

Response ID ANON-PYJC-FR1R-H

Submitted to Sign Language Bill - Call for Evidence
Submitted on 2025-05-07 10:33:11

Consent and introduction

What is your name?

Name:

[REDACTED]

What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Faculty of Public Health

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?

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

Clause 2

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

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

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:

We would encourage the Committee to consider the following in its report to the Assembly:

The Bill makes note of the challenge in accurately estimating the number of BSL and ISL language users. We would support the inclusion of these language options as options in the future for census purposes, as well as encouraging consideration of these language options to be recorded systematically in BSL and ISL users healthcare records. This would support the purpose of the Bill in ensuring those who use BSL and ISL are systematically identified and their language needs considered.

Aligning with clause 5 of the Bill there may be a need for specific action plans for implementation across a range of social and employment settings, including education and healthcare settings (for both staff and service users). It may be helpful for this to include examples of what factors may be at play in the decision making around what is considered a reasonable step for a prescribed organisation to take, and timelines for organisations to demonstrate their alignment with the legislation resulting from this Bill.

Clause 10 supports the accreditation of teachers and interpreters of BSL and ISL. We are supportive of this specific clause as it presents an opportunity to

ensure that BSL and ISL users are less vulnerable to significant variation in the degree and quality of language support they have access to. We would encourage the assembly to consider inclusion of what level of qualification may be required to support BSL and ISL users in specific settings, such as healthcare and education settings, due to the specific language, safeguarding considerations and clear need for accurate communication to avoid detrimental impacts on the BSL or ISL user.

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?

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

Clause 4

Do you support the approach taken by Clause 4?

Not Answered

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:

Aligning with clause 5 of the Bill there may be a need for specific action plans for implementation across a range of social and employment settings, including education and healthcare settings (for both staff and service users). It may be helpful for this to include examples of what factors may be at play in the decision making around what is considered a reasonable step for a prescribed organisation to take, and timelines for organisations to demonstrate their alignment with the legislation resulting from this Bill.

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?

Not Answered

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?

Not Answered

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box for entering additional information:

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:

Clause 10 supports the accreditation of teachers and interpreters of BSL and ISL. We are supportive of this specific clause as it presents an opportunity to ensure that BSL and ISL users are less vulnerable to significant variation in the degree and quality of language support they have access to. We would encourage the assembly to consider inclusion of what level of qualification may be required to support BSL and ISL users in specific settings, such as healthcare and education settings, due to the specific language, safeguarding considerations and clear need for accurate communication to avoid detrimental impacts on the BSL or ISL user.

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:

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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?

Yes

Please give details to support your answer.

Text box to enter additional details:

The Faculty of Public Health welcomes and supports The Sign Language Bill introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

This Bill presents a clear opportunity to further the equity of treatment and experiences of BSL and ISL users, with would support wider actions to address societal disparities in support in accessing key services and experiences, such as education and healthcare.

We would encourage the Committee to consider the following in its report to the Assembly:

The Bill makes note of the challenge in accurately estimating the number of BSL and ISL language users. We would support the inclusion of these language options as options in the future for census purposes, as well as encouraging consideration of these language options to be recorded systematically in BSL and ISL users healthcare records. This would support the purpose of the Bill in ensuring those who use BSL and ISL are systematically identified and their language needs considered.

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

Text box to enter additional details: