

Irish Sign Language Awareness Week 2023 **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/103180>)**

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) is delighted to celebrate International Week of Deaf People 2023, and Irish Sign Language Awareness Week which runs from the 18th to the 24th of September.

The theme of this week is *“A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere.”* This theme is in line with our vision of a world where Deaf people everywhere can sign anywhere. A world where Deaf people are seen as a part of the natural range of human diversity and national sign languages are celebrated and used everywhere as part of national societies.

The International Week of Deaf People (IWDP) is an initiative of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and is celebrated annually by global Deaf communities each year. During this week of celebrations, 70 million Deaf people in Deaf communities around the world welcome the involvement of families of Deaf people, professional and accredited sign language interpreters, and other stakeholders including national Governments, human rights organisations, and disabled persons organisations.

Saturday 23rd September is International Day of Sign Languages 2023. On this day, the WFD, with the support of the IDS calls upon all governments to take measures to ensure at least 50% of their children and youth know their national sign languages, as a step towards building societies in which Deaf people everywhere can sign anywhere. Throughout the week, we will be calling on Irish politicians, and the public to sign our Declaration on the Rights of Deaf Children.

The IDS and other Deaf organisations have a range of activities planned to recognise and celebrate the week. Some activities planned by the IDS include an Irish Sign Language (ISL) coffee morning and ISL parkrun events on Saturday 23rd September, free Deaf Awareness Training sessions, a competition for our Instagram followers to win 2 places in our ISL classes, as well as a series of videos that will be released throughout the week. More information on any of these events can be found on our website www.irishdeaf society.ie (<http://www.irishdeaf society.ie>).

IDS also use this week as an opportunity to highlight some of the main concerns and barriers facing Deaf people in Ireland today and to campaign for full implementation of the Irish Sign language (ISL) Act 2017. There is a growing awareness of the barriers Deaf people face in Government organisations and State service providers but there is still a lot of work required to fully implement all aspects of the ISL Act. The National Disability Authority’s Report on the Operation of the Irish Sign Language Act, published in 2023, details areas of the ISL Act that need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

The ISL Act has resulted in many positive changes for Deaf people in Ireland. Under the Act, the Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) have been able to expand the availability of provided through the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS), also SLIS have established a register of sign language interpreters (RISLI). Another vital element of the ISL Act that has recently been implemented, is the Social Inclusion Voucher Scheme. Sign Language Interpreting Service (SLIS) has recently announced that the Social Inclusion Voucher Scheme will be launching on the 2nd of October 2023. This scheme allows for Deaf people to access an ISL interpreter for social, cultural, education and medical services, in line with the ISL Act section 9. Another exciting development from SLIS is the IRIS Connect service, which provides improved access to the Deafblind Community, Deaf People with Additional Needs and Deaf people whose preferred sign language is not Irish Sign Language.

The IDS has achieved a significant milestone by obtaining approval from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to offer Level 5 ISL courses. This achievement is a crucial step in the realisation of the ISL Act's objectives. Among its numerous implications, this approval empowers teachers working with Deaf children to enhance their fluency levels, thereby improving their competence. We are encouraging people from all walks of life, not limited to educators alone, to strive for a higher level of fluency. Doing so will contribute to expanding access for the Deaf community.

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) is the only national Deaf-led representative organisation of the Deaf and is recognised as a Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO) under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities (CRPD). IDS campaigns for equality and rights and provides advocacy and education services for Deaf people and Deaf Awareness Training and ISL courses to the general public.

Region

Nationwide

Date Entered/Updated

18th Sep, 2023

Expiry Date

25th Sep, 2023

Source URL: <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/news/103180-irish-sign-language-awareness-week-2023>