

## Response ID ANON-PYJC-FRRR-J

Submitted to Sign Language Bill - Call for Evidence  
Submitted on 2025-05-09 19:44:53

### Consent and introduction

What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

[REDACTED]

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?

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

Clause 1 doesn't go far enough. It's good that BSL and ISL are mentioned, but just saying they're recognised isn't enough. There needs to be real support like better access to interpreters, education, and services in sign language.

### Clause 2

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

I don't think it goes far enough. Just saying we support BSL and ISL isn't enough. To really promote them, we need more action like having sign language shown on TV, in schools, and at public events. Without these actions, it's hard for Deaf culture to grow and be respected.

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:

Sign language education, public sign language interpreting, and media representation

### 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:

Apart from classes, we need to see sign language used more in everyday life. This means having interpreters at public events, including sign language in school lessons, and making sure information is available in sign language, like on TV. We should also train people working in public services to understand Deaf culture and learn some sign language.

#### Clause 4

Do you support the approach taken by Clause 4?

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

No, I don't think it's strong enough. Just saying organisations "should" make things accessible isn't the same as making sure they actually do it. There should be clear rules and checks to make sure Deaf people get equal access to services like interpreters at hospitals 24/7, sign language information online, and staff who understand Deaf needs.

#### Clause 5

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

No, because it allows consultation with just one group or person, which is too limited. It risks excluding important voices from the Deaf community. The clause should require input from multiple Deaf-led organisations and individuals with lived experience, and there should be a clear process showing how their feedback is used.

#### Clause 6

Do you support the approach taken in this clause?

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

Just giving advice isn't enough to make real change. Public bodies don't have to follow the guidance, so it might be ignored. Also, it doesn't clearly say that Deaf people should be involved in creating the advice or the action plans. To really support BSL and ISL, the guidance should be stronger, include clear rules, and involve the Deaf community properly.

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:

Involve deaf-led organisations and set clear timelines for compliance

#### Clause 7

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

consultation with the Deaf community is positive, the clause lacks clarity on enforcement. Allowing adjustments based on an organisation's resources could weaken the regulations. There should be stronger safeguards to ensure consistent implementation and clear involvement of the Deaf community in shaping both the regulations and enforcement.

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:

The consultation approach in Clause 7 is a good step, as it involves the Deaf community and relevant organisations before making regulations. However, the effectiveness will depend on how well their feedback is included in the final decisions.

## Clause 8

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

Consulting just one group or person isn't enough. The Deaf community is diverse, so there should be a broader consultation with multiple Deaf-led organisations to ensure all voices are heard.

## Clause 9

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

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

Five years may be too long to wait for an evaluation. It could delay necessary changes and improvements. A shorter evaluation period, such as every two or three years, would allow for quicker adjustments and better monitoring of progress.

## 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:

Accrediting BSL and ISL teachers is important to ensure they are well-trained and qualified. It would help improve the quality of education and communication services, building trust within the Deaf community and attracting skilled professionals.

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:

Creating a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL interpreters is essential to ensure they are properly trained and qualified. It would improve the quality of interpretation services, making communication more accessible and reliable for the Deaf community.

## 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:

The definition is inclusive and covers all people who use BSL or ISL, including deafblind individuals and children of Deaf parents. It ensures that everyone who communicates with sign language is supported under the Bill.

## 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:

The definition includes both visual and tactile forms of BSL and ISL, making sure Deafblind people are included. It's clear and inclusive.

## 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:

The definition is clear and broad enough to cover people who use BSL or ISL daily, whether out of necessity or convenience. It reflects the real-life communication needs of the Deaf community.

## 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:

Shorter review periods: Impact evaluations should happen every 2-3 years instead of every 5.

Greater Deaf community involvement: Ensure ongoing input from multiple Deaf-led organisations in all stages.

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

Text box to enter additional details: