



Preparing for your virtual meeting



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The coronavirus pandemic has led to us to embrace technology faster than ever to keep in touch with family and friends. Many services, such as Adult Social Care, GP surgeries, hospitals and businesses have been using video calling technology to carry out appointments and meetings.

There are many advantages of video calling. For example, it can take place in your home, saves travel time and if you are unable to leave home, you can still keep your appointment at a time that is convenient for you.

We also had to adapt the way we work and use more technology to keep in touch with colleagues and deliver key services to vulnerable people during this uncertain time. Throughout the pandemic, we have used technology to continue to support people to live independently in line with the latest government guidance.

While online appointments can work well, there are situations when a face to face meeting is more appropriate. For example, if you have been admitted to hospital, we will visit you at home as soon as possible after your discharge from hospital.

If you don't feel comfortable with a video call, let the person you are meeting know and explain the reasons why. They will discuss your concerns with you. If you are still unsure, they will arrange a telephone call or face to face meeting instead.

How we are supporting you online

Any online appointments we arrange will take place through Microsoft Teams (MS Teams).

MS Teams is an app that allows video calling. It is secure as only your email address is needed to set up a meeting. During the meeting, it's possible to share information and guidance with you on screen. It is also possible to record the meeting as long as everyone in attendance agrees to the recording.

Once we have agreed a date and time to meet, we will send you an 'invitation' to the meeting by email. If you do not already have MS Teams installed you may wish to install the app, but it is not necessary.

Although MS Teams is our preferred method of communication for video calls, we can arrange a telephone call on your preferred number or discuss another method of communication if a video call won't work for you. As with face to face meetings the information discussed will remain confidential.



Setting up a video call

MS Teams can be installed on a mobile phone, laptop, desktop or tablet. Depending on what device you have, installing and preparing for a video call will differ. Age UK has put together a step by step guide that can help you set up a video call, or you can ask family or friends for help. Alternatively, you can use MS Teams in your browser (online web version) by clicking on the meeting invitation link that we will send you and just follow the instructions on the screen.



Preparing for your virtual meeting

Before you join your online appointment, there are some things that you should do to prepare for a successful meeting:

- Ensure you have the correct video calling app installed.
- Make sure your camera, audio and microphone work.
- If you have any additional needs, for example you need an interpreter or have hearing or sight loss, tell the staff member before the meeting so arrangements can be made.
- Consider if you want someone else such as a family member or friend to join you for your appointment. If you want someone else to join the meeting and they are not living with you, we will need their email address to invite them to the meeting.
- Agree a suitable date and time to meet and the length of the meeting.
- Agree what will be discussed at the meeting and agree on any paperwork that you may need to have ready.
- Discuss whether you want the meeting to be recorded.
- You may wish to prepare some questions or concerns in advance.
- Plan where you will take the video call; choose a place where you will be comfortable for the duration of the call and have good WIFI connectivity.

If you decide you are not comfortable with a video call at this stage, let the person you are meeting know and explain the reasons why. They will discuss the options with you including a telephone call or a face to face meeting and make the arrangements for you.

During your online appointment

- First, make sure you are comfortable, and you have any paperwork or questions ready.
- Ensure your camera and audio are turned on and both you and person you are meeting can see and hear each other.
- If have trouble joining the video call, please contact the person you are meeting by telephone
- Relax and talk as you would in a face to face meeting. If it is a long meeting and you need a comfort break, tell the person you are meeting that you want a break. Re-join the meeting when you are ready.
- If at any time the quality of the call worsens or you lose connection altogether, try not to worry and wait for the app to reconnect.
- If at any time you during the meeting you become uncomfortable, tell the person you are meeting and reasons why. You can arrange another meeting to finish the conversation.
- At the end of the meeting, end the video call and close the app.

Further information and advice

Microsoft Teams Video Training

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7>

Age UK Technology and Internet Support

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/video-calling

Government Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19) - staying safe online

www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online



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