

Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y  
Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: British Sign Language (Wales) Bill  
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/522/25

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Equality and Social Justice Committee

23 October 2025

Dear Jenny,

### **British Sign Language (Wales) Bill – Stage 1 Scrutiny**

Thank you for your request for additional information, following my evidence session at the Equality and Social Justice Committee on 13 October 2025. Please find below my responses to the additional points raised.

#### **Action point one:**

At paragraph 234, Sioned Williams asked:

*“We have heard from some witnesses very strong views on whether the BSL adviser should be a deaf BSL signer. However, we've also had evidence that has suggested that perhaps having that as a requirement could be legally problematic. So, what are your views on that?”*

At paragraph 236 the Cabinet Secretary mentioned that this is something Welsh Government might be able to provide further information on.

**ESJ Committee - It would be helpful to receive a note setting out the Welsh Government's view on the competence of requiring the National Adviser to be a Deaf BSL Signer.**

#### **Response**

The Bill is not a Welsh Government Bill and therefore questions about changes to its drafting are ultimately matters for the Member in charge. In addition, the Welsh Government is unable to disclose legal advice. Nevertheless, to assist the committee, there appears to be no legal bar to the Bill requiring that the BSL adviser be deaf. The attention of the committee is drawn, in particular, to section 13(3) of and paragraph 2 of Schedule 3 to the Equality Act 2010.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Regarding legislative competence, the Welsh Government considers that a requirement that the BSL adviser be deaf would be within the legislative competence of the Senedd for the same reasons that the other provisions of the Bill would be.

**Action point two:**

At paragraph 275, Jenny Rathbone asked:

*“I'd just like to ask whether there is any room for adding the beginning of training for more interpreters into the financial impact assessment. Because all the evidence we've heard is telling us that there is a genuine shortage of interpreters and therefore that will be a major barrier to being able to implement the ambitions of the Bill”*

**At paragraph 279, the Cabinet Secretary mentioned that this is something Welsh Government might be able to provide further information on. Again, please can you confirm whether Welsh Government has any further information in this regard.**

**Response**

Data on existing BSL/ Interpreting workforce has been provided by the Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Translators (ASLI). ASLI statistics (July 2025):

- 1,558 Registered Sign Language Interpreters, 54 are based in Wales
- Qualified translators: 5, with 3 currently registered with the regulatory body and accepting work
- Intralingual (relay) interpreters: 4 (3 of those are also translators)

The shortage of BSL translators is a challenge that needs to be addressed, however members of the BSL Stakeholder Group have been clear that any plan to address the shortage should be done in a pragmatic and staged approach. The recommendations from the Group [were published on the Welsh Government website](#) on the 30 September and include a short-term recommendations on the BSL interpreting and translation workforce to map out BSL within the existing teaching workforce to understand levels of BSL provision.

Welsh Government is developing a BSL route map that will set out the initial actions needed to promote and facilitate the use of BSL and to improve outcomes for the deaf BSL signing community in Wales. The short-term actions within this route map will be informed by the Group's recommendations. Welsh Government are working with the BSL Stakeholder Group to develop this. Short term recommendations in the Route Map will be delivered within with a target for completion of 18 months and inform longer term work in relation to the BSL interpreting and translation workforce.


The Group also recommend a long-term recommendation on the BSL interpreting and translation workforce. This involves two aspects:

- Mapping and researching the existing career barriers to becoming and progressing as a BSL interpreter or translator; and
- Working with Careers Wales and other appropriate groups to consider ways in which a career in interpreting or translation could be promoted.

Discussions within the BSL Stakeholder Group highlighted that recommendations must focus on addressing both the existing gaps within BSL interpretation and translation, and the barriers in entering the BSL interpreting/ translation profession to increase the number of people entering the profession. The long-term recommendations should inform the development of the national BSL strategy, BSL guidance and BSL plans. The Bill's emphasis on co-production and stakeholder engagement ensures that implementation will be shaped by the lived experiences of deaf BSL signers, helping to develop meaningful and proportionate action.

Should you require any further clarification, I would be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a distinct 'H'.

**Jane Hutt AS/MS**

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