The Governance Services Team does not endorse or guarantee the use of Zoom software; however, we recognise many schools and boards use this as a communication platform and following a number of queries, we have established this guide to assist governors and trustees. Other video conferencing facilities are available.

This document contains guidance on the following:

- School Accounts with Zoom
- Scheduling a Meeting in Zoom
- Setting Up an Individual Zoom Account
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Section 1 - School Accounts with Zoom

Zoom is a remote conferencing service which facilitates online meetings and video conferencing.

The service is free to use with a Basic account and provides an unlimited number of meetings. There is an unlimited time duration for 1:1 meetings but there is a 40 minute limit for meetings with 3 or more participants. After 40 minutes of meeting time the session ends automatically. Participants are able to sign back into the meeting, using the same meeting number and password to access a further 40-minute session.

Zoom appears to be lifting this limit for some meetings but this is not guaranteed.

However, Zoom has temporarily lifted this 40-minute limit on free Basic accounts for schools affected by the pandemic. In order to benefit from this measure schools must sign up for a school account and subsequent meetings must be scheduled from this account in order to take advantage of these extended meeting lengths.

Schools can sign up to a school account via the following link:

Activate School Account

Schools will need to input the following information:

- School email address
- School name
- First and Last name
- School size
- School website
- Phone number
- Country/ Region

The following are screenshots of the sign-up process (smartphone view):

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K-12 School Verification Form

Zoom is temporarily lifting the 40-minute time limit on free Basic accounts for schools affected by the Coronavirus. Here's how to get access for your school.

FAQ on Zoom's Program for K-12 Schools in Impacted Areas

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Step 1

Sign up for a free Basic account here using your school's email address.

Step 2

Fill out the below information for your school to remove the 40 minute time limit for anyone on your school's domain after verification. Personal email addresses such as Gmail, Yahoo, or Outlook are not eligible. It can take up to 72 hours. You'll be notified in Zoom if the limits have been lifted on your settings page when you log into Zoom through a web browser.

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School Information

School Email Address

School Name
To select, begin typing.

First Name

Last Name

School Size

School Website

Phone Number

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School Website

Phone Number

Country/Region *
Afghanistan ▾

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About

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Customers
Why Zoom
Careers
Partners
Press
How to Videos

Download

Meetings Client
Browser Extension
Lync Plug-in
Android App

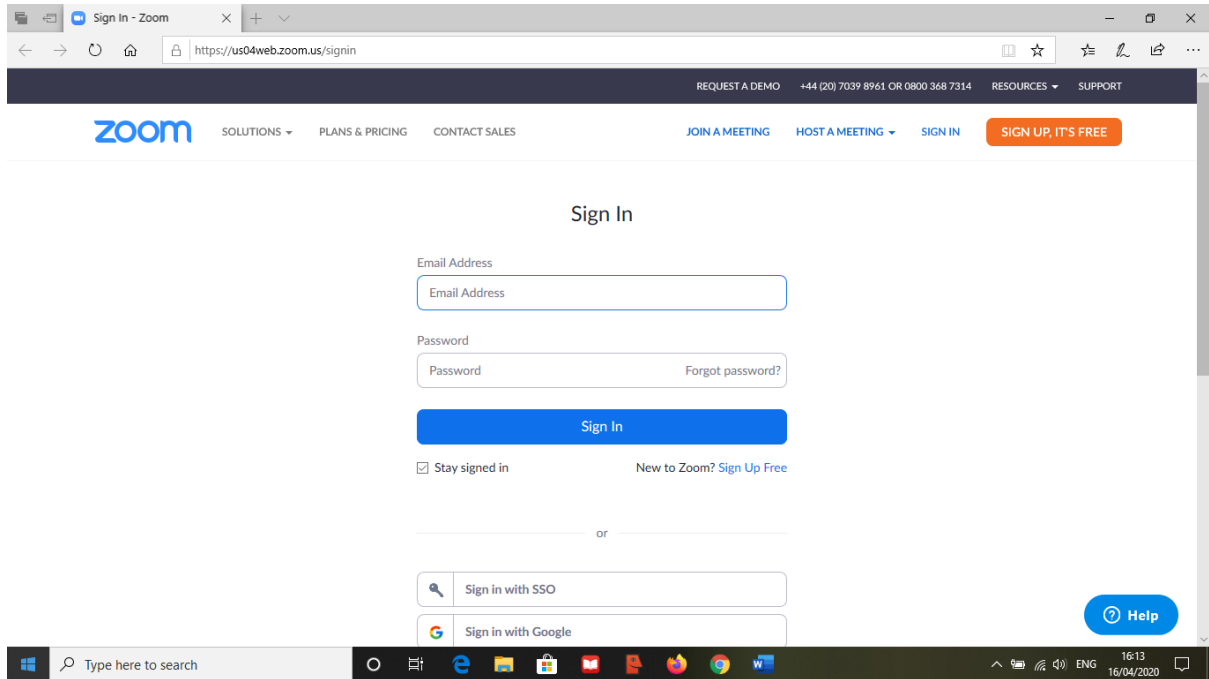Zoom Rooms Client
Outlook Plug-in
iPhone/iPad App

Section 2 - Scheduling A Meeting In Zoom

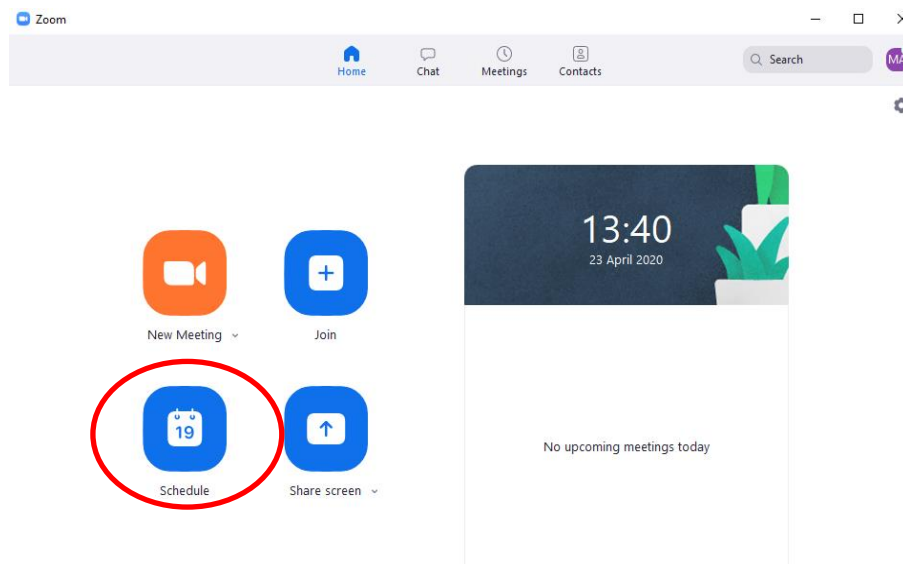The following are screenshots which provide a step-by-step guide to scheduling a virtual meeting using Zoom.

Step 1
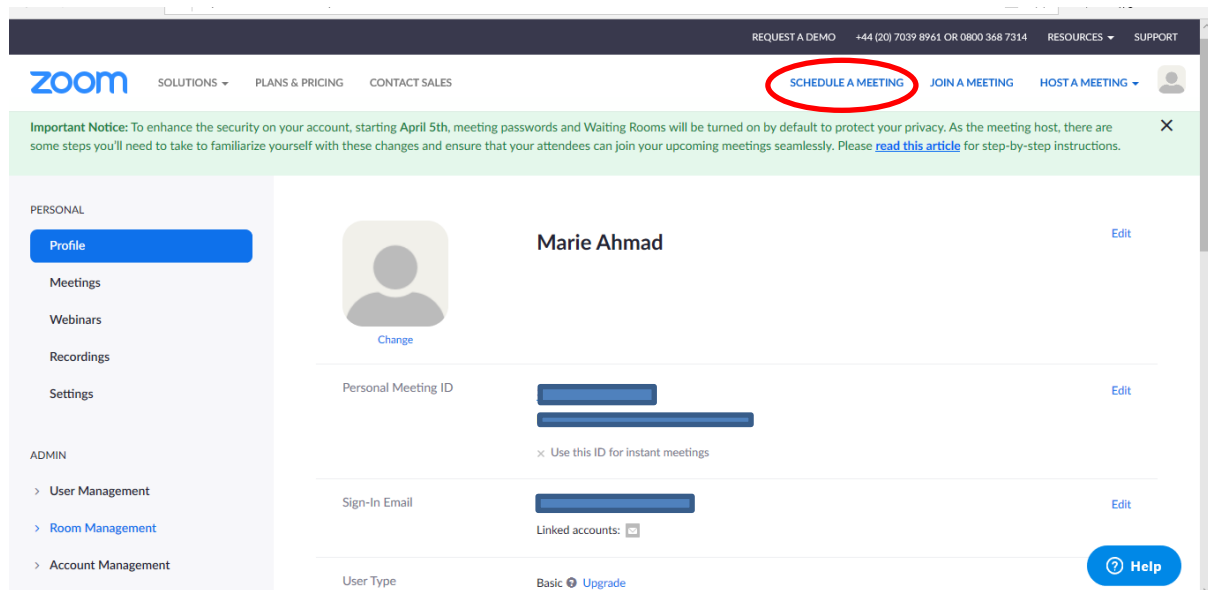
Sign in to your Zoom account

Step 2

There are two places from which you can schedule a meeting. The quickest method is from your 'Home' Page:
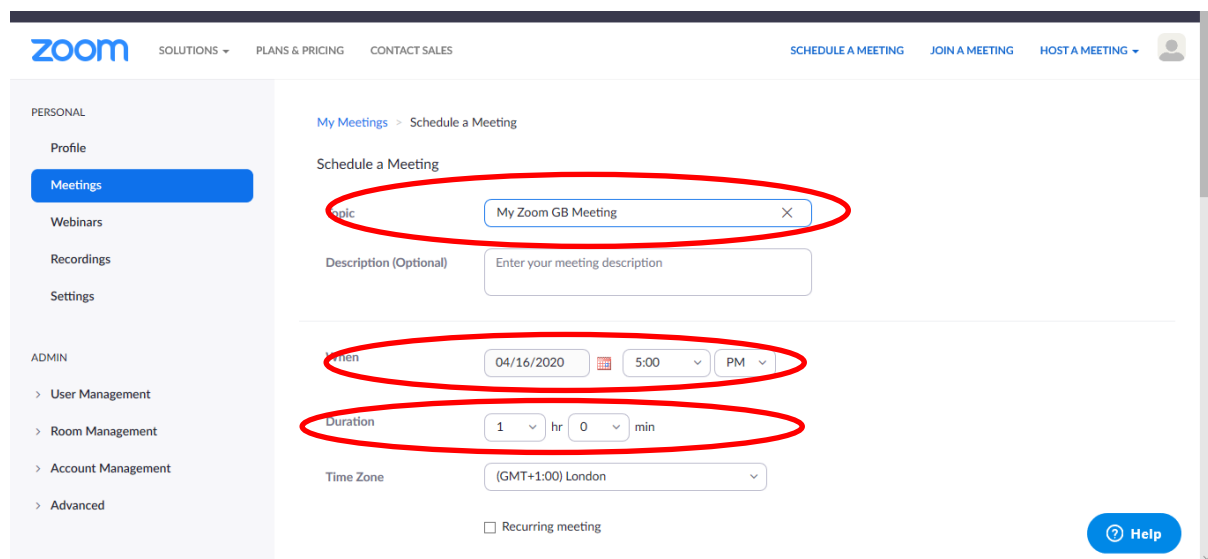
Just click on the 'Schedule' button

OR

Click on the tab 'Schedule a Meeting' on the top of your profile page.

Step 3

Type in the details of your meeting:

Some of the detail is already generated – leave these as the default. NEVER GIVE OUT YOUR OWN PERSONAL MEETING ID – an ID for your meeting should be automatically generated.

Click 'Save'

Step 4

A meeting ID will have been generated along with a password. You can personalise the password by editing that which has been automatically generated. ALWAYS SET A PASSWORD FOR YOUR MEETINGS as this provides additional security. Meeting participants will need both these to be able to join the meeting. These details can be copied and pasted into an email to all participants by clicking 'Copy the invitation'.

Zoom generates this typical text for your meeting invitation:

> Marie Ahmad is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
>
> Topic: My Zoom GB Meeting
>
> Time: Apr 16, 2020 05:00 PM London
>
> Join Zoom Meeting
>
> https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74367533063?pwd=Ny9FMER1dE1QakE5VXhnSzVDVk1qQT09
>
> Meeting ID: 743 6753 3063
>
> Password: 6Nm97B

To access the meeting, participants just need to click on the link and type in the meeting ID number and password when prompted. Participants will not be able to access the meeting until the scheduled date and time.

Upon joining the meeting all participants will be placed in a virtual 'waiting room' and can only be admitted to the meeting by the 'host' (the person who has scheduled the meeting).

Participants can check their video, microphone and audio functions whilst in the waiting room ahead of the start of the meeting.

➢ Meetings can be accessed through your web browser but you will need to set up a Zoom account. Previously, you could join a meeting without having to create a Zoom account but this is a recent, additional security feature. The option to access a Zoom meeting through your web browser is provided once you have clicked on the meeting link and there are instructions to follow to help you set up an account.

We have provided some further step-by-step instructions should participants wish to set up their own account with Zoom and download the software application to their own devices:

Section 3 - Setting up an Individual Zoom Account
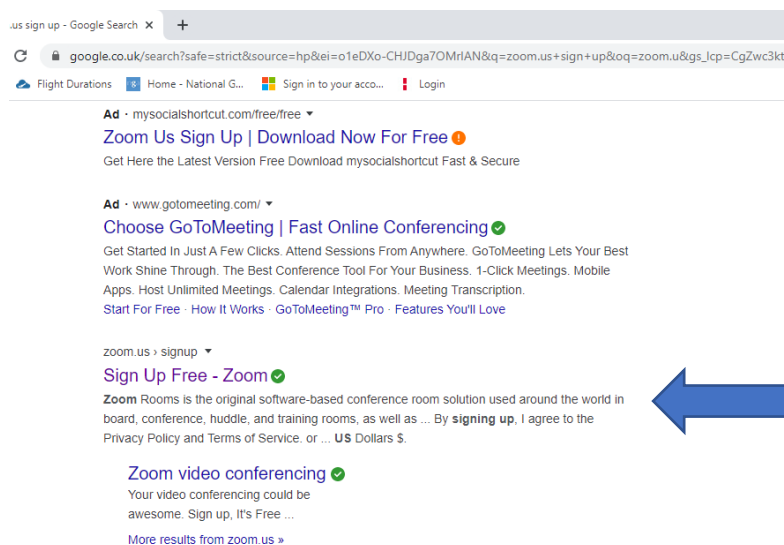
Step 1

Search for 'Zoom' using your usual search engine (e.g. Google, bing etc)
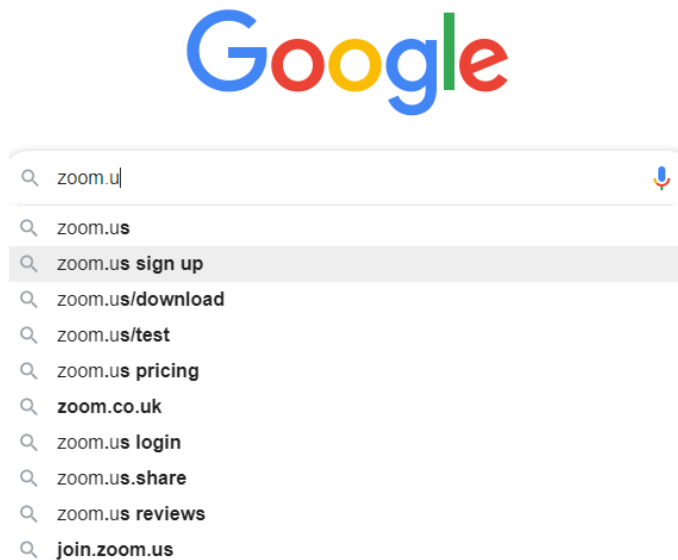
Step 2

The correct link is identified below by the arrow. Click on this link.

Step 3

Type in the email address with which you would like your account to be linked and then click 'Sign Up'.
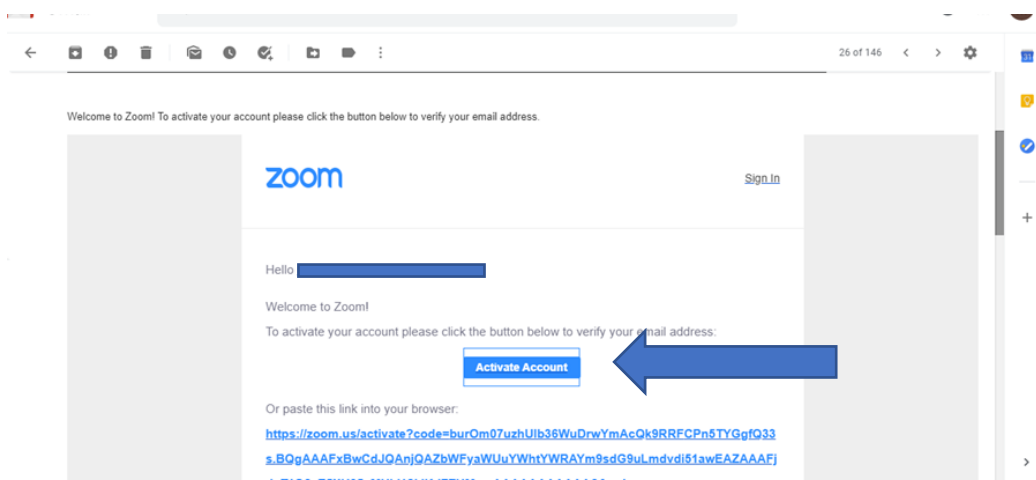

Step 4

The following page will appear. You will need to sign into your email account to retrieve the confirmation link within the email which Zoom will have just sent.
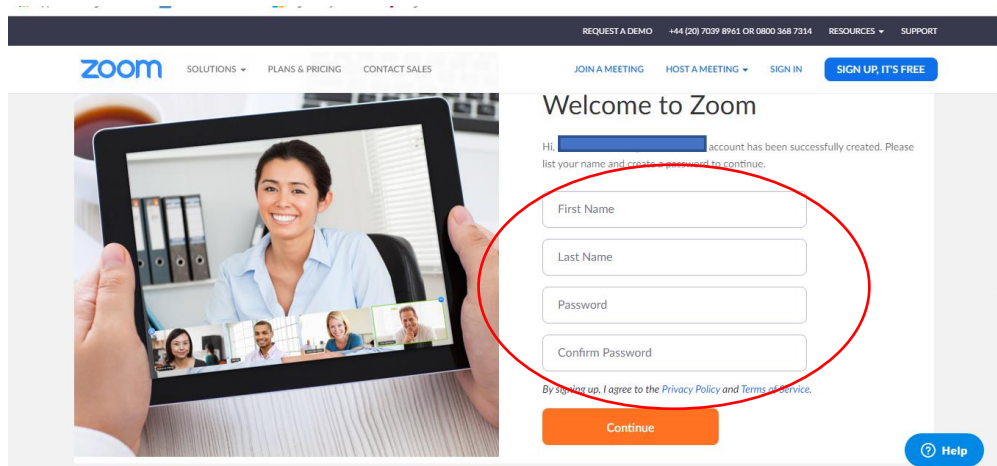
Step 5

Click on the link to activate your account and then follow the instructions to set up your Zoom account.
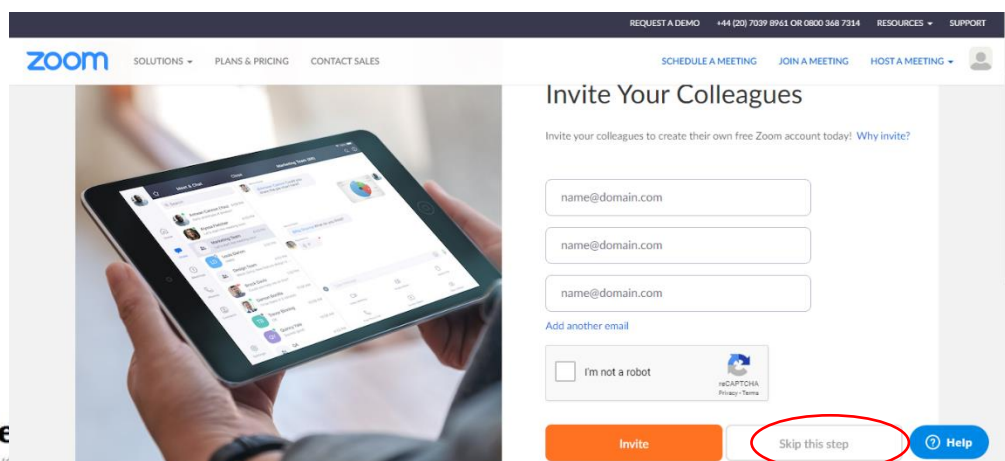

Step 6

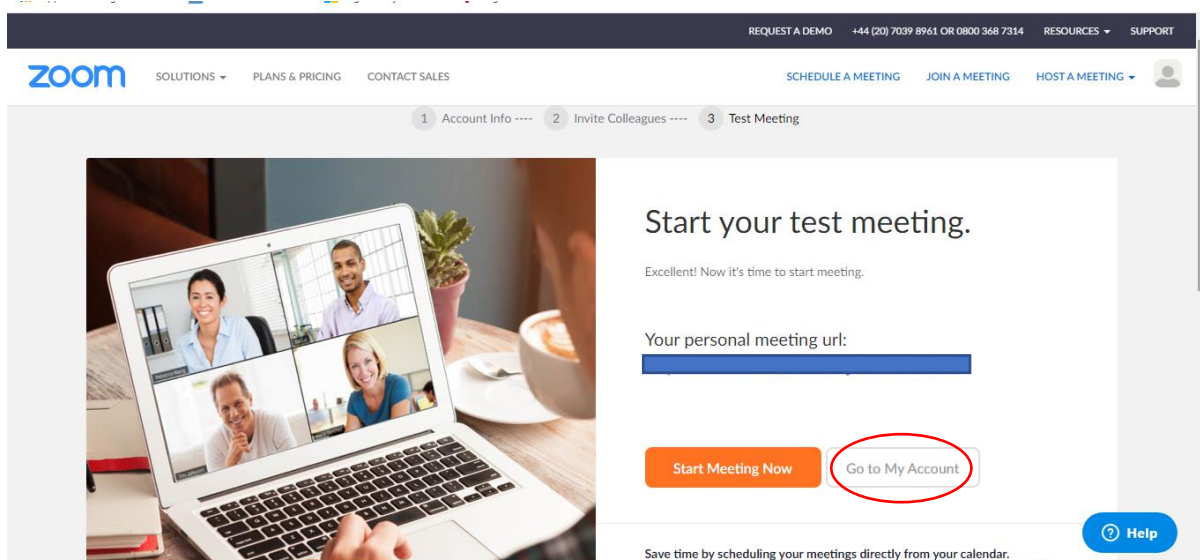Once you've added all your details, including your password click 'Continue'.

Step 7

You will be taken to a page which allows you to 'Invite Colleagues'. You can skip this by clicking the 'Skip this Step' button.

Step 8

You are all set up! You will be taken to a page which will invite you to start a test meeting but you can skip this by clicking on the 'Go to My Account' button.

Step 9

You will be taken to your 'Profile' page which contains all your account details. If you scroll down the page you will find some links to training resources. Click on these to watch videos for further guidance on how to use 'Zoom'.
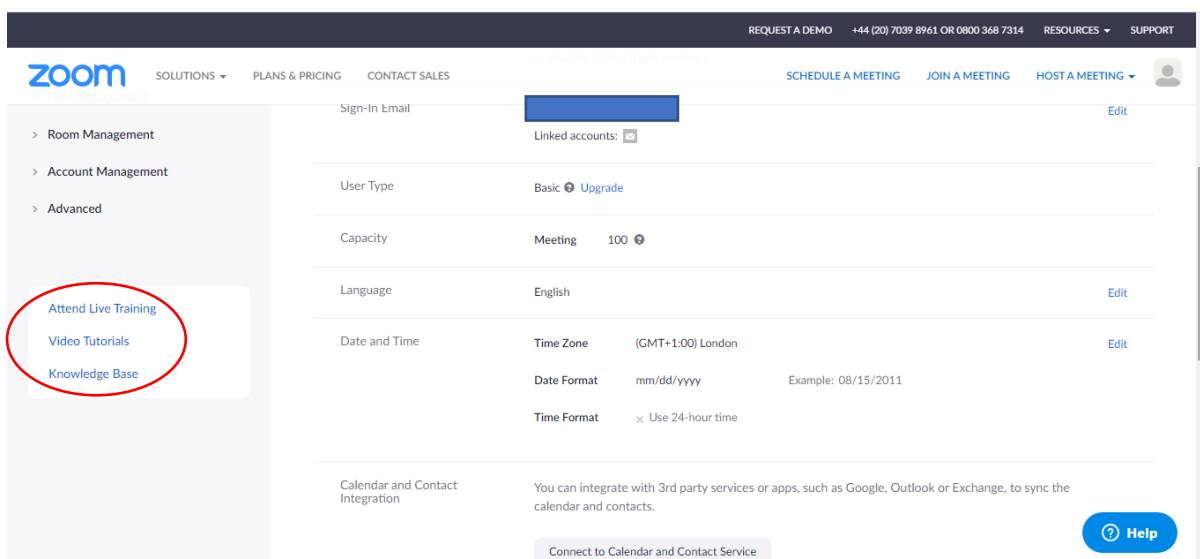
There are a number of videos and articles to help you get to grips with Zoom.
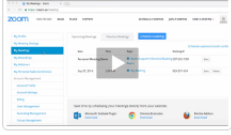
Section 4 – Frequently Asked Questions

1. I've managed to join a meeting, but I can't hear anyone in the meeting/ other participants cannot hear/ see me.

When signing in to join a meeting ensure that you enable the audio and video on your device. The following boxes should be left 'unticked':
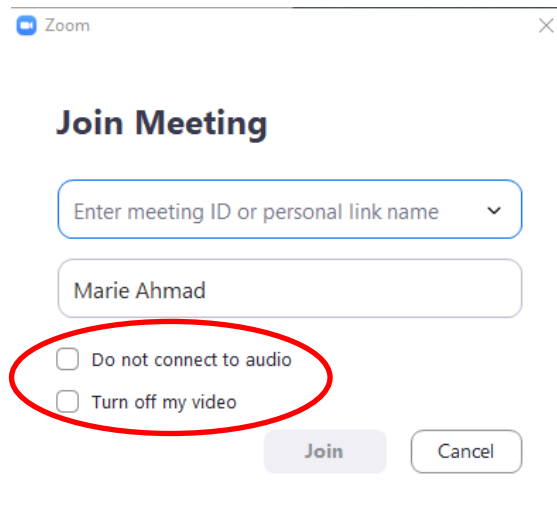
You can also check your speakers and your microphone from your 'Home' page of your Zoom account. Click on the settings cog and choose 'audio' from the drop-down list. Check that the volume on these have not been turned down to a low level. You can check your microphone by speaking out loud - you should see the input level fluctuate when you speak.

Click the 'Settings' cog in the right hand corner of your Home Page
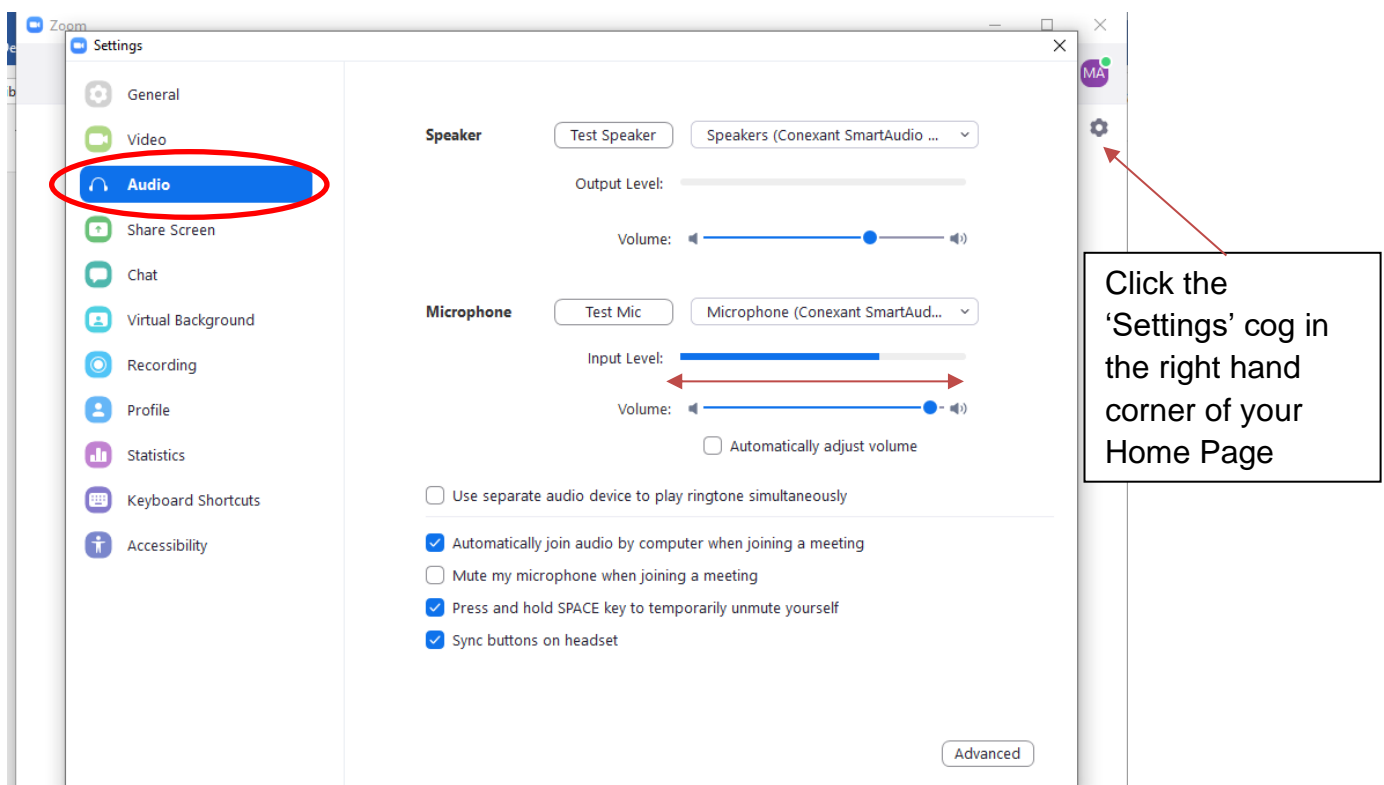
You can also check your video output from this setting page. Choose 'video' from the drop-down list and you should see a preview from your camera. Ensure that your camera is enabled when you join a meeting. This should be left unticked.
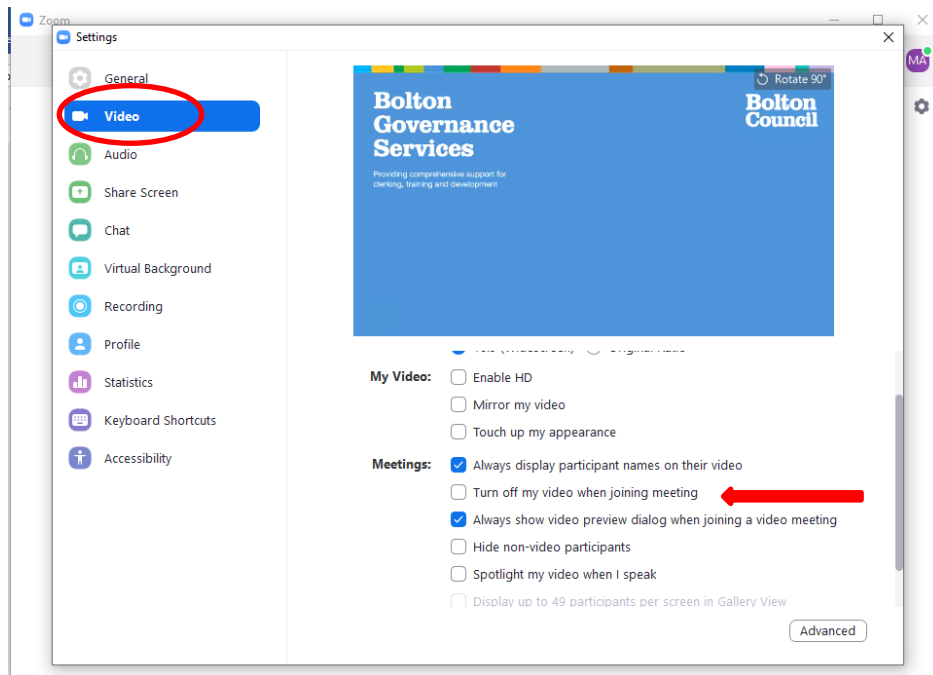
You can check the status of your microphone or camera from the horizontal toolbar on the meeting screen. If you have a red diagonal line through the microphone icon or the video icon this indicates that they are muted/ switched off. Just click on these icons to unmute your microphone or start your video. The little arrows at the side of each icon also provide further functions – just click on the small arrows to view the drop-down options.
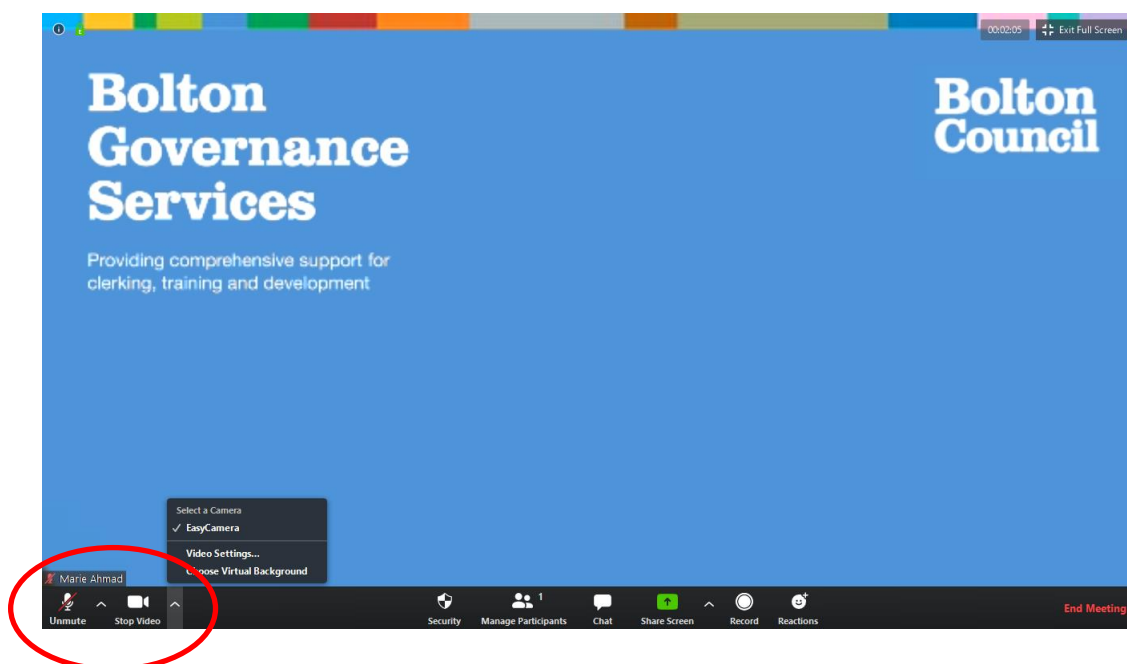
*2. I'm not able to see everyone who has joined the meeting on my screen.*

The number of other participants you are able to view on the screen will depend on the type of device you are using. If you are accessing the meeting from a smartphone/ iphone this number will be reduced. You should be able to view more participants on larger devices such as ipads/ tablets/ laptops and PCs. You can maximise the number of participants you are able to see by viewing your screen in 'Gallery mode'. The viewing options can be found in the top right hand corner of your meeting screen.

The number of participants will also be temporarily reduced if a participant shares their screen with you i.e. to share a document to meeting attendees.

Throughout the meeting you can see who has joined by clicking on the 'Manage Participants' icon from the toolbar. This generates a list of everyone who is present and can be kept open on the right-hand side of your screen. The small number at the side of the icon represents the number of participants present.
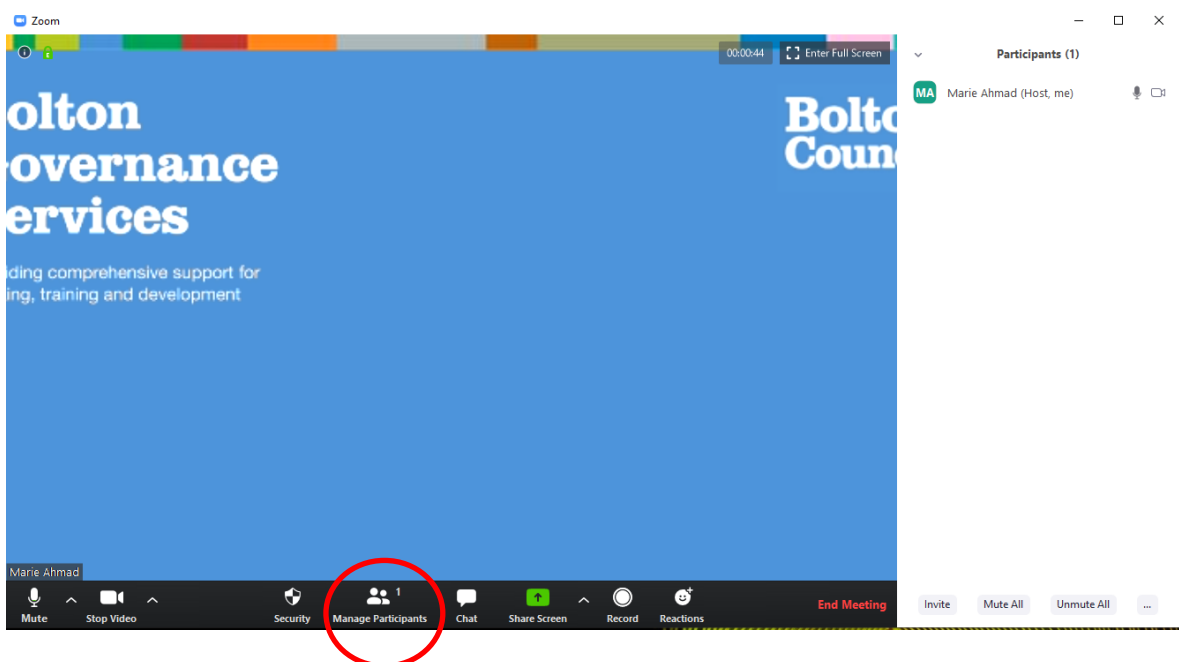
3. I am getting a lot of interference whilst on calls and background noise is making it difficult to hear others speak.

Interference and background noise can be minimised by all participants agreeing to 'mute' their microphones throughout the meeting. This is really effective in creating a much quieter setting for the meeting. Microphones can be unmuted when participants wish to speak at the meeting and then muted again once they have made their contribution. Wearing headphones also helps to block out sound from outside of the meeting and provides a more private space for discussions.

4. What happens if I 'drop-out' of a meeting – will I be able to re-join?

If you lose connectivity during a meeting you can use the same Meeting ID number and password to re-join the meeting. Once you log back into the meeting you will be transferred to the waiting room and the meeting's Host will need to re-admit you to the meeting. Protocols and procedures for such occurrences should be agreed at the start of the meeting. It is helpful for the host to have a contact telephone number for all participants so that if necessary, they can be telephoned during the meeting and support to re-join the meeting can be provided. It may also be helpful for you to have a contact number for the Host so that you can notify them of any issues you may experience in the event that they haven't noticed you have lost connectivity. These strategies should all help to minimise any disruption to the meeting.