

Virtual Patient and Public Involvement: A guide to video calling



Virtual patient and public involvement (PPI) can take shape in many ways, but video calls are perhaps the most common.

Video calls can be joined in multiple ways, by telephone, tablet or your laptop or desktop computer.

A researcher may prefer to arrange a video call (sometimes called a video conference) if it is


not practical or possible to meet face-to-face, for example due to geographical spread of all stakeholders.

Video calls can also be a way to become more flexible by offering opportunities to be involved outside usual office hours. It is also a more accessible method of involvement for those who are housebound.

Overview of common video calling platforms

Features common to all platforms:

-  Free to use as a participant.
-  Desktop / laptop apps.
-  Mobile phone and tablet / iPad apps.
-  Text chat function.
-  Registration not required to join as a participant.
-  You control whether to show your video or not.
-  Can make recordings of the call. *This is usually not on by default and the organiser should advise you ahead of time.*

Comparison table	Microsoft Teams	ZOOM	Skype	Google Hangout / Meet	GoTo Meeting
Access via web browsers 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dial in only option	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*	✗
Breakout rooms	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Participant screen sharing	✓	✓*	✓	✓	✗

* Availability of feature may depend on subscription type the organiser has.

Some top tips for video calls:

We asked PPI professionals, researchers and public contributors for their suggestions.



Prepare for a video call as for a face-to-face meeting, for example reading documents in advance.



Ask for clarification if anything is unclear– use the chat function if you don't think the chair has noticed you want to speak.



To reduce noise on the call, mute your microphone if you are not talking.

Don't forget to unmute when you want to speak!



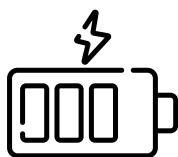
Video is there to help communication, so don't worry about bad hair days, family members appearing or messy backgrounds!



Get set up in a quiet space with a drink, paper and pens with your laptop, tablet or phone. Or even some snacks if you like!



It takes time to get used to video calls, and initially they may feel trickier than face-to-face meetings.



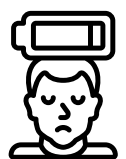
Make sure your device is charged or have your charger ready.



Check with the researcher about reimbursement for your time or any out of pocket internet or phone costs.



Ask for hard copies of papers in advance if you prefer not read on a screen.



Video calls can be more tiring, so don't be afraid to ask for a small break if you feel you need one.

Please note that the features of these services are changing rapidly at the moment, but we will try to keep this guide as up to date as possible.

This brief guide was produced by the NIHR's School for Primary Care Research, Oxford Biomedical Research Centre, Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, Community Healthcare and In Vitro Diagnostics Co-operative, and the Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley.

For more information visit:

www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/PPI/resources-for-the-public

