

Virtual Support Group Toolkit

A 'good practice' guide to
getting your health and
wellbeing support group online



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Thank you to those organisations who shared their resources with us in helping to create this toolkit, with special thanks to the working group members who spent many hours researching best practice: Gill Collins (Public Governor, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust), Jacqui Varden (Volunteer, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust), Laura Johnson (Engagement and Corporate Services Officer, Northern Care Alliance), Mark Lupton (Engagement Officer, Healthwatch Salford) & Trudy Taylor (Head of Patient/Service User Experience, Northern Care Alliance). Finally special thanks to Zoe Haith for the illustrations.



The aim of this toolkit is to equip health and wellbeing support groups to mobilise their meetings online - allowing groups of people to get together, create and support each other in a digital space.

The toolkit has been put together by staff and governors from the Northern Care Alliance and Healthwatch Salford (for more information about these organisations, please see over the page)

Included within this toolkit is:

- ◆ An introduction to different platforms to meet and support each other online
- ◆ Instructions on how to use different platforms and how to set up meetings
- ◆ How to advertise and administer your group meetings
- ◆ Good practice for ground rules
- ◆ Safeguarding
- ◆ What to do if something goes wrong

Throughout this toolkit we may refer to the following words:

- **Host** - This is the person who is setting up the meeting or running the group page
- **Participant** - This is anyone who accesses your meeting or page to interact with your group
- **Window** - The display screen on your computer/laptop/smart phone
- **Browser address bar** - the bit at the top of your internet page that usually starts with 'www.' or 'https'

About the Northern Care Alliance and Healthwatch



Northern Care Alliance

NHS Group

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) brings together staff and services from Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust (SRFT) and The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (PAT).

With a dedicated 19,500-strong team – the NCA Family – they deliver healthcare excellence to over one million people across Salford, Oldham, Rochdale and Bury, as well as providing more specialist services to patients from Greater Manchester and beyond.

Their aim is to deliver consistently high standards of care to them all.

People may be visiting one of their four hospitals - Salford Royal, The Royal Oldham Hospital, Rochdale Infirmary or Fairfield General Hospital in Bury – or receiving a range of integrated health and social care services at their home or in the community.

The NCA Family works to save lives and improve lives. By joining forces with the partner organisations who share their values, they're committed to enhancing the health of our local communities.



Everywhere in the country has a local Healthwatch nearby. If you've recently visited your GP, or local hospital, or used any health and care services in England, Healthwatch want to hear from you. Whether you've had a good or bad experience, we can use your feedback to improve services for everyone and they have the power to make NHS leaders and other care providers listen to what you have to say. They're completely independent and impartial and anything you say is confidential. They also offer information and advice to help you to get the support you need. Their service is free, simple to use and can make a real difference to you and to your local community.

Different ways of getting your support group connected



Zoom is a video conferencing service that allows you to virtually meet with others using a phone, tablet or personal computer with camera. It is also accessible to join by phone call only. It's good for interactive sessions as participants can see each other, and you can control who can join your meeting. It is free to host a meeting for more than 2 people, but there is a time limit of 40 mins. There are options to purchase a professional account so that time is not limited.

Microsoft Teams is a free app to use on any smart phone, tablet or on a computer as a website. It is very similar to Zoom but instead of codes to join, there is a simple link to join a meeting. It is a chat-based workspace allowing groups to chat through text and video. Participants can also share and collaborate on files. It is good for interactive sessions with live streams with screen sharing included.



WhatsApp is a secure messaging service and free calling app that can be used on most mobile devices and computers using the internet. It is good for texting, sharing photos and videos. It isn't suitable for group calls, and is limited to four people on a call. You can also share documents.

Facebook is a well-known platform, and anyone can join for free on any device. It is easy to share information or events, and as a group coordinator you can host a private group and invite members to join via a link. You can broadcast live videos with two presenters and viewers can ask questions via the comments. However, it is not suitable for a regular virtual meeting or support meeting as you cannot see the people involved or talk with them.



Different ways of getting your support group connected - pros and cons

Pros

Cons

Zoom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's widely used for people to keep in touch with others • Simple to set up and log onto an account • No purchase necessary to access the free 40 minutes group session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The free meeting only lasts for 40 mins, so you may need to plan further meetings • Attendees could use their phone to take a picture or video of the meeting which would raise privacy concerns • You may need more than one person to administer the meeting
MS Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is considered a professional conferencing/meeting tool • Creating a meeting link is simple within your Outlook calendar, or within the Teams app if you have a professional account • People who join the call can choose to have their video turned off so they are not seen if that helps them feel more comfortable • You can have a virtual lobby, admitting audience members in when you are ready • You can create separate break out rooms to allow smaller group discussions to take place • For people who wish to present to your group, for example a video or PowerPoint presentation it is simple for them to press share screen and show the content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When people first use a new piece of software like Teams, they can be nervous of not accessing the meeting/getting something wrong • A risk with all virtual meetings is that someone could send the meeting link to others who are not meant to attend your meeting • Attendees could use their phone to take a picture or video of the meeting which would raise privacy concerns • In some meetings, particularly webinar-style or larger meetings, people may choose to join or leave at arbitrary points during the meeting • You may need more than one person to manage a meeting, admitting late
WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is simple to set up • It's very easy to use, compose and reply to messages • Members can 'mute' the chat so they do not feel pressured to reply instantly • People may feel tired when it comes to virtual meetings, and or social media like Facebook – a texting chat can be dipped in and out of with ease, and none of the participants will need to be particularly experienced when it comes to using their smartphone. This is very good for capturing and sharing ideas on the go 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members may not appreciate messages coming in at any time of the day • There could be a lot of fast paced texting which some members may feel unable to keep up with • Members will be able to see each other's phone numbers – some may not feel comfortable with that lack of privacy • Members will need to have a smart phone to be able to chat within this group – so this may be inaccessible to members of your group who don't have a smartphone

Different ways of getting your support group connected - pros and cons

Pros

Cons

Facebook

- Members can chat at any time – post a discussion and comment on each others posts
 - Many people are already on Facebook, and likely already in private groups to do with their own interests so will be aware of how they work
 - It can be a really friendly place for group members to feel supported, encouraged etc
 - Facebook groups can be private, you can choose who to invite to join or people can find your group and ask to join
 - You can set security questions and group rules for people to read through before they join
 - You do not have to be 'Facebook friends' with all group members in order to invite them to the group or interact with them in the group space
 - You can 'block' a group member if they are being inappropriate or trolling/upsetting others
 - You can host a live Facebook broadcast within your private group where members can watch you speak and can interact with each other in the comments area
 - As group administrator you can turn off commenting if an argument is forming or something inappropriate is being discussed – or you can delete a post altogether if it is in violation of your group rules.
- Not everyone already in your group will already be a Facebook user and may not wish to open an account just to join your online group
 - People may not appreciate being on social media with fellow group members – they may wish to keep their health matters off Facebook altogether and therefore choose not to join
 - They may not like having notifications at any time of the day
 - Some Facebook users may not be willing to adhere to etiquette rules and may appear rude, abrupt or unhelpful in their comments or posts at times
 - You may find it tiring managing a Facebook group single handed and may need a buddy to help to admin posts and comments. You can select additional group administrators in your group settings.
 - Facebook is often used for personal recreation, and your own account could be visible to fellow group users, all group members would need to consider their own personal security settings.

Your notes page

Have a think about the members of your group and then try to write your own pros and cons about getting the group online.

See which of the different ways on the previous pages would be better suited for the people in your group.

My group - the pros:

My group - the cons:

The best way to get my group online would be to use:

How to set up a Zoom meeting



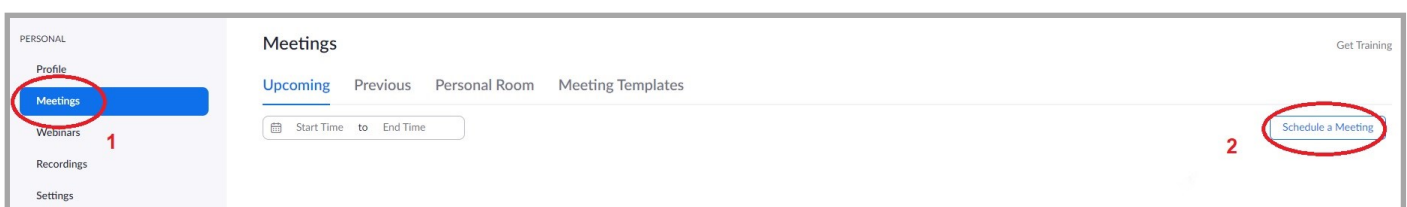
Zoom is a popular online platform that is used to meet with other people in a group. It can be downloaded to a phone, tablet or laptop/pc but has more functionality for the administrator when used via a laptop/desktop PC web browser.

To download Zoom, just type this link into your browser address bar: **<https://zoom.us/download>** and follow the instructions to download.

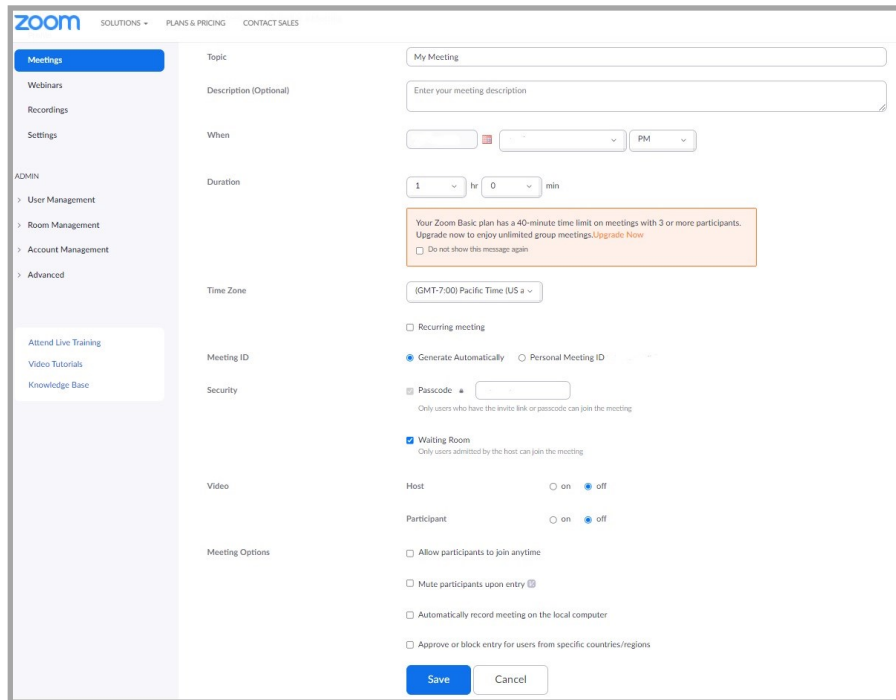
When you first log onto Zoom with a desktop PC or laptop, you will first be taken to your profile page. From here you will be able to see different menu options down the left-hand margin of the page.

Setting up the meeting

Click on 'Meetings' (1)



How to set up a Zoom meeting



The meetings page will default to show you upcoming scheduled meetings, though you can click on any of the tabs to explore previous meetings, personal room and template settings.

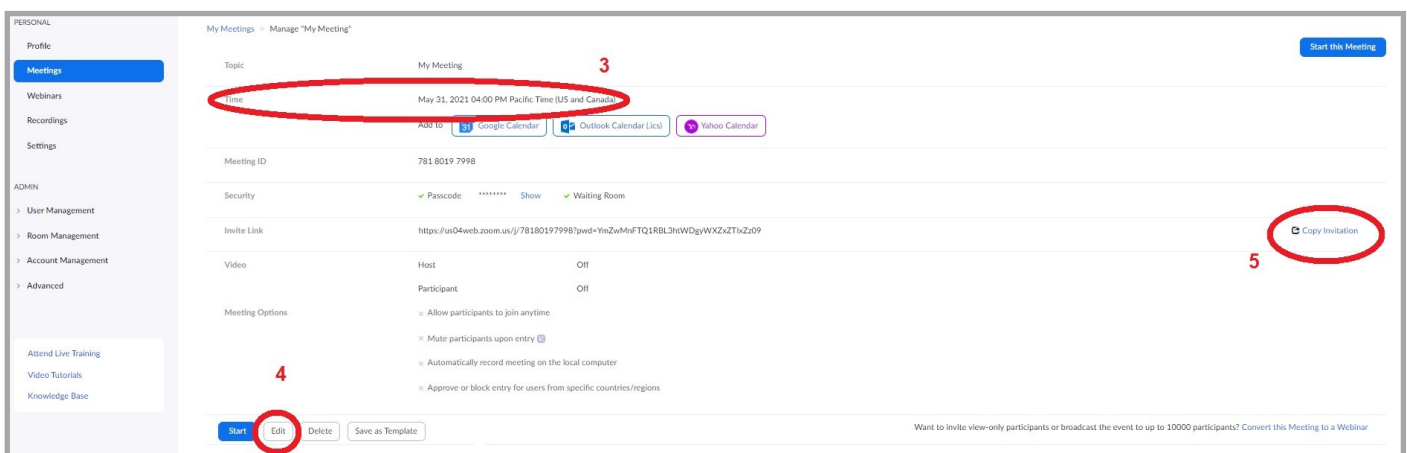
To set up a new meeting, click on 'Schedule a meeting' (2) to the right side of the page. This will take you to 'Schedule a meeting' page

There are a range of fields on this page, some default to basic level and some you won't need to change. To set up your meeting you will need to complete the following fields:

1. **Topic** – The default setting is 'My meeting' but you can change this to something your group participants may recognise.
2. **When** – Enter the date of the meeting by clicking on the calendar icon and selecting the date. Next, enter the time you would like the meeting to start (don't forget to select AM or PM).
3. **Duration** – Put an approx. time limit on your meeting.
Note – Zoom is available free of charge but is limited to meetings of just 40mins for 3 or more people. You can upgrade which will give you better time options and can cost as little as £11.99 per month (price correct as at May 2021), just follow the links to upgrade. Some groups have got around this by splitting their meetings into 2 parts, then registering 2 separate links for each meeting. Participants will log into 'part 1' for 40 minutes, then following a 10min comfort break will log into 'part 2' for the new 40 minute meeting.
4. **Time Zone** – check to see that it is set to (GMT) London.
5. **Meeting ID** – check to see it is set to 'Generate automatically'.
6. **Security waiting room** – check to see that the box is ticked.

How to set up a Zoom meeting

7. **Video** – Select ‘on’ or ‘off’ if you want cameras to start automatically for yourself or participants as soon as they log onto the meeting.
8. **Meeting options** – Tick the box if you want to have the following:
 - Allow participants to join anytime – this allows participants to join the meeting even before you have logged on yourself (they will be held in the waiting room though if this option is also ticked).
 - Mute participants upon entry – if you are hosting a large meeting whereby participants won't be speaking much, this could be a good option.
 - Automatically record meeting – this function will set the recording of the meeting to start as soon as the meeting starts.
 - CAUTION – It is important that all participants are aware that they are being recorded and give consent for this to happen. You must have good reason to want to record the meeting – see the section on recording a meeting for more information.
 - Approve or block entry for users from specific countries/regions – This will set at default for allowing UK participants to take part. If there is good reason to block participants from other countries then you can select them from the list, but otherwise if you are using a waiting room where you can admit people on an individual basis, you are safe to leave this option alone.
9. **Click ‘Save.’**



Check the start date, time and any other details (3). If you need to change anything, click ‘edit’ (4) at the bottom of the screen.

Invite link - Click on ‘copy meeting invitation’ (5) and this will open the invitation in another window. You can either highlight the text or simply press ‘copy meeting invitation’ and then paste the information onto a separate document/email invite.

How to set up a Zoom meeting

Start and administer the meeting

Click on 'Meetings'

The meetings page will default to show you upcoming scheduled meetings. Select the meeting you want to start and click on 'Start'.

If a window pops up and prompts you to open Zoom meetings, click on 'open Zoom meetings'.

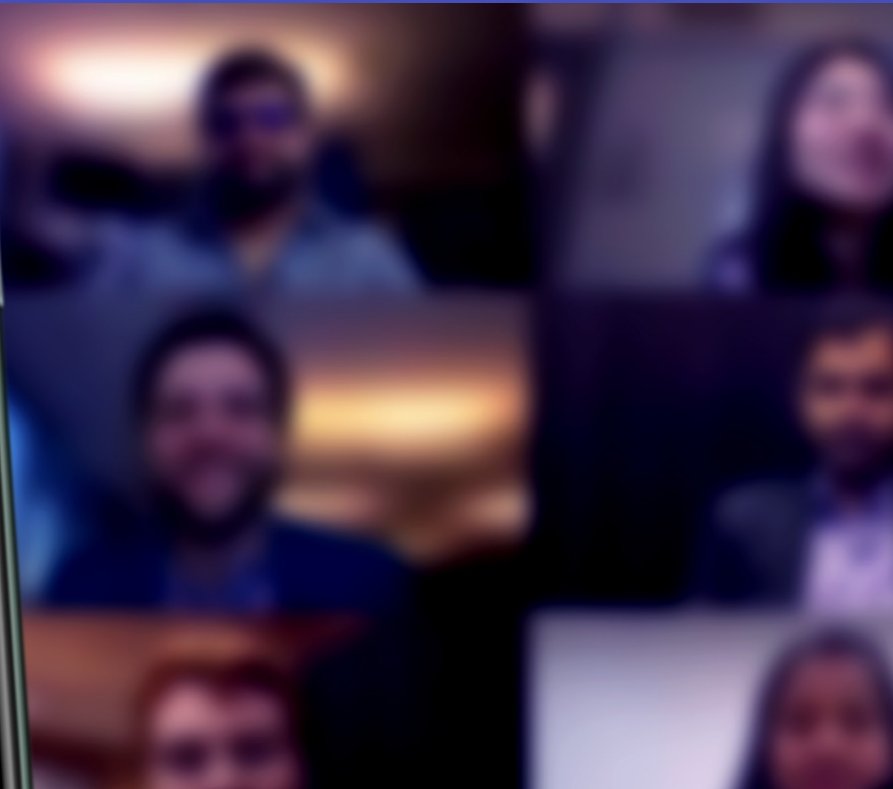
If a window pops up and you are prompted to join with audio, click on 'Join with computer audio'.

1. If you have enabled the waiting room, participants will automatically be placed here and await admission. The waiting room is usually displayed to the right hand side of your screen. If you can't see it, just click on 'Participants' and it will bring the list up.
2. Here you can see the list of people who are waiting to join your meeting, you can click 'admit' to let them in or 'remove' to block them.
3. During the meeting you can click on 'Participants' in the host controls to display the participants list.
4. If you hover over the participants name, you can click 'more' for further options:
 - **Ask to Unmute / Unmute / Mute.**
 - **Chat:** Open the chat window to send messages directly to the participant.
 - **Stop Video:** Stop the participant's video stream so they are unable to start their video. If the participant hasn't started their video, you will see the Ask to Start Video option.
 - **Pin:** Pin up to 9 participants' videos so that it is always visible on your screen. This will not affect other participants.
 - **Spotlight for Everyone:** Spotlight up to 9 participants' videos, so that their videos are always visible for all participants in the meeting.
 - **Make Host** (only available to the host): Assign the participant to be the host. There can only be one host.
 - **Make Co-Host / Remove Co-host Permissions**(only available to the host): Assign the participant to be a co-host. You can have an unlimited number of co-hosts.
 - **Rename:** Change the participant name that is displayed to other participants. This change only applies to the current meeting.
 - **Put in Waiting Room:** Place the participant in a virtual waiting room while you prepare for the meeting. The host must enable waiting room for this option to appear.
 - **Remove:** Dismiss a participant from the meeting. They won't be able to re-join unless you allow participants to re-join.
 - **Report:** Allows you to report a user to Zoom's Trust and Safety team. You will be able to select which user to report and provide details about the problem. You can also upload evidence, such as screenshots.

How to set up a MS Teams meeting



Microsoft Teams



How to set up a Microsoft Teams meeting

Creating an MS Teams meeting link is dependent on having an Outlook email address, for example if you use Outlook to access your work or personal emails. You can only create a meeting link if you use Outlook email and the calendar system within it – so this method of meeting will not be possible for every health / wellbeing group – as many groups are run by volunteers who do not use any Microsoft email / Outlook packages. However, anyone who has access to a phone, tablet, laptop or computer can attend the meetings by pressing the 'join meeting now' link – from any email address.

Host Function, Getting Started:

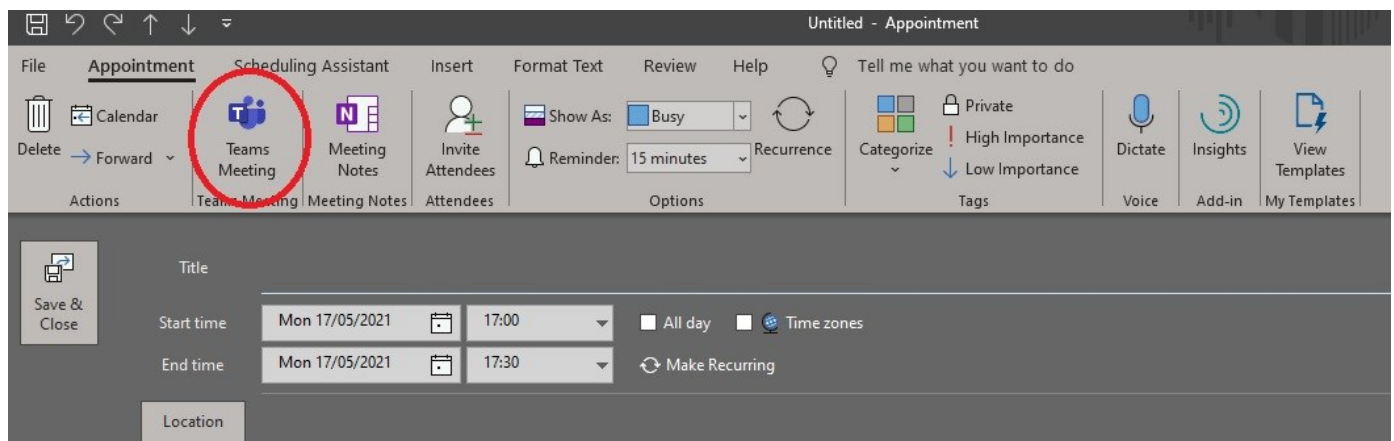
If you decide you want your group to meet via MS Teams, you should develop an agenda and a clear plan for managing the meeting. Bear in mind that – as with any meeting – the chair's role is to make sure everyone has a chance to participate, this is true of both face to face meetings and virtually as we are discussing now. We would recommend that you:

- Consider in advance whether this is a formal or an informal meeting – this will have bearing on whether you need to set some ground rules at the beginning.
- Ask people to mute their microphones when they're not speaking – this avoids interference and background noise, which can be distracting.
- Ask people to use the 'raise hand' button if they wish to ask a verbal question, so that the chair can come to them when ready for a question.
- All of the above can be communicated within your invite email to your group (BCC is best practice to protect your members email addresses) and including the meeting link.

How to set up a MS Teams meeting

Setting up the meeting

1. First you must ensure you have an Outlook account (usually this would be a professional secure account from your workplace) with calendar function.
2. If you do not already have the MS Teams package downloaded, you should do so now and link it to your Outlook account.
3. Open your calendar and select the day and time you wish for your group to meet.
4. In the location field, type in MS Teams meeting.
5. In the top tool bar you should see a button that says 'new teams meeting' – press on that and automatically some text will appear within your appointment slot which includes the 'click here to join the meeting' link.



7. Underneath this you will see a 'meeting options' link – press on this and it will take you to a unique page that is for the settings of this particular meeting. Here you can select from the following options:
 - Having a lobby or allowing people to bypass it (we would recommend always having a lobby);
 - Announcing when callers join or leave;
 - Who can present;
 - Allowing attendees to unmute themselves;
 - Allow meeting chat (this can be useful for questions that come up during the meeting and avoids people interrupting a presentation with verbal chat);
 - Allow reactions.
8. Once you have decided on the above settings, you need to press save and close this page down. Now your meeting link is ready to be shared with your group.
9. You may wish to forward your calendar invite to your group members or you can simply copy and paste the 'click here to join the meeting' link into an email to your group with the date and time of the meeting.

How to set up a MS Teams meeting

Alternatively, you can schedule a meeting directly from within Microsoft Teams:

1. Click on "Meetings" on the left side menu and select "Schedule a Meeting."
2. Select the channel you want to meet with.
3. Use the "Scheduling Assistant" to find a time during which everyone is available.
4. Select how often you want the meeting to recur.

How to invite external users to a Teams meeting:

1. From the Teams app, select the Calendar tab on the left.
2. Click the New Meeting button in the top right of the screen.
3. Fill in the meeting details such as title, time, description.
4. To add external users to the meeting, type their full email address in the attendees box and press enter.

How to set up a MS Teams meeting

Ground Rules / Etiquette Guides

As with all virtual meeting tools, it is good practice to establish ground rules so that attendees know what to expect, and how they can take part in the meeting. You can include ground rules in the invite email to your group members and you may also like to remind them of those rules when the meeting starts. We would recommend that you tell your members:

- ⇒ This is a private meeting for group members only, if you wish for a friend or family member to attend, please inform the chair prior to the meeting taking place.
- ⇒ Stay on mute until it is your turn to speak, having background household noise can be distracting for presenters and for others listening.
- ⇒ Members are to use the raised hand function to signal that they wish to speak or ask a question.
- ⇒ You can also use the chat function (look for the speech bubble) if you wish to comment or ask a question.
- ⇒ The group members should not take pictures or video of the meeting to protect everyone's privacy.
- ⇒ Matters discussed within the meeting should be kept private.
- ⇒ If you have concerns about a group member's wellbeing, please share this privately with the Chair who can action this appropriately outside of the meeting.

How to set up a Facebook group



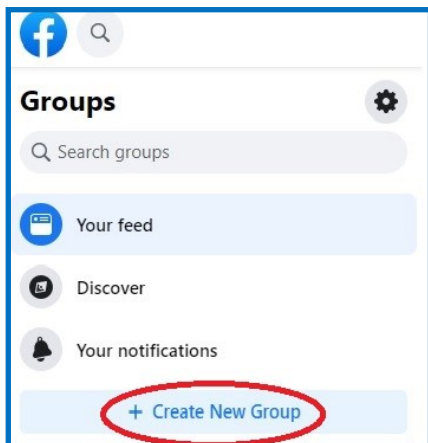
Social media can be a welcoming and exciting space, but it can also be a threatening space at times with 'trolling.' As a group coordinator, you should spend some time exploring the privacy and security settings of Facebook before you consider launching a group on there.

While researching Facebook as a potential platform, you may like to check out some other groups that are already supporting each other on there – for example for Diabetes or Long Covid. Simply use the search bar within Facebook and ask to join a group you are interested in. You will notice that all private groups have some questions to answer first, as a way of monitoring who they allow in – and why someone may be muted or removed from the group if they do not adhere to the group rules. This is covered in our instructions below. Within that group will be some posts from members sparking discussion and / or sharing news from their day or any health-related questions they may have for their fellow members.

Setting up a private Facebook group

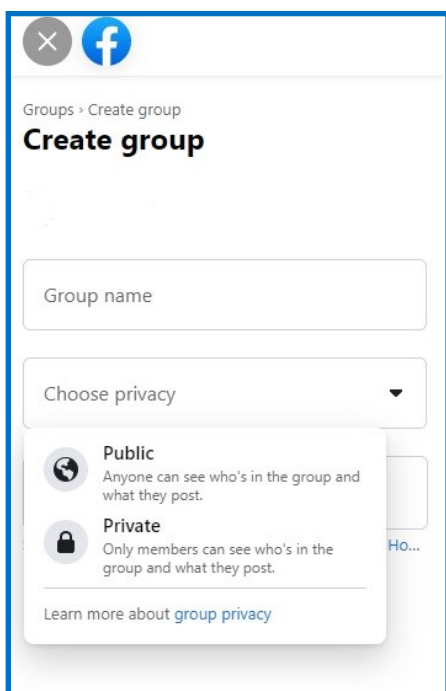
First you should have a Facebook account yourself – if you don't already then set up an account for free here: www.facebook.com and find your friends and family on there to connect with to help get you started and familiar with the settings. You should also familiarise yourself with how people interact on that platform with posts and comments, pictures etc. Please note, you should never add someone as a friend, or accept a friend request from a total stranger.

How to set up a Facebook group



To create a private Facebook group, you need to:

1. Go to your Facebook news feed page and click Groups.
2. Click 'create group'.
3. Enter the name of your group.
4. Select the privacy of your group. Here you can decide if you want your group visible to the public or private where your group cannot be found. If your group is private, you will have to add members to your group yourself either via their email address, Facebook name or by sending them a link to the group later perhaps via your email newsletter.
5. You can write your own security questions, which potential group members have to answer for you to view before admitting them.
6. You can start to add people to your group now if you have their Facebook name or email address and once you have entered the information required, press create.
7. Now you will be at your Facebook group landing page. You can personalise your group by uploading or choosing a photo for your banner, adding members to your group and sharing content.
8. To create a post, click on the 'Write something...' box and you will be able to write a post, upload photos/videos, do a live video and more.



How to set up a Facebook group

Managing your private Facebook group:

When groups are private, the content in them is intended and assumed to be private as well. Members will need to be told to be sensitive to their fellow peers and that if they are going to screenshot, share, or quote content from your private group, they need to request permission from the original poster first. Strong, consistent enforcement is key to creating a positive experience for members of any online group. We recommend:

- Feature your group rules upfront in the group's welcome content.
- You could clearly state group rules in a pinned post and or in the banner image as well as in the "about" description.
- If not, you will need to find a way of introducing new members to the rules – for example creating a post that contains the rules but also tags the new members that week so they can clearly see.
- It's also a good idea to ask prospective members to agree to your rules upon joining as part of the security questions and to tell them that they can be blocked or muted if they break a rule.

A useful tip: within your group rules, you could suggest that posts and chatting should only be done on a certain day or certain times – this would formalise your group and help to avoid constant and overwhelming amounts of chat / posting on the group page.

Administration

Administration of a Facebook group can be tiring, particularly if group members post at all times of the day and night. We would recommend that you share the role of admin with another person you trust to hold the same values and group rules that have been set out. Your group may be so large that you take on a team of administrators to help monitor the posts or comments.

On Facebook group settings, there is an option to screen all posts before they can be seen on the group page – you may like to exercise this as a way of allowing posts to be seen only during sociable hours. This could also lessen the overall time you have to spend on Facebook.

Remember, consistency is key. If you create clear rules, follow them, and enforce them consistently, then you will create a community that is both a pleasure to manage AND a pleasure to belong to.

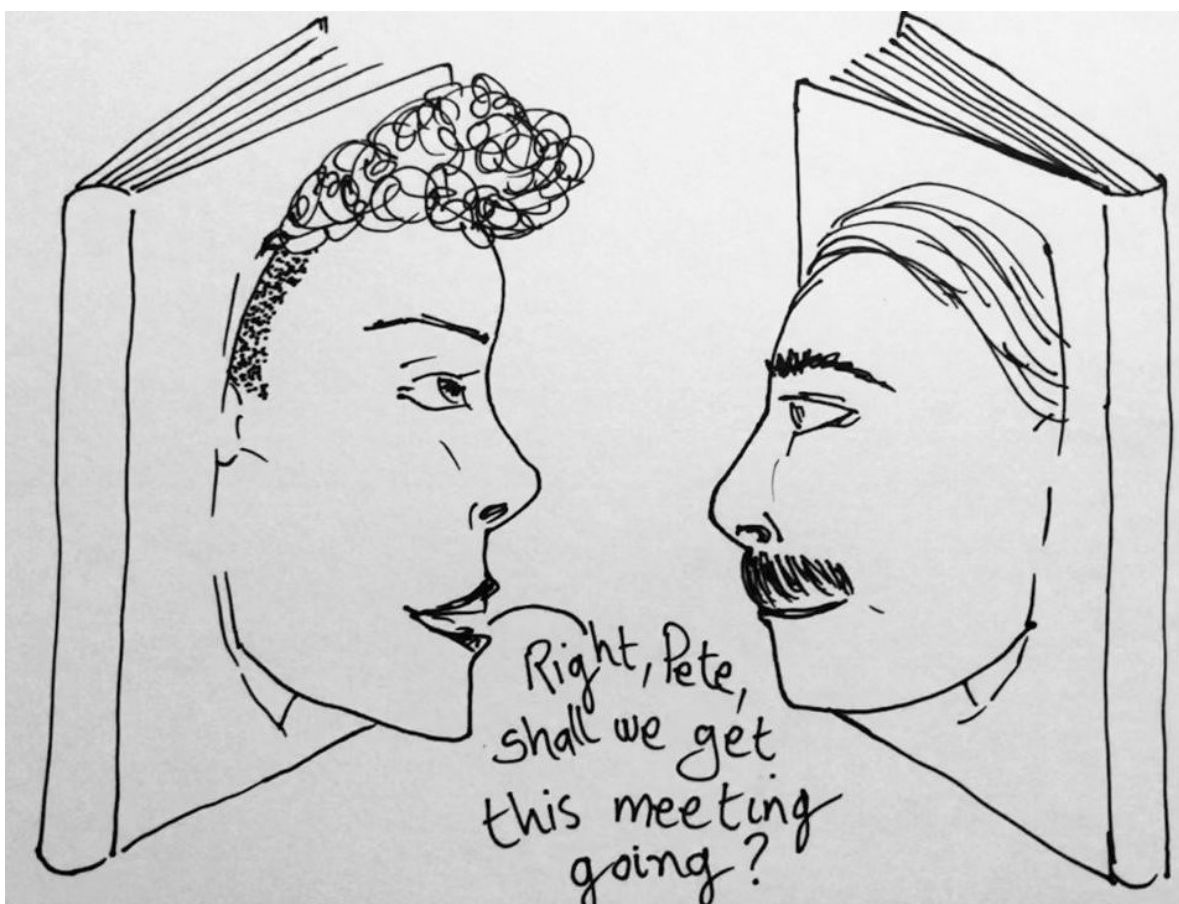
How to set up a Facebook group

Privacy

Privacy for Facebook users can be a concern. You should encourage all of your group members to look at their own privacy settings to make sure that those who are not Facebook friends of theirs cannot see their own personal page – this helps to avoid hacking for example and simply means that any historical posts they have shared before with pictures of their children etc cannot be seen by strangers.

For group privacy, we would recommend that your health / wellbeing group uses the privacy settings in your group creation. You can share the link to join the group at any time, for any new member to join. When someone asks to join, they will be answering the security questions you set – so you can monitor who the new members are, and potentially reject any applications that look like spam.

As stated in the above suggested group rules – members must be reminded that they should not screen shot or save any other members posts / pictures or comments without their permission – in doing so would be a violation of their privacy.

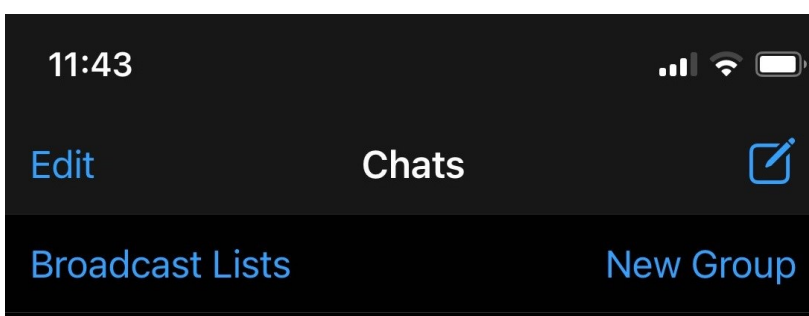


How to set up a WhatsApp group



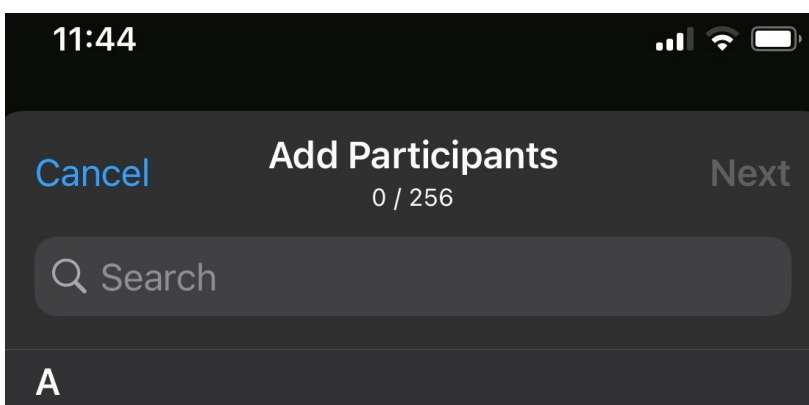
By nature, WhatsApp is very informal – in the last 10 years it has taken over the traditional text message as the main way to send a short message or picture to a contact. It works in the exact same way as an SMS text message, in the way that you must have a mobile number to download the free app – however you do not need to have 3G or 4G connectivity – you can send a text with only being on Wi-Fi.

We recommend that if you have never been in a WhatsApp group chat before, then you should set up one today with some friends or family to see how it works.

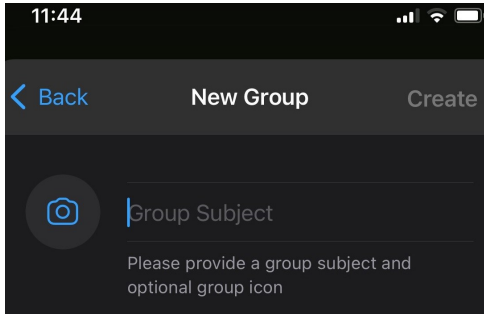


Setting up a WhatsApp group

1. Go to the 'Chats' tab in WhatsApp.
2. Tap 'New Chat' then 'New Group'. Or if you have an existing chat on the Chats tab, simply tap 'New Group.'
3. Search for or select contacts to add to the group (you will need your members mobile numbers for this). Then, tap 'Next'.



How to set up a WhatsApp group



4. Enter a group subject for example 'Salford Diabetes Group Chat'.
5. You can add a picture if you wish selecting the camera button circle on the left.
6. Tap 'Create' when you're finished.

Useful tips

Within 'Group Info' you can select 'add participants' to add more members at any time. You can also press 'invite to group via link' which creates a unique link which you can send on a text or within an email to anybody you wish to invite to join.

Control

To avoid members becoming exhausted with your group chat, you could set ground rules which might include:

- A set day or time for chat to commence, for example the first Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm only, or any week day lunch time from 11:30 till 2pm.
- A reminder to members on how they can mute a chat (they tap on the group name and select mute from within 'group info'.
- You should have a simple set of ground rules for your chat which could include a prompt on kindness, manners and ban on hate speech, bullying and also a note on privacy etc.

Administration

Within 'Group Settings' you can add admins if you wish to have help monitoring the group.

Privacy

WhatsApp includes end-to-end encryption so the messages shared are safe, and only seen by group members. Within your ground rules for your group chat however, you should include a point on respecting each other's privacy and not screen shotting any messages to share outside of the group without the original author's permission.

You could post this as a new message on your group chat each time new people have been added – and re-send it anytime you feel a group member is not adhering to them as a polite reminder

Advertise and administer your group meeting

Letting your members know about the meeting in plenty of time, is essential to giving everyone the opportunity to attend and take part. If you are hosting the meeting for the first time, you may need to make allowances for people to navigate their way around the systems at the start.

It's good to circulate ground rules and instructions of how to log in in advance, so that participants feel comfortable with what is being asked of them. Be mindful not to share email addresses with other participants, use the bcc (blind carbon copy) to input addresses onto group emails instead of cc (carbon copy). This way you can send one email to the group without sharing email addresses.

If you are hosting an online meeting or group get together, as informal as it is, it's always a good idea to have a loosely based agenda so that as host, you can keep an eye on timings, topics etc.

Always start your meetings with reading your ground rules and do a quick round of introductions. This will allow participants to try out their microphones and cameras and 'break the ice' with others in the meeting.

When advertising an online meeting, it's better to get interested participants to make contact with you to let you know they would like to attend. This way you can reply to them with a private email containing the login details, including any passwords. Ask your participants kindly not to share these details. This way you will take away the risk of any unexpected guests turning up and disrupting your meeting.



Engaging with your members

There are many different ways in which you can engage with your group members online. As you become more familiar with the system that you are using (Zoom, MS Teams, Facebook or WhatsApp), you can begin to explore how you can use the technology to make your meetings more interactive.

Breakout rooms

Breakout rooms are a facility through Zoom or Microsoft Teams in which you can split the group into smaller groups. This is a particularly useful function if you are hosting a large group and want to allow people to have discussions within smaller groups.

For more information on how to learn about breakout rooms please visit:

Zoom - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Enabling-breakout-rooms>

MS Teams - <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/use-breakout-rooms-in-teams-meetings-7de1f48a-da07-466c-a5ab-4ebace28e461>

Quick polls

If you want to ask your group members a question and feel that it would work better with anonymous answers as opposed to counting 'hands up', or just an easier facility to calculate quick responses, you may choose to run a quick poll.

With a quick poll, a small box will appear on everyone's screen and ask them to answer a set of pre-conditioned questions.

For more information on how to learn about polls, please visit:

Zoom - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-meetings>

MS Teams - <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/poll-attendees-during-a-teams-meeting-9923b7d4-ea97-4aa2-b8b8-b45fefe7d454>

Facebook - <https://mobilemonkey.com/blog/how-to-create-a-poll-on-facebook>

Host a webinar

A webinar is a way of broadcasting live to an audience, whilst limiting the controls of interaction. They are particularly useful when giving large presentations to over 100 people, though most applications will require an additional license to be purchased.

For more information on how to learn about webinars, please visit:

Zoom - <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/200917029-Getting-started-with-webinar>

MS Teams - <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dynamics365/marketing/teams-webinar>

Ground rules for members taking part

We have laid out some suggested ground rules below which you may like to adopt for your own group meeting online. As with all health and wellbeing groups, the aim is to create a supportive environment where everyone feels safe.

General ground rules for groups meeting via virtual conferencing (Zoom / Teams):

- ◆ Attendees are to mute microphones after initial sign in to avoid unnecessary disruption to the meeting.
- ◆ Arrive on time for the meeting - if you are late please do not disrupt the conversation.
- ◆ Video can be turned off if this makes attendees feel more comfortable.
- ◆ If you wish to speak, use the raised hand button to indicate to the host that you wish to contribute.
- ◆ Remember, respect for all. No abusive, threatening, racist, sexist, or foul language to be used. We will not tolerate any hate speech or bullying.
- ◆ Listen to other's point of view without becoming argumentative.
- ◆ Confidentiality - anything shared with the group remains private unless permission has been given.
- ◆ No recording, photographs or screenshots to be taken of the meetings.



Ground rules for members taking part

General ground rules for groups on social media:

- ♦ Be kind and courteous to your fellow group members, this is a safe environment to discuss and share ideas.
- ♦ No hate speech or bullying, let's make everyone feel safe here.
- ♦ No political talk that is irrelevant to why we are meeting.
- ♦ No promotions, selling posts or spam – these will be removed immediately.
- ♦ Respect everyone's privacy – do not screen shot anyone's posts, comments or pictures to share outside of this group without the permission of the original author.
- ♦ Failure to adhere to the above rules will result in that member being removed from this group.

A useful tip: within your group rules, you could suggest that posts and chatting should only be done on a certain day or certain times – this would formalise your group and help to avoid constant and overwhelming amounts of chat/posting on the group.



Safeguarding is about protecting the safety of the people you are working with and may involve issues upon which you have a duty to act. Safeguarding will apply particularly in the case of children and vulnerable adults.

The safeguarding of your online meeting space should be as important as when you met in person.

We have described below some key guidelines that should help you decide how to explain safeguarding to your group members and help to keep them safe. At the end of this chapter, there is a comprehensive list of other agencies and services to signpost to when additional help is needed.

A note on the last year:

Considering the year 2020-2021 with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and various lockdowns we must consider that as a society, we have all be under stress and strain. Group members may exhibit their stress and frustration in different ways online than they did in person, as a group coordinator please keep this in mind and be flexible and patient when holding meetings online especially if you are in the early stages of doing so and your members haven't quite found their feet with it yet.

Bear in mind that our concentration can drift during online meetings, and we may need to make more of an effort to remain engaged to support other participants.

Defining Safeguarding:

If you are an organisation, your existing safeguarding policies for children and vulnerable adults will apply in the digital space. Please carefully review your organisation's policies with digital technology in mind to understand the implications. If you are a charity your Trustees have ultimate responsibility for safeguarding in relation to anyone the organisation works with.

What to do if you recognise a safeguarding concern within your group:

During an online meeting, if you become concerned about a group member, try not to make it obvious. You should reach out to them afterwards to ask if they need any extra help or support, or even just a friendly ear.

After you have clarified if there is anything you can help with, you should make the relevant referral or signpost to someone who can help as soon as possible. For example referring to counselling, or housing support etc. There is a list of agencies at the end of this chapter.

Safeguarding

Telling group members about safeguarding:

If you have not already established a safeguarding guideline for your group, then you should do so now whilst you prepare to meet them in a digital space. It can be as simple as letting people know via email that if they have any concerns about a fellow group member to let you know so you can take a lead on making any appropriate referrals or offering the appropriate additional support.

Tips for group leaders/coordinators:

- Do you have contact details so that you can follow up with anyone you are concerned about? Please also let your members know if you are saving their contact details. If it is an open forum, and contact details are not provided, consider how you might close the meeting so that anyone who has shared personal information feels heard, acknowledged and supported.
- During challenging or stressful times, it may be more appropriate to build in check-in time for participants to report on how they're feeling. This is supportive at both the beginning and end of sessions. Try not to squeeze out this reflective space due to a busy agenda.
- Reflective time at the end of a session in particular helps ground us and give a sense that we have engaged, been recognised and listened to.
- Think about what reflective practice you can build in for yourself; can you write notes after the session? Is there someone else you can have a debrief with?
- Group leaders/coordinators have a duty of care to look after the needs of the whole group. You should think about how you would react if you see a group member behaving erratically or inappropriately on screen that could trigger fellow group members and how you would manage this situation to keep the meeting calm.
- It is also important to be clear what support you can and cannot offer to participants online. Do not promise something that you aren't qualified to deliver. Be careful in managing participants' expectations about the depth of support you can offer.

Keeping your group members safe (should this go here or within guidelines for Zoom / Teams?) It is best practice to not share your meeting links for any online meetings to those who do not belong to your group. For example, not sharing the meeting link online via social media – but instead on email or text just to your group members. Adding a password is also advisable and is possible on Zoom but not Microsoft Teams at the time of writing this guide.

Organisations for further support:

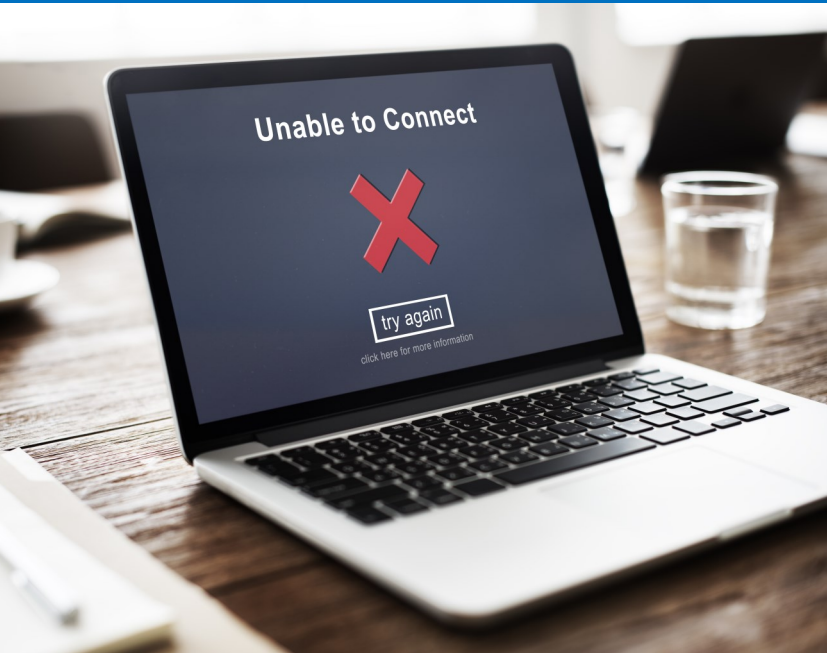
Salford - <https://www.salford.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/safeguarding-adults/>

Bury - <https://burysafeguardingpartnership.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8876>

Rochdale - <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/social-care-and-support/Pages/safeguarding-adults-at-risk.aspx>

Oldham - <https://www.osab.org.uk/>

What to do if something goes wrong



Occasionally things don't go according to plan and the best advice here is to be prepared.

Participants lose connection during the meeting

It's good practice to remind participants not to panic if they find their internet connection goes down and they end up leaving the meeting. Suggest that they go back to the original login details and try again – make sure you look out for them in the waiting room as you will need to admit them again!

As a host you lose connection and the meeting stops

Usually with most online meeting functions, if the host loses their internet connection, the video application will usually make one of the other participants a co-host until the original host re-joins the meeting. Good practice suggests to let your participants know what to do if connection goes down e.g. suggest everyone try to log back in with the same details. In the event that you cannot get the meeting up and running again, it's a good idea to drop your participants and email/text/phone call to let them know what's happening and ensure that everyone is fine.

People are talking but nobody can hear them

Following good practice, it's always best to have participants mics on mute during meetings. Sometimes though we can forget to switch them back on when we want to say something.

Allow participants to familiarise themselves with the mute button at the start of the meeting and don't be afraid to talk over them if they cannot be heard.

If they are struggling to switch their microphones back on, get them to check no external speakers or microphone's are plugged into their device. If all else fails, ask them to leave then re-join the meeting.



What to do if something goes wrong



One of your participants is breaking your ground rules or acting inappropriately

As host, you can always mute a participant's microphone, switch off their camera or put them back into the waiting room if you feel it is necessary. Just hover over the participants name on the screen and select 'mute' or click more to enable you to 'stop video', 'remove' or 'put in waiting room' – note that if you mute or stop video, the participant can always unmute their microphone or turn on their camera again from their end.

Don't be too afraid to remove someone from a meeting or switch their camera or microphone off. Make sure that your participants understand this is part of your 'ground rules' for behaviour.

Recording an online meeting

It is usual for written notes and minutes to be taken during a meeting and this should be communicated to participants at the start.

Recording an online meeting needs careful consideration. You will need to comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and you will need to safeguard the interests of your participants.

- If you record a meeting, you create an 'asset' of participants data and as such you will need to gain their consent for this (make sure you include the purpose of the recording, how it will be stored, shared and what the participant needs to do if they wish to withdraw).
- You should have an explicit reason for recording the meeting. Recording a meeting, just because you can or just in case you need it for a later date, isn't really justifiable enough to record in the first place.
- You should be able to say who will have access to the recording and how it will be stored and for how long.
- If you are going to go ahead with your recording, you will need prior consent from all those participating in your meeting, including any guest speakers. You will need to tell your participants:
 - ◊ that you're intending to record the meeting;
 - ◊ why you are recording the meeting;
 - ◊ who will have access to the recording and for how long;
 - ◊ where people will be able to access the recording;
 - ◊ how long the recording will be kept.
- It's best to provide this information in plenty of time prior to your meeting. You could include this information in your meeting invitation if you ask for permission at the start of the meeting, you are not providing adequate time for participants to make a decision, and you may be putting them under pressure to agree.

Other points to remember about recording meetings:

Some people are often very self-conscious about appearing on video and knowing that the meeting will be recorded may prevent some people attending. The knowledge that they are going to be recorded may also affect their ability, or willingness, to contribute to any conversation. Participants may be less motivated to attend meetings if they can just watch the recording later. Some guest speakers may not be happy with you recording their presentation, as they may be concerned that the recording will impact on their business if they are usually paid for their presentations (training etc).

Unless it is absolutely essential and you can justify your reasons for doing so, it is better not to record your meeting.

Other useful page links

Salford

Directory of support	www.directory.salford.gov.uk/kb5/salford/directory/home.page
Salford Care Organisation	www.northerncarealliance.nhs.uk/salford-care-organisation
Healthwatch Salford	www.healthwatchsalford.co.uk

Rochdale

Directory of support	https://www.ourrochdale.org.uk/kb5/rochdale/directory/home.page
Rochdale Care Organisation	www.northerncarealliance.nhs.uk/rochdale-care-organisation
Healthwatch Salford	www.healthwatchrochdale.co.uk

Bury

Directory of support	www.theburydirectory.co.uk
Bury Care Organisation	www.northerncarealliance.nhs.uk/bury-care-organisation
Healthwatch Bury	www.healthwatchbury.co.uk

Oldham

Directory of support	www.actiontogether.org.uk/community-activities/community-activity-directory
Oldham Care Organisation	www.northerncarealliance.nhs.uk/oldham-care-organisation
Healthwatch Oldham	www.healthwatcholdham.co.uk

Your notes page

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