

# Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 20 April 2023

## PE1867/J: Establish a new national qualification for British Sign Language (BSL)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the British Sign Language (BSL) Plan engagement and consultation plans and progress. I note the detail of Petition PE1867.

### **BSL National Plan engagement and consultation**

As the Committee may be aware, we are currently developing a new BSL National Plan for 2023 – 2029. This has involved the formation of a Short Life Working Group for the plan, consisting of multiple BSL stakeholders: British Deaf Association (BDA), Deaf Action, Deafblind Scotland, Scottish Ethnic Minority Deaf Charity (SEMDC), National Deaf Children's Society, and Scottish Sensory Hub.

My officials have confirmed that we will begin undertaking engagement with this group later this month, to clarify priorities for the plan, where national qualifications in BSL are likely to be raised. As part of this ongoing engagement, BSL organisations will be asked to run their own consultation events in BSL so that there is a two-way dialogue with members of the BSL communities around the plan. This approach will enable BSL-using individuals to raise questions and contribute meaningfully.

For the Committee's awareness, there will also be a standard Scottish Government national consultation alongside this to offer opportunities for public bodies, local authorities and individuals to respond. This consultation will take place over the Summer and analysis of this consultation will help to form priorities and actions for the plan.

I hope the above is helpful in setting out the position in relation to the engagement and consultation process of the BSL National Plan 2023 – 2029, and to addressing the substantive query on the petition in question.

Yours sincerely,

**JENNY GILRUTH MSP**