

## Response ID ANON-PYJC-FRHW-D

Submitted to Sign Language Bill - Call for Evidence  
Submitted on 2025-05-02 10:27:35

### Consent and introduction

What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

What is your organisation?

Organisation:  
Belfast City Council

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:

Clause 1 clearly states that British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) is formally recognised as languages of Northern Ireland, whilst preserving the architecture of existing disability and equality legislation that applies to Northern Ireland.

### 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:

We are supportive of this Clause. We welcome the inclusion of available classes for deaf children, their close families, guardians, carers and individuals in the deaf community to learn BSL or ISL.

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?

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

### 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:

We have a Language Strategy which includes Sign Languages as one of the language strands therefore as a public body, we are committed to making sure our information and services are accessible to members of the deaf community.

#### 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:

As a public body, we support this approach.

#### 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:

We will welcome the opportunity to work with the Department for Communities to ensure our information and services are accessible to Sign Language users.

#### 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:

We are satisfied with this approach. We have a Language Strategy Action Plan which covers actions to improve Sign Language provision within the Council therefore we are supportive of developing Sign Language Actions plans and the use of best practice, advice and guidance from the Department for Communities.

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

#### 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:

We welcome the provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations. It is important we are consulted and that our financial and resources implications are considered when drafting the regulations.

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:

We welcome the approach to be consulted on the drafting of the regulations.

### 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:

We support this level of consultation which includes all listed prescribed organisations being involved in the process of drafting regulations.

### Clause 9

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

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

We are supportive of an evaluation report being produced every five years showcasing the impact made.

### 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:

An accreditation scheme for BSL and ISL teachers would assist in our on-going work within the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan. We will be able to identify, approach and supply accredited teachers to deliver Sign Language courses for council staff.

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:

An accreditation scheme for BSL and ISL interpreters would assist the Council in making sure qualified interpreters are placed for required and requested bookings made by Council staff. The scheme will also assist deaf employees in the Council by being able to book qualified interpreters for communication purposes in the workplace.

### 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:

We agree with the inclusion of the above categories as people belonging to the deaf community.

### 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:

We agree with this definition of BSL and ISL.

### 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:

We agree with this definition of "everyday reliance" on BSL and ISL.

### Any other comments

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

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

Text box to enter additional details:

Please note this is an officer response on behalf of Belfast City Council which will require ratification by full Council at their meeting in June.