

The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister for Social Security and Disability
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

16 October 2026

Dear Sir Stephen Timms MP

Section 3 of the British Sign Language Act 2022

I write in relation to the implementation of the British Sign Language Act 2022 ("the 2022 Act"), specifically section 3 which requires the Secretary of State to issue guidance.

Section 3 of the 2022 Act states:

3. Guidance on use of British Sign Language

(1) The Secretary of State must issue guidance, or arrange for guidance to be issued, about the promotion and facilitation of the use of British Sign Language.

(2) Guidance under this section may for example include—

(a) advice for relevant government departments on providing information to the Secretary of State in accordance with section 2(4),

(b) advice on best practice for communicating with British Sign Language users (both when interacting with individuals and when communicating with the public at large), and

(c) case studies to illustrate the value of providing British Sign Language interpretation in communications with the public.

(3) Guidance under this section must not include advice or other material which—

(a) relates only to Scotland and does not relate to reserved matters (within the meaning of the Scotland Act 1998);

(b) relates only to Wales and does not relate to reserved matters (within the meaning of the Government of Wales Act 2006).

(4) The Secretary of State must arrange for any guidance issued under this section to be published.

Section 4(4) of the 2022 Act provides that section 3 will come into force on such day as the Secretary of State appoints by regulations.

Please can you clarify when the Secretary of State intends to bring section 3 into force?

As you may be aware the Equality and Social Justice Committee is currently scrutinising the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill and an answer to the above question would greatly assist the Committee in its scrutiny.

Thank you in advance for considering this issue. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Welsh Parliament