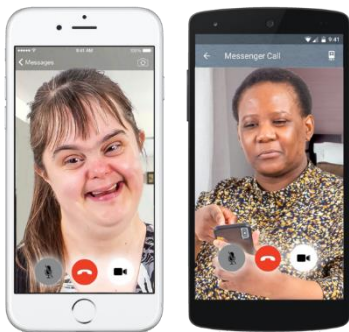# Why have a Virtual Meeting?

Most of us can't leave our houses to go to work because of the Government lockdown, so a virtual meeting helps us keep in touch with work colleagues, customers and service users, and stay safe.

It helps people to get a good balance between work and life.
It helps people have a more flexible life that works for them.

It saves money – no need to hire a meeting room, or have the cost of travel.

It saves time.

You can talk to a large group at the same time, when people are in different parts of the country.

Virtual meetings could be useful when the lockdown is over.

Maybe you don't always have to meet face to face.

It could be a positive change to your working life.

## What is a Virtual Meeting for?

- To discuss what work is happening and what work is to come.

- To ask work colleagues what they think, talk about ideas, and make decisions.

- To connect and build relationships with colleagues, customers, service users

- To support each other.
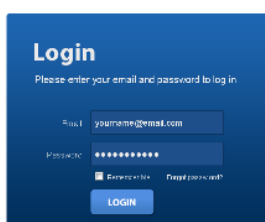
- To interview and to learn.

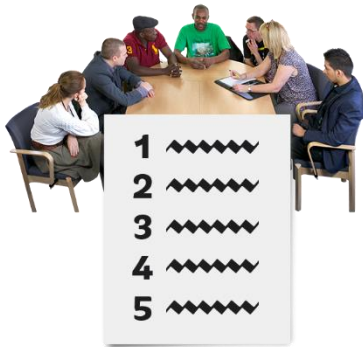  To remind people of instructions or important information.

## Guidelines for the Host (Chair)

Send the invites including the meeting ID and password.
Have a practice meeting with a few people before the actual meeting to check how the technology works.

Make up an agenda – a list of things people want to talk about at the meeting.

Agree what information will be sent out before the meeting.

Make sure people have enough time to read the agenda and information and can think about what they want to say at the meeting.

Let people know if there will be decisions made at the meeting and how this will happen.

Decide who will take notes of the meeting and how they will be sent out after the meeting.

Some groups record the meeting and send a short email to people after the meeting, saying what the main points were and who has to do what.

Say when the dates and times of the next meetings will be.

Ask people who can't take part in the meeting to let the host know.

Decide how they will find out what has happened at the meeting and how they could take part in making decisions.

Start and finish the meeting on time and use the time well.

Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak at the meeting and is part of making decisions.

Make sure no one tries to talk too much at the meeting, or doesn't say anything.

Make sure people have good manners for example:

- not talking in a bad way about people who are not at the meeting.
- not talking over people, interrupting, being loud, being rude or talking about personal things.
- Not making decisions that need the input from a colleague who is not there.

Make sure people agree if you are recording the meeting on video and if it will be shared later.

Ask people at the end of the meeting what they thought of a virtual meeting and if there is a way to make it better.

# Advice for people taking part.

Help to decide the meeting agenda.

Send any important information or documents to the host before the meeting, what needs to be talked about, and what decisions need to be made.

Be prepared. Read documents prior to the meeting and come prepared with thoughts, ideas, questions, decisions

Take part in the meeting as you would with a meeting in real life.

Make sure you have the right technology to take part.

Decide if people want 10 minutes online before the meeting to have a general chat.

Make the call from a quiet place where the sound will be ok.

Rooms with carpets and soft furnishings creating better sound rather than rooms with wooden floors which might echo.

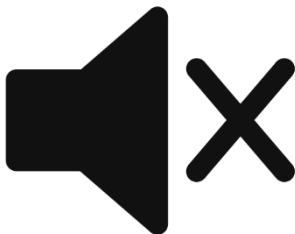Use your desktop computer or laptop to take part instead of a phone.

You need your hands free to take notes and a larger screen helps prevent eye strain and poor visuals

Use headphones and a microphone if you can to block out background noises.

Try not to talk too quickly or move around – it can make the screen blurry.

Check your lighting is ok.

Don't try to do other things while you are in the virtual meeting, like answering emails or talking to someone else in the room.

If there is background noise, 'mute' the call at your end until you want to contribute.

Switch off notifications like email, text messages and Whats App on the PC, laptop, tablet or phone you are using for the virtual meeting.

Take part in a small practice meeting with trusted people before the virtual meeting so you can try out the technology.

**Useful Resources:**

Edward De Bono's Thinking Hats
http://www.debonogroup.com/six_thinking_hats.php

Myers Briggs (MBTI) Personality types
 https://eu.themyersbriggs.com/

Harvard Business Review – How to Run a Great Virtual meeting
https://hbr.org/2015/03/how-to-run-a-great-virtual-meeting