

# Video Conferencing (meeting online) Policy

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. Video Conferencing (online meetings) requires different behaviour to a face to face meeting.
- 1.2. This policy sets out how we at SHAL will ensure that we make the most of video conferencing both in building relationships and in achieving the purpose of the meeting.
- 1.3. Video conferencing can provide participants with important nonverbal cues and encourage us to stay engaged. However, some people might feel uncomfortable and self-conscious using it, which may stop them participating as much as they would in a face to face meeting.
- 1.4. There are different skills required for effective communication via video conferencing but they build on attitudes of respect, self-awareness, thoughtfulness towards others and positivity.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1. We will ensure that we are able to use the right technology for each meeting.
- 2.2. We will ensure that every meeting is properly facilitated to achieve better relationships and to meet the tasks.
- 2.3. All attendees are clear about the structure of the meeting and the roles people have.

## 3. Details

### 3.1. Roles

#### 3.1.1. Organiser/Facilitator

- a The Organiser and Facilitator are administrative roles in the meeting and they will neither take part in the discussion nor be required to make decisions.

- b Occasionally the Organiser may be different to the Facilitator. If so, they will liaise with each other before the meeting to ensure it's planned and run effectively. If possible, the Organiser will advise all attendees (including the Chair) who the Facilitator will be in advance of the meeting.
- c They will support the Chair in ensuring the meeting is run effectively.

### 3.1.2. Chair

- a The Chair is the formal lead in the meeting and will be involved in both the discussion and making decisions.
- b They should consider in advance how they will conduct the meeting including:
  - Time management
  - Opening and closing discussions
  - Resolving potential conflicts

### 3.1.3. Attendees

- a All attendees will be involved in both the discussion and decision making.
- b All participants will ensure their microphones are muted unless they are involved in a discussion. This will reduce interference and improve the audio for all attendees.

## 3.2. Software

- 3.2.1. The right technology can ensure that the video conference is run as smoothly as possible.
- 3.2.2. SHAL will use software and platforms approved by our IT consultants and ensure they are as secure and reliable as possible.
- 3.2.3. SHAL will occasionally engage with other organisations using the software and platforms provided by the other organisation.

- 3.3. Planning the meeting
  - 3.3.1. Each meeting will be organised by the Organiser/Facilitator who schedules the meeting and invites the attendees. They will have access to the email addresses of all attendees.
  - 3.3.2. They will liaise with attendees and ensure they have received the invitation and confirm if they are attending the meeting.
  - 3.3.3. The Organiser/Facilitator and Chair should liaise before the meeting to discuss how the meeting will be conducted, including:
    - a Introductions and starting the meeting
    - b Document/screen sharing
    - c Timings (including breaks)
    - d Closing the meeting
  - 3.3.4. Meetings should schedule a break allowing attendees to move away from their devices and screens at least once every 60 minutes. This break should be scheduled in between (and not during) discussions but can take place at a convenient point during the meeting.
- 3.4. Starting the meeting
  - 3.4.1. Any attendee will be able to start the meeting. Some software/platforms provide a “lobby” in which attendees can wait before being admitted to the meeting.
  - 3.4.2. The Organiser/Facilitator should join the meeting at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start time to prepare.
  - 3.4.3. They will monitor the “lobby” if one is being used and liaise with the Chair as the Chair may choose to admit some attendees in advance of the meeting starting formally.
- 3.5. During the meeting
  - 3.5.1. Attendees will not conduct the meeting where they may be overheard or where shared screens and documents could be viewed either by

people outside the organisation or people inside the organisation who should not have access to the information being discussed.

- 3.5.2. Attendees will use headphones if their location means information being discussed verbally that is either sensitive or confidential can be overheard by either people outside the organisation or people inside the organisation who should not have access to the information being discussed.
- 3.5.3. Attendees will apply a branded background to their video if other attendees are from outside the organisation. This will prevent information and identities being disclosed in error and present a professional image.
- 3.5.4. The Organiser/Facilitator will open the meeting by outlining the basic principles of this Policy and ensure all attendees:
  - a Can see/hear the speaker (if applicable)
  - b Have muted their microphones
  - c The procedure for asking questions and/or making comments
  - d Using headphones (if applicable) or confirm headphones are not required in their location
  - e They will then invite the Chair to formally open the meeting
- 3.5.5. Attendees will not interrupt or talk over other attendees.
- 3.5.6. All attendees will use options within the software to alert either the Chair or the Organiser/Facilitator they wish to ask a questions or contribute to the discussion. They will then unmute their microphone during their contribution. They will then “turn off” the alert and mute their microphone at the end of their contribution.
- 3.5.7. All attendees will use options available within the software to make comments and ask questions.

- 3.5.8. The Organiser/Facilitator will prompt the Chair if questions are overlooked and/or the meeting is not keeping to the schedule agreed in advance.
- 3.5.9. All attendees will use active listening skills to confirm they have both heard and understood the discussions. This includes:
  - a Asking for clarification (if applicable)
  - b Asking questions, referencing details from the discussion
  - c Nodding their head in agreement
  - d Putting their hand up if they have something urgent to say and/or unmuting their microphone and asking the Chair if they can comment and/or ask a question
- 3.5.10. All attendees will explain how they're feeling as video conferencing and meeting online does not allow other attendees to pick up on non-verbal clues and/or body language.
- 3.5.11. All attendees are expected to contribute to the discussion and be mindful of how their contribution (or lack of) may be perceived by other attendees.
- 3.6. Hybrid meetings
  - 3.6.1. SHAL will facilitate hybrid meeting in which there is a combination of people meeting in the same physical space and people attending virtually. SHAL is mindful this can sometimes result in those attending virtually to become "observers" to the meeting being held in person.
  - 3.6.2. The Organiser/Facilitator will ensure the audio and video conferencing facilities are working correctly and ensure everyone can be seen and heard clearly and those attending virtually are part of the physical meeting space and the discussion taking place.
  - 3.6.3. Those attending virtually will be required to have their video cameras turned on during the meeting and the Organiser/Facilitator will ensure they are clearly visible when they are speaking.

- 3.6.4. Those attending physically will be required to address their comments and discussions to those attending virtually so they can respond to non-verbal communication queues or raised hands and comments.
- 3.6.5. The chat window will be displayed clearly for all participants to see and the Organiser/Facilitator and the Chair will monitor and respond to comments made.
- 3.7. Breaks
  - 3.7.1. The Chair will confirm when attendees are required to return to the meeting.
  - 3.7.2. All attendees will be invited to mute their microphones and turn off their videos during the break.
  - 3.7.3. The Chair will remind all attendees to check their microphones are muted and they can see/hear the speaker.
- 3.8. Sharing screens and documents
  - 3.8.1. Screens and documents can be shared by any attendees during the meeting. However, this should be agreed when the meeting is planned.
  - 3.8.2. The Organiser/Facilitator will check if any attendees cannot see the shared screens/documents before proceeding.
  - 3.8.3. Attendees should only confirm if they cannot see the shared screens/documents.
- 3.9. Closing the meeting
  - 3.9.1. The Chair will confirm the meeting is due to close and invite comments and questions from all attendees before closing the meeting formally.
- 3.10. Technical faults
  - 3.10.1. If an attendee leaves the meeting because of a technical fault the Chair will agree whether to proceed without their contribution.
  - 3.10.2. The Organiser/Facilitator should attempt to contact the attendee and assist them in re-joining the meeting (if possible). The Chair may want to schedule an unplanned break to allow this to be done.

- 3.10.3. If the meeting is re-scheduled the attendees will agree a mutually agreeable date and time before the meeting ends.
- 3.10.4. The Organiser/Facilitator will plan the new meeting.
- 3.10.5. If the meeting continues the Chair will contact the attendee who left the meeting to discuss the outcome of the meeting.
- 3.10.6. The official record of the meeting will note the time the attendee left the meeting (if applicable).

#### **4. Outcomes**

- 4.1. Video conferences and meetings online will build relationships across teams and be effective in achieving their goals.
- 4.2. Everyone will feel they have had an opportunity to express their views and to contribute to the meeting goals.

#### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1. The SHAL team as a whole has been consulted in the preparation of this policy.

#### **6. Equality and Diversity**

- 6.1. SHAL will ensure that all members of the team are able to participate and will make full use of technology to enable this to happen.

#### **7. Value for Money**

- 7.1. Video conferencing and meeting online can be a cost-effective way of achieving collaborative goals.

**8. Owner**

8.1. Systems and Communications Officer

**9. Version and Revisions**

9.1. This policy will be reviewed every 3 year(s)

9.2. Revisions

New version	Date	Revision details