What is the difference between a Teams meeting, webinar and live event?

Contents

Overview

This guidance is for you to understand the difference between the Teams meeting types so you can choose the most appropriate for your meeting needs.

Meetings, webinars and live events are all types of Teams meetings, but webinars and live events give an organiser extra control over the conversation and participants. Like meetings, webinars provide two-way interaction, whereas live events provide only a managed 'written' Q&A experience.

Type	Total participants	Interaction	Registration supported?
Meeting	Up to 20,000*	- Up to 1,000 participants with fully interactive capabilities - Over 1,000, participants can have view-only capabilities**	No
Webinar	Up to 1,000	- Up to 1,000 participants with fully interactive capabilities - Registration available - Can specify your presenters - Audience interaction is configurable	Yes
Live event	Up to 20,000*	- Broadcast to large audiences - Moderated Q&A for audience interaction - Can specify producers and presenters, including external presenters - Supports more advanced production capabilities	No

*the 20,000 limit has been extended until June 2022; normal limit is 10,000.

** View-only capability means the extra participants cannot use audio or video, screen share or chat, but can attend the meeting to watch and listen.

Please see pages 9-10 for full comparison table.

Teams Meeting

What is it?
This is your 'everyday' meeting with colleagues, partners, etc, that you probably schedule or attend regularly.

How is it scheduled?
In your Teams calendar, a meeting can either be scheduled, or can be ad-hoc and spontaneous using the camera icon in the chat space or the Meet Now button.

A Teams meeting can be set up using your Outlook calendar too.

How many participants?
Up to 20,000 participants can attend a meeting in Teams. However, only the first 1,000 to join will have full capability of audio, video, chat and screen sharing; view-only capabilities then apply for up to 19,000 participants. The meeting for up to 1,000 is called the 'main meeting'.

If your main meeting hits 1,000 capacity and more people join, Teams will automatically expand to a 'view-only broadcast' for them. This means that the 1,001[st] person onwards will only be able to watch and listen and will not be part of the main meeting.

Questions and answers about the view-only broadcast function

How does the organiser make sure the meeting can have view-only attendees?
View-only attendees are only supported by the following lobby settings: People in my organisation; People in my organisation and guests; People in my organisation, trusted organisations and guests; Everyone.

How does the organiser know when the main meeting capacity is reached?
When the capacity of the main meeting has been reached, the meeting organiser and presenters will see a banner informing them that new attendees will join as view-only attendees.
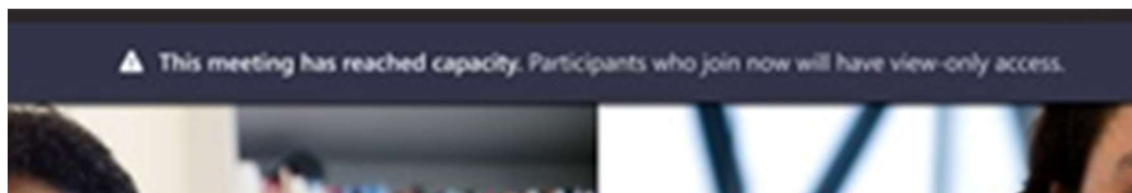
How does a new attendee know that they are joining as 'view-only'?

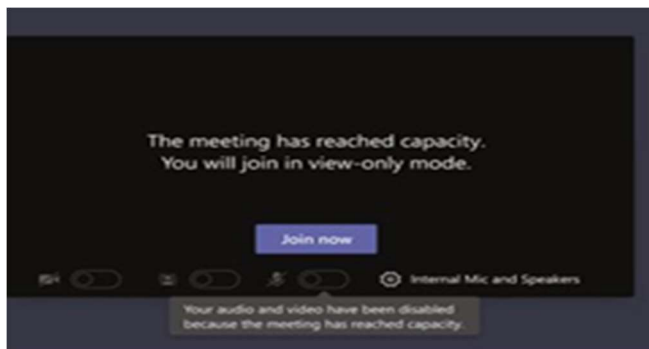When the capacity of the main meeting has been reached, further attendees will be informed on the pre-join screen that they're joining in view-only mode.

What if a presenter joins after view-only capacity is reached?

Currently, if a pre-set presenter attempts to join a meeting after the main meeting has reached its 1,000 capacity, they'll join as a view-only attendee and have the same limitations as other view-only attendees.

The organiser is always guaranteed space in the main meeting.

What if people leave the main meeting that is 'full'?

If there's space, a user will always join the main meeting.

If the main meeting reaches capacity but one or more attendees leave, the main meeting then has available capacity. Attendees who join or re-join the meeting will automatically go into the main meeting until it reaches capacity again.

However, please note that attendees who are in the view-only broadcast **won't** automatically be promoted to the main meeting and can't be manually promoted to the main meeting. They would have to leave and re-join.

Can people in the main meeting see view-only attendees?

Participants in the main meeting can't see the view-only attendees. The attendee count within the 'People' icon will only reflect the people in the main meeting and not the people in the view-only room. Therefore, you can't get an exact count of who is in the view-only experience.

You can't remove a view-only attendee from the meeting.

You will experience a 30-second video and audio delay in the meeting.

If you join as a view-only attendee, you can:

- ✓ Listen to the participants in the main Teams meeting.
- ✓ See the video feed for the active speaker if they are sharing video.
- ✓ See content being shared using the 'share desktop' or 'share screen' functionality.

As a view-only attendee, you will not be able to:

- ✗ Join the meeting if you don't have permission to bypass the lobby because the organiser has changed the default option
- ✗ Join using Teams Rooms or Audio Conferencing
- ✗ Share your audio or video
- ✗ See or participate in the meeting chat
- ✗ See the video feed of meeting participants unless the participant is the active speaker
- ✗ See presentations that are shared using the 'PowerPoint Live' function
- ✗ Raise your hand or send /see reactions such as thumbs up, clapping hands
- ✗ Interact with any app integrating into the Teams Meeting, including Polls
- ✗ Access the meeting recording afterwards
- ✗ See both the active speaker and any content being shared at the same time (i.e. you will have a single video experience)
- ✗ Use Gallery, Large gallery or Together layouts

Who can join?

Participants don't need to be a member of an organisation (or even have a Teams account) to join a Teams meeting. They can join directly from the calendar invitation via the 'Join meeting' link. They can join either on the teams app or via a web browser (e.g. Chrome, Edge).

Can the audience communicate?

Yes. As long as they are one of the first 1,000 to join, a participant can speak and be heard and seen.

Channel meetings

In addition to regularly scheduled meetings, you can create channel meetings if you are part of a Team on Teams. Channel meetings are a way to quickly invite everyone in a team to a meeting; everybody in a team can see there is a meeting, join it, and use the meeting chat

Note: Teams with channels has not yet been rolled out across Barnardo's but some of you will be part of a team already due to a need for this.
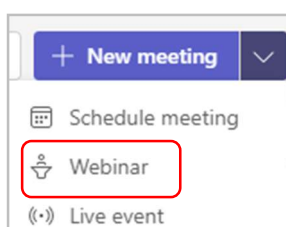
Webinar

What is it?
A webinar is a structured meeting where presenters and participants have clear roles. A key difference between a webinar and a live event is that webinars support registration and provide attendee engagement data.

Once you are in a webinar, you have the same controls as in a normal meeting, such as chat space, breakout rooms, recording and transcription, etc.

How is it scheduled?
A webinar is scheduled using your Teams calendar. Click onto the 'New meeting' button in top right and choose Webinar. You cannot use your Outlook calendar to set up a webinar.
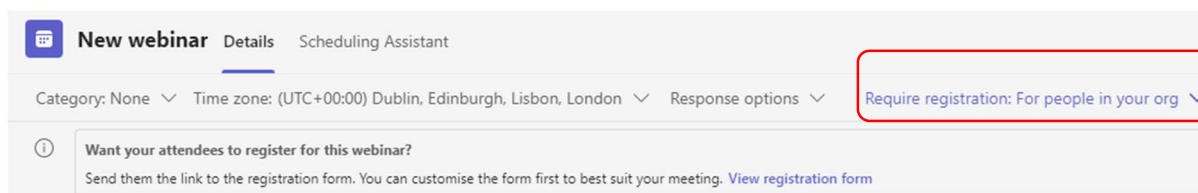

How many participants?
Up to 1,000 can attend. A webinar does not give view-only function so all 1,000 attendees can fully contribute but no more than 1,000 can join.

Who can join?
In order to receive the 'Join Webinar' link, people will have to register after receiving the event details and registration link from the organiser (e.g. in an email, newsletter, etc).

Registration is the main appeal that a webinar has compared with a live event or a meeting as it allows you to (a) control who attends and (b) know how many will attend.

Can the audience communicate?
Yes. Webinars allow all attendees to speak and be heard and be seen on camera.

However, as with a normal meeting, the organiser does have the ability to switch off cameras and mics.
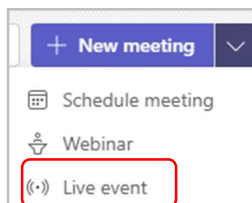
Live event

What is it?

A live event is a structured meeting that enables you to schedule and produce events that stream to large online audiences—up to 20,000 people. It should be used for large meetings where the audience participation is primarily to watch content.

The key difference between a live event and the other two meeting types is that live events have no verbal or camera-based interaction from the audience; the audience participation is a managed Q&A experience where attendees type questions and a moderator replies.

How is it scheduled?

A live event is created in your Teams calendar using the 'New Meeting' button in top right of the screen. You cannot organise a live event from your Outlook calendar.

To create a live event at Barnardo's, you must be from Barnardo's (i.e. the host organisation).

How many participants?

A live event can handle up to 20,000 attendees. Apart from those allocated to producer and presenter roles, all participants have the same limited capabilities.

Who can join?

If the live event has been set up as Public, anyone who has access to the link can join as long as they have a Teams licence (all Barnardo's colleagues have this).

For Private events restricted to Barnardo's colleagues or specific guests, attendees will need to log in to join.

Can the audience communicate?

Not verbally or on-camera. The only form of communication is a moderated Q&A section into which attendees type questions or comments. It is manned by a presenter or producer who either replies publicly and publishes the questions or replies privately depending on the need.

Best practices for large meetings

To run a successful event with many participants, follow the practices outlined below:

- To create a smooth meeting, an organiser can set pre-defined presenters. After a meeting has started, presenters also can promote other attendees to the presenter role.
- Define a co-organiser via the meeting options.
- Pre-configure video and microphone settings to control attendees' experiences
- Disable attendees' microphones to avoid disturbances and background noise. If someone needs to interact during the meeting, allow them to un-mute when they raise their hand.
- Disable attendees' video to avoid visual distractions. During appropriate times in the meeting, video can be permitted for all attendees or specific individuals.
- Use polls and Q&A during the meeting.
- Use lobby controls to control meeting entry with 'holding' in the lobby until you are ready (a live event has no lobby but you can press 'Live' when ready).
- Run the Microsoft 365 network connectivity test to verify network suitability several days prior to and the day of the event.
- If presenting from home, check that other devices are not consuming high bandwidth (streaming services, online gaming, large downloads).
- Present from an endpoint with a wired connection for more reliable audio, video, and screen sharing.
- Ensure users are on the latest Teams app on a desktop or mobile device.
- When using a laptop, check for high network connectivity and sufficient power.
- Schedule a dry run prior to the event to identify device, lighting or network issues. This will also ensure that organisers/presenters are familiar with features they'll be using.
- Schedule additional practice runs if issues were encountered to ensure remediation efforts were successful.
- To promote engagement and effectiveness, use Teams in-meeting features such as spotlight, PowerPoint Live, recording and transcription, and captions.
- Presenters and participants should use the Teams desktop app to provide an optimal experience.
- Participants should turn off chat notifications to avoid distractions.
- For more tips on hosting large meetings, see Best practices for a large Teams meeting.

How to decide which type of meeting you need

Function	Meeting	Webinar	Live Event
How many participants can attend in total?	Up to 20,000	Up to 1,000	Up to 20,000
How many participants can have full interaction (speak, be on camera, share screen) ?	Up to 1,000	All 1,000	Only Presenters/Producers
Can participants be seen and heard?	Yes *(you can switch this off)*	Yes *(you can switch this off)*	No
Can participants register for the meeting?	No	Yes	No
Can you specify presenters/control who presents?	Yes *(default is everyone at Barnardo's but can be changed)*	Yes	Yes - Producers and Presenters
Has a separate question and answer section?	No *But you can add the Q&A tab to create this*	No *But you can add the Q&A tab to create this*	Yes
Can participants share their screen?	Yes *(if within first 1,000 to join)*	Yes	No. Only Presenters/Producers
Can it be scheduled from Outlook calendar?	Yes	No - Teams calendar only	No - Teams calendar only
Does an attendee need to have Teams licence?	No, can join on a web browser	No	Yes *(unless the event is set up as Public where those without a licence join anonymously)*
Can you download an attendee report?	Yes *But only for up to 1,000 attendees*	Yes	Yes

Can you record the meeting ?	Yes	Yes	Yes (*separately for attendees or just producers/presenters*)
How do attendees access the recording?	Anyone invited can see it in the meeting chat. Others have to be sent the link from the recorder's OneDrive	It needs to be sent out by the organiser as attendees cannot access the chat once the webinar has ended	Use the same link as when joining live
How easy is it to run?	Easy as we are used to these meetings	Not hard once you have set up registration, and the in-webinar controls are the same as a meeting	It needs some understanding of the Producer and Presenter roles (see Live Event guide)
Is there a function to 'hold' people before they join?	Yes but only if you change the lobby settings from default	Yes, all attendees wait in the lobby until admitted	Yes. Producer controls when the live event actually goes live
Are there specific roles?	Not unless you change the default and specify that only certain people can present	Yes - presenters	Yes – producers and presenters. Everyone else is an attendee.
Do you invite everyone in the same invitation?	Yes	No	No
Is there a chat space during the meeting?	Yes	Yes – same as a normal meeting	Only for presenters and producers between themselves
Can you set up breakout rooms?	Yes	Yes	No
As an attendee, can you pause or rewind the live meeting?	No	No	Yes