Zoom is a video call app that you can use on a computer or mobile phone, and lets you connect online for live chats and video conference meetings.

During the Covid19 crisis, Zoom has seen a surge in popularity, with millions of people using it to stay in touch with others.

The app is available to download for free, and Zoom users can choose to sign up to the free service, or for a number of paid plans. The **free service** allows users to create unlimited meetings with up to 100 participants, although the time limit for group meetings is **40 minutes.**

Zoom allows you to set up a chat or just join in a meeting where you can chat with others using video and audio (see and hear each other).

To join a Zoom meeting, you need to have the Zoom app, and either the meeting link, or a Meeting ID and a password. While **you do not need a Zoom account to join a meeting**, you need to set up an account in order to host a meeting.

How can you join?

Like most things, this might seem a bit tricky the first time – but stick with it!

If you haven't used Zoom before, you might want to do this a few minutes before your chat is due to start.

1. Click the link that was sent to you (on your phone, tablet or computer) - just click on the long link (where it says 'Join Zoom meeting ').

2. If you haven't used Zoom before you'll be asked to install a little piece of software on your laptop (or the app if it's on a tablet or phone) – you'll only do that once.

3. If you have used Zoom, you might have to click on Open Zoom if it appears on the screen.

4. You'll be asked to enter your name and email (just so the host know who's in the chat) and confirm you aren't a robot (tick the box).

5. Just follow the instructions to be connected to the chat.

(If a new tab opens asking you to sign in with Google, ignore that and just click back on the Zoom icon)

Video and audio – When joining a Zoom chat, you can choose to turn your video on or off, but you'll want it on if you are chatting with friends so they can see you. And you will also be able to see the other people if they have their camera on. (The host has additional controls to disable the video or mute the audio of those taking part in the meeting).

Waiting rooms - When the chat is set up, Zoom automatically sets up a waiting room for the chat. If you sign in to the chat before the host is ready, you can just wait and when the host is there, they will see that you have logged in and they will let you in to the chat. As people turn up for the chat, the host sees a message and clicks that to let them in. This is also safer because the host will only let in the people you want to chat with, and not strangers.

Setting up a meeting – A host can choose to set up an instant chat, or schedule one for a particular time. This generates the Meeting ID and password, and a **link** for the meeting which can be shared with people you want to join the chat, usually by email but it can also be sent by WhatsApp.