

Review of methods used to collect data on British Sign Language (BSL) use and prevalence



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Summary

This is an exciting opportunity to do a work placement on a project for the Welsh Government. The successful applicant will work closely with Welsh Government officials to research and review current methods of collecting data on BSL use and prevalence, identifying barriers and examples of best practice to inform decisions on how data collection processes in Wales may be improved in the future. The applicant will have the opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills and to enhance their knowledge of research outside academia.

The Organisation

The Welsh Government is the devolved Government for Wales with responsibility for the economy, education, health and the Welsh NHS, business, public services and the environment of Wales.

Specifically, the internship will be based within Knowledge and Analytic services (KAS). KAS provides the collection, analysis and presentation of research and data for policymakers and the general public in keeping with professional standards. They offer independent evidence to understand, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies. KAS also supports policy colleagues with policy development, implementation and delivery.

The Internship

The intern will be part of a team supporting the British Sign Language (BSL) policy area. The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of Welsh Government. The internship will require working closely with policy officials and researchers, and will provide an opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance policy knowledge.

The successful candidate will benefit from development opportunities offered centrally by the Welsh Government, potentially including mentoring, shadowing, peer support and training.

Interns will benefit from the experience of working closely with the Welsh Government:

- Gaining a better understanding of the world outside of academia and increasing employability, using their knowledge and skills to contribute to the work of the Welsh Government.
- The intern's colleagues at the Welsh Government can offer an insight into the intern's PhD project that can contribute to the success of their thesis', as well as networking opportunities within the policy arena linked to their research area
- Transferable skills and knowledge
- Time management skills
- Report writing skills

The Project:

Review of methods used to collect data on British Sign Language (BSL) use and prevalence

Background

The BSL stakeholder task and finish group was established in January 2025, following the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip's written statement published in November 2024.

The purpose of the group was to develop a set of key recommendations to inform the Welsh Government's production of a BSL policy 'route map'. The 'route map' will outline the short-term actions Welsh Government will take to strengthen the recognition and provision of BSL, ensure equal access and outcomes, equal language rights, and the empowerment of Welsh deaf leadership.

The group met monthly between January – July 2025 to explore language barriers and the actions required to ensure equitable access to information and services for deaf BSL signers across a broad range of policy areas. The group discussed challenges and priority areas.

The group brought together a diverse and representative mix of stakeholders, including deaf organisations and charities, each contributing valuable expertise and lived experience. Discussions were undertaken in BSL as the primary language of the meeting, the group was also co-chaired by two deaf BSL signers.

The BSL Stakeholder group raised that there is often a lack of rich and representative BSL data and that often within data collection there is often no defined category for recording BSL data. The BSL Stakeholder group have recommended Welsh Government should commission research to explore what barriers exist when collecting and collating BSL data, to inform any future statistics data collection. This information could then be used to inform data collection for BSL to ensure parity between language data collection.

Welsh Government will use the recommendations provided by the group to inform and develop the BSL Route Map. The Route Map will include the short-term recommendations and actions needed to improve the lives of BSL signers in Wales and to support to promotion and facilitation of BSL across our Welsh public services.

Anticipated project outcomes:

It is anticipated that the outcome of this project will comprise a publishable report and presentation of findings to cover:

- A review of the ways in which BSL data is currently collected in Wales and at a UK level, including identification of existing barriers
- A review of how BSL data is collected elsewhere, including the identification of 'best practice' examples
- Consideration of how data on other languages (i.e. Welsh) is collected, including any lessons that may be learned for BSL data collection.
- Recommendations for 'next steps' on improving BSL data collection in Wales

Internship responsibilities and requirements

The internship will last for a maximum of 3 months. Full time students are expected to step back from their PhD to focus on the placement for its duration in line with ESRC guidelines ([ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#) p. 27). Applications are encouraged from part-time students.

It is anticipated that the successful applicant will work in a hybrid way between home and a Welsh Government office during their internship. This may change depending on Welsh Government policy. Any changes to working arrangements will be discussed with successful applicants.

The internship will last for a period of 3 months full-time or the part-time equivalent. For students registered on a part-time studentship, this internship is available on a part-time basis over a longer time frame (no fewer than three days a working week), this would be negotiated between the WG and the successful applicant. If you would like to be considered on a part-time basis, please specify your preferred working hours on the application form.

Student specification

The student must have:

- A willingness to learn about the background and history of BSL in Wales. An appreciation of the concept of BSL as a language and the language rights of BSL users.
- An ability to identify and critically review relevant evidence, aligned to the requirements of the project
- An ability to accurately evaluate and present research findings, and apply them in a Welsh Government context
- An ability to produce concise, well written documents, presenting complex evidence in an accessible format.

Start date of internship

January 2026 (exact date to be negotiated). There may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

Funding and costs

Reasonable travel costs for students not normally based in Cardiff can be met. Requests should be consistent with Wales Graduate School for the Social Sciences (WGSSS) guidelines. Applications from students requiring additional funding for travel and accommodation will not be treated less favourably. For any queries on this please contact Katy Marrin Katy.Marrin001@gov.wales and Jo Coates Joanne.Coates@gov.wales.

Security

The Welsh Government's vetting procedures (which apply to temporary as well as permanent staff) involve the completion of a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) application form and a Security Questionnaire for the purpose of security vetting.

This process requires the applicant to produce in person three original forms of identification documents, one of which should be photographic (passport, new driving license), one document should showing their current address, plus one of: a utility bill, birth certificate, P45 or P60.

Nationality requirements

'Eligibility for taking up an internship on this scheme is dependent on meeting the [Civil Service Nationality rules](#). Please check that you are eligible before applying. Those who do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be able to take up a placement opportunity.

Queries

Any queries relating to the post or application process should be directed to equalityevidenceunit@gov.wales.

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