

# Study to shed light on TV viewing habits of British Sign Language users

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In a new study never conducted before in the UK, researchers at Heriot-Watt University will undertake a comprehensive review of the television viewing habits of British Sign Language users.

At present, most [television programs](#) are subtitled but not all include British Sign Language (BSL). This is despite [advocacy groups](#) estimating that 151,000 people rely on BSL in the UK, of whom 87,000 are deaf.

This new 12-month study, entitled "Deaf BSL users' preferences for watching television," gets underway at the end of May and is funded by the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust (BSLBT), which commissions program makers to include BSL in its output. Its findings will better inform decision-makers at the BSLBT when tailoring their TV programming schedule for the deaf community and put BSL at the center of Deaf TV programming.

Principal investigator, Dr. Robert Adam from the Department of Languages and Intercultural Studies, will lead a team with Dr. Annelies Kusters, Professor Jemina Napier and Professor Graham Turner from Heriot-Watt University.

They will use their combined experience to gather data from BSL users from across the UK in the form of focus groups, video diaries and one-to-one interviews to build a detailed analysis of television viewing patterns.

Dr. Adam explains: "This project is an exciting milestone in deaf TV programming and it is hoped that this research will help identify preferences and trends.

"Entertainment is very much a part of deaf lives and this study will go a long way in helping us to understand what [deaf people](#) like to watch."

Dr. Adam and his team are now recruiting research assistants to help deliver the study.

The BSLBT will use the study's findings to guide audience engagement

and program planning.

The Chair of the BSLBT Tim Patterson adds: "I am delighted that BSLBT will be working in partnership with Heriot Watt on this very important audience research project which will help us to get a better understanding of how our core target of Deaf BSL users engages with [television](#) in its broadest sense."

Provided by Heriot-Watt University

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