

#TakingBSLForward
#BSL2032



How the BSL Curriculum is a positive development following the BSL Act 2022?



Rebecca Mansell, Chief Executive, British Deaf Association

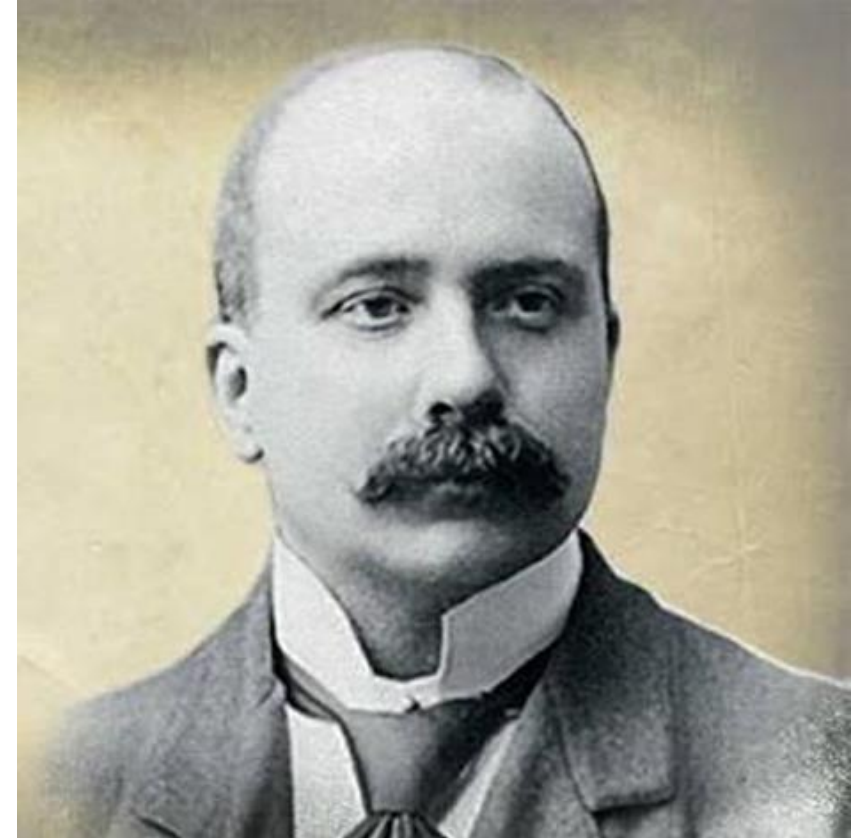
About the British Deaf Association



Founded in 1890.

The BDA is the official National Representative Organisation by the United Nations as representing our national sign languages, BSL/ISL in the UK. We hold international status at the WFD, WFDYS, EUD, and EUDY.

Our Mission is to ensure a world in which the **language, culture, community, diversity and heritage of Deaf people in the UK is respected and fully protected, preserved and promoted.**



Francis Maginn

“The BDA is the Deaf community.”
– Roundtable participant, 2022

10-year Strategic Vision #TakingBSLForward

#TakingBSLForward sets out the BDA's aspirations for Deaf people in the UK for the next decade and beyond, following the historic legal recognition of our language with the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and the BSL Act (2022).

28th April 2022 – 28th April 2032

Our plan sets out a 10-year vision for a new civil rights movement: **#TakingBSLForward #BSL2032** Over the next decade, the Deaf communities in the UK must take ownership of our own future as a linguistic and cultural minority that has been oppressed and discriminated against for more than a century.



Annual 'National BSL Day' 28 April

#BSL2032 Movement: What we are campaigning for?



Over the next ten years, our work will focus on the advocacy for our **national sign language* rights**.

The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD), is the latest International human rights Convention emanating from the United Nations (UN). It is also one of the most ratified conventions in the UN legal system.

The motto of the CRPD is “**Nothing About Us Without Us**” places persons with disabilities, including deaf people, and their **representative organisations** - national associations of deaf people- at the forefront of the decision-making processes related to them.



* We use the term ‘sign languages’ to include both BSL and ISL

#BSL2032 Movement: What we are campaigning for?

Linguistic rights are the human and civil rights concerning the individual and collective right to choose the language or languages for communication in private or public settings.

According to international treaties, language rights, sometimes known as linguistic rights, are human rights. They have specific implications for the **language choice** of members of minority groups, as well as the prohibition of discrimination, freedom of speech, and the right to communicate in their language with other members of their group. We know certain minority languages, including sign languages, have frequently been subject to **restrictions**, even outright bans, and a lack of promotion in several countries all over the world.



Linguistic human rights



Learning in a person's native language has been shown to increase **educational outcomes**, higher literacy levels, and a person's ability to communicate fluently in both their native tongue and the language spoken by the majority of the population.

Language is at the heart of what it means to be **human**. To be able to express ourselves, share information, and build relationships, every human needs a strong **language foundation**. We continue to be deprived of that basic human right in 2023. It is time for this to change.

As a member of both WFD and EUD, they advocate for our national sign language rights on an international level representing 70 million Deaf people's human rights worldwide.

We recently adopted this Declaration.

DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF DEAF CHILDREN

Article

All deaf children, like all humans, are born free and equal in dignity and rights.



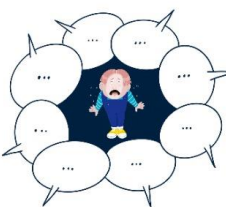
Article

All parents, carers and family members of deaf children must be provided with free instruction in their national sign language(s).



Article

All deaf children have the right to protection from language deprivation. Not providing access to the national sign language(s) to all deaf children constitutes discrimination⁽³⁾.



Article

All deaf children have a right to a sign language.
National sign language(s) are the only fully accessible
language for deaf children from birth onwards.



Article

All deaf children have a right to quality, inclusive, multilingual education in their national sign language(s) and the national written language(s).⁽¹⁾



Article

All deaf children have a right to fluent national sign language models, including teachers in education.⁽⁴⁾



Article

All the above declarations must be implemented for all deaf children immediately and without delay.¹⁴

Article 3

The right of deaf children to their national sign language(s) shall not be infringed.



Article 6

all deaf children have a right to learn the linguistic identity and culture of the deaf community.^[2]



Article 9

I deaf children have a right to express their views on all matters affecting them.⁽⁵⁾



Our Early Years position – A new campaign

Our campaign will push for the awareness that sign languages are **acquired naturally** by infants and children, and language acquisition in sign languages occur on the same timetable as spoken languages.

There is no language delay for deaf children exposed to sign languages from birth. Through sign languages deaf people assert their **identities and cultures** as linguistic minorities. Sign languages provide access to important domains in life and the opportunity for full participation.

However, in the UK, sign languages are still considered **inferior** and lack proper governmental and legal recognition.



Our Early Years position – A new campaign

Deaf children do not have problems learning or acquiring language. They have problems with **access** to language.

In the UK, deaf children are still denied access to natural language input in the form of their national sign languages. Consequently, they may face **delays** in language acquisition.

This delay is not due to their lack of hearing but due to **political factors** that prevent them from being in sign language rich environments. Once exposed to natural sign languages, deaf children's language acquisition proceeds smoothly and on the same development scales as all other children.



The importance of your BSL Curriculum

The BSL Act 2022 recognises BSL as a language of England, Wales and Scotland.

The Act requires each government department to promote or facilitate the use of BSL and produce a report.

And the publication of any plan, strategy, consultation document or consultation response, or any explanatory or supporting materials

And for example, include advice on best practice for communicating with British Sign Language users (both when interacting with individuals and when communicating with the public at large).



#TakingBSLForward together

The importance of your BSL Curriculum

Teachers play a pivotal role in amplifying Deaf children's voice, through your work advocating for their human rights, and help us to integrate the importance of our language into society.



#TakingBSLForward together

Thank you

#TakingBSLForward

#BSL2032



www.bda.org.uk



The BDA stands for **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of Choice