



*Independent Hearing Care Services*

## **Hearability information sheet**

### **LIPSPEAKING**

#### **What is a lipspeaker?**

Lipspeakers repeat a speaker's message to lipreaders accurately, without using their voice. They produce clearly the shape of words, the flow, rhythm and phrasing of natural speech and repeat the stress as used by the speaker. The lipspeaker also uses facial expression, natural gesture and fingerspelling (if requested) to aid the lipreader's understanding.

Messages which are too fast for lipreading may have to be pared down by the lipspeaker, who is not more than a sentence behind the speaker. Many people speak up to two hundred words a minute; lipspeaking, therefore, requires a high level of concentration. If two people speak at the same time, neither message can be passed on. Lipspeakers are also trained to provide a voiced transmission of the lipreader's message if requested.

#### **Who uses lipspeakers?**

Lipspeakers are mainly used by deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people who use lipreading as their first means of communication with other people. These lipreaders will have good English skills.

Hearing people may use a lipspeaker in order to communicate with deaf people. A lipspeaker may be employed to aid communication between lipreaders and hearing people in a range of situations, for example:

- adult education
- further and higher education
- conferences and meetings
- training courses
- job interviews.

All lipspeakers are expected to conform to a professional Code of Practice and must keep all information on assignments strictly confidential.

#### **What are the different levels of lipspeaking?**

There are two levels of lipspeaking, and it is important that a lipspeaker of the correct level is engaged for an assignment.

##### *Level 2VQ lipspeakers*

A Level 2VQ lipspeaker is trained to manage speeds of under 120 words a minute and is qualified to accept assignments at meetings organized specifically for, or to include, deaf or hard of hearing people. These include:

- talks and club meetings
- practical courses and demonstrations
- open or public meetings
- some one-to-one consultations
- religious services (where the liturgy is familiar to the lipspeaker)
- personal telephone calls.

### *Level 3VQ lipspeakers*

Level 3VQ lipspeakers are trained to manage speeds of over 120 words a minute – fast speeds being made lipreadable by omitting the redundancies of language, reducing adjectival words and phrases, and eliminating inessential language while maintaining accuracy.

Level 3VQ lipspeakers are experienced to manage all situations. They are qualified to accept professional assignments in the following settings:

- employment (job and career development, interviews, training courses)
- further and higher education (lectures, tutorials and demonstrations)
- medical settings (including HIV and AIDS counselling)
- theatre, television and cabaret work
- social services (including child protection and mental health)
- marriage guidance
- political meetings (including parliamentary lobbies)
- legal work (tribunals, solicitors and barristers' meetings, police, and all courts of law)
- assignment with lipreaders who have particular requirements, for example Usher syndrome

### **How many lipspeakers do I need?**

For many assignments two lipspeakers will be required. A lipspeaker should not be expected to work alone for a whole day or for complex and specialist areas of work.

### **How do I find a lipspeaker?**

Registered Level 3VQ lipspeakers are listed in the CACDP Directory. A list of Level 2VQ lipspeakers is available on request from CACDP. The Directory also lists Agencies and RNID Communication Services Units that offer lipspeaker support. If you experience difficulties in finding appropriate lipspeaker support, contact the Association of Lipspeakers (see below).

There are more than a hundred lipspeakers around the country, over thirty of whom are Level 3VQ. You will need to book as far in advance as possible, preferably two to three weeks. Always make sure that you book the correct level of lipspeaker for the assignment; the booking agency will be able to advise you on this. Recommended rates of pay are published annually in the CACDP Directory.

### **Further information**

#### *Association of Lipspeakers*

Information Office

21 Christchurch Avenue

London NW6 7QP

Tel. 020 8459 7191 (voice and text)

Typetalk 0800 95 95 98 (textphone users only).

Web [www.lipspeaking.org.uk](http://www.lipspeaking.org.uk)

#### *Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP)*

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