

An open letter to the Association of Lipspeakers (ALS)

Since 1948, lipspeaking has been used as a method of communication and has supported countless deaf and hard of hearing people. Since that time, technology has significantly advanced, preferences shifted and subsequently, 'lipspeaking' has adapted over time. Today, we see more deaf people using lipspeakers than ever before, some preferring pure and some preferring additional BSL to support lipreading.

In March 2017, following these advances and shifts, the idea of a new Association of Lipspeakers with Additional Sign (ALAS) was pitched by Lesley Weatherson, to the 'NRCPD' board who supported the idea, and ALAS was founded thereafter.

Since then, we deeply regret that there appears to have been a growing sense of animosity and division between the two Associations. Many very talented lipspeakers in the profession are members of both ALS and ALAS.

Despite four lipspeaker training courses over the last 4 years, lipspeaker numbers continue to decline, instead of increasing. This is sad and concerning and we would like to attract people into a more united profession and improve relations for all.

We would like to see the Association of Lipspeakers (ALS) and the Association of Lipspeakers with Additional Sign (ALAS) start working together more closely to achieve our shared goal of improving communication for those who prefer to lipread, both with and without additional sign. With this in mind, we invite the ALS Committee to meet with our Committee, at a mutually agreed venue and date, to iron out misunderstandings and to form a more united working relationship across the profession.

We have been in touch with NRCPD and they are happy to attend this meeting as impartial advisors, if that would be beneficial.

We would also like to invite all ALS members to attend a CPD event on Thursday 23rd February 2023. The topic for this webinar is 'Living with Dementia' and will be delivered by 'Brookevale Healthcare'. We hope that this can be the start of a positive and proactive working relationship between ALS and ALAS. There will be no charge for ALS members.

We look forward to hearing from you.

ALAS Committee

14 December 2022