



Alex Paterson  
Chief Executive  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH

[ChiefExecutive@hes.scot](mailto:ChiefExecutive@hes.scot)

T: +44 (0) 131 668 8768

By email to [bslconsult@gov.scot](mailto:bslconsult@gov.scot)

29 May 2017

## **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) NATIONAL PLAN 2017-2023**

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Draft British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023.

Established by the Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014, HES is the lead public body for the historic environment in Scotland. We are a Non-Departmental Public Body and registered Scottish Charity. Our general functions under the 2014 Act are to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment and we are under a statutory duty to carry out our functions with a view to promoting the diversity of persons accessing the historic environment and its collections.

Our 2016-19 Corporate Plan<sup>1</sup>, which sets out our vision, values and strategic objectives, includes a clear commitment to promoting equalities. As part of this, we are committed to working with and listening to young people's views through our learning programmes and are already developing a partnership project with Deaf Action which supports this aim. Further information on HES can be found on our website at [www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot).

We are one of the public authorities covered by the National Plan. The sections relating to Public Services, Employment and Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Arts are of particular relevance to our remit. We welcome the focus on developing guidance and delivering training, on promoting best practice and knowledge-sharing, on improving accessibility, and on developing the BSL skills and capacity needed to support public services.

We have some specific comments to make in relation to steps 45 and 46 under Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Arts, provided overleaf.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/who-we-are/corporate-plan/>



#### **45. Work with Historic Environment Scotland to introduce British Sign Language tours in historic buildings in order to improve access for BSL users.**

Our published *Access Policy for Properties in Care and their Associated Collections*<sup>2</sup> relates to the 336 properties and associated collections that we manage and operate on behalf of Scottish Ministers under the terms of two Schemes of Delegation. It includes reference to our having begun work to produce a BSL delivery plan in relation to Properties in Care which will incorporate a range of actions intended to improve access for BSL users, including BSL tours. We suggest that in the final draft of the National Plan the wording for Step 45 should mirror this, thus:

Work with Historic Environment Scotland to produce a BSL Delivery Plan for the historic properties in their care in order to improve access for BSL users.

As we are also the lead public body for the historic environment sector consideration could be given to adding an additional step that makes a commitment to work with or support Historic Environment Scotland to promote access to the wider historic environment, including historic places and information on the historic environment.

#### **46. Work to ensure that everyone is empowered to access and participate in Scotland's culture. The new Cultural Strategy will be owned by the people of Scotland and will be co-created with artists, cultural producers and anyone else with an interest across the sector.**

Culture in its widest definition can encompass heritage and the historic environment. This is how it is used in the title of the section, although the Arts could also be included in this definition. In focusing on the Cultural Strategy however, which we understand to be currently in development, it appears that a narrower definition is being used here. Reference is also made to the Arts in the form of 'artists and cultural producers'. We would suggest that the first sentence be retained and that by definition it should cover heritage and the historic environment, as well as the Arts. If reference to the Culture Strategy is retained however then it would be useful to reference Scotland's Strategy for the Historic Environment – Our Place in Time also.

Overall we support the policy aims of the draft National Plan and are pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

Yours sincerely,

**Historic Environment Scotland**

---

2 <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/media/2559/hes-access-policy.pdf>