



**ONLINE MEDIATION
GUIDELINES AND GROUND RULES**

Technology

Zoom: We will use the online secure platform provided by Zoom to conduct your online mediation sessions. This is because it is one of the few we have found that in addition to face to face discussion, it offers the facility to offer virtual breakout rooms. These can be allocated by the mediator, and from time to time you will be invited to go into your allocated breakout room so that you can talk to the mediator in private or you can have your own private discussions with your team members.

The Zoom has great tutorials and videos which we recommend viewing. They are available at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>.

Equipment Requirements

Kit: You can attend a Zoom meeting via telephone or computer.

If you would like to have video as well as audio we would recommend using a laptop/tablet. This will need a camera and microphone. Experience has found that using a smart phone for video and audio does not work so well. If attending using a phone it may be best to limit to audio only.

Secure Internet Connection: You will need a secure connection to the internet, either hard-wired or on a password protected private Wi-Fi connection for your computer. Test the speed and dependability of your connection before the mediation by hosting a Zoom meeting by yourself or with another video conferencing platform. You are advised against using any public access Wi-Fi connection, or any connection that is not secure or password protected. You and other participants' confidential information may be at risk if you do so.

How to Join a Meeting

Step by step: See our document How to Join a Meeting on the Online Mediation page of our website for a step by step guide to joining a Zoom meeting.

Testing Testing 1, 2, 3: Our mediators always contact the parties prior to the mediation day, normally via telephone. If you are going to be mediating via Zoom then pre-mediation contact will be made via Zoom so you can check everything works in advance of the day.

On the Day – Hints and ground rules

Practical points:

- For privacy and confidentiality please ensure you are somewhere private and cannot be overheard or disturbed.
- Check the physical setting, for example a light source behind you will mean you are in shadow.
- Check your background, ensure no personal items, photo's visible.

Privacy and Confidentiality: It is important that all taking part in the online process situate yourselves somewhere suitably private such that you cannot be overheard at any time. You should confirm at the outset to the mediator and the other parties either the identities of any person in the room or that you are alone in the room and that you cannot be overheard by anyone else around you.

No recording: All agree that no audio or video recording will be made of any mediation session or any part of a session by any physical or electronic means.

Organising an interruption-free day: You will need to take all reasonable measures to ensure that you are not interrupted during your online mediation sessions. This may include appropriate domestic arrangements and making yourself available for the whole of the session however long it may last. There will be agreed breaks during the sessions for refreshments, etc by agreement with the mediator. We recommend having refreshments and a supply of drinking water to hand.

Private Meetings: At times it may be beneficial for your mediator to meet you in a virtual 'breakout room' which will not be accessible to anyone else involved in the mediation. Zoom allows the mediator to move between these virtual breakout rooms and conduct discussions with the participants in that room out of the hearing of the other participants. It is vital to the mediation that the confidentiality of such private meetings is respected by all parties.

Early Log On: Whenever possible, log on the scheduled mediation around five minutes in advance of the scheduled start time so that any technology issues can be resolved, and your mediation session can start on time.

Waiting Room: Unless otherwise agreed e.g. where parties are in different time zones, you will enter the mediation session each time you log on into a 'virtual waiting room.' The mediator will admit you to the mediation from there. If you are left for any length of time in the waiting room without being admitted, call or text the mediator.

Quirks of Online Communication: The online format can amplify and exaggerate sound. If you are not speaking and do not plan to speak, or you wish to speak privately to another participant in the same room, please mute your audio (in the bottom task bar, extreme left) temporarily.

We hope you enjoy the day and that your mediation is successful.