

The background is a solid dark blue color, densely populated with handprints of three different colors: bright yellow, light blue, and white. The handprints are scattered across the entire frame, some appearing as solid shapes and others as outlines, creating a sense of collective action and diversity.

BSL
in our
hands

About us

Rebecca Mansell, CEO,
British Deaf Association



Dr Robert Adam, Chair,
British Deaf Association



About the *BSL in Our Hands* campaign



- **Our mission is clear** - every deaf child deserves access to BSL and ISL, ensuring a thriving future from the very beginning.
- **Our approach** to the campaign:
 - We have responsibility to ensure early access to BSL and ISL
 - We empower parents to see themselves as powerful advocates
 - We maintain a positive and hopeful attitude

Why *BSL* in Our Hands?



90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents.



Why *BSL* in Our Hands?

Research



Why *BSL in Our Hands*?



- Some deaf children do very well with hearing technologies such as cochlear implants, they usually do not have implants until they are around 14 months of age.
- The gap in educational outcomes between deaf and hearing pupils is increasing, and parental concerns about inadequate support are valid.
- The 2023 *'Introducing the READY Study: Deaf and hard of hearing young people's well-being and self-determination'* cohort scores on subjective well-being are a cause for concern with only 3% registering high well-being in comparison with an expected level of 15% in a general population sample of the same age.

Why BSL in Our Hands?



Supporting a Bilingual Bimodal Future:

Early BSL Provision:

Government Collaboration:

Challenging Low Expectations:

Campaign Journey



1. Where it began: BDA Early Years Policy Statement

BDA moved from concern to a clear policy position:
early access to BSL and ISL



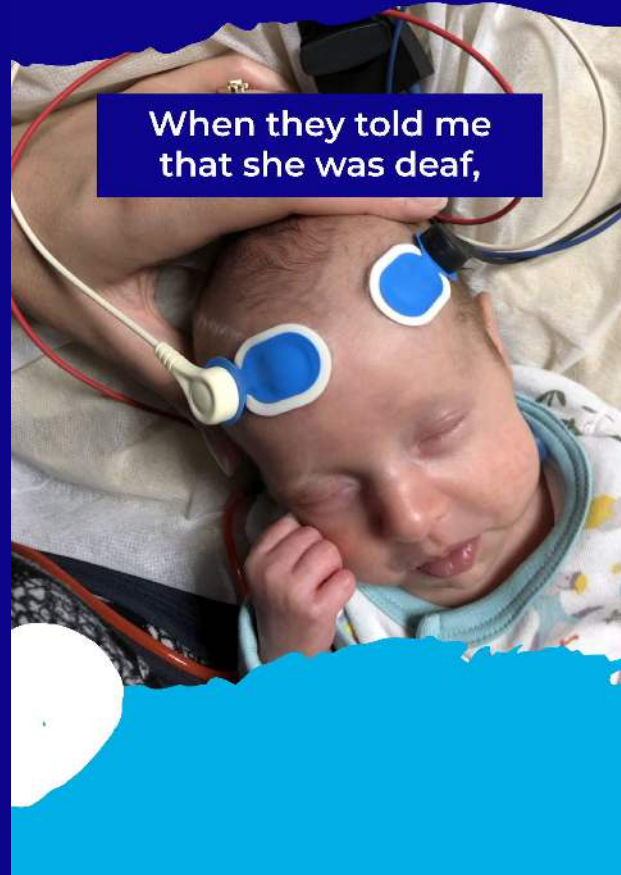
Campaign Journey



2. From policy to campaign: BSL in Our Hands

Launched a handprint petition, social media action and slogan: *Their Future is in Your Hands*, and BSL Conference 2024





When they told me
that she was deaf,

Campaign Journey



3. Taking the campaign to Parliament in March 2024

Parliamentary Reception with MPs, Ministers, BSL Alliance partners, families and Deaf community voices.



Campaign Journey



4. The question from Government: “What is the ROI?”

Ministers asked for economic evidence, so the BDA strengthened the campaign with research.

5. Building the evidence base

RAND economic research + SORD/DCAL evidence review: early BSL is a rights issue, but also a smart public investment.

<https://bda.org.uk/new-report-highlights-investment-impact-of-bsl/>

Campaign Journey



6. Relaunching with evidence

Second Parliamentary Reception March 2026: same campaign, stronger case, clearer ask, stronger evidence.



Campaign Journey



7. Creating political channels: APPG on BSL

How the APPG became a route to influence Government, build cross-party support, and keep BSL on the agenda.

8. What we learned

Lived experience opens doors; evidence keeps them open; Deaf-led policy must shape Government action



Campaign Journey



9. What comes next: Reactivating BSL in Our Hands

Bring the handprint petition into something visual, tangible and powerful - a collective public demand. Action.

10. Deaf Culture as Living Heritage

Link the campaign to Intangible Cultural Heritage: safeguarding BSL, Deaf culture and intergenerational language transmission

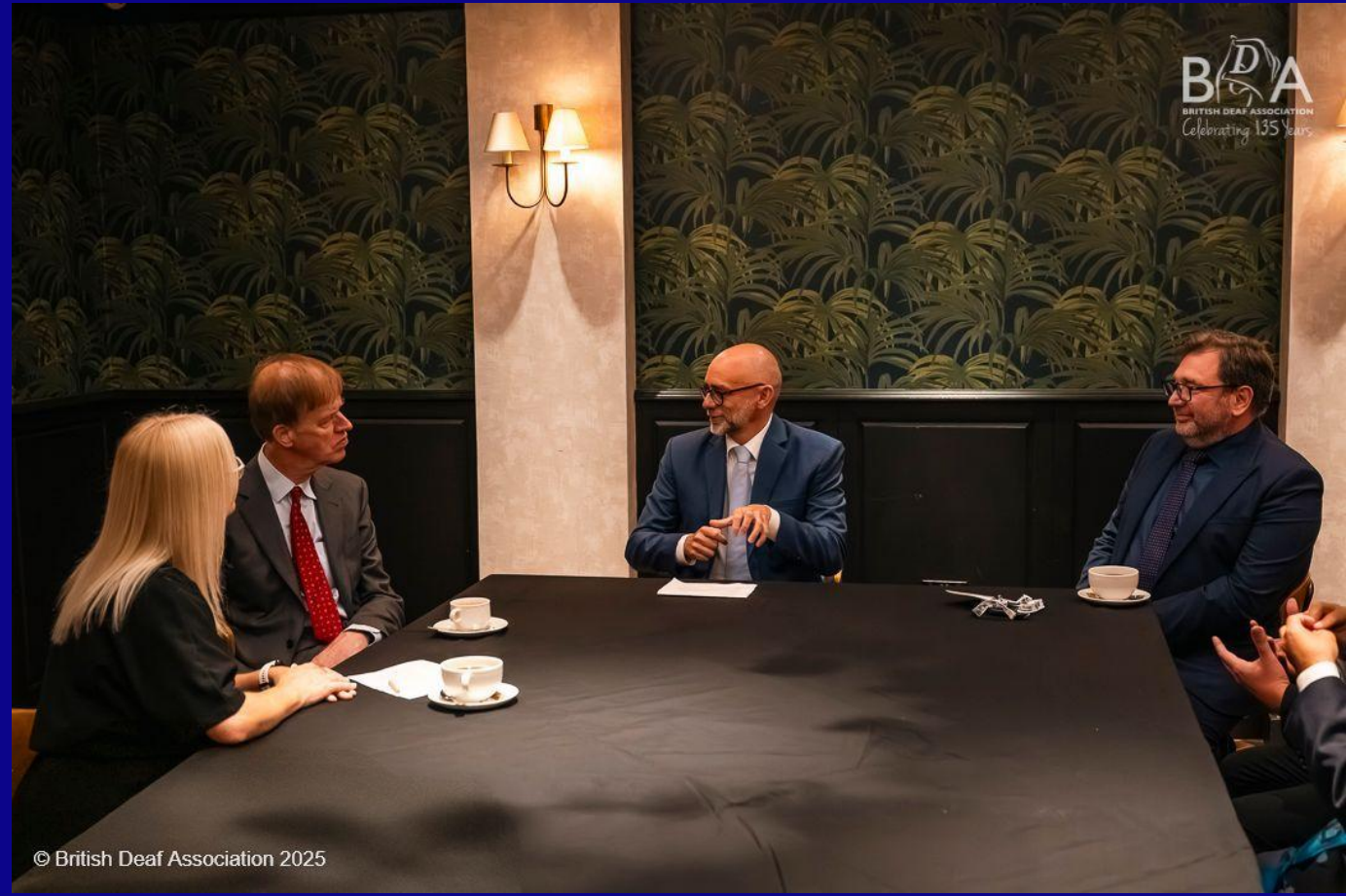


Campaign Journey



11. Our message to WFD members

The UK case study: how a Deaf-led organisation turned rights, research, public campaigning and parliamentary advocacy into one movement.



Final call – Their future is still in our hands



- **"Their Future is in Your Hands"** This is not just a campaign; it's a call to action. **Will you help shape it?**
- **We invite international solidarity:** Early sign language acquisition must be recognised as a global Deaf children's rights priority.

Thank you

#BSLinOurHands

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*We are
also on
Tik Tok!*