

# HELEN'S LIP READING SERVICE

## Helen Barrow, Lipreading Tutor and Hearing Loss Management Consultant

Hello, I'm Helen, and I am currently Nottinghamshire's only qualified and active Lipreading Tutor. I have a lifelong hearing loss and am part way through the process of being fitted with bi-lateral bone anchored hearing aids because of eustachian tube dysfunction.

I qualified as a Lipreading Tutor in the summer of 2020, a summer of Covid 19 lockdowns and not meeting face to face and I was starting my own business. Fast forward to 2026; I run a mix of online and face to face Lipreading and Hearing Loss Management classes in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire each week. Along with talks to community groups and businesses on how to be hearing loss friendly.

Becoming a Lipreading Tutor and Hearing Loss Management Consultant is such a contrast to my previous role working as a Project Manager in IT. However, both roles involve working with people and that's what I really love about running Lipreading.me.uk; seeing people relax and gain confidence through taking part in classes and activities.

As I am sure BSHAA members know, fitting someone for hearing aids can be a big step for them, there is still a stigma about hearing aids – but that's a separate topic. A big part of my work is trying to find those people who now have hearing aids but perhaps need some encouragement to wear them, meet other people and build on the peer support network.

The overall aim of my Lipreading classes is to make them fun, relaxing, interactive in a supportive environment.

To prepare for a class, the message is "If you have them: please wear your hearing aids, put on your glasses and, most importantly for people to lip read you, have your dentures in." For example, on a football pitch "Dear ref, I don't quite agree with your decision" could be difficult to lipread. Ideally you need to have a top set of dentures in to see an F or a



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V lip shape clearly, perhaps that's why TV now blurs the image?

Key to working out what someone has said are context and the lip shapes. Have a look at yourself saying bear, pear and mayor, is there a difference? What about glockenspiel and cocker spaniel?

Seeing the classes build up their confidence to say the words that they saw and rationalise the lip shapes defining those words makes it so worthwhile and my students sharing these explanations with their peers - brilliant.

Technology continues apace and I support that, especially Auracast®. However those conversations with people are still vital, to reduce that risk of loneliness and isolation that hearing loss can bring.

My website has links to a self-help guide and a how you can be a 'hearing aid' to someone with hearing loss:

<https://www.lipreading.me.uk/atla-how-to-be-a-hearing-aid-self-help-leaflet/>

I hope my enthusiasm will encourage others to try out lipreading and hearing loss management classes. Details of my current classes and services are available at:

<https://www.lipreading.me.uk/services/>

For details of the Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults, please see:

<https://atlalipreading.org.uk/>