**

**Making speech accessible to those who lipread: face coverings**

Most people who are deaf or have a hearing loss rely on lipreading to varying degrees. It’s not possible to lipread a speaker who is wearing a non-transparent face covering. This guidance gives practical advice for situations where use of face coverings is otherwise required or preferred.

* Remove face covering when possible/safe to do so
* If removing your face covering, try and stay 1-2 metres away from the person you are speaking to
* Remove your face covering for as little time as required
* Where this is not possible, try a [transparent mask with anti-fog spray](#_Clear_face_coverings/masks) which can help.

**Classroom teaching where there is a student who lipreads:**

* If some students are wearing masks, tell all students how to get a [free transparent mask through the School](#_Free_masks_through); this will make it more possible for the student who lipreads to join in. This will still not be perfect, so please also try these strategies:
  + Always wear the classroom mic. Remember that this is a compulsory mainstreamed adjustment. Only mute if having a private conversation.
  + Ensure that the teaching room is as quiet as possible – consider change of room if necessary/possible
  + Check if lighting in the room causes specific difficulty with reflections on transparent masks
  + Make it easy for the student to sit near the front (without drawing attention to them)
  + Encourage all students to say if they miss information or want anything repeated – it will be really helpful for the student to know it’s normal and not a nuisance
  + Write down key points on the board
  + Discuss with the students after class how well they were able to follow and contribute to class, again with drawing attention to them. It’s an opportunity to agree any further strategies as relevant.

# **Clear face coverings/masks**

There are a number of different types of clear face coverings/masks on the market. There are no legal standards for face coverings (including clear masks), although the Scottish Government has advised that face coverings should fit over the nose and mouth and as tightly to the face as possible.

This same advice would be expected for clear face coverings/masks. You should also look for latex free to avoid any possible allergic reactions. Most clear face coverings also only come in one size which may not be suitable for all face sizes.

There are a number of clear face coverings on the market, with a small number being able to be purchased through the University’s eProcurement system.

However, since there are no standards to apply, we cannot recommend one type of clear face covering over another other than based on recommendations from those who have purchased before and have made comment on their fit and general construction.

The following are available via the University’s suppliers:

BCHS, CLR-Mask (<https://www.bunzlchs.com/Special-Offers/Transparent-Mask~p~800023P>), product code 800032

Smile Shield Type IIR Face Masks with Transparency (<https://thefacemaskstore.co.uk/smile-shield-type-iir>), A LUCRE MUSKET LIMITED, product code 586229

However, schools are free to purchase other clear masks as long as procurement processes are followed as required.

**Anti-fog spray for clear face coverings**

Clear masks can sometimes steam up which makes lip reading difficult or impossible. Anti-mist products can be very helpful here. As with the masks, as there are no standards to apply, we cannot recommend one over another.  However there is a list of examples below.

Here are some examples:

* ‘Muc Off’ spray has been recommended by some staff, who have found it effective: <https://muc-off.com/collections/face-masks/products/anti-fog-treatment>
* Here is a  ‘top ten’ list, two of which have been tried and found to be effective (‘ProGear’ gel; ‘AB’ mask anti-fog cloth and ‘Muc Off’): <https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/house-garden/best-anti-fog-spray-wipes-gels-b1821076.html> Muc-off is also on this list.

# Free masks through Schools

It’s advised that Schools to have supplies of transparent face masks and anti-fog sprays which can be easily accessed by staff and students. If you are not sure, talk to the School facilities manager.