In response to the following questions:

1. Do you think we need to change the law to promote the use of BSL and, if so, why?

   - Yes.
   The current evidence on the experience of Deaf and Deafblind people in Scotland is they continue to experience less access to public services in relation to all aspects of living in Scotland. This often has significant consequences. The following offers 2 examples:
   1) In relation to information on health and health conditions when visiting any of the medical services either as a patient or a relative of a patient, and in particular as a parent. A diagnosis of diabetes requires for any new patient extensive support to understand the significance of the disease and the lifestyle changes that are essential to optimize positive health outcomes. It is clear that for many access to appropriate linguistic access is often not available, the assumption being that information currently available in English, on the internet and in paper format by the various health professionals will be sufficient and offer appropriate information. This is to forget that for the vast majority of BSL users, English is a second language and for many it does not offer them access to the necessary information.
   2) In relation to equality of access to further education at College or University or in apprenticeship schemes. There is a consistent gap in educational attainment, accessing to employability opportunities through apprenticeship schemes, access into college and university courses. This can begin at the very beginning at the ‘getting in’ stage as the access arrangements for application often in themselves act as a barrier. This makes it more difficult to gather accurate evidence of the real impact that the lack of linguistic access actually has. The journey of Deaf or Deafblind person from school through to the situation where they can choose which career they wish to follow as any hearing person and then successfully follow through to self determined position is challenging at every place, due to linguistic access to BSL.
2. How realistic do you think this aim is and to what extent do you believe the Bill can achieve this objective?
   - It is realistic and yes the Bill can achieve the objective it sets out.

3. Could there be unintended consequences for other languages or forms of communication used by the deaf community?
   - There may be however I think this will be in a positive way not a negative way as in raising awareness as to the linguistic access with BSL it will raise the discussion and question of the communication needs for all deaf people.

5. If listed authorities say they will do something relating to the promotion of BSL, will the Performance Review process ensure they are held to account?
   - To a greater extent yes however this will be further reinforced by the meeting of the s.129 and Public Sector Equality Duty as failure to be held to account through Performance Review process will highlight the failure to be meeting the Duty.

6. Do you have any comments on these proposed timescales?
   - They may be considered challenging for some local authorities, depending on their current infra structure and connections to Deaf and Deafblind people within their area/services expectations.

7. What effect do you think these requirements will have on you or your organisation?
   - It will raise the standards of communication practice and accessible formats that I work in and with.
   - It will support me in raising the expectations I have with clients and potential clients who currently provide services in
the public sector, not just for service users but in relation to access for staff careers and progression.