

Participant Information Sheet



1. Study Title

Deaf Education and the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015: comparisons with the Welsh approach

2. Invitation paragraph

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study into the impact of sign language recognition on deaf education. In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament passed the British Sign Language (BSL) Act in 2015, formally recognising BSL as a language and imposing duties on public authorities across Scotland to promote and encourage the use of BSL. In Wales, the Senedd has agreed to debate a legislative proposal for a Bill that would make provision to encourage the use of BSL in Wales and improve access to education and services in BSL, but this has yet to take place. Meanwhile, the Curriculum for Wales includes BSL, in stark contrast to Scotland where BSL is currently not included in the national curriculum.

Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you would like to take part.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

In November 2021, Rachel O'Neill (University of Edinburgh) and I published the first independent impact study of the BSL (Scotland) Act, *The impact of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 on deaf education*, to act as a discussion point for parents, teachers, organisations and deaf young people themselves about what changes the Act has so far made in relation to their education.

The report made 14 recommendations for key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Act including a public debate regarding language acquisition and binary attitudes, engagement with families of deaf children and young deaf people, transparency in relation to the funding of third sector organisations, an increase in the availability of BSL courses and an improvement in providing BSL content on websites.

A number of themes were identified that require further examination during the production of this report:

- The conceptualisation of BSL as a language;
- The extent to which attitudes towards deaf children as being either 'BSL pupils,' 'other deaf children' and/or disabled persist;
- Internal and external factors in how the first BSL plans were drawn up; and
- The role of the third sector in implementing the BSL Act and how they are funded.

This research project aims to explore these themes in further depth in order to provide more context and understanding of the issues affecting the implementation of the Act's first national BSL plan in relation to deaf education.

In the process, comparisons of the Scottish approach will be undertaken with Wales. Of interest is the contrast between the two nations and particularly the role of the respective education systems in supporting BSL. In Scotland, the push has been to explore how hearing children can be encouraged to learn BSL (as opposed to deaf children learning BSL). In contrast, without a BSL Act in Wales, the focus has been to include BSL in the national curriculum which includes deaf children.

4. Why have I been invited?

You are a Scottish or Welsh Government civil servant, a national public body representative, a council official, a college or university representative, a parent of a deaf child, a young deaf person, a Teacher of the Deaf or a third sector employee.

I believe that you are uniquely placed to offer your views of the impact (or intended impact) of sign language recognition on deaf education, and this is why you have been invited to participate in this study.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet, which I will give to you, and will answer any questions you might have about the research and your involvement. If you are willing to take part, I will then ask you to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

Your participation in this study will only entail an interview conducted on either Microsoft Teams or Zoom of no longer than one-hour duration, to be arranged at a date and time convenient to you on a Tuesday or Wednesday between 10am and 3pm.

If you agree to participate in this study following my initial contact, I will send you a copy of this information sheet and the consent form. It would be appreciated if you could sign the consent form and return it to me via email prior to the interview. I will be happy to answer any questions or deal with any concerns prior to or at the beginning of your interview.

Each interview will be conducted by me (or Rachel O'Neill as appropriate) and a BSL/English Interpreter (funded by Access to Work) will be present when I interview to facilitate communication and/or provide a voiceover for the purpose of transcribing.

Each interview will be recorded (video and audio) and then transcribed by University of South Wales or University of Edinburgh and stored in a central cloud folder at USW using my OneDrive facility.

A copy of the transcript will be sent to you for you to check and approve. The audio and video recordings and any other data will then be processed in line with section 13 below. We will keep you informed of the project's progress and outcomes through our blog at <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/deafeducation/>.

7. Expenses and payments

No expenses will be covered, nor will any payments be made.

8. What will I have to do?

Your involvement in the study will entail of the following:

- Read this information sheet and the consent form;
- Sign the consent form and send it to me prior to your interview;
- Attend and participate in your interview at the agreed date and time; and
- Check and approve the subsequent written transcript of your interview.

9. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

I consider that there are minimal possible disadvantages and risks of you taking part in this study.

If you are a young deaf person or a parent or guardian of deaf children and you or your children are experiencing difficulties in accessing their education or have poor educational experiences at educational institutions, it is possible that the interview will be a source of distress and anxiety for you. If this happens to you, I will signpost you where appropriate to counselling services such as Deaf4Deaf, the National Deaf Children's Society and other organisations and/or local educational authorities.

10. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I cannot promise the study will help you directly, but the information we get from the study may help to increase the understanding of BSL in the education system and influence deaf education in Scotland and Wales and further afield.

11. What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions by email (rob.wilks@southwales.ac.uk).

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through University of South Wales' Research Governance department. The contact name is Jonathan Sinfield, Research Governance Manager, and his email is jonathan.sinfield@southwales.ac.uk.

12. Data Protection Privacy Notice

The data controller for this project will be the University of South Wales. The University Compliance Manager provides oversight of university activities involving the processing of personal data. The University of South Wales Compliance Manager is Rhys Davies (rhys.davies@southwales.ac.uk).

Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this information sheet. Standard ethical procedures will involve you providing your consent to participate in this study by completing the consent form that has been sent to you. However, the legal basis on which this task is being performed is public interest, approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact Compliance Manager, Mr Rhys Davies (rhys.davies@southwales.ac.uk).

Details of your individual rights are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/fororganisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

13. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you which leaves the university will have your name and address and any other identifiable details removed so that you cannot be recognised.

Each interview will be recorded (video and audio) and then transcribed by a transcriber from the University of South Wales or the University of Edinburgh and stored in a central cloud folder using my OneDrive facility. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you for you to approve.

Your data and the interview recordings will be retained kept for no more than 5 years and may be destroyed earlier if they are no longer of use to the study.

14. What will happen if I do not carry on with the study?

If you withdraw from the study, we will destroy all your identifiable recorded interviews and data but we may find it difficult to identify data which has been anonymised during the transcription process. In these cases, we will not destroy it.

15. What will happen to the results of the research study?

It is anticipated that the results of the study will be disseminated as follows:

- A supplementary report summarising the findings of this project;
- A summary report summarising the findings of this project, with accompanying BSL and Welsh translations;
- Articles to be published in two journals; and
- Submissions to conferences.

16. Who is organising or sponsoring the research?

This study is funded by the University of South Wales' Faculty of Creative Industries Early Career Researchers (ECR) Pump Prime Funding initiative, set up to support the development of the next generation of excellent researchers at USW. Pump prime funding enables ECRs to accelerate their research careers and helps establish them as highly productive, independent researchers.

17. Further information and contact details:

Role	Name	Email
Principal Investigator	Dr Rob Wilks	rob.wilks@southwales.ac.uk
Co-Investigator	Rachel O'Neill	rachel.oneill@ed.ac.uk
Academic Manager – Law	Holly Evans	holly.evans@southwales.ac.uk
Research Governance Manager	Jonathan Sinfield	jonathan.sinfield@southwales.ac.uk
Compliance Manager	Rhys Davies	rhys.davies@southwales.ac.uk

During the interview, references will be made to the following:

BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 was passed on 17 September 2015 and received Royal Assent on 22 October 2015. It aims to promote the use and understanding of BSL requires the Scottish Government to prepare and publish a national plan in relation to BSL, setting out the Scottish Government's BSL strategy. It also required public authorities to prepare and publish their own BSL plans. The first National Plan by the Scottish Ministers was published on 24 October 2017 and is currently being reviewed.

More information: <http://bslscotlandact2015.scot>

Curriculum for Wales

The new Curriculum for Wales is due to be introduced in 2022 and has been developed to ensure that for all learners aged 3 to 16 in Wales have the best opportunity and support in life to ensure that they are all able to thrive for the future of Wales. BSL is included in the curriculum in the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience, and anyone can learn BSL

regardless of their medium of education or home language, including learners with additional learning needs. Practitioners involved in designing a curriculum should BSL for deaf BSL users, as well as for others learning BSL as a second, third or subsequent language.

More information: [https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/languages-literacy-and-communication/designing-your-curriculum#british-sign-language-\(bsl\)](https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/languages-literacy-and-communication/designing-your-curriculum#british-sign-language-(bsl))