

Betting on deaf children's futures: how far are the Scottish and Welsh approaches ensuring the inclusion of BSL in deaf education?

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The research question



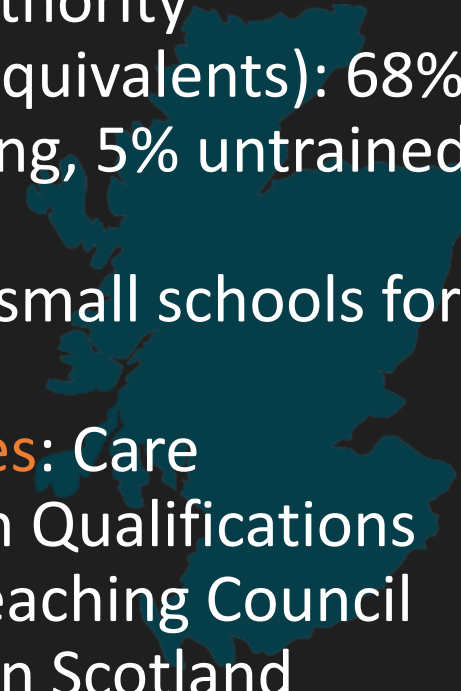
How does the approach of the devolved administrations of Scotland and Wales to language planning support the promotion and encouragement of BSL in deaf education?

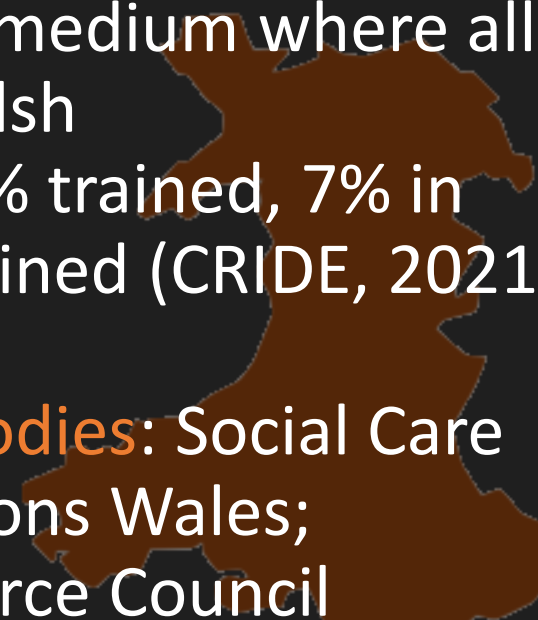


Sub-questions

- What approach(es) do Scotland and Wales take to language planning?
- How do key stakeholders in Scotland and Wales conceptualise BSL in terms of *deaf-disabled* and *language-minority* rights?
- To what extent does the *deaf-disabled* paradigm persist in Scotland and Wales in the context of deaf education?
- What role do national bodies, local authorities and parents of deaf children have in relation to deaf children's use of BSL and bilingual potential?

Comparing the education systems of Scotland and Wales

- **Key principle in Scotland** is the presumption of mainstreaming
 - Does not apply to Gaelic-Medium Education. Parents can request placement in Gaelic Medium Schools outside their local authority
 - **ToDs** (132 Full Time Equivalents): 68% trained, 27% in training, 5% untrained (CRIDE, 2021)
 - 14 resource bases, 3 small schools for deaf children
 - **Relevant public bodies:** Care Inspectorate; Scottish Qualifications Authority; General Teaching Council of Scotland; Education Scotland
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- **Key principle in Wales** is bilingualism in English and Welsh. All children learn Welsh. Mainstreaming for deaf children.
 - Parents can choose Welsh-medium school or English-medium where all children learn Welsh
 - **ToDs** (60 FTE): 91% trained, 7% in training, 2% untrained (CRIDE, 2021)
 - 20 resource bases
 - **Relevant public bodies:** Social Care Wales; Qualifications Wales; Education Workforce Council
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The Scottish approach

BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

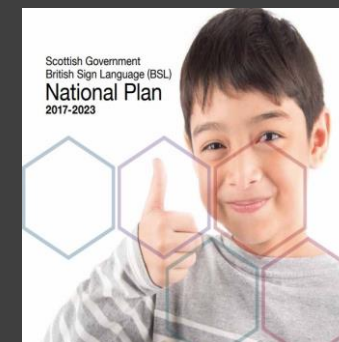
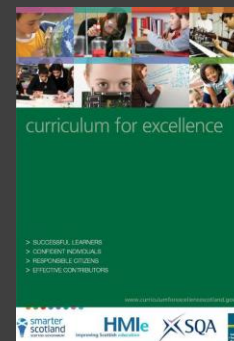
- Aims to promote use and understanding of BSL
- Requires the Scottish Government to prepare and publish a national plan
- Requires public authorities to prepare and publish own BSL plans
- Scottish Government must publish national plan every six years
- Similar to Gaelic, Act does not establish any rights in education, even though key concern of deaf campaigners

Curriculum for Excellence

- Scottish Government sets guidelines about school curriculum
- Four Capacities
- 3 core subjects: literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- Curriculum entitlements
- Eight curriculum areas
- Languages: 1+2 approach; L1 – speak at home; L2 – choose from 8 languages; L3 - second additional language subject to availability, **can include BSL**

National BSL Plan

- Current plan 2017-2023
- Goals related to deaf education
 - Early Family resources in BSL: Councils (Goals 10-13)
 - GTCS to remove barriers for BSL users to become registered teachers (Goal 16)
 - Education Scotland to lead on work with parents who use BSL so they can get involved in their child's learning (Goals 20-21)
 - Scottish ministers to look into level of BSL held by teachers and support staff of deaf children in schools (Goal 17)
 - Scottish Qualifications Authority to develop an initial suite of awards in BSL (Goal 19)
 - Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) to lead work to support BSL learning for hearing pupils. (Goals 23-24)
 - Scottish Funding Council to support colleges and universities in developing BSL plans (Goal 26)
 - Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS) to offer accessible advice and guidance to students who use BSL (Goal 27).



The Welsh approach

A BSL Act for Wales?

- Campaign for a BSL Act in Wales since 1999
- Deffo!, deaf youth forum, submitted petition to Senedd in 2019 to improve access to education and services – successfully received, but no further action taken
- Motion NDM7478 by Mark Isherwood MS – Senedd passed in February 2021; not picked up through Private Members Bill ballot
- Motion NDM8093 by Mark Isherwood MS – Senedd passed December 2022
 - Includes a BSL Commissioner, and aims to improve access to education in BSL
- Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice - waiting for British Deaf Association to complete BSL audit then will ask Disability Rights Taskforce to look at recommendations which are likely to include BSL Act for Wales

Curriculum for Wales

- To be introduced in school classrooms from nursery to Year 7 in 2022, Year 8 in 2023, Year 9 in 2024, Year 10 in 2025 and Year 11 in 2026
- Four Purposes that guide whole curriculum
- Six Areas of Learning and Experience
- Affords more flexibility and autonomy to teachers and schools
- A co-constructed curriculum
- English and Welsh
- International languages include BSL
 - A translanguaging approach to learning languages
- BSL Glossary Group
 - Focus groups, feedback, involvement of SSC

Easy Read

ADDYSG CYMRU
EDUCATION WALES
Yn hyrwyddu'r iaith Gymraeg yn ysgolion

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

A new curriculum in Wales

Changing the way children and young people learn in school

This document was written by Welsh Government. It is an easy read version of 'The Curriculum for Wales: Guidance on Curriculum Design and Implementation'.
January 2020

Interviews

Stakeholder category	Number of interviews	
	Scotland	Wales
Civil servants	1	1
Colleges and universities	1	1
Local authorities	2	
National public bodies	3*	
Teachers of the Deaf	2	2
Third sector organisations	2 [†]	4 [†]
Total	11	8

* One of these interviews had two individuals representing one national public body

† One of these interviews involved three representatives in one organisation covering Scotland and Wales between them

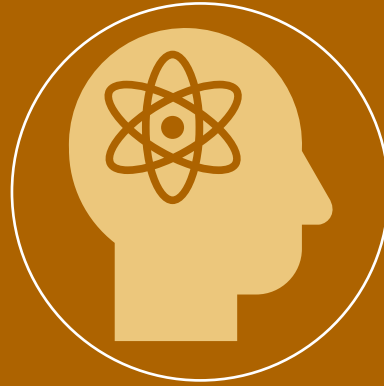
Findings



Influence of
medical
intervention



Resources
(curriculum
development
and staffing)



Need for more
training in
language
pedagogy and
how it relates to
deaf children



Example of
Welsh and Gaelic
language
education



Gaps in early
years education
for deaf children



The research question



How does the approach of the devolved administrations of Scotland and Wales to language planning support the promotion and encouragement of BSL in deaf education?

Sub-questions



- What approach(es) do Scotland and Wales take to language planning? **Varied and successful in relation to Welsh and Gaelic**
- How do key stakeholders in Scotland and Wales conceptualise BSL in terms of *deaf-disabled* and *language-minority* rights? **Little confidence in bilingualism from ToDs**
- To what extent does the *deaf-disabled* paradigm persist in Scotland and Wales in the context of deaf education? **This viewpoint is dominant.**
- What role do national bodies, local authorities and parents of deaf children have in relation to deaf children's use of BSL and bilingual potential? **Strategic role – not being used yet in deaf educational settings.**

Recommendations: early years



Training for health professionals

- Early support vital for deaf children
- Importance of language acquisition in early years
- For midwives to health visitors, newborn hearing screening, ENT consultants, audiology departments
- Twf/Cymraeg i Blant model



Upskilling for nursery care workers

- Funding for some nursery care workers to learn fluent BSL
- Cymraeg i Blant/Mudiad Meithrin model
- BSL-medium nurseries?



BSL therapists

- Develop new profession
- Central and peripatetic services
- BSL teachers

Recommendations: resources



Mapping exercise

- Need to identify and map qualifications and skills gap amongst people teaching BSL (ABSLTA survey)
- Establish numbers of BSL teachers in Wales and Scotland
- Gain qualified teacher status and accredit tutors to work in schools



Welsh-Scottish approach to upskilling

- BSL degrees
- Work in partnership with ToD qualification provider to provide more opportunities for (language) teachers in Wales to qualify as ToDs
- Accredited/set up PGCE course in Wales for BSL teachers
- ToD course in Wales



Language sabbaticals

- Common for Welsh- and Gaelic-medium teachers
- Never heard of in deaf education
- Raise standards for teaching through BSL for deaf children



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References

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