

**Your email address:** louise.bellamy@nottsc.gov.uk

**Your name:** Louise Bellamy

**Your department:** Adult Social Care and Public Health

**Your job role:** Commissioning Officer

**Description of what the Equality Impact Assessment is for. (Do not use acronyms or jargon so that the title is easily understood by the general public.):** The re-commissioning of the Sign Language Interpretation Service (SLIS)

**Which document, report, Option for Change, Committee report etc. are the details set out in? (Please make sure the relevant report references this EqIA.) :** Report to Senior Leadership Team- held 21st June 2023.

**What are the aims of your proposed activity / policy? (Please keep to approximately 100 words.):** The Equality Impact Assessment is for the recommissioning of the Sign Language Interpretation Service (SLIS) which provides British Sign Language interpretation for D/deaf people within Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. The provision of British Sign Language Interpreters enables the D/deaf people to engage with the Council. The population of D/deaf BSL users in Nottinghamshire isn't accurately known. The 2021 census, which it had been hoped would give a clearer picture, only identified 241 people aged three and over who have BSL as their main language.

There are 604 people who are known to Adult Deaf and Visual Impairment Service (ADVIS) as D/deaf (with and without speech) and Nottinghamshire Deaf Society estimate contact with around 400 people (although this includes people from Nottingham City). British Deaf Association estimates are higher than all these figures. The aims of the SLIS provision is centred around promoting equality, accessibility, and inclusivity for all BSL users. There is focus on bridging the linguistic gap between D/deaf and hearing people to enable meaningful interactions with the Council and engagement with required activities.

The provision of SLIS will promote equitable access to information which will empower and support D/deaf people who use British or Other Language Sign Language users to exercise their rights, make informed decisions, to be able to express their views, opinions and to be actively involved in decision making about their lives.

**Is a detailed impact assessment and consultation required?:** Yes a detailed impact assessment and consultation is required.

**Who are the main internal and external stakeholder groups that will be affected? (Please tick select all that are relevant.):** Children, Young people, Parents, Families, Residents, Elderly people

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please  
select  
one  
option  
at a  
time:**

**Positive impact**

Positive impact This service is an all-age offer, data shows that in terms of age, the current SLIS use is highest amongst 55–64 year olds, followed by 45-54 and 65–74 year olds. Over time, it is expected that the use of cochlear implants and digital literacy will reduce the need for interpreting services, but for now there is sustained demand. The offer will be delivered through face to face interpreting and remote interactions, the D/deaf coproduction group share that not everyone is au fait with technology, including older adults and whilst it is expected the provider will support people to be familiarised with technology the face-to-face offer is important.

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

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**Positive impact**

Positive impact The SLIS contract will incorporate Deaf Relay Interpreters, a qualified Deaf interpreter who works alongside BSL interpreters with people who are D/deaf and have a specific language need. This could be due to a disability, mental health condition, limited language development or being a non-native BSL user. The provision of a Deaf Relay Interpreters was highlighted as a current gap and priority by ADVIS and the D/deaf co-production group. The service will be accessed by professionals booking an interpreter on behalf of a D/deaf person, the aim of this is to make access as simple as possible. Consultation with D/deaf people shares that trying to co-ordinate services for appointments is difficult.

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please select one option at a time:**

Not applicable

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please select one option at a time:**

Not applicable

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please  
select  
one  
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**Positive impact**

Positive  
impact

The specification requests the Provider has an awareness of cultural attitudes and beliefs, to influence and reflect the acceptable standard and appropriateness of care. D/deaf people using this service will be given an opportunity to request an interpreter of a specified cultural identity and where this is not possible, the Provider shall offer the choice to continue with the appointment with an interpreter who is not of the specified cultural identity, or to cancel and re-book the appointment at such time as is available. The Provider will be expected to support its staff to develop cultural competence through means of training, supervision, and reflective practice. The Provider will ensure data on service usage by ethnicity are collected as fully as possible and routinely monitored and evaluated. Any gaps in provision must be highlighted and discussed with Commissioners at the earliest opportunity to consider action that can be taken.

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please select one option at a time:**

Not applicable

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

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**Positive impact**

Positive  
impact

D/deaf people using this service will be given an opportunity to request an interpreter of a specified gender and where this is not possible, the Provider shall offer the choice to continue with the appointment with an interpreter who is not of the specified gender, or to cancel and re-book the appointment at such time as is available. Research has shown that this is important to D/deaf people in situations such a medical examinations.

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please select one option at a time:**

Not applicable

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please select one option at a time:**

Not applicable

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

<b>Please select one option at a time:</b>	<b>Positive impact</b>
Positive impact	<p>The provision of SLIS for people who use BSL as their primary method of communication is significant, this service can lead to numerous benefits for D/deaf people in various aspects of their lives, promoting equality and inclusion. Some of these aspects include: - Improved access to information - Enhanced communication and inclusion - Equal access to services - Empowering people to advocate for their own needs and rights - Cultural and Linguistic recognition - Positive impact on mental health - Compliance with Equality Laws and Policies (BSL Act 2022, Care Act, Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act1970, Equality Act 2010) The SLIS contract can be accessed via face-to-face interpreting at appointments, including out of hours emergencies and online via Video Remote Interactive sessions. This scope of access allows for people who use BSL to have choice surrounding which platform of communication works best for them at that time. The SLIS contract will also provide D/deaf translation for the purposes of creating BSL signed video communications. This supports delivery of key messages through the Council's online presence; promotion of services; and the dissemination of summary information from meetings with D/deaf people. This type of service is currently being acquired through spot purchasing. The current SLIS contract enables D/deaf people to 'drop in' at a session for interpreting, the uptake for this has been very low. The current provider shares that County residents will access City drop-in sessions; these are well attended. The new SLIS contact doesn't offer drop-in sessions, it is for the Council to book an interpreter on behalf of the Deaf person. This will not leave a service gap for County residents as a separate D/deaf Prevention Service offers this. The Provider will support D/deaf people who are non-native BSL users.</p>

**Click the button to add your impact assessment for...:**

**Please indicate when you would like to revisit this policy or activity..**6 months

**Will you monitor the impact yourself?:**Yes

**Monitor name:** Louise Bellamy

**Monitor Email:** louise.bellamy@nottsc.gov.uk

**Are there any other people involved in undertaking this assessment besides yourself, the Monitoring person and the Approver?:** No

**Does this policy / activity rely on, relate to or mention any other policy?:**No

**Consultation exercise:** Consultation exercise already done

**Please give details of the consultation exercise undertaken.:**City Council have led on engagement work with a range of professional services and the experience of interpreters. County Council have consulted with the D/deaf co-production group and the ADVIS team manager/ senior

practitioner.

**Please indicate with whom you consulted and the outcome of the discussions.** Led by the City Council, review work undertaken has considered the views of a range of professional services and the experience of interpreters. From work carried out, it has been identified a number of things that will be taken into account when developing the specification for the future service:

- a. There is a need to ensure that interpreting retains a local focus as BSL is influenced by local 'dialects', meaning different signs are used in different parts of the country.
- b. There is currently a service gap around Deaf relay interpreters, where a qualified D/deaf interpreter works alongside a BSL interpreter to support effective communication, e.g. where a D/deaf person may have additional communication needs due to limited language, poor mental health or where there is more complex subject matter.
- c. There is also a need for, under a contractual arrangement, D/deaf translation for the purposes of creating BSL signed video communications. This supports delivery of key messages through the Council's online presence; promotion of services; and the dissemination of summary information from meetings with D/deaf people. This type of service is currently being acquired through spot purchasing.

Nottinghamshire County Council led on an engagement activity with the D/deaf co-production group, 6 D/deaf people who use BSL attended, 1 person also had a visual impairment. This shared several views on what an effective SLIS provision would look like:

- a. It was felt positive that a professional would book an interpreter for the D/deaf person, otherwise this is a lot of back and forwarding for the D/deaf person liaising with two agencies.
- b. All group members strongly felt that there is a requirement for face-to-face interpreting, sign language is a 4D language and screens make it 2D. Those with sight issues find it very difficult to use remote interpreters, using screens for visual impairment isn't good.
- c. BSL Video Remote Interpreting & BSL Video Relay Service is useful in emergency situations, it wasn't felt suitable for more complex appointments such as social care assessments or pre planned medical appointments.
- d. The group felt Deaf Relay Translation is very important, some D/deaf people prefer to communicate through a D/deaf person, particularly with health issues that are more complicated to sign.
- e. People who are culturally D/deaf have the crucial skills to help with this translation. It was felt that not everyone would need Deaf Relay Translation, but due to D/deaf people missing out on such a lot of information from the hearing world there are gaps in knowledge. It was shared that this moderation was felt to be critical – especially for more complex messages and those with learning difficulties and/or mental health needs.

Quotes from the group: "I can explain in what we say is 'the Deaf way'". "Gentle way to talk Deaf person to Deaf person is much better – the cultural part is so crucial for the lived experience understanding".

- f. It was felt that a local signer is better with the local linguistics, some freelancers are good but it's better to have the same people signing as you build relationships and interpreter knows your best way of communicating.
- g. In relation to pre-planned drop-in interpreting sessions, it was felt this is required and should be accessible during the week at varying times. This is to enable better accessibility vs all sessions held on one day. N.B this offer will sit in the D/deaf Prevention service for County residents, not SLIS.
- h. The group were not as interested in understanding how payment to the Provider is made, more about the service. Quote from the group: "We just want to have good quality people and have a choice of people to use, we don't mind about the funding stream".

h. It was felt that when the new service 'goes live' there needs to be excellent communication to people and services, people need to know how to book the service and when they should use it. It was also felt that office staff should have D/deaf awareness training to understand communication needs.

**Who will Approve this Equalities Impact Assessment? :**

Employee search	Select person
lyn farrow	Lyn Farrow - lyn.farrow@nottsc.gov.uk (lf39)

**Approver name:** Lyn Farrow

**Approver Email:** lyn.farrow@nottsc.gov.uk