

## Response ID ANON-PYJC-FR1A-Z

Submitted to Sign Language Bill - Call for Evidence  
Submitted on 2025-05-08 21:09:37

### Consent and introduction

What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

N/A

Please confirm you have read the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee privacy notice by clicking the button below.

I have read the privacy notice

Do you consent to your submission being published on the Committee's website and included in the Committee's report?

Yes, publish but with my personal information and any content that could be used to identify me redacted.

### Clause 1

Do you feel Clause 1 goes far enough in formally recognising BSL and ISL as languages of Northern Ireland?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

I wholeheartedly support Clause 1. Officially recognising both BSL and ISL means so much to the Deaf community, and it's a powerful step towards feeling seen, valued, and included. I'm also reassured that existing disability and equality protections will remain in place—it shows real respect and understanding.

### Clause 2

Do you feel Clause 2 goes far enough in promoting the use of BSL and ISL and developing deaf culture?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

I strongly agree with Clause 2. Promoting the use and understanding of both BSL and ISL is essential for breaking down communication barriers and building a more inclusive society. Deaf children deserve access to sign language from an early age, and it's equally important that their families, guardians, and carers are given the chance to learn it too—this helps create stronger, more connected relationships and reduces feelings of isolation.

[REDACTED] Teacher of the Deaf advised [REDACTED] not to learn sign language. Looking back, I do feel that took my language away—and part of my identity. I always knew I was meant to sign—it was in me. I am most myself when I use sign language. It's how I feel most natural and fully expressive.

This clause gives real hope for future generations. It means deaf children and their families won't face the same barriers I did. A true right to access and use BSL or ISL, along with support for the development of Deaf culture, will make a huge difference. It's not just about language, it's about identity, connection, and equality. I fully support it.

Are there any other approaches (apart from providing for the availability of classes) that could help to meet the objective of the greater use and understanding of BSL and ISL?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

1. More Interpreters:

Increase the number of qualified BSL/ISL interpreters in key public settings such as schools, hospitals, and government offices, ensuring deaf individuals can communicate easily in everyday situations. From my own experience, [REDACTED] I struggled to get an interpreter at the hospital on several occasions. Even though I'm quite good at one-to-one communication, I find it challenging with people who aren't familiar with sign language or have different accents. It's no one's fault, but I should be able to fully understand medical information instead of just nodding along without a clear understanding.

2. Online Resources:

England has done well in promoting online resources for BSL, but Northern Ireland still lags behind. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The online resources available aren't the best, and when people research, it tends to be focused on English BSL rather than tailored content for our region. This gap highlights the need for better, more accessible online learning platforms for those in Northern Ireland.

3. Workplace Support:

In my experience working [REDACTED] my employer has been great in supporting me. They always ensure I have an interpreter in meetings, making it easier for me to communicate and be fully included in discussions. This level of support is incredibly valuable and should be more widely adopted in workplaces.

4. Incorporating BSL and ISL in Schools:

While incorporating BSL and ISL into school curricula is essential, it may be tricky as there aren't many qualified Deaf teachers to teach these languages. However, this does highlight a real need for better training and support for teachers to help bridge this gap, ensuring that Deaf students, as well as hearing students, can benefit from learning sign language

### Clause 3

Do you think the duty placed on prescribed organisations to make the information and services accessible to members of the deaf community is sufficient?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

I agree with this clause. It's important that information and services are easy for deaf people to access, without extra cost. If the financial support is available, this would be a great way to make sure everyone can use the services they need, with access to BSL or ISL

### Clause 4

Do you support the approach taken by Clause 4?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

### Clause 5

Do you support the approach to consultation required in Clause 5?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

It's important that the Department for Communities gets feedback from the right people, including the deaf community, to make sure the guidance is helpful and clear

### Clause 6

Do you support the approach taken in this clause?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

In my experience, I usually let people know when I need an interpreter for meetings and that I can't do phone calls. However, sometimes I just struggle and get on with things myself because I don't always feel like giving advice. Clear guidance will help public organisations better support people like me

Do you feel there is anything else this Clause should include?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

The guidance should also highlight the need for accessibility in all areas of public service such as health care, education, and public transport.

As I mentioned before, sometimes I don't always let people know or aware and just get on with things, but I thought it would be better if organisations didn't wait for us to ask. It would be helpful if they were more proactive in making sure deaf people have the support they need.

Encouraging Regular Training for Staff.

## Clause 7

Do you support the provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations detailed in Clause 7?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

Do you support the approach to consultation detailed in Clause 7?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

It's important that any consultation on BSL and ISL includes deaf experts who use these languages (BSL/ISL), ensuring the guidance/requirement is relevant and practical for our community

## Clause 8

Do you feel the level of consultation required in Clause 8 is sufficient?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

## Clause 9

Do you think evaluating the impact of the Bill in a report every five years is an appropriate length of time?

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

I'm not sure about this clause as I'm unsure if five years is the right amount of time. Life moves quickly, especially with the fast pace of technology, and things might change faster than we expect. It could be worth considering a shorter review period to make sure the Bill stays relevant and effective

## Clause 10

Do you support the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL teachers?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

It's important that teachers and interpreters of BSL and ISL are properly trained and accredited to ensure high-quality support for the deaf community

Do you support the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL interpreters?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

I agree with the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL interpreters. It's important that interpreters are highly skilled and qualified, as being an interpreter is not easy and requires great expertise

## Clause 11

Do you agree with the definition of the deaf community provided for in the Bill?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer. Please outline what people or groups you think should be included or excluded and why.

Text box for entering additional information:

## Clause 12

Do you agree with the definition of BSL and ISL provided for in the Bill?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer. If you think there are any aspects missing, please outline what you think should be included.

Text box for entering additional information:

I agreed

## Clause 13

Do you agree with the definition of "everyday reliance" provided in the Bill?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer. If you think there are any aspects missing, please outline what you think should be included.

Text box for entering additional information:

I agree with this clause. An example would be communicating with my child using BSL, which I do regularly because it's the easiest and most effective way for us to communicate.

## Any other comments

Is there anything which you expected the Bill to make provision for which has not been included in the Bill?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

Support for Deaf professionals - The Bill focuses on accreditation for teachers and interpreters but does not address support for deaf individuals pursuing careers in these fields. Providing resources and training opportunities could help build capacity within the deaf community.

One thing I noticed is that the Bill doesn't mention technology or media. These are a huge part of everyday life now, and it's important that BSL and ISL are included in digital services, public information videos, social media, websites, and apps. This would help make sure the deaf community isn't left behind in our fast-changing world. I apologise if I missed it, but I feel it's something that really needs to be included

If you have any other comments in relation to the Bill please tell us here.

Text box to enter additional details:

As mentioned above.