

Top Tips for a virtual meeting

Virtual meetings are meetings that happen online using a device rather than meeting people face to face. You may be asked to attend a virtual meeting regarding your child such as a meeting with school, their EHCP annual review or a multi-agency meeting. Remember, this is a new way of working for many and so don't be worried about getting it wrong or asking questions. Like any meeting, the more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel.

If you have an invite to a virtual meeting, make sure you are clear of the following:

- Date and time - this is particularly important to ensure you will be somewhere suitable to attend.
- Why is the meeting being held?
- Who is leading the meeting?
- Who is going to attend the meeting, what are their names and their roles?
- Is your child attending? If they would like to attend, ensure school are aware and make arrangements for this.
- What software or platform is going to be used? For example, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype

Prior to the meeting

- Request an agenda from the meeting lead
- What would you like to discuss at the meeting? Make a list and tell the person leading the meeting via email if possible.
- If your child is not attending the meeting, ask them for their views so you are able to share on their behalf.
- Read through any reports, documents or your child's EHCP. It helps to have paper copies rather than electronic at the meeting so get copies if you can
- Ask for a phone number you are able to call on the day if you are experiencing any problems, such as joining the meeting or loss of internet connection.

Practical tips

- What device will you be using? You will need to be able to access the email invitation
- If you are using a phone or tablet, check the data allowance or credit. Using a Wi fi connection is free and will likely give you the best access.
- If you need to dial in using a phone with no internet, ask the person leading the meeting to call you so you won't have an unexpected bill.
- Consider where you will sit. Is it quiet and private? Will you be comfortable? What is in the background?
- If possible, have your device plugged into a charger so you don't get cut off due to low battery. Otherwise, make sure your device is fully charged.
- Will your child or young person be attending? Will they share your device, have their own or will they be at school or college?
- Have a practice run with a friend or family member

How to join meeting

- An email will be sent to you which will include a time, date and link to the meeting. Make sure you can easily find this email on the day.
- Click on the link provided. You may be asked to download an app which you will not have to do but you will probably have more options for the call if you do.
- You may be prompted to add your name in a box. Turn your camera and microphone on and off as required

Give yourself enough time before the start of the meeting to get everything set up.

Start of meeting

The person leading should allow for everyone to have the opportunity to introduce themselves. They should also tell you how to let them know that you would like to say something.

It is best to keep your microphone on mute until you would like to speak- just remember to unmute at this point!

It usually works best when everyone has their video on but if you are finding the connection is poor, it can sometimes be improved by turning the video off.

What to have with you

- List of prepared questions or points that you would like addressed at the meeting. Tick them off as they get discussed.
- Note pad and pen to jot down key points
- Your child's views if they are not attending the meeting- ensure you are given time to read them
- Any relevant reports or documents

During the meeting

- Have the agenda in view to follow
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking to limit any background noise, and try not to interrupt or talk over people
- Indicate when you would like to speak, make sure you have enough time to get your say
- For a productive meeting, try and focus on solutions rather than just what's gone wrong
- If you don't understand something, it is ok to speak up and ask for something to be explained
- Don't feel pressured into agreeing to something, you can ask for time to think
- Ask the person leading the meeting to list the main actions from the meeting and for you to be provided with a copy. Make sure you understand who will be carrying out the actions and a date to review.

After the meeting

- Get a copy of the minutes and actions
- If you have agreed to do anything, make sure you write it down and try set some time in your diary to do it, it can help to give yourself a deadline.

Where can I get further information, advice or support?

Contact the IASS team on:

Phone: 01743 280019 (Open 10am-4pm Monday—Friday)

Web: www.cabshropshire.org.uk

www.facebook.com/IASSShropshire

Email: iass@cabshropshire.org.uk

Address: Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LY