



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

27<sup>th</sup> July 2023

*Dear Constituent,*

**RE: FREE BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR FAMILIES WITH DEAF CHILDREN**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of British Sign Language (BSL) classes for families with deaf children. I have read your comments with interest.

The Government is committed to supporting the parents of deaf children and children with hearing loss to learn sign language and other non-verbal communication.

Funding is available through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) for qualifications in, or focussing on, BSL, up to and including Level 2. About 60 percent of the AEB has been devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority, who determine which provision to fund for learners who live in their areas. The Education and Skills Funding Agency provides the remaining funding for learners who live in non-devolved areas. Community-learning providers offering BSL courses are responsible for determining the course fees, including levels of fee remission. For some BSL courses, Adult Learner Loans (ALLs) are available, and parents can find more information about which qualifications are eligible on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk/Search>.

For parents learning BSL on an AEB-funded course, there is additional support available to overcome barriers to learning. Providers have discretion to meet costs such as transport, accommodation, books, equipment, and childcare. Learning support funding also helps colleges and training providers to meet the additional needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and the costs of reasonable adjustments as set out in the *Equality Act 2010*.

More broadly, every local authority provides specialist support services for hearing-impaired children. Legal duties are in place to ensure a local authority keeps the educational, training, and social care provision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) children and young people under review.

In March this year, the Government published its 'SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan', which included a number of commitments to train teachers of children and young people with sensory impairments. As part of this, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is developing an apprenticeship for teachers of sensory impairment, working with universities, local authorities and sector representatives, including the National Deaf Children's Society, the Royal National Institute of Blind People and the British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People. Subject to approval by IfATE, the apprenticeship will be published this year and will be delivered in 2025.



Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**