

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?

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

Clause 5 of the proposed legislation states that the Department for Communities must consult “at least one person or group” appearing to represent the deaf community. This is wholly inadequate and frankly shameful. The deaf community is not a monolith, and its members have a wide range of lived experiences, linguistic identities, and perspectives that must be meaningfully represented. Limiting consultation to just one person or group tokenises the community and risks decisions being made based on narrow or unrepresentative input. True consultation must involve a broad and diverse range of deaf individuals and deaf-led organisations. No one person or group can or should claim to speak for an entire community, and this clause must be strengthened to ensure inclusive, transparent, and representative engagement with the deaf community at every stage.

Clause 6

Do you support the approach taken in this clause?

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

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

Not Answered

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?

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

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

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

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:

" and at least one person or group appearing to the Department to be acting on behalf of the deaf community " This is wholly inadequate and frankly shameful. The deaf community is not a monolith, and its members have a wide range of lived experiences, linguistic identities, and perspectives that must be meaningfully represented. Limiting consultation to just one person or group tokenises the community and risks decisions being made based on narrow or unrepresentative input. True consultation must involve a broad and diverse range of deaf individuals and deaf-led organisations. No one person or group can or should claim to speak for an entire community, and this clause must be strengthened to ensure inclusive, transparent, and representative engagement with the deaf community at every stage.

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:

Every 3 years

Clause 10

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

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

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:

Clause 10 proposes that the Department for Communities must make a scheme for the accreditation of BSL and ISL teachers and/or interpreters. While this appears promising on the surface, the reality on the ground exposes deep and damaging flaws that undermine this ambition. The MA Interpreting course recently established in Northern Ireland at QUB September 2024 was promoted as a pipeline to produce 20 new interpreters with deaf led experts in interpreting and with the PROMISE [REDACTED] qualified registered interpreters, but [REDACTED] completely misleading. The majority of students on the course are already qualified or partially qualified interpreters, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] only around five students at most could emerge as new interpreters — and that's an optimistic estimate, given the severe shortcomings in the course's delivery and design. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] a shocking lack of expertise embedded in the course. Deaf lecturers — whose input was promised — are almost entirely absent, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] course content is wholly inadequate, with minimal focus on practical interpreting and no requirement for students to use sign language in class or for assignments. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] there has not been a single formal assessment of students' signing skills. There are no qualified assessors or mentors, and the NRCPD has not recognised or approved the programme. [REDACTED] student was admitted without even holding Level 6 BSL — a basic prerequisite in most interpreting programmes.

How can accreditation be meaningfully discussed when this flagship course — positioned as a key part of interpreter development in NI — is failing so profoundly in standards, transparency, and accountability? As it stands, this scheme risks accrediting underprepared students, some of whom may not be fit to practise. That puts deaf communities at risk. There is a serious concern of language oppression and a total lack of deaf-led quality assurance. We need a clear, accountable framework to ensure accreditation is meaningful, ethical, and genuinely raises the standards of interpreting provision.

. Accreditation takes years to develop properly, with robust infrastructure, experienced staff, and rigorous quality assurance — none of which are currently in place. The money already pumped into this farce has been a complete waste. Instead of creating a substandard course from scratch, that funding could have supported students to train at established institutions with world-renowned expertise in sign language interpreting, such as Heriot-Watt or UCLan in Preston.

Clause 11

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

Not Answered

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?

Not Answered

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:

Clause 13

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

Not Answered

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:

Any other comments

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

Not Answered

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: