

**Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee**  
**Tuesday 9 December 2025**  
**29th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)**

## **British Sign Language Inquiry – Note by the Clerk**

### **Introduction**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to help inform the Committee's evidence session with the Deputy First Minister following up on the conclusions of its British Sign Language inquiry. The Deputy First Minister will be supported by the following officials—
  - Kevin McGowan, Unit Head, Equality Division,
  - Andrew Godfrey-Meers, BSL and Social Isolation Policy Manager;
  - Kit Wyeth, Interim Deputy Director Inclusion, Attainment and Wellbeing Division; and
  - Lucinda Fass, Additional Support for Learning Senior Policy Officer.

### **Background information**

2. At its meeting on 4 February 2025 the Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into actions taken by the Scottish Government and listed authorities to tackle barriers faced by BSL users in Scotland ten years on from the passing of the [British Sign Language \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) (BSL Act).
3. The Committee subsequently agreed that the inquiry would take place over a three-week period beginning on 3 June and would focus on—
  - Whether the BSL Act, the current BSL Plan and listed authority plans are improving the lives of BSL users; and
  - What changes could be made in the shorter and longer term to improve the lives of BSL users.
4. The Committee also agreed to issue a call for views running from 3 April to 2 May in response to which 36 submissions were received. All published responses can be accessed on the [Committee's website](#).
5. The Committee took evidence from stakeholders including representatives of Deaf organisations on 3 June. The meeting papers and official report are available on [the Committee's website](#).
6. The Committee then held two informal engagement sessions with BSL users from the British Deaf Association, Deaf Action and Deafblind Scotland on 9 and 10 June to enable them to share their views on progress made in respect of the BSL Act over the last decade along with their priorities for further action. An unattributed note of these discussions will be published in due course, but the points raised in discussions will help inform the Committee's questions at this meeting.

7. The Committee concluded its evidence taking with a session with the Deputy First Minister on 17 June.
8. The Committee published its [report on the inquiry](#) on 26 September. A response is yet to be received from the Scottish Government.
9. At the meeting on 17 June the Deputy First Minister committed to returning to the Committee before the end of the year to follow up on issues arising out the inquiry including the Scottish Government's consultation on "[Teachers of children and young people who are blind or partially sighted, deaf, or deafblind](#)".
10. This session will be an opportunity to follow up on the outcomes of that consultation and the Scottish Government's response to the Committee's report.

## **Next steps**

11. The Committee will be holding a debate in the Chamber on its report on 11 December 2025.

## **Conclusion**

12. The Committee is invited to consider the above information in its evidence sessions with both panels of witnesses.

**Clerks to the Committee**  
**December 2025**