

# Tips for effective remote working & virtual meetings

March 2020

Recommended guidelines

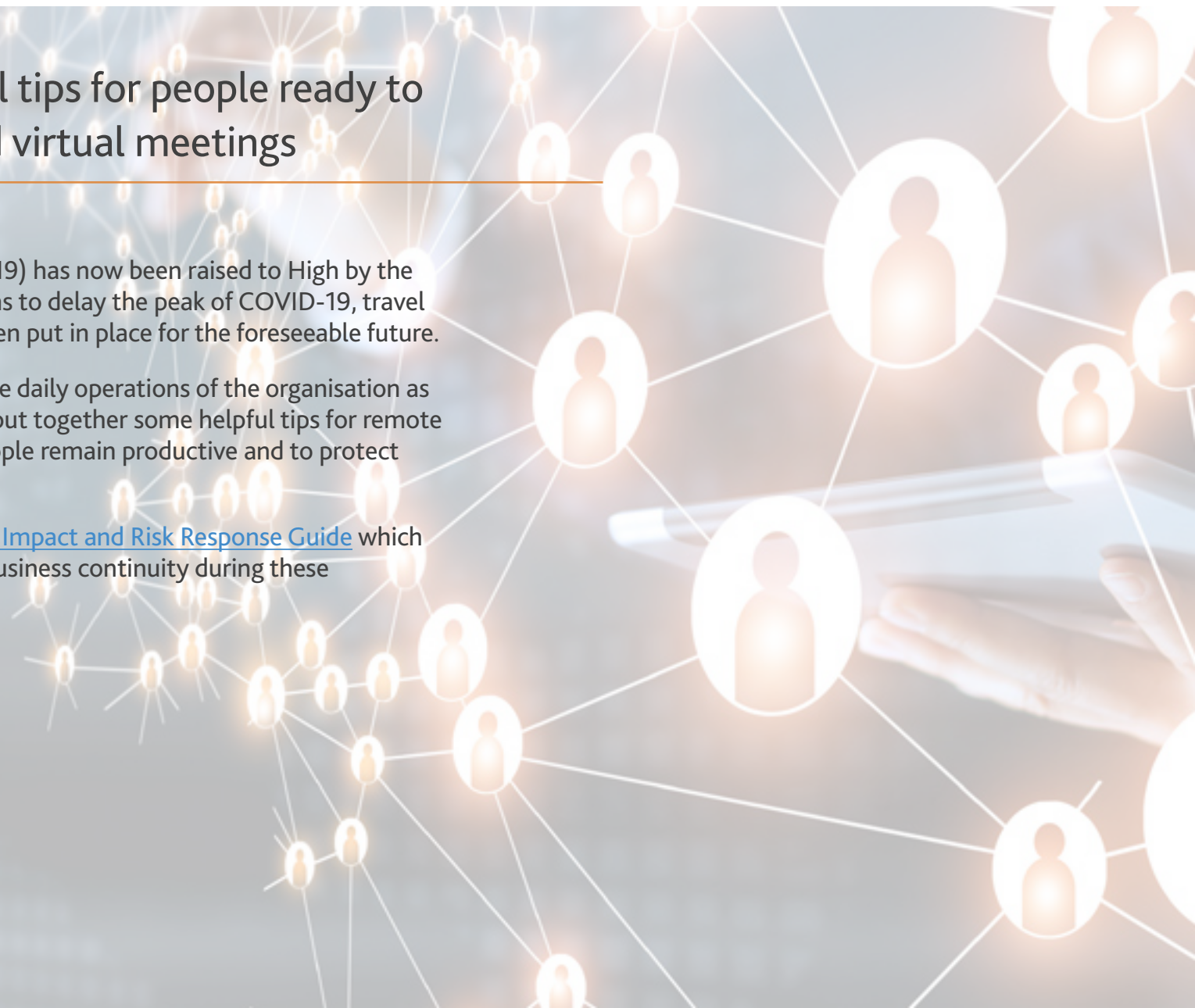
## This guide provides useful tips for people ready to start remote working and virtual meetings

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The threat level of Coronavirus (COVID-19) has now been raised to High by the UK Government. As the Government aims to delay the peak of COVID-19, travel restrictions and remote working have been put in place for the foreseeable future.

The impact of these actions can affect the daily operations of the organisation as well as employees. In response we have put together some helpful tips for remote working and virtual meetings to help people remain productive and to protect employees morale.

In addition you can read our [Coronavirus Impact and Risk Response Guide](#) which advises organisations on resilience and business continuity during these challenging times.





### Remote working – 8 top tips to keep you productive



Set yourself up – Make sure you have a comfortable place to work from, check your connections and video conferencing tools so you know everything works.



Plan your day – Without the daily requests from people around the office it can be difficult adjusting. Plan your working day the night before to help you to be productive and define the end of it. Check with your manager what you need to achieve and don't forget your timesheet.



Work ready – Get ready to go to work. Get up, have breakfast, make a coffee. Keep a routine to maintain focus.



Work contact – Try to have your normal meetings even if working remotely as this helps to keep continuity in your work routine and ensures you are still feeling like you are part of the team. It also allows for you to share the experiences you may be having as everyone may have similar feelings and challenges.



Human contact – Make sure to schedule a coffee with a friend every couple of days, or call someone. Humans love interaction and you are no different. Working alone can be difficult so make sure you schedule contact time.



Ignore the chores – If you are not used to working from home the chores can become something you didn't know you loved. Don't get distracted by the laundry or the hoovering. Pretend you have that weird house blindness that some people you live with might have when they ignore housework that needs doing.

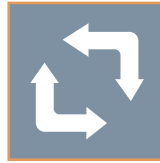


Reward yourself – Without others around you it is important to praise or reward yourself for completing activities or tasks. Schedule in that tea or coffee for getting the job done!



Finishing your day – Make sure you know when to finish working. Working from home you can lose hours or get totally sucked into what you are doing distraction free. Unless it's a deadline there will always be something to do, so have a realistic finish time and go and do your life activities.

# Technology Tips for Remote working with MS Teams



## RE-ORDER YOUR TEAMS

Rearrange the position of your teams so that the most important are at the top, hide those that are no longer active and leave Teams which are no longer relevant.



## TITLE POSTS

All posts should be titled like all emails are titled. Click the format icon to fully open the post to add a title and use all formatting features.



## WHO ARE YOU NOTIFYING?

Do you need everyone in the team or just those following the channel to be notified about your post? If so use @Team or @channel accordingly.



## CUSTOMISE YOUR NOTIFICATIONS

Limit your notifications to those that matter. Go to your settings behind your profile picture and modify the banners, activity feed and emails for each option.



## THREADS

Be mindful to not create a new 'thread' when you actually want to respond to the current thread



## USE LINKS NOT ATTACHMENTS<sup>4</sup>

Reduce the numbers of copies and confusing versions by adding links to your posts rather than sending emails with attachments.



## FORWARD EMAILS TO A CHANNEL

Each channel has an email address which you can forward a email to. This will keep a record of it in your channel and reduce multiple emails.



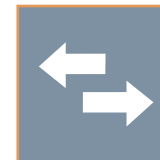
## ADD TABS

Use tabs to collate websites, third party applications and key documents into a channel. People should be able to carry out all of their work from within the relevant channel.



## CHECK TEAM MEMBERSHIP

Before you post, upload or create a new document in a channel, check the membership of that Team or private channel first? Are you addressing the right audience?



## REPLYING

People often try to write multi-line messages but in the normal 'view' hitting enter causes the message to be sent



## Privacy and security guidelines

As every meeting, use your common sense when you start a virtual meeting. Please also refer to the following privacy and security guidelines. If in doubt, please consult your privacy and security representative.



When in doubt, follow or refresh an Information Security awareness course



Use your company device for remote working



Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid shoulder surfing and eavesdropping by others. When using webcam blur out the background



Always inform participants in advance if meetings will be recorded, all participants need to be notified when a recording is started



Use organisation approved apps only. Although some collaboration platforms allow connections to third party apps, consult IT Services before using these



## How to run a virtual meeting – **Top 10** tips for the chair



Test your technology ahead of time (sharing screens, audio, polling tools, headsets,...)



If the technology is new to your participants – send them a practical user manual or guidelines, and inform your participants what kind of participation is expected (webcam, audio,...)



For smaller meetings – insist on the use of webcam. It brings all participants in the meeting (higher engagement)



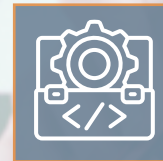
Provide clear meeting basics: a clear agenda, pre-readings, expected outcome, next steps, accountability. Creating a Microsoft Teams space where participants can enrich experience and enhance engagement. Ask participants to check-in/summarise what they want to achieve



Set clear ground rules for participation. Consider things such as video versus audio only, muting phones during the meeting, use of the chat functionality (how and when).



Be a respectful host. Start and end the meeting on time. Include a 5-10 minute break for any meeting over one hour in duration. Avoid using your keyboard to take notes as the noise can be distracting to participants.



Compile a group of people to support you with running the meeting. Secure someone to provide technical support for larger meeting, someone to keep abreast of online questions/chat discussion, someone to record the meeting/take minutes.



Minimise the length of your presentation, instead focus on fostering discussion.



Encourage questions and input throughout the entire meeting, not just at the end. Consider a virtual 'going around the table' for smaller meetings.



Capture real-time feedback and summarise conclusions, actions and next steps



## Participating in a virtual meeting – **Top 10** tips for participants



Test your technology ahead of time. Can you start a Microsoft Teams virtual meeting? Do you have webcam? Does your webcam work properly?



If webcam is required, ensure you are in a non-distracting environment (for noise and visually)



If in a meeting room with more people attending the same meeting – respect those dialling in (and close your own laptops and tools) to avoid distraction



Come to the meeting prepared to participate. Familiarise yourself with the agenda, read pre-readings, understand the desired outcomes.



Actively use the Microsoft Teams space to inform the chair what you want out of the meeting (and give feedback on any pre-readings, etc.)



Respect the meeting ground rules set by the Chair. Enter muted, remain muted when not speaking, use the chat function in the way requested, avoid typing when unmuted



Engage in the meeting  
Use the chat function to ask questions and react to other participant's contributions



Do not stay silent – you are a participant – as a participant your opinion and view matters



Remember that outcome of a virtual meeting is just as important as a face-to-face meeting – your accountability remains the same



Use the Microsoft Teams space to stay updated on all relevant information

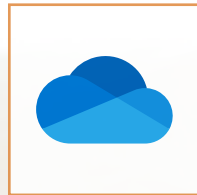
## Other Useful Office 365 tools

These tools can help you be more productive when working remotely.



### FORMS

Create surveys, quizzes, and polls and easily see the results in real-time



### ONEDRIVE

Store, access and share your files in one place, all backed up



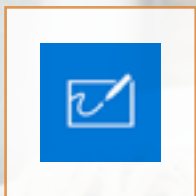
### PLANNER

Create plans, organise and assign tasks, share files and get progress updates



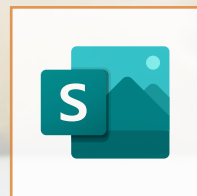
### YAMMER

Stay connected with your network of co-workers and tap into the organization's knowledge.



### WHITEBOARD

Collaborate on a freeform canvas designed for pen, touch and keyboard



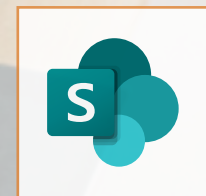
### SWAY

Keep your team up to date with the latest news and information in a format accessible on all devices



### STREAM

Share 'how to videos', briefing from senior leadership team, recordings of meetings.



### SHAREPOINT SITES

Publish read-only documents such as policies, procedures and templates to the whole company.



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