



# **The Supported Needs & Disability Office**

## **British Sign Language Act (2022) Report - May 2024**



## Duty of Minister

- As required by the British Sign Language Act (2022), the Minister for Equality has a duty to prepare and publish a BSL report for each reporting period (April 2023).
- To obtain a more up to date picture, the Minister asked all relevant departments to further provide an update of the information provided since April 2023 up to March 2024.
- The Report will describe what each relevant public authority has done to promote or facilitate the use of BSL in its communications to the public.





## **Departments were asked a number of questions in a questionnaire format. These were as follows:**

Q1. Has your department/agency made use of BSL services during the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A1. Six Departments/Agencies replied to this question with a yes, these were: No 6 Convent Place, Ministry of Health, Public Utilities, Digital and Financial Services, Royal Gibraltar Police, Department of Education, GBC and GHA.



Q2. How often has your department/agency offered or provided BSL services in relation to any public announcement made about policy or about changes to the law during the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A2. One Department replied to this question with a yes, this was: Department of Education.





Q3. How often has your department/agency offered or provided BSL services in relation to the publication of any public announcement be it of any plan, strategy, consultation document or consultation response, or any explanatory or supporting material during the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A3. GBC replied to this question with: In full current season of GibTalks where a camera was dedicated for BSL and inserted in programme with pic in pic x 8 episodes.

The Director for Civil Aviation replied with: All public announcements will be made via the Government Media Team and thus we would use their facilities.



Q4. How often has your department/agency offered or provided BSL services in relation to press conferences, social media or government website to publicise any of your activities or policies during the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A4. The Department of Education provided a reply of once.





Q5. How often has your department/agency used the services of a BSL interpreter for face to face meetings within the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A5. GBC replied to this question with: Various where available in public meetings and coverage on news and programming has reflected that.

The Department of Education used the services of a BSL interpreter once.

The GHA used the services of a BSL interpreter from 10-15 times.



Q6. How often has your department/agency used the services of online BSL video interpretation services for face to face meetings within the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A6. No 6 Convent Place replied with eight occurrences, the Department of Education replied with five occurrences and the Royal Gibraltar Police replied with two occurrences.

The GHA uses the services of BSL video regularly.





Q7. Has your department/agency promoted the use of BSL services during the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A7. The following Departments/Agencies replied that they had promoted the use of BSL services:

GBC, No 6 Convent Place, Ministry of Health, Public Utilities, Department of Education, Ministry of Equality, Civil Status and Registration Office, Office of Fair Trading, Therapeutic Team at Care Agency, Gibraltar Regulatory Authority, Gibraltar Audit Office, Treasury Department, Department of Employment, Gibraltar Courts Service, Gibraltar National Museum, Environmental Agency and GHA.



Q8. Please provide more information on how your department/agency has promoted the use of BSL services during the reporting period (16/6/22 - 30/4/23)?

A8. The following replies were received:

GBC: GBC News will show the BSL interpreter from public events, when available, to help create awareness, we have also carried out numerous interviews with GHITA and other Campaigners including a Viewpoint programme on the matter.

No 6 Convent Place: We have signposted service users and other departments / agencies to Richard Weaver, Pradigan and Gill Earle.





## A8. Continued

Ministry of Health: The Minister has held meetings with GHITA as well as with GBC in order to progress and discuss more ways of incorporating BSL within programming and in their future increased social media presence.

Department of Education: We always ask our BSL users whether they want a face to face interpreter or SignVideo depending on the meeting/activity.

We have liaised with other agencies to facilitate for the young people whose parents communicate using BSL.

Our Nurses in St Martin's School are training in BSL in order to be ready to offer it if required for communication purposes in the nursing station at school.



## A8. Continued

**Ministry of Equality:** The Ministry of Equality sponsored an online BSL Level 1 course for 10 people and subsequently paid a bursary to GHITA to invest in the promotion of BSL Level 2.

**Civil Status and Registration Office:** There is signage available offering the use of BSL to clients that may require this facility.

**Office of Fair Trading:** We have placed a sign in our public counter informing service users that those who use BSL can be assisted by our staff.

Our counter staff is trained to deal with requests to use BSL and there is a laptop set up in the office with access to a BSL interpreter through the Sign Video app as per Circular 05 of 2022.





## A8. Continued

Therapeutic Team at Care Agency: specialised equipment available in interview rooms and awareness to need, which should context arise, will be offered .

Gibraltar Regulatory Authority: Staff from relevant Divisions have completed the "Short Introductory Course including signature unit 101 assessment" in BSL provided by SigncodeUK in March 2023.



## A8. Continued

Gibraltar Audit Office: The Gibraltar Audit Office ("GAO") has no dealings with members of the public. The work of the GAO, as external public auditors to the Government of Gibraltar, involves interacting with staff of Government departments and statutory authorities and agencies. Nevertheless, officers of the GAO have been advised that in the event of coming into contact (within the precincts of the GAO) with staff of Government departments that have hearing difficulties, that they make use of the British Sign Language speaking service via the Sign Video Application, which has been installed in the GAO Board Room, in order to effectively communicate with the individual concerned.

Treasury Department: Gibraltar Savings Bank Reception has 2 notices informing clients that BSL Sign Video service is available.





## A8. Continued

Department of Employment: We have two members of staff who have undertaken the BSL Level 1 course, one of which was in the last intake. We would offer this course again to other staff members should this be available.

Gibraltar Courts Service: A departmental process was introduced to facilitate this service to service users that may need this reasonable adjustment. All members of staff in public facing roles as well as management have been made aware of the process. Notices have been placed at both our counters and in the Gibraltar Courts Service website notifying service users that BSL services are available at our counters.



## A8. Continued

Gibraltar National Museum: we have attempted to use a BSL interpreter for our Museum Lectures, but have been unable to do so as there are very few names, none of whom are resident in Gibraltar, and only one is resident in Spain. That person was unavailable on the dates that we required. We have also been in contact with GHITA.

Environmental Agency: Laptop with webcam installed with Sign Video Application. Instructions provided to staff when providing services to those in need of an interpreter.

Signs at counter to show service users that a video interpreter is available.

The GHA has promoted the use of BSL through Social Media.





Q9. Have there been any updates since 30/4/23 up to 12/4/24?

A9. The following Departments said there had been updates since the last reporting period:

GBC, No 6 Convent Place, Civil Status and Registration Office, Therapeutic Team at the Care Agency, Department of Employment, Civil Aviation, Housing Department, Gibraltar Maritime Administration.



Q10. What have been the updates since 30/4/23 up to 12/4/24?

A10. GBC: New season of GibTalks, which airs after Easter, will air with BSL.

No 6 Convent Place: An interpreter was used for both the Disability Fair and Open Hall Discussion for the Disability Council.

Civil Status and Registration Office: A BSL online video service has been used once since last updated.

Therapeutic Team at the Care Agency: An interpreter has been used for the Care Agency awards as well as in at least one meeting with a stakeholder.





A10. Continued.

Department of Employment: One officer in the Department has a BSL level 1 and another has BSL levels 1, 2 & 3.

Housing Department: Arrangements have not been necessary thus far but meetings away from the counter can be arranged. Additionally, a hearing loop has been installed.



A10. Continued.

Gibraltar Maritime Administration: Since 23 June 2024, there here is a sign in our public counter advising members of the public who may require use of British Sign Language that a facility is available for them within GMA premises.

The facility of "Sign Video", which is made available within the office to any customers who may require use of British Sign Language in order to facilitate communication with our members of the GMA staff.





Conclusion by the Minister for Equality, The Hon. Christian Santos GMD MP:

I am pleased to report that more departments/agencies are promoting and facilitating the use of BSL in their communications to the public, year on year. This demonstrates that these departments have more awareness and have better access to available information and services. The Ministry of Equality will continue to work with GHITA and other relevant groups and individuals to continue this growth. In the following year, discussions will take place with the Parliamentary Select Committee to review progress and find ways of continuing this upward trend.



ENDS