British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill: Scrutiny of Financial Memorandum

The Scottish Parliament’s Finance Committee invites organisations and individuals to submit evidence setting out their views on the financial implications of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill.

The Education and Culture Committee is the lead committee and has responsibility for considering the Bill’s policy provisions. It has issued a separate call for evidence and intends to take oral evidence in early 2015.

The Bill

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament by Mark Griffin MSP on 29 October 2014.

The estimated financial implications of the Bill are set out in its accompanying Financial Memorandum (FM). A copy of the FM can be found at page 7 of the Explanatory Notes.

The Financial Memorandum

The Policy Memorandum states that the Bill “aims to promote the use of British Sign Language (BSL), principally by requiring BSL plans to be prepared and published by the Scottish Ministers and listed public authorities. Plans will be reviewed, reported on via the Performance Review Report and updated at regular intervals.” The Bill would introduce a requirement for the Scottish Government to develop and publish a National Plan and for the listed public authorities to prepare and publish an Authority Plan.

A regular cycle for production of these plans and the Performance Review Report is stipulated in the Bill. The Policy Memorandum explains that this “cycle is based on parliamentary sessions, reflecting the fact that the Scottish Ministers have a central role in the process and are accountable to the Parliament for this responsibilities under the Bill.”

The FM confirms that the Bill “does not prescribe any minimum level of activity beyond the production of an Authority Plan”, stating that “it will be a matter for public authorities to determine the scope of their activities in relation to BSL, taking account of needs assessment and budgetary considerations.”

The Bill will also require the Scottish Ministers to designate a minister as having lead responsibility for BSL.
Tables summarising the total estimated costs of the Bill are provided on pages 14 and 15 of the FM.

**How to submit evidence**

A BSL video containing questions from both the Education and Culture Committee and the Finance Committee is available via the link below. The questions on the Bill's financial implications start 7 minutes and 17 seconds into the video.

Watch the BSL video of the Questions

Watch the BSL video of How to submit your evidence

Listen to the audio version (3.95MB mp3)

The Finance Committee invites you to respond to the attached questions by Friday 9 January 2015. Written responses should be sent electronically (in MS Word - no confirmatory hard copy required) to finance.committee@scottish.parliament.uk. Responses in BSL (video) format are also welcome.

All responses will be handled in accordance with the Parliament’s policy for handling written evidence received in response to calls for evidence.

Should you have any queries in relation to this, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee clerking team via the email address above or by calling 0131 348 5451.
British Sign Language (Scotland) Bill - Finance Committee questionnaire on Financial Memorandum

Estimates of the Bill’s financial implications are set out in its accompanying Financial Memorandum (FM), which can be found at page 7 of the Explanatory Notes.

In addition to the questions below, please add any other comments you may have which would assist the Finance Committee’s scrutiny of the FM.

Consultation

1. Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

2. If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

Costs

4. If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.

5. Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?

6. If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?

7. Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill’s estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?

Wider Issues

8. Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?

9. Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?