

HMPPS User Guidance During CoVid-19: Cloud Video Platform Video Meeting Rooms in Reception, Training and Resettlement Prisons

Who this guidance is for:

- Criminal Justice System (CJS) officials and other staff, including defence practitioners, probation officers and psychologists, who need to formally consult a prisoner to progress cases, parole hearings or other meetings, using a Cloud Video Platform (CVP) Video Meeting Room (VMR).

Key Notes:

- This guidance replaces any previous CoVid-19 guidance.
- Throughout spring and summer 2020, Reception (Local) Prisons and Training & Resettlement Prisons with existing Prison Court Video Link (PCVL) equipment 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.
- The Parole Board, using their own CVP VMRs, will need to book a video-enabled meeting room with the individual prison.
- CJS officials who need to book formal consultations with a prisoner at any other time will need to contact the individual prison to reserve a video meeting slot, subject to availability.

Note: Whoever you book with, you must supply a Gov.uk or a CJSM email address to confirm a booking.

- The slots available are limited. Prisons are trying to support the highest priority work. For example, this might include bail and sentencing hearings, custody time limited cases, Parole Board hearings and extradition hearings. It will also include consultations necessary to progress these cases and hearings, such as defence, probation and psychology. Other uses of prison CVP VMR will be at the discretion of the prison and will depend on whether they have capacity.

- Magistrates' Courts operate slightly differently to Crown Courts. Therefore, for Magistrates' Court pre-hearings held over CVP VMR, solicitors or defence participants must provide their names to the court by 2pm the working day before the hearing. Where this is not known by the deadline, up to 3 names may be provided to the court before 2pm. The name(s) will then be used during the pre-hearing authentication process with the prison.
- Where no names are provided for Magistrates' Court hearings, pre-hearings cannot take place via CVP VMR.
- If the case is being held in the Crown Court, practitioner name/s will be requested at the time the hearing is being booked.
- Please allow up to 15 minutes for authentication to take place and please ensure you have your approved ID ready to present. This should be:
 - **EITHER** the photo identify card issued by MoJ, HMPPS, probation or legal firm/chambers, etc. (including Bar Council Professional Access Digital Cards)
 - **OR** an introductory letter on the headed letter paper of HMPPS, probation, the firm/chambers, etc. **PLUS** passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence)

Note: Some prisons, particularly high security prisons such as HMP Belmarsh, may have differing requirements, which they will advise you of at the time of booking. (For instance, you may need to provide a passport or driving licence, as well as an ID card, or you may need to provide them before the scheduled video call.)

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 the video meeting room link and ask them to delete it immediately after the video call. 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 a 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). Again, individual prisons, particularly high security prisons such as HMP Belmarsh, may have additional requirements.
- 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 enter 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; 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 CVP VMR slot will be administered by:

- the prison (or, in some cases, the central booking service) for consultations
- the courts for priority hearings
- the Parole Board for parole hearings

Bookings usually require at least 48 hours' notice, but please book as far ahead as possible. When booking a consultation, as a minimum, you will need to provide the following details when you contact the prison:

- prisoner number and date of birth
- names and contact details of all visitors (eg if you need to bring an interpreter)
- date and time of preferred time slot and two alternative slots
- case/hearing date and details

Note: Some prisons may ask for more information, particularly high-security prisons, such as HMP Belmarsh.

Your visit will be confirmed by email and will include the VMR details (including the browser link and address to type into Skype for Business), guidance for joining the call and ID verification requirements.

Joining Instructions: Internet browser

Maintaining Confidentiality: Prison staff may 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 and your screen is not visible to others. 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.

Note: If you have been given a phone number, please do not use it to join the meeting. This is because you cannot be fully authenticated by the prison and the call will not be able to progress. (Please also be aware that all participants, including the prisoner, can see the phone number of anyone dialling in.)

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](#)

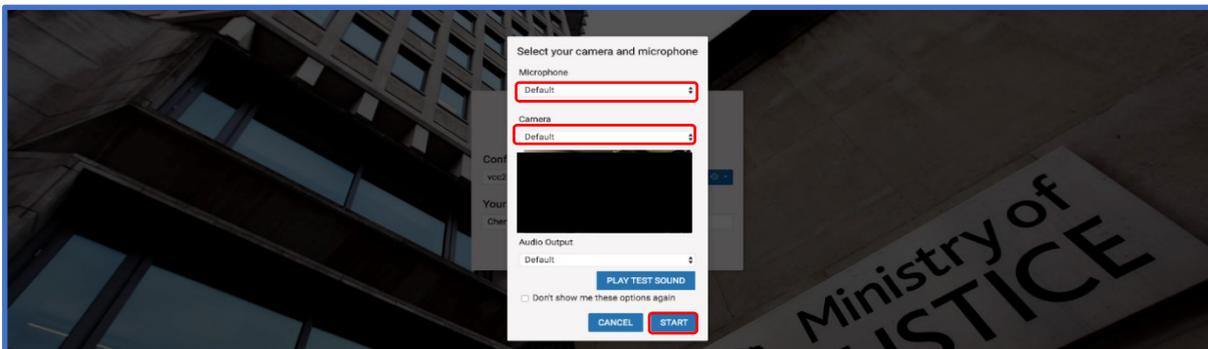
3. Type in your professional name (this will be seen by everyone on the video call).
Note: Some people's identities must be kept secret. They will be given an alias to use and should enter this instead of their name. (This could be something like 'Witness A'.)

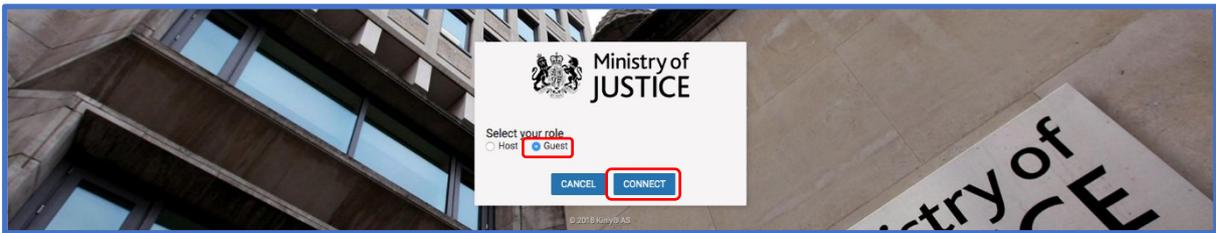


4. You need to choose video **and** audio. To do this, click the down arrow and then click on the top option. (This shows a phone icon and a video icon.)



5. Check that the microphone and camera are set up 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 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. This can take up to 15 minutes.

7. Please provide your name and 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 MoJ, HMPPS, probation or legal firm/chambers, etc. (including Bar Council Professional Access Digital Cards) **OR** an introductory letter on the headed letter paper of HMPPS, probation, the firm/chambers, etc. **PLUS** passport or driving licence (photo licence; not paper licence).

Note: You may find it helpful to check exactly what ID formats are required with individual prisons when making your booking. If a prison has advised you of the need for additional ID, please ensure that you and any visitors (such as interpreters) have this ready to show.

Once your identification has been authenticated, the CVP VMR will be locked by the prison officer so that no additional parties can join. You will see a padlock on the screen. If this is not present, please raise this with the prison officer. The prison officer will then 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. In prisons, 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 starts.

Note: some connections do not currently offer this function.

9. If the hearing finishes before the expected end time, please ask the prisoner to 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 have been given a phone number, please do not use it to join the meeting. This is because you cannot be fully authenticated by the prison and the call will not be able to progress. (Please also be aware that all participants, including the prisoner, can see the phone number of anyone dialling in.)

Contact details for those prisons ready to provide the CVP VMR service

Prison	Email contact	Other contact
Altcourse	visits@altcourse.g4s.com	N/A
Ashfield	viv.simpson@serco.com	N/A
Askham Grange	OMU.AskhamGrange@justice.gov.uk	01904 772048 01904 772035
Aylesbury	N/A	AM: 01296 442626 / 442635
Bedford	LegalVisits.Bedford@justice.gov.uk	01234 373179
Belmarsh	Videolinkbelmarsh@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Berwyn	Legalvisits.Berwyn@hmpps.gsi.gov.uk	01978 523300
Birmingham	N/A	0121 598 8189
Brinsford	OMU.Brinsford@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Bristol	VideoLink-Bristol@justice.gov.uk	0117 942 4074
Brixton	legalvisits.brixton@justice.gov.uk	
Bronzefield	Bf.videolink@sodexogov.co.uk	01784 425690 ext 3315
Bullingdon	LegalVisits.Bullingdon@justice.gov.uk	01869 353154
Bure	OMU.Bure@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Cardiff	videolinkHMPCardiff@justice.gov.uk	029 2092 3155

Channings Wood	LegalVisits.ChanningsWood@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Chelmsford	Custody.Chelmsford@justice.gov.uk	01245 552 064 / 01245 552 066
Coldingley	omu.coldingley@justice.gov.uk	01483344467
Cookham Wood	Legalvisits.cookhamwood@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Dartmoor	OMU.Dartmoor@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Doncaster	Videolink.doncaster@justice.gov.uk	01302 763218
Dovegate	custody.dovegate@serco.cjsm.net	01283 829462
Downview	OMU.Downview@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Drake Hall	videolinkbooking.hmpops@justice.gov.uk	0121 368 0710 Option 1
Durham	legalvisits.durham@justice.gov.uk	0191 332 3816
East Sutton Park	omu.eastsuttonpark@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Eastwood Park	custody.eastwoodpark@justice.gov.uk	01454 382 104 01454 382 037
Elmley	Courts.Elmley@justice.gov.uk	01795 802373 / 01795 802372
Erlestoke	OMU.Erlestoke@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Exeter	legalvisits.exeter@justice.gov.uk	01392 415730
Featherstone	OMU.featherstone@justice.gov.uk	N/A

Feltham	Reception.feltham@justice.gov.uk	020 8844 5497
Ford	Custody.Ford@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Forest Bank	ForestBankVCC@sodexogov.co.uk	0161 925 7000 ext 2047
Foston Hall	custody.fostonhall@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Frankland	N/A	0191 3765181
Full Sutton	OMU.FullSutton@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Garth	OMU.Garth@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Hatfield	OMUHatfield@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Hewell	pcvl.hewell@justice.gov.uk	N/A
High Down	N/A	0207 147 6331
Holme House	OMU.HolmeHouse@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Hull	videolinkhull@justice.gov.uk	01482 282247
Humber	OMU.Humber@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Huntercombe	custody.huntercombe@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Isis	LegalVisitsIsis@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Isle of Wight	custody.isleofwight@justice.gov.uk	01983 634000

Kirkham	OMU.Kirkham@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Lancaster Farms	OMU.LancasterFarms@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Leeds	VCCLeeds@justice.gov.uk	0113 203 2841
Leicester	N/A	0116 228 3245
Lewes	videolink.lewes@justice.gov.uk	01273 785019
Leyhill	OMU.Leyhill@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Lindholme	OMU.Lindholme@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Lincoln	lincolnvisitsbooking@justice.gov.uk	01522 663 172
Littlehey	videolink.littlehey@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Liverpool	videolinkliverpool@justice.gov.uk	0151 530 4249
Long Lartin	OMU.LongLartin@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Lowdham Grange	visitsbookinglowdham@serco.com	N/A
Low Newton	OMU.LowNewton@justice.gov.uk	0191 376 4025
Maidstone	omu.maidstone@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Manchester	Videolink.manchester@justice.gov.uk	0161 817 5898
Moorland	legalvisits.moorland@justice.gov.uk	N/A

New Hall	Reception.NewHall@justice.gov.uk	01924 803250
Northumberland	OMU.Northumberland@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Norwich	LegalVisits.norwich@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Nottingham	videolinkhmpnottingham@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Oakhill	TBC	TBC
Oakwood	legalvisits.oakwood@uk.g4s.com	01902 799 700
Onley	Custody.onley@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Parc	OMU.VideoLinks@uk.g4s.com	N/A
Pentonville	videolinkbooking.hmpms@justice.gov.uk	0121 368 0710 Option 1
Peterborough Female	peterboroughvcc@sodexogov.co.uk	01733 217631
Peterborough Male	peterboroughvcc@sodexogov.co.uk	01733217631
Portland	OMU.Portland@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Preston	N/A	01772 444657
Rainsbrook	STCRainsbrook-admissions@mtcnovo.co.uk	N/A
Ranby	videolink.ranby@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Send	OMU.Send@justice.gov.uk	N/A

Spring Hill	omu.springhill@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Standford Hill	OCA.StandfordHill@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Stafford	Videolink.stafford@justice.gov.uk	01785 773160
Stoke Heath	OMU.StokeHeath@justice.gov.uk ,	01630 636059 / 636158 / 636270
Styal	omu.styal@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Swaleside	Custody.Swaleside@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Swansea	Omu.swansea@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Swinfen Hall	OMU.swinfenhall@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Thameside	thameside.legalvisits@serco.com	020 8331 7380
The Verne	omu.theverne@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Wakefield	Videolinkwakefield@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Wandsworth	VCCWandsworth@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Warren Hill	omu.warrenhill@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Wayland	OMU.Wayland@justice.gov.uk	01953 804100
Wealstun	omu.wealstun@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Werrington	Custody.Werrington@justice.gov.uk	N/A

Wetherby	N/A	01937 544299
Whatton	OMU.Whatton@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Whitemoor	Security.whitemoor@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Winchester	videolinkwinchester@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Woodhill	custody.woodhill@justice.gov.uk	N/A
Wormwood Scrubs	Videolinkbooking.HMPPS@justice.gov.uk	0121 368 0710 Option 1
Wymott	OMU.Wymott@justice.gov.uk	N/A