

HMPPS User Guidance During CoVid-19: Cloud Video Platform Video Meeting Rooms

Who this guidance is for:

- Criminal Justice System (CJS) officials, including defence practitioners and probation officers, who need to formally consult a prisoner to progress priority cases listed by the courts, using a Cloud Video Platform (CVP) Video Meeting Room (VMR).

Key Notes:

- This guidance replaces any previous CoVid-19 guidance.
- Throughout Spring 2020, Reception (Local) Prisons are phasing in the use of CVP VMR, and this guide sets out how to connect to a CVP VMR from a web browser. You should try to use the latest version of Google Chrome as this offers the best functionality, sound and picture quality. Skype for Business can also be used by typing the specific CVP VMR address into the Skype search field.
- As part of the scheduling process for listed hearings, courts will obtain from the prisons a link for the reserved CVP VMR and a time slot for defence practitioners to connect to the prison either side of a hearing. This information will be passed on by the court.
- CJS officials who need to book formal consultations with a prisoner at any other time will need to contact:
 - The Family Visits Booking Team to reserve a video meeting slot. (The booking service is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and contact details are below.)
 - For prisoners at **HMPs Belmarsh or Swansea**, the booking service, details are below. (The Belmarsh booking staff will be there 8am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8am to 1pm Friday. The Swansea booking staff will be there 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.)

Note: You must supply a CJSM email address to confirm a booking.

- The slots available are limited. We are therefore focusing on supporting the highest priority work listed by the courts, namely bail and sentencing hearings and custody time limited cases. We are also making slots available for the defence and probation consultations necessary to progress these priority cases. With the exception of those consultations required for scheduled Parole Board hearings, we are not able to make them available for other categories of legal consultation.

Authentication

- The slot times allow for authentication to take place; therefore, please ensure you have your approved ID ready to present. This should be:
 - **EITHER** the photo identify card issued by probation or legal firm/chambers (including Bar Council Professional Access Digital Cards)
 - **OR** an introductory letter on headed letter paper of the firm/chambers **PLUS** passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence)

Note: HMP Belmarsh requires that an image of the approved ID be submitted by email prior to the visit being confirmed. They will also require a passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence).

Interpreters and other specialists

- If a practitioner requires an interpreter (or another specialist) to attend the video meeting, the practitioner is responsible for confirming that they will be present at the consultation and/or hearing at the time of booking.
- Where the interpreter does not have a CJSM email, the practitioner may forward them the video meeting room link and ask them to delete it immediately after the consultation/hearing. The link must not be forwarded to any further third parties or re-used.
- The practitioner is responsible for ensuring that the interpreter has suitable ID documentation: photo identity card issued by company like Big Word, etc, **OR** an introductory letter on the headed paper of the translation firm **PLUS** passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence).
- The practitioner is responsible for verifying the interpreter, but the prison will also need to visually verify them, using their official ID.
- The practitioner should also advise the interpreter about being in a suitable location and how to optimise their device and connection.

Getting ready to dial in to the video call

- Before you dial into the CVP VMR, please make sure you have closed any other applications that use video and that your devices are charged and connected to a good broadband speed.
- Please connect to the specified CVP VMR room as a guest at the required time as the CVP VMR is locked shortly after commencing; therefore, late parties cannot join.

Note: Video consultations, as with all legal visits, remain subject to Prison Rule 38 (YOI Rule 16). It is a criminal offence to record audio or visual content from a prison. Participants in video consultations with prisons must not take pictures or record any screenshots, sound or video from calls, nor will they allow or support any other party to do so.

Booking a CVP VMR consultation slot

Booking and confirming the details of a CVR VMR slot will be administered either by the courts in relation to a priority hearing, by the Family Visits Booking Team or by HMPs Belmarsh and Swansea (which are taking their own bookings), as below.

Note: bookings using the Family Visits Booking Team require at least 48 hours' notice.

Sentencing hearings		
	30 minute Pre-Hearing	20 minute Post-Hearing
Defence Practitioner	Booked and shared by court	Booked and shared by court
Other priority hearings		
	30 minute Pre-Hearing	20 minute Post-Hearing (Optional)
Defence Practitioner	Booked and shared by court	Booked and shared by court

Consultations		
	Prisons using central booking	Prisons doing their own bookings
Defence Practitioner	Family Visits Booking Team	videolinkbelmarsh@justice.gov.uk
Probation		Omu.swansea@justice.gov.uk

The Family Visits Booking Team can be contacted as set out below. If additional participants are required, such as interpreters, their full details are also required at the time of booking.

Contact the Family Visits Booking Team by:

- **Phone:** 0121 368 0710 Option 1: provide prisoner details, date, time of booking and your contact details
- **Email:** prisoner details along with preferred slot and two alternative choices and send to: videolinkbooking.hmpps@justice.gov.uk.

The Family Visits Booking Team will confirm the booking by email and will include the VMR details, guidance for joining the call and ID verification requirements.

HMPs Belmarsh and Swansea Booking Teams can be contacted as set out below. If additional participants are required, such as translators, their full details are also required at the time of booking. HMP Belmarsh also require an electronic image of all approved ID to be submitted by email prior to the visit being confirmed. They will also require a passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence).

Contact the HMP Belmarsh Visits booking team by:

- **Email:** videolinkbelmarsh@justice.gov.uk

Contact the HMP Swansea Visits booking team by:

- **Email:** Omu.swansea@justice.gov.uk

Joining Instructions: Internet browser

Maintaining Confidentiality: Prison staff will not be permitted to be in the room when you consult with the prisoner. When joining a CVP VMR, you should be in a private area, so you are not overheard. This will also help the quality of the video call as your microphone will not pick up any background noise. Please ensure anything visible behind you does not give away any personal or locational information.

1. Close all open browsers and tabs. Then open a new browser window. Make sure you maximise the browser window to get the best view.
2. Click on the web browser link from the invite email sent to you.

Video/Lync/Skype address: test@meet.video.justice.gov.uk
Web browser: [click here](#)

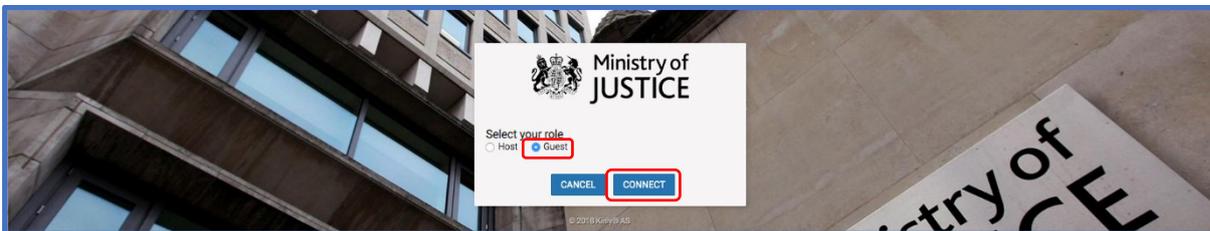
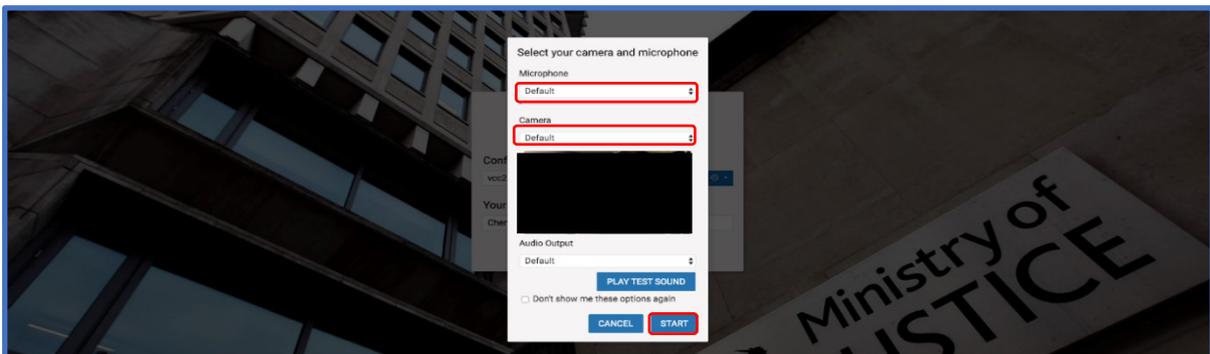
3. Type in your professional name (this will be seen by everyone on the call).
Note: Some people's identities must be kept secret. They will be given an alias to use and should enter this instead of their name. (This could be something like 'Witness A'.)



4. You need to choose video **and** audio. To do this, click the down arrow and then click on the top option. (This shows a phone icon and a video icon.)



5. Check that the microphone and camera are set as required (e.g. headphones or use 'default' if no additional equipment is being used). Then press 'Start'.



6. Select Guest as your role. You will be placed in a waiting room until the prison opens the call. (They will do this by entering the Host PIN).



Note: Please keep your microphone muted when not speaking as the camera will focus on the device that is making the most noise. You can mute your microphone or turn off your camera using the controls at the bottom of the screen.



Click the blue arrow at the bottom left to make the video screen bigger if required.



Authentication and Meeting Arrangements

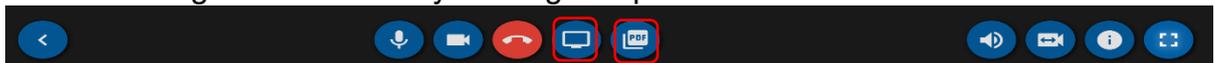
At the agreed time, the prison will start the CVP VMR and you will be connected.

7. Show your formal ID when prompted by the prison officer. You and the prison officer will also need to authenticate any other authorised participants you have arranged to join the call, such as an interpreter. Approved ID formats are **EITHER** the photo identify cards issued by probation or legal firm/chambers (including Bar Council Professional Access Digital Cards) **OR** an introductory letter on headed letter paper of the firm/chambers **PLUS** passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence).

Once your identification has been authenticated, the CVP VMR will be locked by the prison officer so that no additional parties can join. The prison officer will collect the prisoner and remind parties that the meeting must end on time before leaving the room.

Note: If there is a knocking sound during the call, this means another party is attempting to join the call after it has been locked. Please instruct the prisoner to signal this to the prison staff as soon as possible for this to be securely addressed.

8. The private consultation can then take place. Participants may be able to display documents during the video call by clicking the 'present' or 'screen share' buttons.



If you intend to do this, you must inform the prison officer before the video meeting commences. **Note:** some connections do not currently offer this function.

9. If the hearing finishes before the expected end time, please ask the defendant to stand up or to otherwise signal to the prison officer (who will be visually monitoring the room) that they are ready to leave. The callers can then leave the CVP VMR room by clicking the 'hang up' button.



Troubleshooting guide

Type of problem	Common CVP VMR problems	Solution
How to connect	What can I use to connect to CVP?	<p>Try to use the latest version of Google Chrome as this offers the best functionality, sound, picture quality and functionality.</p> <p>The latest versions of Mozilla Firefox and Safari will also work but may provide less functionality.</p> <p>Skype for Business can also be used by typing in the specific CVP VMR address into the Skype search field.</p>
Call failed	Not able to connect	<p>Please ensure you are using the latest version of Google Chrome.</p> <p>Try using a different device or a different means to connect to the internet.</p> <p>Check local WIFI and router connections.</p> <p>Try to reboot your device and start afresh.</p>
Errors	Receive an error message when trying to connect	<p>If you are unable to connect to CVP VMR, check to see how you are connecting to the internet.</p> <p>Managed Wi-Fi, such as business accounts or public systems may block the connection.</p> <p>Try to connect on a different Wi-Fi network.</p> <p>Check your mobile device allows calls to be made using mobile data. You might be able to change this in device settings.</p> <p>Or, the mobile data provider may not allow video calls. You may need to contact your provider to unlock this feature</p> <p>Or, speak to your mobile internet provider for further help.</p>

Type of problem	Common CVP VMR problems	Solution
Connection	Cannot connect with any browser	<p>If you're calling from a device on company Wi-Fi, or using a company device, their IT system might be restricted.</p> <p>Ask the company IT department to unlock their ports to allow connection to a CVP VMR.</p> <p>Or, try connecting with a different device.</p>
Audio or video	Camera or microphone problems	<p>If the camera and microphone don't work, check your device settings to make sure the app and your browser have permission to access the microphone and camera.</p> <p>You can often fix this problem by opening the VMR in Google Chrome (or the Pexip Infinity Connect App if you are using a smartphone to connect).</p> <p>If your camera or microphone have not connected, check that the 'default' settings are selected correctly before you join the CVP VMR; otherwise, try Skype for Business.</p>
Image quality	Image problems on Smartphone or Tablet	<p>Connect by wired internet or Wi-Fi if possible.</p> <p>Using mobile data can cause problems.</p> <p>Mobile data users should try to keep their device still to make the image better quality.</p> <p>If possible, try to use a 4G or 5G data connection as this will give a better-quality call.</p>
Sound quality	Poor sound quality	<p>The best sound quality is found using Google Chrome.</p> <p>Use a headset to get the best sound. This is most important if you are using a mobile device.</p>
	Feedback noise	<p>If more than one device in a room is connected to the same CVP VMR, you might hear feedback.</p> <p>You can stop this by putting your device's microphone on mute.</p>
Poor quality connections	Picture or audio quality intermittently drops	<p>Pause syncing if your device is syncing/backing up data.</p> <p>Check if others are overloading your WiFi/Broadband, possibly by downloading or watching live streams.</p>

Type of problem	Common CVP VMR problems	Solution
Internet speed	Will CVP work from where I am working?	<p>You can check broadband speed ahead of your call using the OFCOM speed checker. This will provide upload and download speeds; it will also tell you your data-delay score.</p> <p>OFCOM suggests that video calling requires minimum speeds of over 1 megabyte per second (Mbps) for upload and download. The data-delay score should be below 100 ms (milliseconds).</p> <p>If your broadband does not meet these speeds, your video call may not work properly and you may need to make alternative arrangements, such as using 4G or 5G mobile data.</p>

Note: If you are still unable to connect, you must contact the prison to let them know.

Note: If you are not able to connect and you have been given telephone dial in details, we recommend that you **DO NOT** use these as your phone number will be available to everyone on the call, including the prisoner.