

Guidance for witnesses: attending a virtual hearing remotely

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Health and Care Professions Tribunal Service (HCPTS) will be listing some hearings to be held virtually. This approach is being taken given the exceptional circumstances of the current pandemic which has resulted in the closure of the HCPTS hearing centre in London due to the Government's social distancing restrictions.

This guide shows you how to participate in a virtual hearing and join a meeting using the Microsoft Teams app. Teams is an application that allows multiple users to make audio or video conference calls.

Before the hearing

Technical requirements

In order to participate through video link, you must ensure you have:

- ✓ A suitable/ compatible device and connection speed to ensure the video link will work throughout your attendance.
- ✓ The device must have a camera and microphone so that the live video and audio is available.
- ✓ We recommend a minimum download speed of 8mb and upload of 512kps. Variables that could impact the connection speed are others in the same building using streaming services, online gaming etc, at the same time as the video link.
- ✓ A suitable environment which is quiet and there are no distractions.

Scheduling

You will be sent by email a Notice of Hearing setting out the date and time of the hearing.

The Hearings Officer, who is responsible for coordinating proceedings, will contact you prior to the hearing to answer any questions you have about the hearing process. The Hearings Officer will also email the Teams invite to you and all the other parties, and arrange a test call should you require one. (see 'Appendix A' at the end of this guidance for instructions on using Teams)

At the hearing

On the day and time set out in your Notice of Hearing, you can join the hearing by following the instructions you have been sent.

You can find more information about the hearing process on the HCPTS website:

<https://www.hcpts-uk.org/participant-information/witnesses/>

Please note that the information on the website is in relation to physical hearing and at a virtual hearing, all participants will take part through the Teams application.

Giving evidence

When you are giving evidence, virtual attendance will typically require you to give an affirmation. Where you wish to give an oath, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct holy book available.

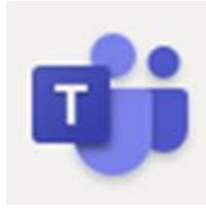
After the hearing

The Hearings Officer will send you the decision by email and the decision will be published on the HCPTS website (in accordance with the HCPC Fitness to Practise publication policy).

<https://www.hcpts-uk.org/aboutus/publications/fitness-to-practise-publication-policy/>

(attached: appendix A – guidance for using Microsoft Teams)

Appendix A : Guide to joining a hearing on Microsoft Teams



In order to access Microsoft Teams you will need to accept the invitation emailed to you.

An example of the invitation:

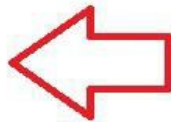
1. The Hearings Officer will send you an MS Teams invite email in advance of the hearing. On the day of the hearing, please open the email and click on **Join Microsoft Teams Meeting**.

When: 19 March 2020 10:00-17:00 (UTC+00:00) Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Microsoft Teams Meeting

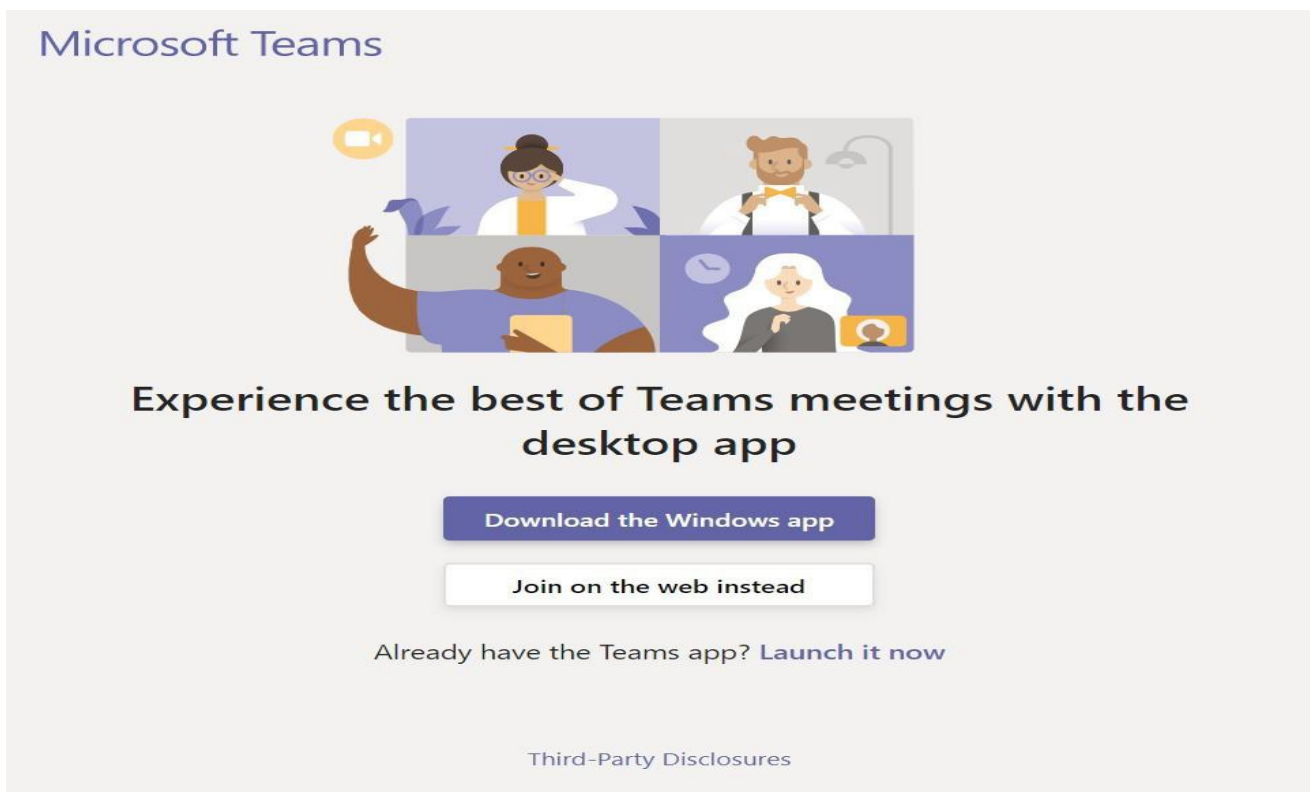
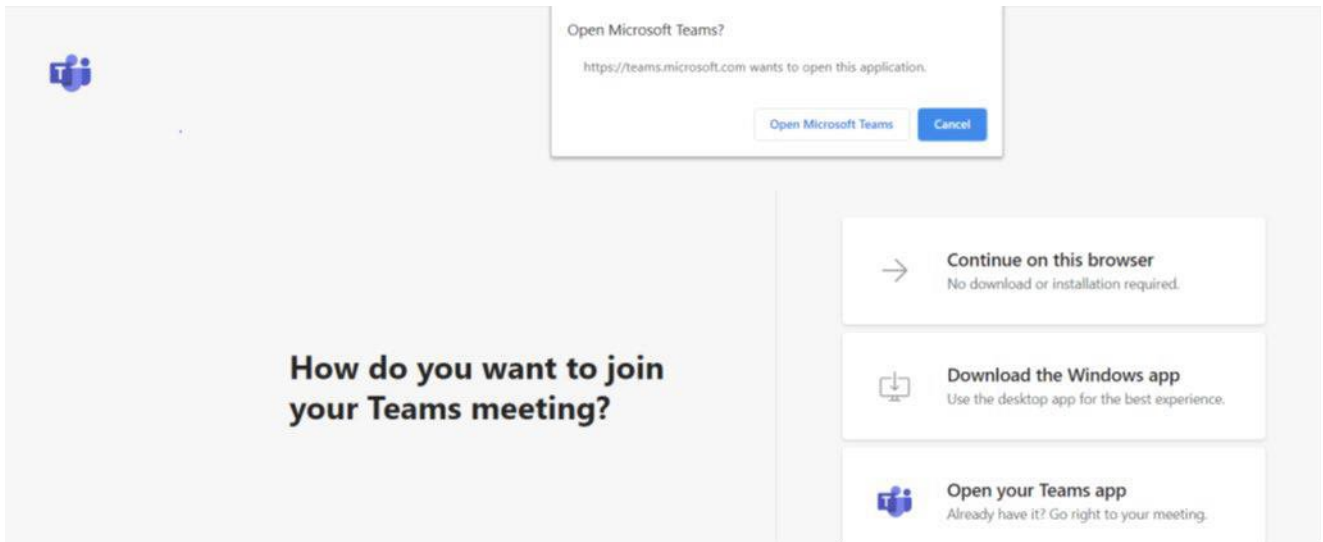
[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

[Learn more about Teams](#) | [Meeting options](#)

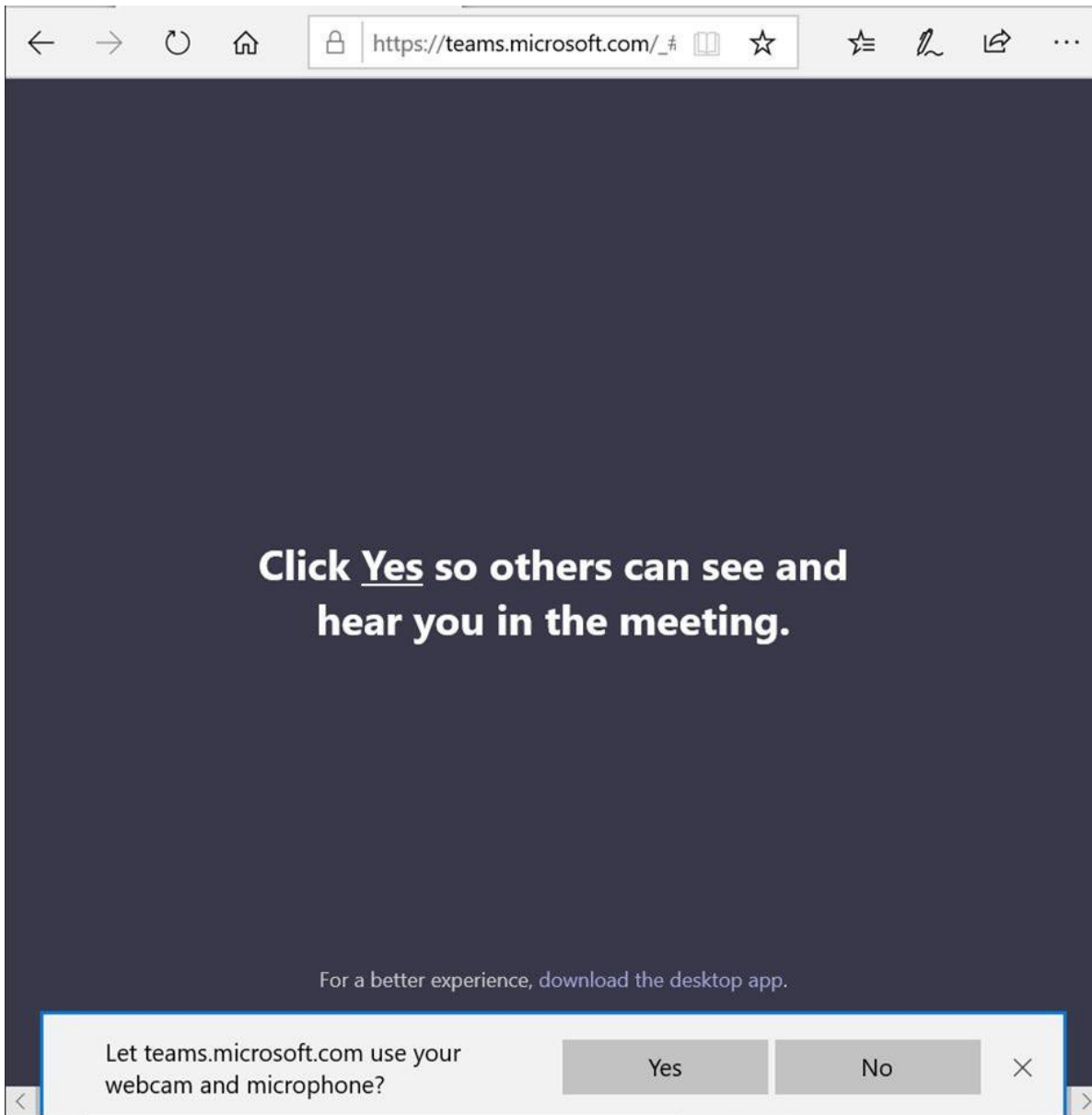


Link to join meeting

2. The attendee is not required to have the MS Teams application. Depending on what browser is used, you may see either of the screens below. You can **Continue on this browser** or **Join on the web instead**. The attendee should select the option that is best



3. Select “Join on the web instead” which will take you to Microsoft Teams in the browser.
4. You will be taken to the screen below. A prompt will appear asking you to “Click ‘Yes’ so that others can see and hear you in the meeting”.
5. Click ‘yes’ to give permission for Teams to access your webcam and microphone. Select “Yes”.



6. A screen will appear asking you to enter your name and choose your video/audio settings. Please enter your full name, adjust your camera and mic settings, then select **Join Now**.

Choose your audio and video settings for

Meeting now



Enter name

Join now



Devices

Other join options



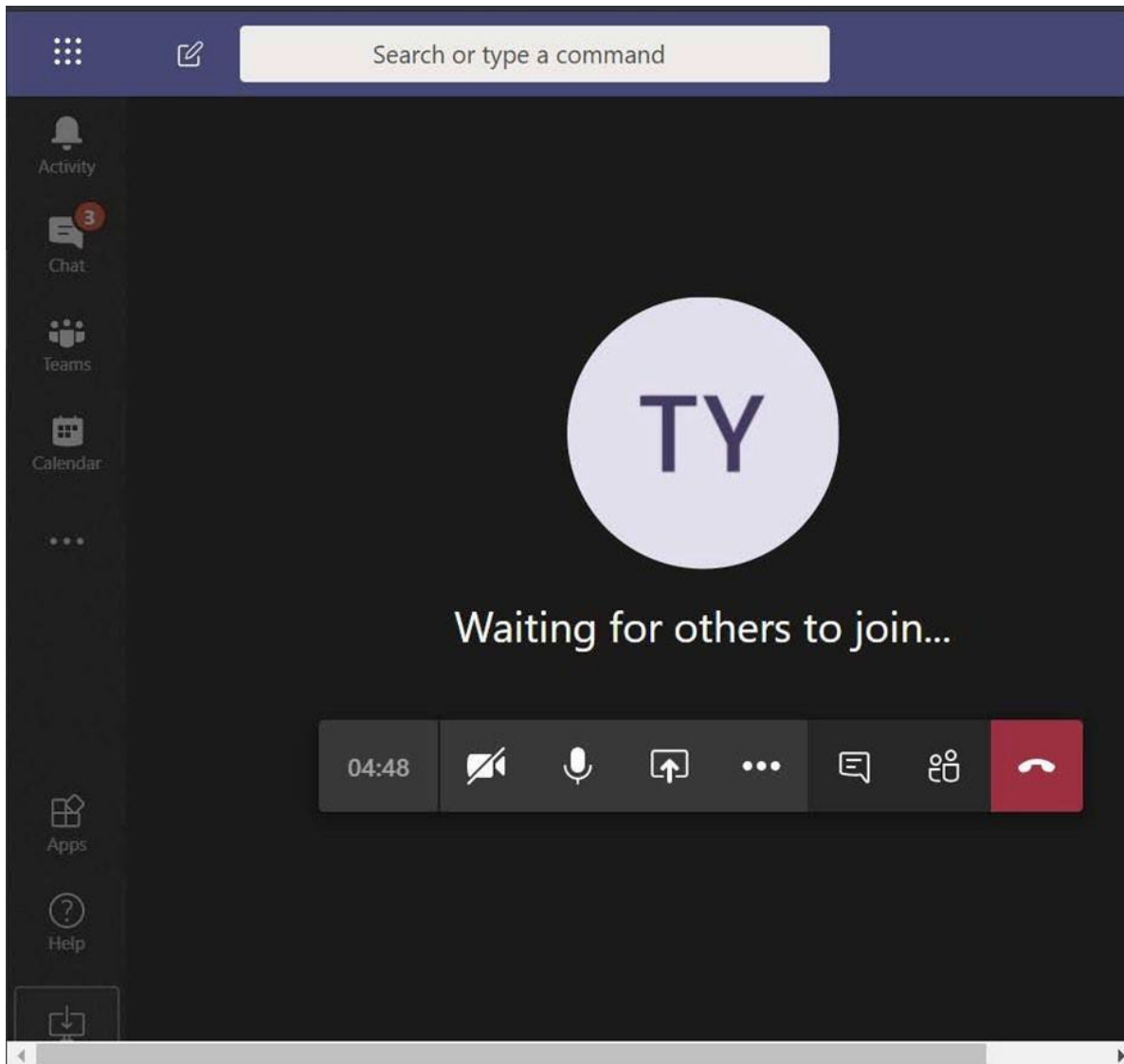
Audio off



Phone audio

7. Once you click “Join now” you will be taken to a screen advising that “Someone in the meeting should let you in soon”. The Hearings Officer will ensure everyone is in at the start of the hearing.

Upon entry, your screen will appear as below:



8. There will be a small window to the side showing your own webcam screen. The screen will split as people join the meeting.
9. The screen will show a maximum of four people, with the initials of additional participants at the bottom – **please note** *only* speakers in the hearing will appear on screen. The toolbar for the controls will appear at the bottom of the browser.



Time	Shows the time and the title of the meeting when you hover over it
Camera	Enable and disable the sharing of your webcam
Mic	Mutes and unmutes your microphone
Share	Share your computer screen (not needed for public members/press)
Actions	The “More Actions” tab allows you to access a menu of tools
Con	The “Show Conversations” tab shows details/history of the meeting to the right of the screen when selected.
Parties	The “Show Participants” tab shows all the individuals in the meeting.

Please contact the Hearings Officer or HCPTS if you have any further queries.