

Scotland's Big Event explained in British Sign Language



Scotland's Deaf community will have an opportunity to put their questions on the Scottish Independence Referendum to the Yes Scotland and Better Together Campaigns at a British Sign Language (BSL) Question Time style event today.

The British Deaf Association (BDA), in partnership with Heriot-Watt and Edinburgh Universities, is hosting the event as part of the BDA's first ever Sign Language Week which is campaigning to strengthen the rights of BSL users.

Over 12,500 people in Scotland use BSL in the home, yet they share far fewer than 100 interpreters. This event will offer a unique opportunity to get their questions answered live and find out how the Referendum may affect them.

Earlier this week the British Deaf Association launched the first in a series of reports to build the case for legal recognition of BSL and ISL which will ultimately lead to a call for Westminster to introduce an Act to the UK Parliament.

The Scottish Parliament already intends to introduce a BSL Bill later this year to raise awareness of BSL across Scottish Society and break down the barriers facing Scotland's Deaf population. The public consultation received one of the highest responses with almost 1,200 people having their say.

David Buxton, CEO of the British Deaf Association explains, "Our recent report shows that British Sign Language users are still not getting the support they need. There are far too many cases of Deaf people being denied their civil rights and

access to essential services, such as healthcare. That's why events such as this Deaf Question Time are essential in helping the Deaf Community make decisions that can help shape their own future."

Prof Graham Turner, Chair of Interpreting and Translation Studies at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh added, "Scotland is already leading the way in helping to train qualified BSL interpreters and improve access to services for BSL users. The forthcoming BSL Bill will go a long way in raising awareness of the issues Deaf people encounter on a daily basis more widely and help implement solutions to ensure they have equal rights."

To watch the question time live, visit http://www.bda.org.uk/Scottish_Independence_Referendum