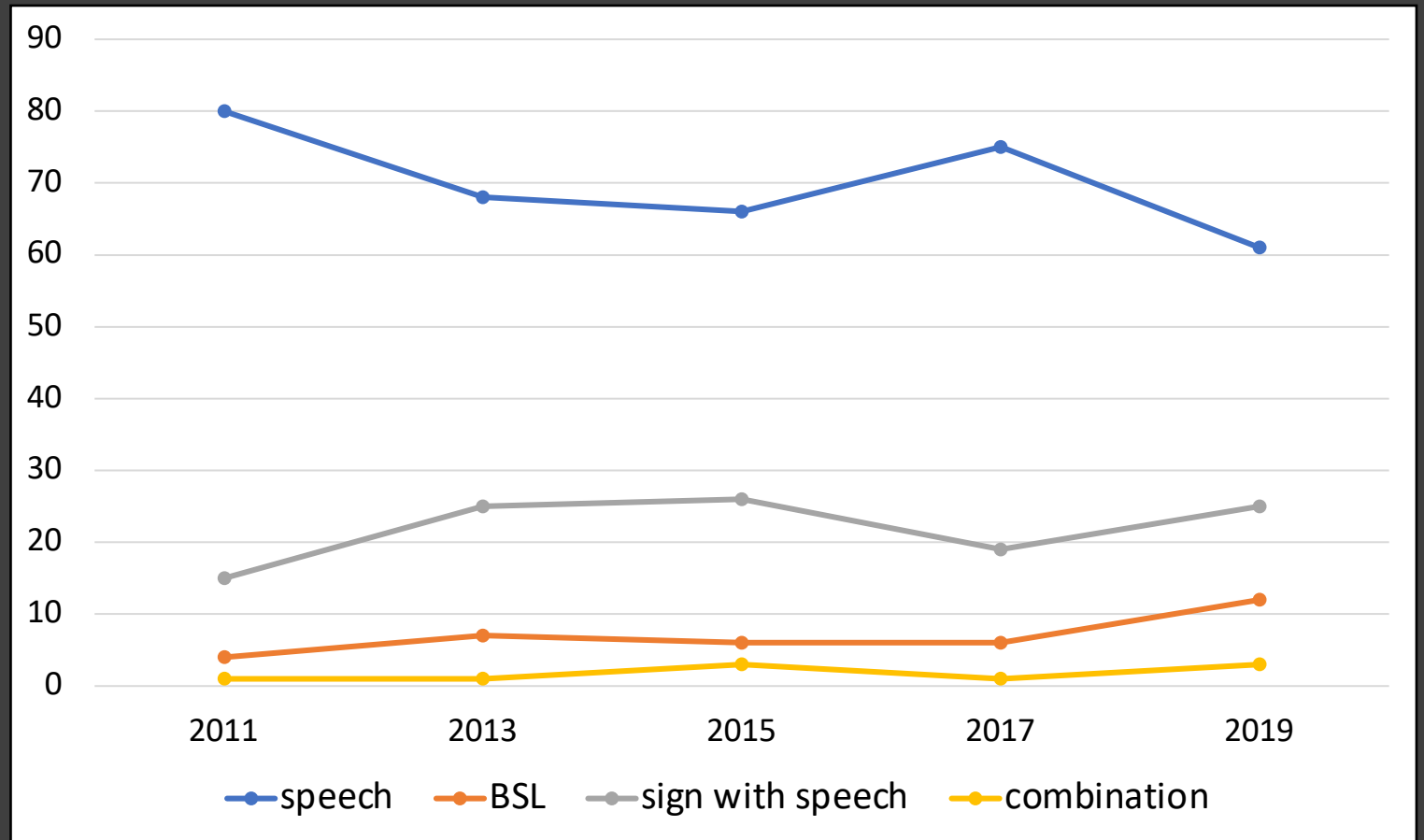
27 Advice and guidance on funding packages through SAAS

# Language use in school

## Languages used

CRIDE Scotland 2011 – 2019

2021 survey may reveal more





# Survey of BSL skills of ToDs 2016

by Scottish Sensory Centre

## Fluency in BSL

### Of the 185 ToDs

- 64% have Level 1 or more as required
- 9% have Level 3 or more which gives reasonable fluency



### But of 174 ToDs,

- 57% were working with children who require BSL or SSE

# Analysis so far



Attitudes towards deaf people as disabled prevents recognition of language rights



## Very slow change in the school system

- Early years (0-5 years) - point of diagnosis, few opportunities to learn BSL (child and family)
- Schools - mainstream v resource bases, teaching methods, quality of BSL
- More commitment to employ qualified BSL interpreters



## Progress in colleges and universities

- Some improvement in SL interpreting provision
- BSL Officer at University of Edinburgh
- Student Awards Agency Scotland fees for interpreters
- Deaf Action FE and HE project and BSL Working Group



## Improvements in ToD education

- Prospect of more fluent ToDs and BSL teachers from 2024 onwards
- Strong support network
- Leadership of ToD profession - Deaf president of BATOD
- Some issues in terms of progression, e.g. probation year, Access to Work



# Conclusions

## Progress depends on who had to make BSL plans

- Public bodies referred to in national plan were not required to make BSL plans:
  - Scottish Funding Council
  - Education Scotland
  - Student Awards Agency Scotland
  - Scottish Qualifications Authority
  - General Teaching Council Scotland
  - Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching
- Impact on performance under the national plan; need more responsibility to effect change

## Clear that money available only for making plans, not for actions

- Some small and temporary funding for charity work
  - Deaf Action FE and HE project
  - NDCS Family Sign Project
  - BDA Deaf Roots & Pride Project
  - BDA work on apprenticeships with Skills Development Scotland
- Funding process needs transparency and permanence

## Comparisons with Gaelic immersion education

- Focus on language
- Children have a right to education in Gaelic
- Gaelic Language Board

# Next steps



Apply for funding



Interview:

Civil servants

Deaf young people at school

ToDs

COSLA



Publish article



Respond to new National Plan (postponed to October 2021 from 2020)

## Contact



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