

Involving people affected by diabetes remotely

What can you do?

Restrictions in place as a result of the pandemic have dramatically influenced how we involve people affected by diabetes. Involving people when it's not possible to meet face to face can be a significant challenge, but it's important we do everything we can to continue to work in partnership with people. Here are some tips to help you navigate how to involve people remotely.

Explore the virtual platforms on offer and choose one that is most appropriate for the activity you're delivering and the people that you are trying to engage with.

- Know the advantages and limitations of each platform or tool that you could use and think about what would be most suitable for your audience.
- The [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) has produced a document describing the features, pros and cons of each of the major platforms.
- There is a set of helpful video tutorials from [Zoom](#) and [Teams](#) that show you the basics and how to use additional functionality such as break-out rooms and screensharing.

Offer different levels of participation, according to participants' needs and confidence.

- People may not be digitally confident, and some may not have the equipment (webcam and microphone) necessary for a video call, so offer different ways of being involved and make people aware of these options.
- Examples of non-digital remote options include posting out a hard copy of a survey as an alternative to completing it online or holding a discussion by phone instead of video call.

Top Tip

If you're running an online meeting, make sure you give participants a warm welcome as they arrive. Introduce yourself and get everyone else to do the same – maybe with their name and one thing about themselves.



Make it possible for everyone to join in.

- If you are running a group session online, try using the different tools available with each platform, such as breakout rooms or virtual whiteboards, to make the sessions more interactive and enable people who are less comfortable talking in a large group to contribute.
- Encourage and support people to take part in the way that they feel able to, such as using the chat function or the 'hands up' button.
- You could also use presentations alongside a polling or Q&A tool such as [Slido](#) or [Menti](#), to help people join in that might not be able/want to use a microphone.
- Make sure that everyone has an equal chance to contribute to the conversation, regardless of how they choose to participate – it can sometimes be easy to 'forget' people who are quieter or who have their cameras turned off.

Make being involved as straightforward and easy to access as possible by supporting with the technology.

- Don't assume everyone will know how to use the platform. Send guidance on how to join in advance with the invitation and any other items like the agenda or pre-reading.
- Offer to speak to participants beforehand if they haven't used the platform you are using, so that they can try it out.
- Allow time before the session to test audio/video and any tools you're using, and for people to log in and sort any issues.
- At the start of the session, give a brief orientation of the virtual space such as reminding participants how to enable video, mute and unmute and where to find the chat box.

Top Tip

Instead of trying to replicate face to face sessions online, rethink how your sessions are designed and structure them specifically to work in a remote context. For example, be sure to factor in breaks and 'off screen' activities if you can.

