

Submission from June Eagles

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am emailing June Eagles's comments to you on her behalf as below:-

I believe the BSL Bill should be implemented to improve services and bring much needed awareness, not only to those who have never encountered Deaf or Deaf/Blind issues, but to those who are within the world of Interpreters/CSW/Deaf, I am particularly talking about the educational system. I work mainly within colleges as a Communication Support Worker (CSW). I have been involved within the Deaf world for 11 years and have strived to get to a certain standard. I understand that we are all different in our abilities, but I am passionate about the inequalities which exist within the Deaf world and my main aim is to ensure that whoever I may be working with, will receive my full commitment at all times.

I would like to add a comment I placed on a social media site after again being frustrated at another newbie coming into the world of Interpreting, it goes as follows:.....

"I am fully aware that not all CSW's have my view on things, but I am also aware that most of us take our jobs seriously enough to know that we need to be as highly trained as possible in order to provide a service which will be beneficial to the Deaf student rather than a hindrance. I, and others I know who are CSW's, are so tired of the attitude which seems to be within the interpreting/Deaf world that CSW's are nothing better than 'communicators' - I'm sorry but I have worked hard to get where I am, I have chosen the CSW route for various reasons, but the main one being that I actually love what I do. I do not enjoy the fact that various people view us as second best and that none of us have any qualifications at all! I have come from the background of interpreters who went to Heriot Watt a few years ago and we also views as being 'crap interpreters'! I have heard this being expressed a few times in the past, but was surprised to hear it again only yesterday. Pray tell me what a 'crap interpreter' is? I have my own views on this one. Ours has been a long road to get to where we are now because we have certain 'standards' in which we want to work. We have had several obstacles put in our way whilst trying to achieve interpreter status, but we have not given in - yet!"

My main point is that most of us are aware and are striving for a very high standard of training in order to do a job in which the Deaf student will benefit. Some of us are still studying after many years as we know it is of the utmost importance that we give the best possible service within our remit. Yes, there are a few who think that because they can 'sign' they will be fine as a CSW/Interpreter or a Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) - this BSL Bill would surely filter these people out as it would mean we all have to reach a certain standard before we can enter into classroom to communicate and work with the Deaf student. It is high time we all worked together instead of the obvious 'snobbery' between 'Interpreters' and 'CSWs' - creating a well-oiled support system between the two would be more beneficial to everyone surely.

Another CSW made the comment....

“feel the same about teachers of Deaf, am I the only one who feels they should be higher than level 2?” AND.... “Frustrates me on the occasions that my pupil often turns to me for support if/when she’s lost on what the speech therapist or TOD is saying/signing. I also strongly, more than ever before now, feel that I want to see some basic BSL introduced into schools..”

A comment made by one teacher within an educational establishment I work at also made the following comment.....

“you (CSW’s) also build bridges beyond interpreting; offering insights, awareness and education to people who are often meeting a deaf person for the first time. In my opinion this is key to bringing down barriers.”

This, surely is what we are all aiming at, bringing awareness to everyone involved in any setting, whether its education, health or socially. What a lovely world it would be if everyone could use BSL!

June Eagles

Hope this will be useful.

Yours,

John Denerley