

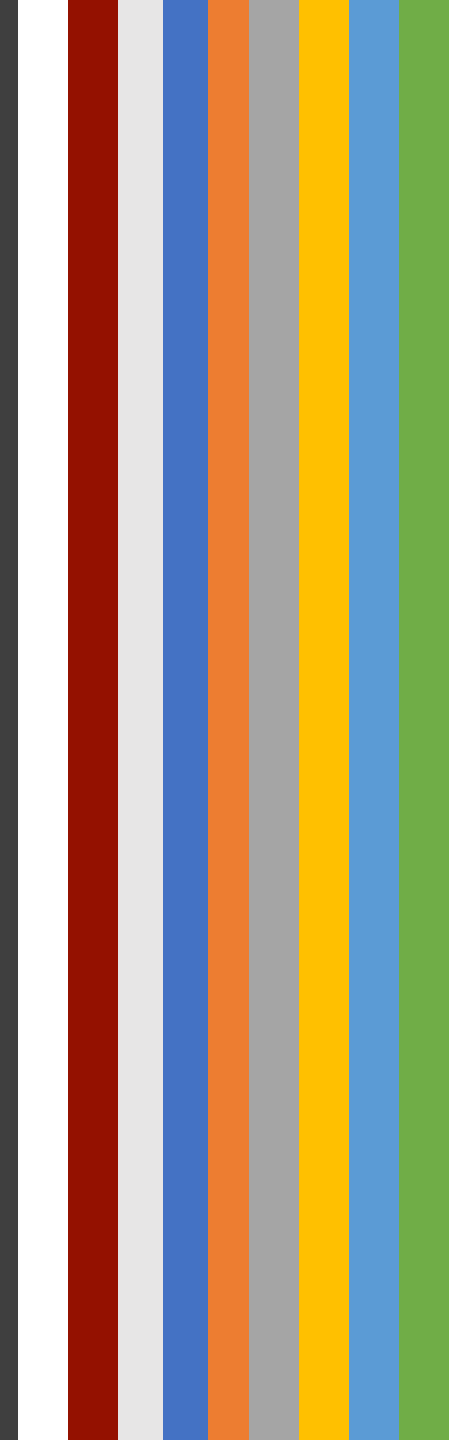
# The impact of the BSL (Scotland) Act on deaf children and young people's education

## Researchers:

Dr Rob Wilks University of South Wales

Rachel O'Neill University of Edinburgh

*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?

# Sources for documentary analysis

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BSL plans

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Submissions from consultations on BSL Bill and national plan

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BSL Act Facebook sites

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Deaf Teachers Group – Instant Messenger

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BSL plans

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Job descriptions of education staff

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SQA data on exam entries in BSL

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Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) survey data

# What did deaf people want?

- Initial findings
  - All (hearing) pupils to learn BSL at least to Level 1 / BSL to be a taught subject
  - More deaf schools to give deaf children more choice
  - Increase number of qualifications deaf children have when finish education
  - Improve quality of communication support professionals working in education
  - Prevent abuse of deaf children (3 to 4 times more likely to be abused than non-deaf)
    - Need to find out what type of abuse being referred to here
    - Language deprivation?



# 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))
- Requires the Scottish executive to prepare and publish a national plan in relation to BSL (section 1(2)), which is expected to set out Scottish Government's BSL strategy (section 1(3)(a)).
- Requires public authorities, defined as 'any body or office-holder (other than Scottish Ministers themselves) which is Scottish public authority with mixed functions or no reserved functions' (section 7)
  - to prepare and publish own BSL plans (section 2(1))
  - setting out measures to be taken in relation to the use of BSL (section 2(2)(a))

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

# The public authorities

Audit Scotland

Commissioner for  
Children and Young  
People in Scotland

Commissioner for  
Ethical Standards in  
Public Life in  
Scotland

Local councils

Health boards

Office of the  
Scottish Charity  
Regulator

Police  
Investigations and  
Review  
Commissioner

Post-16 education  
bodies

Scottish  
Commission for  
Human Rights

Scottish Courts and  
Tribunals Service

Scottish Housing  
Regulator

Scottish  
Information  
Commissioner

Scottish  
Parliamentary  
Corporate Body

Scottish Public  
Services  
Ombudsman

Standards  
Commission for  
Scotland

# BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

- National and local plans must:
  - involve BSL users (including those who use tactile form of language) and those who represent them;
  - ensure that consultation on draft plan is accessible to D/deaf and Deafblind BSL users; and
  - be published in BSL as well as in English in both draft form, and in final form (by October 2018)
- Local plans should 'try to achieve consistency' with BSL National Plan 2017-2023
- Should take account of any guidance issued by Scottish Ministers

# National BSL Plan School education

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 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

Only three points about deaf children





## Local BSL plans

- Organisations *not* asked to make their own plans: SQA (exam board), Scottish Funding Council, Education Scotland, General Teaching Council of Scotland all argued that they comply with Equality Act 2010 so do not need – was accepted
- But these organisations all have Gaelic Language plans
- Evidence of lobbying from consultation at stage 2 of Bill
- A few points each in the National Plan

# Examples of BSL plans

## Colleges and universities

- Equality Act (2010) determines how deaf students are monitored, so language preferences / uses not included
- Some progressive plans
- More commitment to employ qualified BSL interpreters
- BDA work on apprenticeships with Skills Development Scotland
- University of Edinburgh plan comprehensive

## Local authorities

- Many use the same template from COSLA
- Extreme caution and wait for government money and advice
- Some evidence of conflict (e.g. Perth)
- Wide consultation in some areas (e.g. Ayrshires)
- Deaf students / ToDs often uninvolved (e.g. Midlothian)
- Promote use of SSE (Glasgow)

## Scottish Qualifications Authority

## Other

# Edinburgh College BSL Plan



## 4. Short summary of the plan



contribute their ideas and suggestions to shape the start of Edinburgh College's Action Plan.

# Perth and Kinross BSL Plan

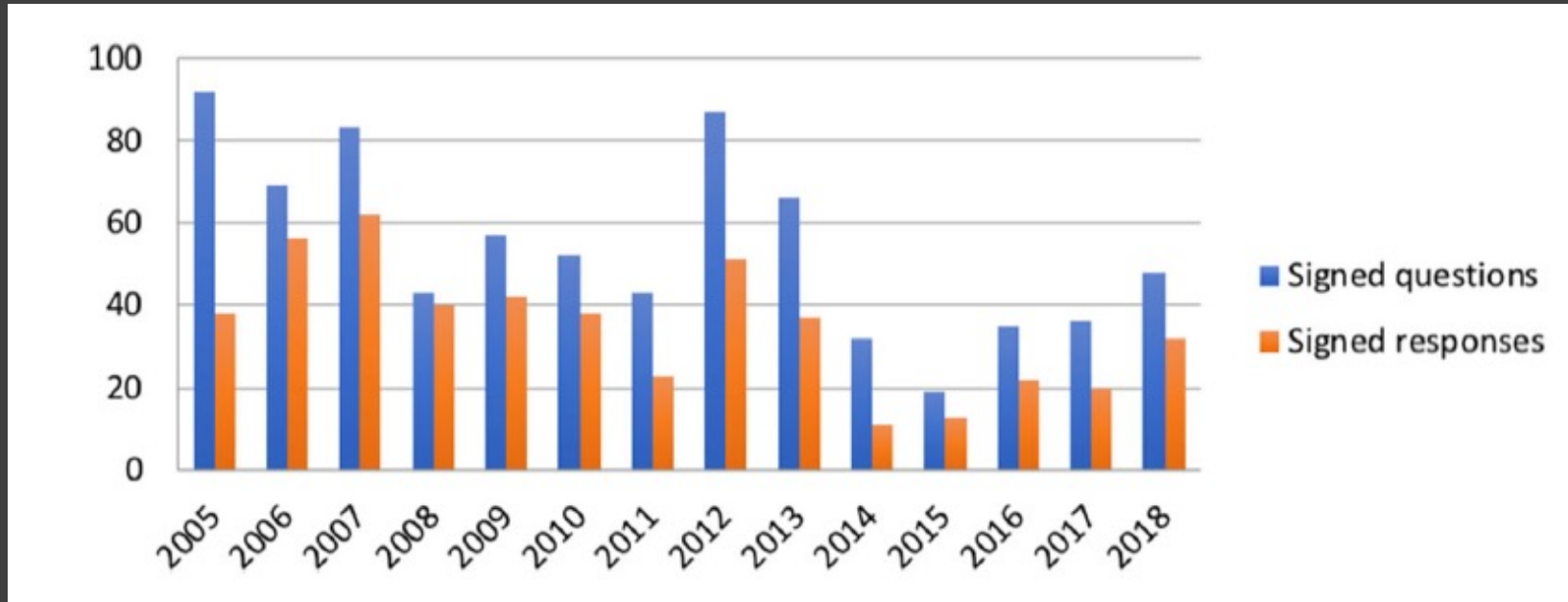
By 2024, we will:

- [17 & 18] Help the Scottish Government with their work to find out the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools. We will use any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.

*Currently within Perth and Kinross Hearing Support staff hold mandatory BSL qualifications at the required level. Education & Children's Services can provide appropriate BSL support to meet the needs of pupils using BSL. We note that BSL community members would like the level of qualification to be higher.*

# The right to take exams in BSL

Unique system in Scotland: the right to have a BSL exam paper in any subject except English, and to respond in BSL.



Numbers of deaf **BSL users in SQA exams**

Requests – SQA administrative data

# SQA BSL units

SCQF 3

SCQF 4

SCQF 5 – similar to Signature level 2

SCQF 6 – similar to Signature level 3

Creating a National 5 or a Higher examination needs about 20 qualified subject specialist school teachers




The screenshot shows the SQA website page for British Sign Language (BSL) National Units. The page has a dark blue navigation bar with links for Qualifications, Services, Past Papers, About SQA, and Support. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > National Qualifications > Subjects > British Sign Language > British Sign Language (BSL) | National Units. The main content area features a yellow 'Select subject' dropdown menu, a dark blue 'National Qualifications' sidebar, and a main heading 'British Sign Language (BSL) - National Units'. The sidebar includes links for 'NQ home', 'Subjects', 'National Qualifications in 2020-21', 'Baccalaureates', and 'Skills for Work'. The main content area displays three images of a person in a red shirt performing BSL hand signs. Below the images is the heading 'National Units' and the text 'Available for SQA approved centres.' followed by a list of units: F8Y0 09 - British Sign Language: An Introduction - SCQF Level 3 and H3PA 10 - British Sign Language - SCQF Level 4.

Qualifications ▾ Services ▾ Past Papers About SQA Support ▾

[Home](#) > [National Qualifications](#) > [Subjects](#) > [British Sign Language](#) > British Sign Language (BSL) | National Units

Select subject ▾

## British Sign Language (BSL) - National Units



### National Units

Available for SQA approved centres.

- F8Y0 09 - British Sign Language: An Introduction - SCQF Level 3
- H3PA 10 - British Sign Language - SCQF Level 4

# Fluency in BSL

## 17 Survey of BSL skills of ToDs 2016

by Scottish Sensory Centre

O'Neill, Ravenscroft, Wazny, 2017

### 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,

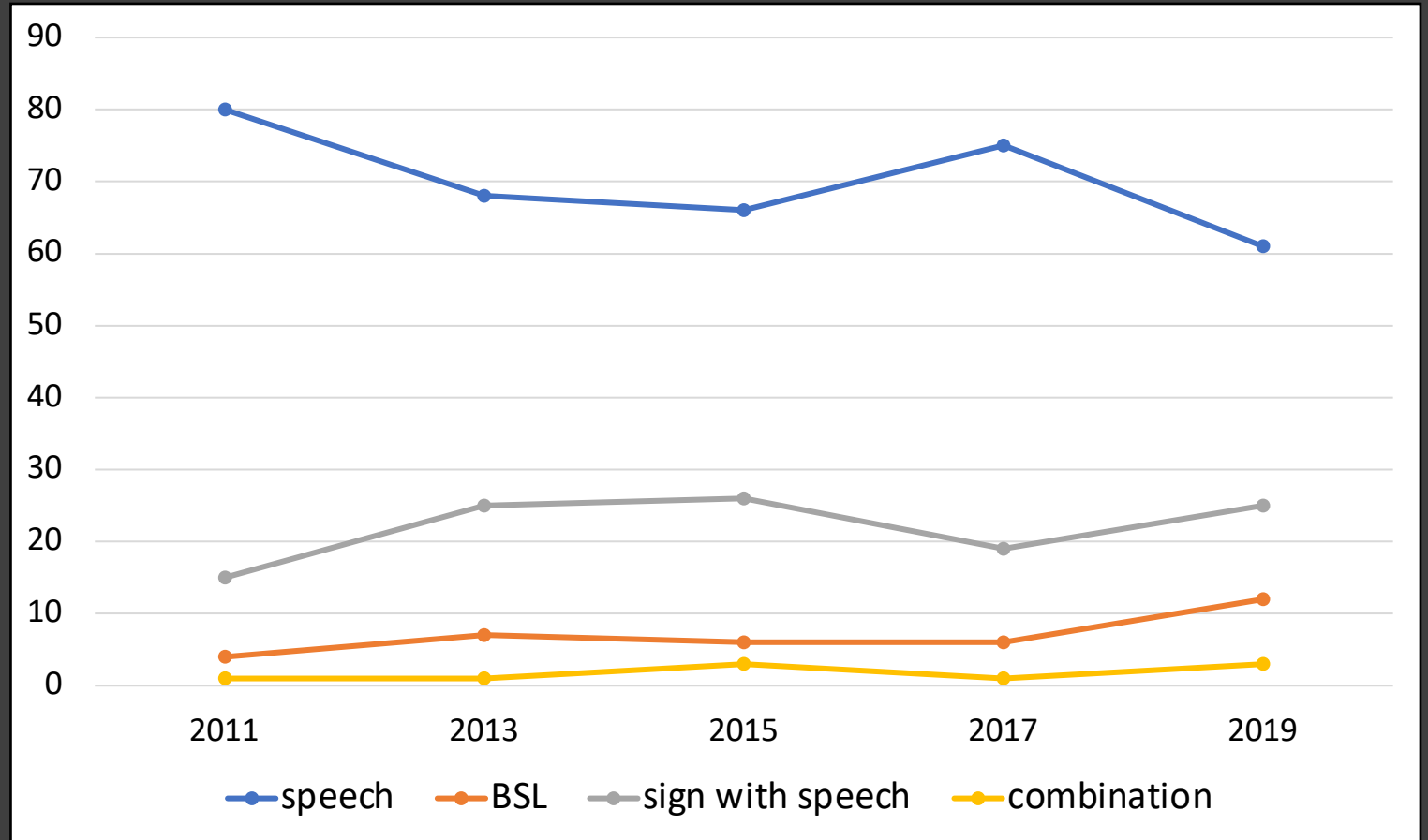
- 57% were working with children who require BSL or SSE

# Language use in school

## Languages used

CRIDE Scotland 2011 – 2019

2021 survey may reveal more





# Language use in school



## Role Profile

### Communication Support Worker

Reference No.	A4018	Type	Individual
Service	Education		
Job Family	Para Professional 5	Grade	FC7

### Purpose

To provide sign language interpreting in a variety of settings, assisting in the development of communication support services for deaf and professional support for staff.

**Task or Responsibility** - For this role, there is an expectation that all, or a combination, of the following will be undertaken:

Providing relevant confidential sign language communicating across a variety of settings.

Providing communication support to enable access to education and services for children, young people and their families.

Providing sign language interpretation support to other members of the team and others.

<b>Person Specification: Skills, Knowledge, Qualifications or Experience</b> - Criteria can apply to more than one task or responsibility	E	D
Educated to SCQF level 6 which includes Highers or SVQ level 3 or equivalent (Deliver results)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Qualified in British Sign Language (BSL) to at least SCQF Level 10.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Member of SASLI/SRLPDC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of supporting communication in a variety of settings (Embrace technology & information)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to provide an efficient and effective service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Communication skills, interpretation of spoken and written English into BSL and BSL to English (Focus on customers)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of developing and training others in use of BSL (Take ownership)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

E = Essential Criteria D = Desirable Criteria

## Job descriptions

‘Nursery nurse’

CSW

Classroom assistant

# Language use in school

## BSL-using deaf qualified school teachers

QToD secondary (science) – resource base

ToD secondary (English) – resource base

Primary teacher – mainstream

Teacher (Biology) - in initial teacher education

QToD secondary (maths) - peripatetic

ToD primary - resource base

SQA needs 20 qualified secondary BSL teachers before it will have resources to produce and run National 5 and Higher exams

Possibly PGDE pathway?

Proposed Primary Education with BSL starts 2023 UoE

## BSL taught under the 1+2 languages policy

Highlands pack – used by non signing hearing primary teachers in about half the Local Authorities in Scotland

Windsor Park School – deaf tutor

Moorfoot Primary School – deaf tutor

St Roch's secondary – ToD BSL teacher and deaf assistant

Hamilton School for the Deaf – deaf tutor

Aberdeen School for the Deaf – CODA classroom assistant / deaf tutor



## Deaf cultural events in education

Scottish Deaf History and St Roch's Secondary

## 2. Professional Skills and Abilities

**2.1 Acquire appropriate language and communication skills to communicate fluently with a range of deaf learners.** To be able to teach and monitor progress effectively, and maintain high expectations, it is essential that teachers of deaf children can communicate fluently.

- Gain BSL skills to a minimum of SCQF level 4 by the time of completion of the postgraduate diploma in deaf education (Signature Level 1 BSL).
- A significant number of QToDs will gain additional communication and advanced teaching qualifications. Local authorities will need to ensure that 50% of their QToDs have SCQF 6 or above BSL, and in addition at Regional Collaborative Level that there is at least one Educational Audiologist available from 2026. These and other certificated additional qualifications in BSL/English interpreting, electronic notetaking, cued speech, early years with deaf children, auditory verbal therapy, and speechreading teaching will be listed on the QToD register on the GTCS website.

### Walker D (Deborah)

This all needs changed back to current minimum BLS level 1 and meet the child's need.

Markup Area

Johnson & Johnson, 2015

## Education civil servants: competencies for ToDs

Lack of engagement with BSL Act and Plan  
Lack of knowledge about BSL  
Need to explore why

# Scottish Parliamentary Elections 2021

Activism by deaf Fife resident 12 year old Niamdh and her mum Sam. They contacted their MSP and met with John Swinney the Deputy First Minister for Scotland. He is responsible for education.

## Re-elect Jenny Gilruth

Thursday, 6 May



### SNP Manifesto Commitment: Free British Sign Language tuition for deaf children from age 5

I helped my young constituent, Niamdh Braid from Glenrothes, to bring her campaign for free BSL tuition for deaf children to the attention of Education Secretary John Swinney.

I'm delighted that a re-elected SNP Government will provide additional funding to enable local authorities to offer free British Sign Language tuition for deaf children from the age of five.



Scottish Parliament Election 2021  
Campaign Posts are promoted by James Wilson on behalf of Jenny Gilruth  
both c/o 17 Edison House, Fullerton Road, Glenrothes, KY7 5QR

**Working for you in Mid Fife and Glenrothes**

# Comparisons

Wales in 2021

basic education  
Department of Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Every child is a national asset...

HOME ABOUT US NEWSROOM RESOURCES PROGRAMMES CURRICULUM

South African Sign Language HL Download

Scripted Lesson Plans: Presentation Slides

Title	
1.1 The Rosebush	Download
1.1.1 The Rosebush ASL	Download
1.2 Alone ASL	Download
2.1 Romeo & Juliet	Download
2.2 The childrens garden ASL	Download
3.1 Discursive Essay	Download
3.2 Complaint	Download
4.1 Comprehension	Download
4.2 Summary	Download
5.1 Advert	Download

## Original consultation

We want your views on Curriculum for Wales guidance in designing a curriculum which includes British sign language (BSL).

## Consultation description

We are consulting on the Curriculum for Wales non-statutory guidance for BSL which includes:

- BSL as a first/predominant language for deaf and hard of hearing learners
- BSL as a third or subsequent language (like French or German) for other learners

South Africa 2018

<https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/InclusiveEducation/SouthAfricanSignLanguage.aspx>

# Analysis so far



Very slow change in the school system



COSLA and civil servants did not want to spend money on BSL users



Attitudes towards disability prevented them seeing language rights



ToD profession changing - Deaf president of BATOD, Deaf Studies course at University of Edinburgh



Prospect of more fluent ToDs and BSL teachers from 2024 onwards



# 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)



# References

- De Meulder, M., Murray, J.J. and McKee, R.L. eds., 2019. *The legal recognition of sign languages: Advocacy and outcomes around the world*. Multilingual Matters.
- Johnson, D.C. and Johnson, E.J., 2015. Power and agency in language policy appropriation. *Language Policy*, 14(3), pp.221-243.
- Wilks, R., 2020. *Making equality law work for Deaf people*. PhD Thesis. University of Leicester. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.25392/leicester.data.11806764.v1>.

## Contact



**Dr Rob Wilks**

Email: [rob.wilks@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:rob.wilks@southwales.ac.uk)



**Rachel O'Neill**

Email: [rachel.oneill@ed.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.oneill@ed.ac.uk)