

LumoTV Annual Review



Our purpose

LumoTV is proud to be the only commissioning body for sign language content in the world. We work hard to commission content that is bold, fresh, and innovative!



02
Who we are



04
Our vision and values



06
Key activities



08
Leadership insights



10
Our talent strategy



12
Our audience research

Contents

- 02. Who are we?
- 04. Our vision and values
- 06. Key activities during the year
- 08. Leadership insights
- 10. Our talent strategy
- 12. Our audience research
- 22. Contact us

Who Are We?

LumoTV was established in 2008, with Ofcom's approval, to offer an alternative way for commercial broadcasters to meet their regulatory requirements to provide sign language on their qualifying channels.

To date, we have commissioned 450 TV and web-based programmes and short films, all made in British Sign Language (BSL), with many gaining international recognition. Our content is available to watch on our website and app as well as on linear television platforms.

We are proud to be a female and deaf-led organisation, with award-winning deaf producers and directors in our team.



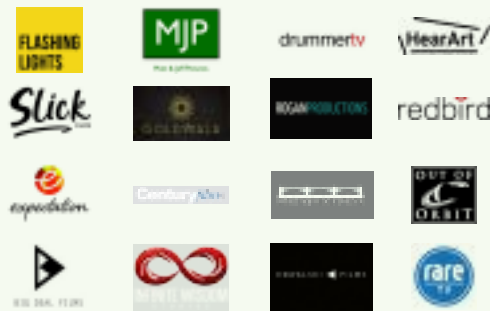
450

TV and web-based
programmes and
short films

2008

LumoTV
established

The production
companies we
work with:



Our Stakeholders:



Our vision & values

Our recently refreshed vision and values guide our work and behaviours.



Our vision

The go-to-place for fresh, diverse and innovative content that celebrates and connects with the deaf and sign language communities.





Our values

To guide our work, our values are:



Authentic

We are the 'go to' place for deaf talent on and off camera. We are committed to portraying the diverse experiences and perspectives within the deaf community with honesty, integrity, and respect.



Empowering

We develop, empower and retain deaf talent.



Bold & Pioneering

We are the home for bold, pioneering, and fresh content that has sign language and/or the deaf communities at its heart.



Collaborative

A collaboration between the deaf communities and the wider communities.



Inclusive

We strive to ensure that all members of the deaf and sign language communities are represented and heard in our content and decision-making processes.



Advocates

We advocate for the rights and inclusion of the deaf and sign language communities, using our platform to raise awareness and make positive change.

Key activities during the year



We are proud of what we have accomplished this year. Here are some highlights...

We...

- Successfully **rebranded British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust to LumoTV**, modernising the organisation's identity and strengthening our ambition to reach wider audiences with deaf-led and sign language content.
- We've had most **successful commissioning round to date**, receiving a staggering and record-breaking number of programme ideas, reflecting growing confidence and creativity across the deaf production sector.
- Developed, and broadcast a **record number of new original series**, including several world firsts for deaf television:
 - First deaf comedy panel show (Random with Gavin Lilley)
 - First deaf dating series (Hold My Hand)
 - First deaf-led renovation series (DeSign)



- Launched a new **in-house short form production team**, in response to changing viewing habits. This team produced new formats such Lights Out, Spotlight and This Is.
- Established an **in-house production team** to deliver coverage of the **2025 Deaflympics in Tokyo**, achieving strong audience engagement and production success.
- Launched a new **Talent Strategy** and implementation team to strengthen pathways, development, and sustainability for deaf talent across the industry.
- Formed a **DeafBlind Working Group** to ensure DeafBlind perspectives inform organisational decision making and content creation as well as ensuring that our future programmes are accessible for our DeafBlind audience.
- Participated in **Sheffield DocFest**, hosting a well-attended industry session on deaf allyship, featuring **Nyle DiMarco** as a guest speaker, which fostered meaningful dialogue, international insight, and new industry partnerships.
- Hosted LumoTV's **first-ever drama premieres**, creating a celebratory, community-focused event that was warmly received by deaf audiences.

Leadership insights

LumoTV's Deputy CEO, Caroline Fearon

Our Deputy CEO, Caroline Fearon, reflects on the organisation's highlights over the past year and shares her ambitions for LumoTV's commissioning and beyond.



1. What were the highlights at LumoTV this year?

2025 was a truly transformative year for LumoTV. One of our biggest milestones was the rebrand from BSLBT to LumoTV, marking a bold new chapter in our journey. We proudly attended Sheffield DocFest, reinforcing our presence on the global documentary stage. Our premieres were held across the UK in London, Derby, Edinburgh, Brighton, Belfast, and Norwich bringing our stories to diverse audiences nationwide. We also established our Short Form Content Creation Team, driving innovation and fresh storytelling.

Beyond content, we strengthened relationships through key stakeholder meetings and visits to Glasgow, Leeds, and Edinburgh, ensuring collaboration and alignment with our mission.

2. Which films produced this year would you say are reflective of LumoTV's new era?

Our short films this year truly marked the beginning of a new era for LumoTV. They showcased diverse narratives, told through sign language, blending creativity with inclusivity. What stands out is how our dramas have become bolder and more daring, tackling wider themes and pushing boundaries in storytelling. Each project was a collaboration with emerging deaf filmmakers, ensuring authenticity and fresh perspectives that were enjoyed by our audience.

3. With many new talents coming through – are we now seeing the benefits of the new Talent Strategy?

Yes, we are already seeing strong results from our two-year Talent Strategy. In 2025, we developed dedicated talent webpages (with BSL resources) due to be launched in 2026, held webinars for runners and post-production roles, and arranged set visits on productions like Casualty and Factory Films. We've grown our off-screen talent database across all four UK nations, and provided personalised career support, leading to real outcomes such as deaf talent securing roles like Production Secretary and camera trainee positions. We also partnered with external organisations like Screenskills to deliver tailored training and networking opportunities. These steps show our strategy is working and laying the foundation for even greater impact in 2026.

4. And finally – what's in store for LumoTV in 2026?

We have the revamp of the LumoTV app, which will deliver a more seamless, accessible experience for our audience. Alongside this, we are preparing to launch even more bold and exciting content, including dramas and short forms that push creative boundaries and celebrate deaf perspectives. 2026 will be a year of innovation and growth, ensuring LumoTV continues to lead the way in deaf entertainment!

“

Our short films this year truly marked the beginning of a new era for LumoTV. They showcased diverse narratives, told through sign language, blending creativity with inclusivity.”



Our talent strategy

LumoTV's Talent Strategy 2025–26 aims to establish the organisation as the go-to destination for deaf and hard of hearing behind-the-scenes talent. We encourage individuals to join our database so we can provide access to online and in-person training, shadowing opportunities, and connections to external upskilling and employment opportunities across the television industry.





On-set access and shadowing

LumoTV delivered on-set access and shadowing opportunities for deaf talent, providing hands-on experience of professional television production environments. These visits offered valuable industry exposure, enabling participants to observe real-world workflows, understand production roles in practice, and build confidence through direct engagement with working sets and production teams.



Webinars delivered

LumoTV delivered a series of successful webinars, including Runner and introductory Post-Production sessions, aimed at emerging deaf talent and supporting early career development and awareness of off-screen roles. The sessions focused on entry routes, role expectations, and practical guidance for working in television. Further webinars are planned for 2026.



Talent pipeline growth

The off-screen talent pipeline continued to grow, with the deaf talent database expanding to 155 individuals across the UK. Registrants represented a range of career stages and were supported through personalised guidance, advice on navigating recruitment processes, and targeted information about relevant job opportunities, helping to strengthen access to work and progression.



External training partnership

LumoTV partnered with ScreenSkills to deliver a series of four online webinars tailored specifically for deaf talent, including 'TV trends and data: What it means and why it matters – for deaf professionals'. Further sessions are scheduled to follow.

Our audience research

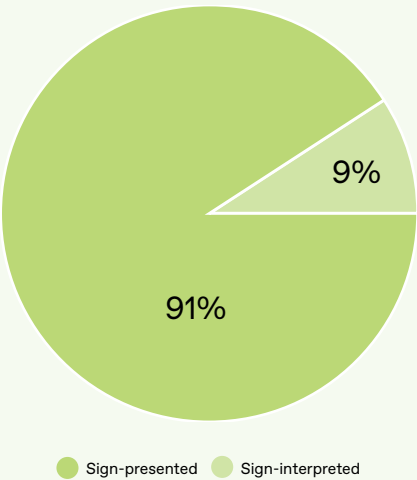
Executive Summary

Heriot-Watt University Survey on deaf audiences’ preferences for sign-presented and sign-interpreted television.

Annelies Kusters, Jemina Napier, Robert Adam, October 2025.

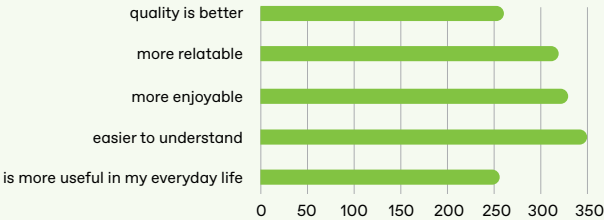
The survey explored how deaf sign language users in the UK prefer to access television content, whether through sign-presented programmes (created directly in BSL) or sign-interpreted programmes (spoken content with an in-vision BSL interpreter). A total of 573 responses were collected.

Deaf signers' preference

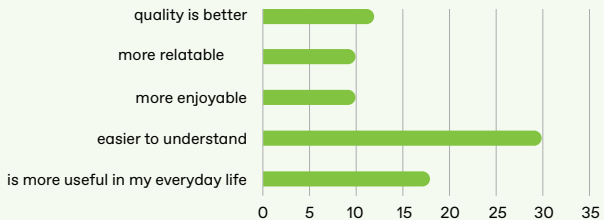


The findings are clear: sign-presented content is overwhelmingly preferred. Of 489 respondents, 446 (91%) chose the sign-presented clip, compared to only 43 (9%) who preferred the sign-interpreted clip. This pattern was consistent across all age groups.

Reasons for preferring sign-presented clip (multiple responses were allowed)



Reasons for preferring sign-interpreted clip (multiple responses were allowed)



Reasons behind preferences:

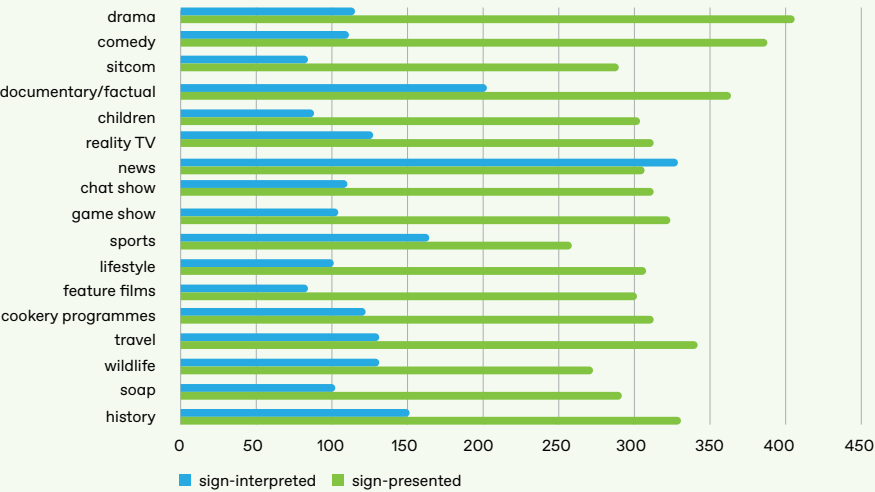
"for both groups, "easier to understand" was the top reason given."

Among those who preferred sign-presented content, large numbers also cited enjoyment, relatability, quality, and everyday usefulness. By contrast, the small group who preferred sign-interpreted content gave much lower endorsements across all reasons, with only a modest emphasis on everyday usefulness.

Preferences varied by **programme types**: For almost all genres, sign-presented was the clear favourite. Drama (405), comedy (387), and documentary/factual programmes (363) were the most popular sign-presented categories. The one striking exception was the news: 328 respondents preferred sign-interpreted news, compared to 306 for sign-presented.

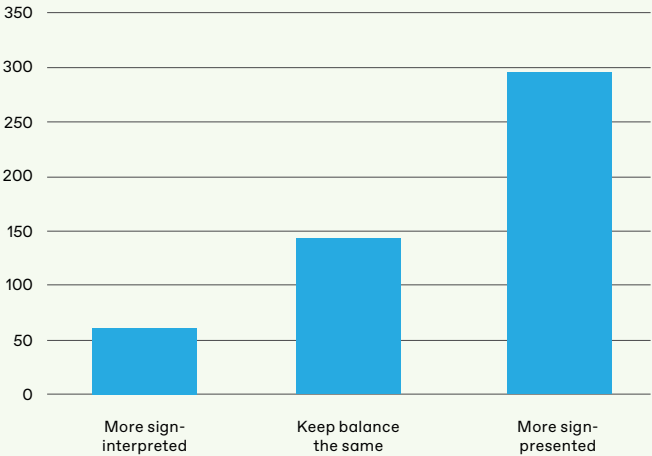
"This makes the news the only genre where sign-interpreted content was the majority choice."

Types of programmes seen as better for sign-interpreted versus sign-presented content



When asked about the future, 59% of respondents (289) wanted more sign presented content and less sign-interpreted, 29% (140) wanted the balance to stay the same, and only 12% (60) asked for more sign-interpreted and less sign-presented content.

Preferences for future balance of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content



Conclusion: Taken together, the findings show that deaf audiences strongly favour sign-presented television, valuing it for comprehension, enjoyment, and cultural relatability. Sign-interpreted content is preferred for the news. The clear message from participants is that they want more sign-presented programming, while maintaining a degree of interpreted provision for genres where it adds specific value.

Contents

15

Introduction

16

Survey design and distribution

16

2.1. Process of creating the survey

16

2.2. Video clips integrated in the survey

16

2.3. Survey distribution: events

17

Survey findings

17

3.1. Distribution of survey responses

17

3.2. Deaf signers' and non-signers' preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

17

3.3. Age distribution of preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

18

3.4. Reasons for preferring the sign-presented versus the sign-interpreted clip

18

3.5. Support for offering both sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

19

3.6. Types of programmes seen as better for sign-presented versus sign-interpreted content

20

3.7. Preferences for future balance of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

21

Conclusion

Table of figures:

16

Figure 1: Screenshot of sign-presented video clip

16

Figure 2: Screenshot of sign-interpreted video clip

17

Figure 3: Survey respondents

17

Figure 4: Deaf signers' preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

17

Figure 5: Deaf non-signers' preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

18

Figure 6: Reasons for preferring sign-presented clip

18

Figure 7: Reasons for preferring sign-interpreted clip

18

Figure 8: Support for offering both sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

19

Figure 9: Types of programmes seen as better for sign-interpreted versus sign-presented content

20

Figure 10: Preferences for future balance of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

20

Figure 11: Correlation between clip preferences and preferences for future balance

Table of tables:

17

Table 1: Age distribution of core sample of respondents

17

Table 2: Age distribution of preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

19

Table 3: Popularity of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content across programme types



Introduction



Survey design and distribution



Survey findings



Conclusion

Sign-presented versus sign-interpreted content on British TV:

What do deaf signers want?

Report by: Annelies Kusters, Jemina Napier, Robert Adam, Heriot-Watt University

Research commissioned by LumoTV, October 2025

In July 2025, a survey was launched to better understand what deaf audiences in the UK want when it comes to sign language on television, focusing on audience preferences for sign-presented and sign-interpreted content across different programme types. Television content in sign language is typically available in two formats: sign-presented and sign-interpreted. In sign-presented programmes, the content is created and delivered directly in BSL. In sign-interpreted programmes, the original spoken-language content is produced first, and a BSL interpreter or translator conveys it to viewers, often in-vision. The survey explored how deaf audiences value these two forms of access and which programme types they feel are best suited to each type of content.

The survey was developed collaboratively between three researchers at Heriot-Watt University and LumoTV. The project operated under a formal contract between Heriot-Watt University and LumoTV. Responsibilities were divided within the research team: Professor Annelies Kusters led budget spend, analysis and reporting, Professor Jemina Napier coordinated the research contract and budget approval, ethics, survey question design and filming of BSL content for the survey in collaboration with a deaf supplier, and Dr Robert Adam oversaw planning of data collection events and deployment of five research assistants. Ethics approval was secured through Heriot-Watt University.



2. Survey design and distribution

2.1. Process of creating the survey

The survey was designed to get wide reach. Questions were kept deliberately short, with careful attention to avoiding leading formulations.

2.2. Video clips integrated in the survey

To ensure that all participants understood the distinction between sign-presented and sign-interpreted content, two short video clips were embedded in the survey: one sign presented and one sign-interpreted, both with subtitles to reflect how deaf people typically watch television. Each used the same scene from a drama. The sign-presented version involved two deaf actors conversing in BSL (Figure 1). The sign-interpreted version involved two hearing actors conversing in spoken English, and a hearing in-vision BSL interpreter (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Screenshot of sign-presented video clip

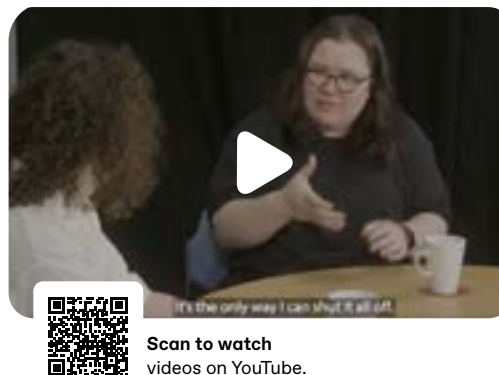


Figure 2: Screenshot of sign-interpreted video clip



2.3. Survey distribution: events

Alongside online distribution, research assistants actively promoted the survey at deaf community events in England, Scotland, and Wales.

A leaflet was produced with details of the survey link and a QR code that allowed participants to access the survey directly.

Research assistants consciously approached individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, including younger and older adults, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people from various ethnic minority communities.

The research assistants reported that the use of the two video clips was found to be particularly effective in supporting participant understanding of the difference between sign-presented and sign-interpreted content.

3. Survey findings

3.1. Distribution of survey responses

A total of 573 responses were collected. Since 50 respondents identified as hearing, they were removed from the dataset, as the survey was aimed at deaf audiences. This left 523 responses in total. Among these 523 people, 482 identified as deaf, 3 as deafblind, and 38 as hard of hearing. Within this group, 34 were not sign language users (14 deaf, 2 deafblind, and 18 hard of hearing). This leaves 489 deaf signers as our core sample for analysis (Figure 3).

Respondents

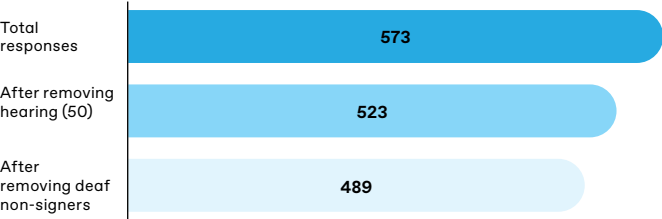


Figure 3: Survey respondents

The age distribution of the core sample of respondents is as follows (Table 1):

Age groups	Count
16–24	18
25–34	101
35–44	136
45–54	115
55–64	80
65–74	29
75 +	10
Total	489

Table 1: Age distribution of core sample of respondents.

3.2. Deaf signers' and non-signers' preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

The main aim of this survey was to examine deaf signers' preferences for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip. Deaf signers overwhelmingly favoured the sign-presented clip: of the 489 signers, **446 (91%) chose sign-presented and 43 (9%) chose sign-interpreted (Figure 4).**

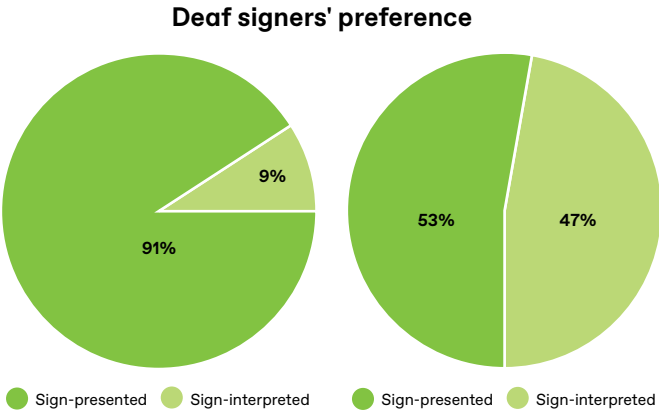


Figure 4: Deaf signers' preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip.

Figure 5: Deaf non-signers' preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip.

“91% of deaf viewers preferred a TV clip delivered directly in sign language, compared to only 9% who preferred the interpreted version.”

3.3. Age distribution of preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip

Across all age brackets of the 489 deaf signers, the **sign-presented clip was preferred**, with support ranging from 85% to 95%. **Only a small minority in any age bracket preferred the sign-interpreted clip.** The figures below show that although there is a consistent and overwhelming preference for sign-presented content across all ages, sign-interpreted content finds slightly more support among respondents in the 55–64 age bracket than among the other age brackets (Table 2).

Age groups	Sign-interpreted	Sign-presented	Grand Total	% prefer sign-interpreted	% prefer sign-presented
16–24	2	16	18	11.1%	88.9%
25–34	5	96	101	5%	95.0%
35–44	11	125	136	8.1%	91.9%
45–54	10	105	115	8.7%	91.3%
55–64	12	68	80	15%	85%
65–74	2	27	29	6.9%	93.1%
75 +	1	9	10	10%	90%
Total	43	446	489	8.8%	91.2%

Table 2: Age distribution of preference for the sign-presented versus sign-interpreted clip.

3. Survey findings continued

3.4. Reasons for preferring the sign-presented versus the sign-interpreted clip

Respondents' reasons for preferring the sign-presented or sign-interpreted clips were as follows (noting that multiple options could be selected). **For both groups, easier to understand was the top reason given**, showing that "understanding" is a central concern regardless of format.

Among those who preferred sign-presented content all the other reasons – more enjoyable (293), more relatable (284), quality is better (232), and useful in everyday life (228) – also **received high levels of endorsement** (Figure 6). This suggests that sign-presented content not only aids comprehension but also offers enjoyment, relatability, and practical value.

By contrast, among the much smaller group who preferred **sign-interpreted content** (only 43 people, compared to 446 for sign-presented), the numbers for other reasons were low across the board: just 30 cited it as easier to understand, 18 as more useful in everyday life, 12 as higher quality, and only 10 each as more enjoyable or more relatable (Figure 7). This indicates that while interpreting can help some viewers with understanding, it does **not provide the same breadth of benefits that sign-presented content does**. The emphasis among the sign-interpreted group on content being easier to understand or useful in everyday life may suggest that their preference reflects a desire for **access to information**.

Because the number of respondents who preferred sign-interpreted content was so small (only 43 people, compared to 446 for sign-presented), their results should be treated with caution. They give an indication of why this minority may favour interpreting, but they are less reliable than the patterns seen among those preferring sign-presented content.

Reasons for preferring sign-presented clip
(multiple responses were allowed)

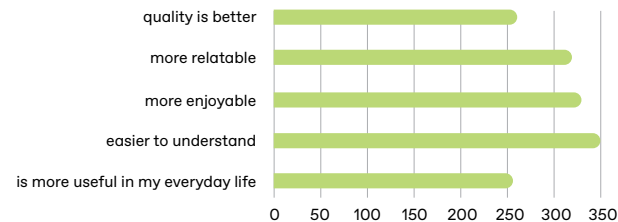


Figure 6: Reasons for preferring sign-presented clip.

Reasons for preferring sign-interpreted clip
(multiple responses were allowed)

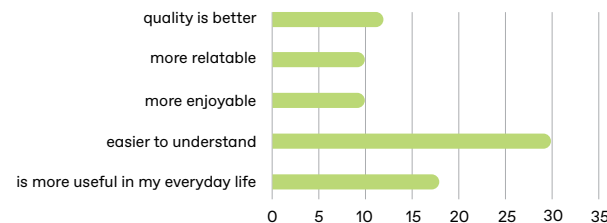


Figure 7: Reasons for preferring sign-interpreted clip.

“

Sign-presented TV was rated clearer, more enjoyable, more relatable, and higher quality than interpreted TV.”

3.5. Support for offering both sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

When asked whether deaf signers should be **able to see both sign-presented and sign-interpreted content on TV**, a **clear majority of respondents (342 people) answered Yes**. A smaller number, 85, said No, while 62 selected Don't know (Figure 8). This shows strong overall support for making both forms of content available, though with some hesitation and disagreement among a minority of participants.

Do you think Deaf sign language users should be able to see both sign-presented and sign-interpreted content on TV?

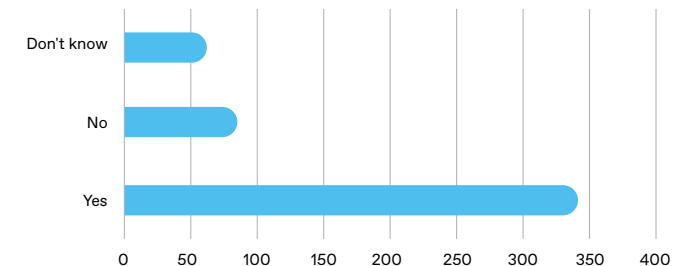


Figure 8: Support for offering both sign-presented and sign-interpreted content.



3.6. Types of programmes seen as better for sign-presented versus sign-interpreted content

In relation to what types of programmes are seen as better for sign-presented versus sign-interpreted content, people could select more than one programme type option, giving insights in what programme types were seen as suitable for each type of content. The results show a very consistent pattern: **sign-presented content was preferred over sign-interpreted content across almost all programme types, with only one striking exception: the news.** A total of 328 respondents preferred sign-interpreted news, compared to 306 who preferred sign-presented (Figure 9). This makes news the only programme type where sign-interpreted content was the majority choice.

Types of programmes seen as better for sign-interpreted versus sign-presented content

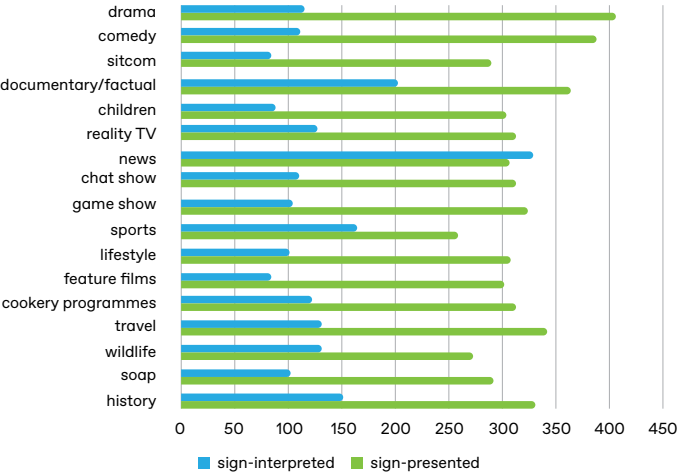


Figure 9: Types of programmes seen as better for sign-interpreted versus sign-presented content.

Looking at the distribution of preferences for sign-presented content (Table 3), drama (405) and comedy (387) clearly stand out as the most popular, followed by documentary/factual (363) and travel (341). Across the board, almost all programme types attracted high support in the sign-presented format, showing that this mode of delivery is broadly appealing across different types of content. In other words, **sign-presented is not only the overall preferred format but also consistently popular regardless of programme type.**

By contrast, sign-interpreted content shows a much narrower profile (Table 3). News dominates strongly at the top with 328 preferences, and the next most popular programme types; (documentary/factual (202), sports (164), and history (151)) trail far behind.

This suggests that **sign-interpreted content is strongly valued for certain types of information-heavy or live formats, especially news and factual programming, but much less so for programme types where immersion, performance, and narrative matter more.** Comparing the order of popularity makes this divide even clearer. For sign-presented, drama and comedy lead, programme types associated with storytelling and cultural expression, while news sits mid-table. Thus, while news was the top-ranked category for sign-interpreted content, it was still popular in sign-presented format rather than being among the least preferred.

Sign-presented in order of popularity		Sign-interpreted in order of popularity	
sports	258	sitcom	84
wildlife	272	feature films	84
sitcom	289	children	88
soap	291	lifestyle	101
feature films	301	soap	102
children	303	game show	104
news	306	chat show	110
lifestyle	307	comedy	111
chat show	312	drama	115
cooking programmes	312	cooking programmes	122
reality TV	312	reality TV	127
game show	323	travel	131
history	330	wildlife	131
travel	341	history	151
documentary/factual	363	sports	164
comedy	387	documentary/factual	202
drama	405	news	328

Table 3: Popularity of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content across programme types.

“
News was the only genre where
interpretation beat sign-presented.”

3. Survey findings continued

3.7. Preferences for future balance of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

The results show a clear **majority preference for increasing the amount of sign-presented content and reducing sign-interpreted content**. Of the respondents, 289 (59%) supported this shift, compared to only 60 (12%) who wanted the opposite (more sign-interpreted and less sign-presented content). Meanwhile, 140 respondents (29%) felt that the current balance should remain the same (Figure 10). Taken together, these figures demonstrate that most deaf signers want sign-presented content to play a larger role in television programming, while only a small minority advocate for increasing interpreted content.

Preferences for future balance of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content

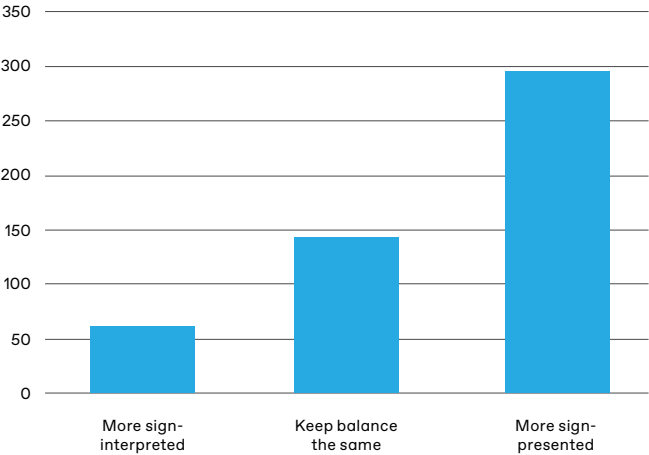


Figure 10: Preferences for future balance of sign-presented and sign-interpreted content.

“*Only 12% of deaf viewers want more interpreted programmes and fewer produced directly in sign language.*”



“*59% of deaf viewers want more programmes produced directly in sign language and fewer interpreted ones.*”

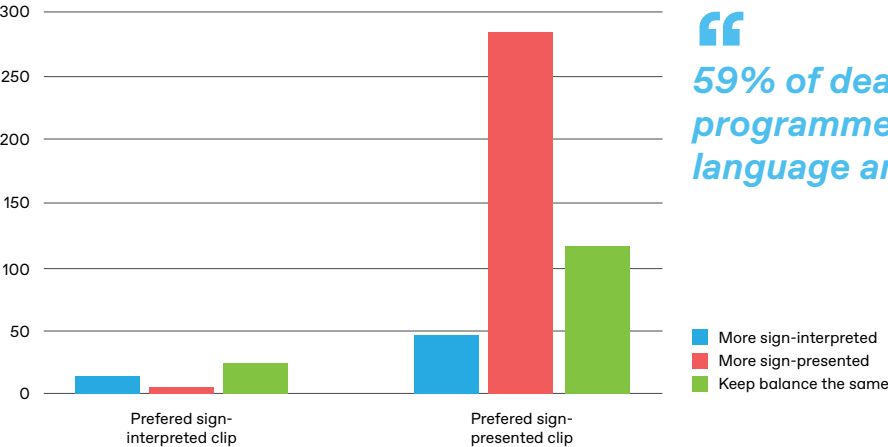


Figure 11: Correlation between clip preferences and preferences for future balance.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the survey findings show a strong and consistent preference among deaf signers for sign-presented content across programme types, age groups, and future expectations. Sign-interpreted content was preferred only for the news, while sign-presented delivery was overwhelmingly favoured for its greater ease of understanding, enjoyment, relatability, and quality.

The findings indicate that deaf signing audiences see sign-presented content as the most suitable mode for television overall, while recognising interpreting as preferable for the news. Taken together, the results point toward a **mixed model, with sign-presented programming as the central focus and sign-interpreted content retained for specific programme types where it best serves audience needs.**

“

Deaf audiences see sign-presented as the default, with interpreting mainly for news and factual shows.”



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