

Making Zoom Accessible

5. Make Meetings Fully Accessible

deafscotland is the user led, membership organisation for the deaf sector in Scotland. For more information, visit the deafscotland website by clicking [here](#).

deafscotland use the term the 'four pillars of deafness' to describe Deaf, Deafblind, Deafened and Hard of Hearing as people with different levels of deafness who have different barriers to overcome and have different communication and language support needs.

It is important to make sure that you follow the principles of Inclusive Communication (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/principles-inclusive-communication-information-self-assessment-tool-public-authorities/pages/9/>) and find out what the communication and language support needs of all participants are well before the meeting so that you can book language support professionals to make your Zoom meetings fully accessible.

1. Support for participants who are British Sign Language (BSL) Users

A Sign Language Interpreter will attend the meeting to provide support for those using British Sign Language (BSL). If need be, an Electronic Notetaker (ENT) may be booked to type what is said during the meeting. The notes can be shown during the meeting so that participants can read what is being said. The host can share the notes by using the 'Share Screen' function if required. The ENT notes provide a record of what is said at the meeting for the host.

2. Support for participants who are Deafblind

It is recommended that the host gets all files/information/presentations at least a week before the meeting so that they can be shared with the language support professionals and those attending the meeting. Participants who are Deafblind need to be emailed papers a week before the meeting so that they can go over all the information to prepare for the meeting. The host should make sure all the information emailed to the participants who are Deafblind are accessible and can be read by an online screen reader.

Zoom supports common screen readers such as NVDA, JAWS, VoiceOver, and Android Talkback.

Interpreters will attend the meeting to provide support for those who are Deafblind.

The Zoom application supports High Contrast settings on Windows, iOS, or Android devices and supports Dark Mode if using Mac. Font size of closed captions can also be adjusted. This can be found in your Zoom account – “Settings – Accessibility”.

3. Support for participants who are Deafened or Hard of Hearing

An Electronic Notetaker at the meeting will type what is said in real time so that participants can read what is said during the meeting. By using 'Share Screen', the Electronic Notetaker can share their note-taking screen and display what they are typing during the meeting with participants.

Using “Closed Captions” to a Zoom meeting can make the meeting more accessible to participants. The use of closed captions also helps people whose first language is not English understand what is being said in the meeting.

“Closed Captions” lets the host, participant or Electronic Note-taker provide closed captions during a meeting. When switched on, the ENT can type directly on the Zoom platform or can be provided through a third party closed captioning source. Participants are told that subtitles are available and can choose whether they wish to 'view/hide subtitles'. The font size of the subtitles can also be adjusted to suit the person reading them. Participants can also choose to 'view full transcript' where a pop up box will appear which has the notes as they are typed in it. “Closed Captions” can make the meeting more accessible for everyone and can be used in when there might be background noise that cannot be got rid of.

In addition, these helpful hints can also enhance communication within meetings.

1. Share Meeting Materials Ahead of Meeting

Share meeting materials/presentations well before the meeting to let participants to know what is happening at the meeting and what the speakers will be speaking about. This is really important for those who experience barriers to communication. Language support professionals also benefit from getting meeting papers well before the meeting to let them to prepare for the meeting.

2. Repeat Questions/understanding what is being said

Remember that in larger meetings all participants are not visible on screen at the same time. It may not be easy for participants to know who is asking a question. Participants can ask questions via the 'Chat' facility. When reading out a question from a participant, give the name of the person who asked the question and repeat the question; this can makes it easier for others to know what is being asked.

3. 'Raise Hand'

As well as raising your hand to visually attract the host's attention during a meeting, participants can use "Raise Hand" to let the host know they want to ask a question or make a comment. This can be found in 'participants' at the bottom of the screen.

4. 'Chat'

"Chat" can be used by the host and participants to speak to each other in the meeting. Messages can be sent privately or publicly using "Chat" to the host or to other participants to ask questions, make comments or understand what is being spoken about. Files can also be shared/uploaded in "Chat".

5. Breakout Rooms

Breakout Rooms can be set up in the meeting to allow smaller group discussion if needed. The host tells participants which group they will be in. Language support professionals can join the smaller groups.

6. Be polite in the meeting

As with face to face meetings only one person should speak at a time. This will let participants and the language support professionals to focus on the person speaking. Make sure other people can see your whole face.

We welcome your feedback

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased remote online working. As technology develops, our Factsheets will be updated to ensure accessible and secure use of Zoom.

To make sure that this factsheet is always up-to-date, we invite you to share your experiences both positive and negative. Please contact us at admin@deafscotland.org with your experiences.