# Hybrid Meetings Guide

The National Forum for Health & Wellbeing exists to improve the workplace. The forum comprises Health & Wellbeing leaders from all sectors in the UK. With goals of improving the workplace, inspiring people, and organisations to think about the opportunities that healthy high performing people bring to work, creating shared values and Bringing the most innovative evidence-based thinking to organisations.
Health & Wellbeing At Work Forum | Alliance MBS (manchester.ac.uk)

**The National Forum for Health & Wellbeing at Work**

## Principles

**Kit is a means to an end** – meeting success will only partly depend on kit what really matters is inclusive chairing.

**Planning matters** – be clear about the purpose and intended outcome of the meeting.

**Meeting etiquette** – Make sure that the event invite includes clear dial-in or video call information.

**Set up to succeed** - Pick rooms with all the technology needed to enable hybrid meetings; Use rooms with speakers/screens so everyone is visible and can be heard.

## Firstly consider – do you need a meeting?

Can the work be done using MS Teams exchanges, Slack threads, or workflow management tools instead?

These handy hints help consider the purpose of meeting and attendee numbers:

**Decision making**
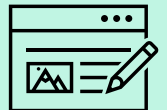Active facilitation 6-8 attendees

**Discussion meeting**
Active dialogue by attendees; 8 to 20 attendees

**Information-sharing meeting**
One-way communication from speaker; 2 to 2,000 + attendees
Source: Five Fifty: Meeting time | McKinsey

## Technology

Ensure accessibility – use live transcript in MS Teams or zoom, translate options, and ensure content shared is digitally accessible for those with screen readers or other assistive tech needs.

Have a back-up plan - another way remote participants can join. Nominate a contact person, an alternate platform or even traditional dial-in number.

## Technology

**Ensure everyone can be heard** – high quality speakers are important to allow everyone to be heard.

**The basic kit isn't enough** - wide-angle cameras and speakerphones are a good idea.
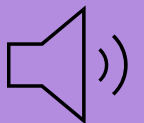
**Emphasise visibility** - have two large monitors in the room so that remote participants appear in different parts of the room.

# Design

what do remote participants need to see in order to fully engage? - Faces of in-room attendees, shared presentations, physical documents, content created during the meeting on whiteboards or flipcharts, etc.
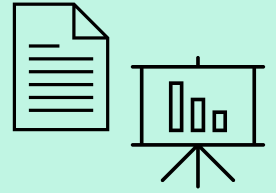
Each remote participant should have an "in-room avatar" — a fellow participant who can be their physical presence as required. Having access to a single point-of-contact goes a long way to removing a sense of isolation from those in the room itself.

*Replicate what's done in the physical room for remote participants* - If you are brainstorming in the room on a whiteboard for example, do the same thing for virtual attendees.

# Management and chairing

**The chair needs support** – Identify a contact person to support virtual attendees in accessing and engaging in the meeting.

**The chair should be a remote attendee** – this helps make the meeting inclusive of virtual attendees.

**Active chairing matters** – Draw remote participants in, keep them engaged. Take note of those not involved and ask them questions, to bring them into discussion.

**Give the floor to remote participants first** – Ask remote participants for their feedback/ questions before in-person participants.

**Avoid distraction** – Avoid side conversations and ask that all attendees take turns speaking.

**Have a common protocol for speaking** – Have all participants, raise their hands before joining in. The meeting chair should call for input or ask questions.

**Use the chat** - Everyone should use the chat function.
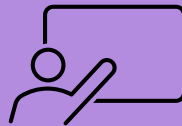
**Stress clarity** – Repeating a question helps to ensure that everybody understands and has heard what's just been asked.

**Gain feedback at the end of the meeting** – 1) What worked well; 2) What should we do differently next time. Share what you learn with colleagues to help their remote / hybrid meetings.

# Planning

**Invite remote participants to access the meeting 10 to 15 minutes early** – This allows remote participants to address any audio/video issues and eliminate distractions as others join the meeting.

**Designate an in-person participant to monitor the chat** – They'll be the eyes and ears for the remote participants in the meeting, providing them a way to ensure their voices are heard. It also helps monitoring any connectivity or audio issues that might occur.

**Think about breakout rooms** – If the meeting demands breakout rooms, it's worth the extra effort to integrate remote participants across several breakout groups to accentuate their equal status.