

THIRD SUPPLEMENT TO THE GIBRALTAR GAZETTE

No. 4953 GIBRALTAR Thursday 14th April 2022

B. 06/22

BILL

FOR

AN ACT to recognise British Sign Language as a language of Gibraltar; to require the Minister for equality to report on the promotion and facilitation of the use of British Sign Language by public authorities; and to require guidance to be issued in relation to British Sign Language.

ENACTED by the Legislature of Gibraltar.

Title.

1. This Act may be cited as the British Sign Language Act 2022.

Commencement.

2. This Act comes into operation on the day appointed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette and different days may be appointed for different provisions and for different purposes.

Interpretation.

3. In this Act—

“Minister” means the Minister with responsibility for equality;

“relevant public authority” means—

- (a) government departments;
- (b) authorities, agencies, commissions, corporations or other bodies established by statute;
- (c) a person or body declared by the Minister by notice in the Gazette to be a relevant public authority.

Declaration recognising British Sign Language

Recognition of British Sign Language.

4.(1) British Sign Language is recognised as a language of Gibraltar.

(2) Subsection (1) does not affect the operation of any enactment or rule of law.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2), sections 5 and 6 (which, in connection with the recognition of British Sign Language by subsection (1), impose duties on the Minister relating to the promotion and facilitation of the use of British Sign Language) shall apply.

Duties relating to the promotion and facilitation of British Sign Language

Duty of Minister to report on British Sign Language.

5.(1) The Minister must prepare and publish a British Sign Language report for each reporting period.

(2) A British Sign Language report is a report describing what each relevant public authority has done to promote or facilitate the use of British Sign Language in its communications with the public.

(3) For this purpose a relevant public authority's communications with the public include in particular—

- (a) any public announcement which it makes about policy or about changes to the law;
- (b) the publication by it of any plan, strategy, consultation document or consultation response, or any explanatory or supporting materials; and
- (c) its use of press conferences, social media or a government website to publicise any of its activities or policies,

but do not include communications with individual members of the public, or any other communications which the relevant public authority does not intend to be shared with the public at large.

(4) In preparing a British Sign Language report, the Minister must—

- (a) collect information from each relevant public authority about the matters to be covered by the report; and
- (b) set out in full or summarise that information in the report.

(5) The Minister must publish each British Sign Language report no more than three months after the end of the reporting period to which it relates.

(6) In this section “reporting period” means—

- (a) in respect of the first British Sign Language report, the period beginning with the day on which this section comes into force and ending with 30 April 2023;

- (b) in respect of each subsequent British Sign Language report, the period (being not longer than three years) beginning on the day after the previous reporting period ended and ending on such date as the Minister decides.

Guidance on use of British Sign Language.

6.(1) The Minister must issue guidance, or arrange for guidance to be issued, about the promotion and facilitation of the use of British Sign Language.

(2) Guidance under this section may for example include—

- (a) advice for relevant public authorities on providing information to the Minister in accordance with section 5(4);
- (b) advice on best practice for communicating with British Sign Language users (both when interacting with individuals and when communicating with the public at large);
- (c) case studies to illustrate the value of providing British Sign Language interpretation in communications with the public.

(3) The Minister must arrange for any guidance issued under this section to be published.

Regulations.

7. The Government may make regulations in respect of any matter and for any purpose relating to the application of this Act and for more effectually carrying into effect the objects of this Act.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Act recognises British Sign Language as a language of Gibraltar and requires the Minister for Equality to report on the promotion and facilitation of the use of British Sign Language by public authorities and to issue guidance in relation to British Sign Language.