

Co-chair appointed to BSL Board advising Government on key issues for Deaf people

- Minister for Disabled People, Tom Pursglove, announces the appointment of Craig Crowley MBE FRSA as co-chair of the BSL Advisory Board
- Mr Crowley is the CEO of Action Deafness, a Deaf-led charity providing BSL interpreting and community support
- Board's launch follows BSL Act recognising BSL as a language in England, Scotland and Wales, which approximately 151,000 people in the UK use

Mr Crowley is the CEO of Action Deafness, a Deaf-led charity providing BSL interpreting and community support. He has worked tirelessly in several key roles to support Deaf people. As a past Chair of the UK Council on Deafness, Crowley has also been a key figure in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness, advocating for improved access to BSL in public services.

Recognising BSL as a language in England, Scotland and Wales for the first time, the BSL Act 2022 will make a considerable difference to Deaf BSL signers across the country. The new Board will provide personal and expert advice to the government on the implementation of the Act.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Tom Pursglove MP, said:

"The British Sign Language Act is a key step to removing some of the barriers experienced by Deaf people in everyday life.

"The BSL Board will ensure we are guided and advised by those who know best how to make these important changes. I am delighted to announce Craig's appointment and look forward to working with him to create a more inclusive, accessible, and fair society for everyone."

The Board's remit will be:

- advising on the use of BSL in public communications and policy delivery
- advising on how to tackle key issues facing Deaf people, such as how to increase the numbers of BSL interpreters

A senior civil servant will serve as the other co-chair. The Board membership will comprise of at least 16 members plus the co-chairs, with a majority of Deaf BSL signers. Membership will also include Deafblind people and/or those who use tactile sign.

The main criteria for appointment for all independent members will include a lived experience of BSL, alongside a willingness to work collaboratively in assisting the government to be more accessible.

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Further information:

[BSL version of press notice](#)

Members of the Board will be appointed soon.

Biography for Craig Crowley MBE FRSA

Craig Crowley is CEO of Action Deafness, a Deaf-led charity providing BSL interpreting and community support. He was founder Chair and Honorary President of UK Deaf Sport and obtained an MBE in 2006 in recognition of his service to Deaf Sport. He has also been a former Trustee of Signature and founding Trustee of the National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf People.

Mr Crowley currently serves as a Trustee for the Royal School for the Deaf, Derby.

As a former Chair of the UK Council on Deafness, Mr Crowley was a key figure in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness, advocating for improved access to BSL in public services and greater equity regarding Access to Work funding.

He has pioneered partnerships amongst local Deaf charities to assist in the development of new services. These collaborations have benefitted the Deaf community and provided financial sustainability for key organisations.