



Top Tips

Inform

- Inform your employee that employee relations (ER) meetings will be conducted virtually at the earliest opportunity.
- Consider a paragraph for template letters to ensure consistency that incorporates a way for employees to advise you of concerns or any reasonable adjustments they need.

Support

- Both the manager and the employee can find the process daunting.
- We know employees find ER meetings anxiety-provoking when they are face-to-face, and virtual meetings have the potential of adding another dimension to this.
- Anything you can do ahead of the meeting will assist the smooth running on the day, such as talking through the process, housekeeping, outcomes, VC software and giving employees the option of submitting a written statement if this would help them.

Policy

- Follow the relevant policy just as you would when you are in a face-to-face meeting.
- Virtual meetings place more emphasis on you to consider attendees, such as witnesses at a disciplinary hearing – the fewer people on video conferencing, the greater the chance of it running smoothly.
- For example: in a hearing where the employee had identified ten witnesses to attend but, after consideration it was deemed that not all were required, written statements were collated and provided to all parties in advance. This is best practice.

Practice session

- Before the virtual meeting takes place, make sure you have a practice session so you are familiar with the software etc. along with key managers – have a go at sharing screens, watching CCTV footage etc.

Housekeeping

- Recommended to be completed at every virtual meeting.

Managers and HR will be used to working virtually but it might be the first time for the employee.

- Gives opportunity to set the expectations of the meeting. Key things to remind everyone are: mute when not speaking, communicate clearly, it's ok to ask people to slow down if talking too fast, address note-taking.
- Covers confidentiality – the meeting is potentially taking place in the employee's house, so are they in a confidential location?

Process

- If your policy has a process outlined, it's best to follow this.
- Consider your formal adjournments – everyone should leave the virtual meeting to ensure no conversations between HR/Mgt are overheard.
- Consider how you will have decision-making conversations: Will you use a breakout room on your video conference platform, create a new meeting, or have a phone call?

Formality

- You should present yourself in the same way as you would face-to-face.
- Speaker view on VC means that the speaker's face will fill the screen, therefore body language and expression are important.

Recording the meeting

- A key area to cover is how the record of the meeting will be made.
- Most likely, a note taker will be present and their notes will form the official record of the meeting.
- Some organisations' policy will allow for recording of virtual meetings and, if so, we highly recommend that you link in with your information governance teams to ensure safe storage and sharing of the recordings.
- An employee may ask you for the meeting to be recorded, link in with IG and, if you don't have the facilities to store, we advise against it.
- Be conscious of the fact that an employee may covertly record the meeting – look out on screens for the recording turning on and set out your position on covert recording. Make sure you address this point as part of your housekeeping, and the consequences of doing so without permission.

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