STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 162 (C. 9)

SIGN LANGUAGE

The Sign Language (2026 Act) (Commencement No. 1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - - 23rd September 2026

The Department for Communities (**a**), in exercise of the powers conferred by section 15 of the Sign Language Act (Northern Ireland) 2026(**b**), makes the following Order.

Citation

1. This Order may be cited as the Sign Language (2026 Act) (Commencement No.1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026.

Appointed Day

2. The appointed day for the coming into operation of the following sections of the Sign Language Act (Northern Ireland) 2026 is 23rd September 2026-

(a) section 1 (Official recognition of sign languages);

(b) section 2 (Promotion of interests by lead department);

(c) section 4 (Organisations to be listed in regulations);

(d) section 5 (Department to issue guidance);

(e) section 6 (Best practice to be in guidance);

(f) section 7 (Department may make regulations);

(g) section 8 (Procedure for making regulations);

(h) section 9 (Department's manner of engagement);

(i) section 10 (Department to publish 3-yearly reports);

(j) section 11 (Accreditation of teachers and interpreters);

(k) section 12 (Members of the deaf community);

(l) section 13 (Different forms of sign languages);

(m) section 14 (Everyday reliance on sign languages).

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Communities on 23rd September 2026.
(L.S.)

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities

(**a**) See section 1(7) of the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (c. 5 (N.I.))
(**b**) 2026 c.7 (N.I.)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order brings into operation on 23rd September 2026 the following provisions of the Sign Language Act (Northern Ireland) 2026—

(a) section 1 (Official recognition of sign languages);

(b) section 2 (Promotion of interests by lead department);

(c) section 4 (Organisations to be listed in regulations);

(d) section 5 (Department to issue guidance);

(e) section 6 (Best practice to be in guidance);

(f) section 7 (Department may make regulations);

(g) section 8 (Procedure for making regulations);

(h) section 9 (Department's manner of engagement);

(i) section 10 (Department to publish 3-yearly reports);

(j) section 11 (Accreditation of teachers and interpreters);

(k) section 12 (Members of the deaf community);

(l) section 13 (Different forms of sign languages);

(m) section 14 (Everyday reliance on sign languages.

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