

1st July 2020

Dear ALL of whom this concerns,

BSL VIDEO VERSION :<https://youtu.be/tdUJhTjcDoQ>

We are a British born/ raised and schooled members of the Deaf community. Deafness happens to anyone; it does not discriminate by class, status, race or by the colour of our skin; nor by our religious beliefs or the culture persuasion that we as d/Deaf people are born and/or raised with. This should be reflected in the BDA's values.

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, in this letter we come together collectively to ask you, as a national organisation that supposedly represents ALL of the deaf community living across the length and breadth of the UK in Stormont, the Senedd, Holyrood and Westminster; in Brussels and as the political face of the UK deaf community internationally, to do better in representing us as whole. Stop with the tokenism. Allow yourselves to come to the table with open minds and open hearts. If that can be realised, we will be able to go forward, with a clearer sense of purpose, clarity, representation and confidence in celebrating with pride the broader diversity of the 'whole' deaf community.

Following demands of this petition are:

- We seek a more active evaluation of BSL that reflects, includes and is sensitively considering race and all of the definitions, and for these linguistic changes to be fed into all areas of publication and use when referring to people. An open sourced approach to the video submission of individual signs + definition and popularity ratings by the community is one way of doing this.
- A licensing structure for BSL teachers being finally set up via ABSLTA, guided by a racially and ethnically diverse steering group of BSL natives and experts is one idea. This would mean that we can report teachers who are continuing to be undisciplined and unethical in their teaching of BSL.
- We seek updated reports / statistics of comparisons and differences in the area of the achievement of blacks and any potential opportunities and pathways for them to aspire to leadership within their educational settings and establishments.
- Celebrate and value our politically engaged young; support, positively encourage and offer your wisdom in the form of mentorship. Make sure youth organisations like BDAY never become silent or find themselves on their knees again. They represent our futures; do not neglect, ostracize or abandon our futures in the name of our forefathers and mothers.
- UK Council on Deafness to include far more Deaf organisations into its fold (like MDUK and DEWA) and to cohesively work together with this wider representation of key stakeholders. In order to bring about change we recognise that until now, we have been complicit with governmental funding sources who don't care about our politics and in-fighting within this community; but must act with a deeper awareness of race to truly be in solidarity with each other, creating a better society for everyone. Stop crabbing as deaf NGOs. We hope for all National d/Deaf organisations in the UK to hold each other to account, to operate with clear checks and balance AND with the community's participation at the forefront.
- Make sure that all UK official broadcasters of BSL (like in-vision signer, factual / drama) include all kinds of home-grown Black BSL, Asian / SouthEast Asian BSL, and even Urban sign language, LGBTQI+ , GVSL and Women's BSL, alongside Britain's rich variety of regional accents such as NIBSL and Scottish BSL.

- Deaf organisations to receive anti-racist and anti-audist training/ open-source assessments by the community across all levels of their organisational hierarchy. Assessment aims to foster better accountability and to enable the widening participation of a more diverse pool of Deaf people in leadership via whatever appropriate channels (workshops, organisational interaction with schools, apprenticeships etc).

In signing this, we are optimistic and hopeful of a better future in Britain. We hope for your full commitment and to engage with us in a selfless manner insofar as you are the people who have been mandated to represent us all and to fight for all of our collective as well as individual human rights.

Yours Sincerely,

Signed,

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Jephta Asamoah | Rinkoo Barpagu | Charlotte Moulton-Thomas |
| Asha Hylton | Nadia Nadarajah | Jenny Seadly |
| David Ellington | Julian Peedle-Callo | Ruth Montgomery |
| Heroda Berhane | Tina Igbintade | Roise Benn |
| Hermi Berhane | Chris Fonseca | Sahera Khan |
| Maresia Liburd-Spencer | Warren Smith | EJ Raymond |
| Desmond Spencer | Ramesh Meyyappon | Jonny Cotsen |
| Troy Soanes-Carter | Natasha Julien | Amy Dawson |
| Silvana Lennon | Sophie Stone | Katie Redstar |
| Lianne Herbert | Olusegun Babatunde | Teresa Garratty |
| Omeima Mudawi-Rowlings | Lynn Stewart Taylor | Nai Tellar Dhal Jok |
| Paul Ntulila | Zoe McWhinney | Lisa Kelly |
| Ashton Jean-Pierre | Amy Dawson | Ciaran Stewart |
| Chris Laing | Stephen Collins | Eleanora Peters |
| Dolapo Akande | Paula Garfield | Kyle Robert Stephen-Lett |
| Vilma Jackson | Fifi Garfield | Hamish Roberts |
| Jumoke Ogunbode | Donna William | Natasha Ryan |
| Ahmed Mudawi | Will Lewis | Nadina Nadarajah |
| Bim Ajadi | Jean St Claire | Nedeem Islam |
| Kevin Walker | Christo Minaminura | Georgina Buckle |
| Kwame Afrik | Daryl Jackson | Dionna Thomas |
| La Toya Grant | Carolyn Parker MBE | Kyle Stephen |
| Natasha Raphealle | Neil Fox-Roberts | |
| Martin Glover | Craig Andrew | |
| Donna Mullings | Jamie Rea | |
| Damien Peters | Bea Webster | |
| Matthew Adedeji | Alim Jadavij | |
| Inigo Brathwaite | Ilan Dwek | |
| Ayla Wellington | Kirsty Jade | |