

# Guidance for the Legal Profession to conduct a telephone hearing using BT MeetMe IN COURT

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## Introduction

BT MeetMe is a secure conference call which has been used in Civil Hearings for some time. In the current situation it may be required for use where Skype cannot be used.

It is essential to the effective operation of the system that you have provided listing with your phone number on the day prior to the hearing and that you are available 10 minutes in advance of the hearing in a quiet place with good reception (if using a mobile phone). You should not be in a place where you can be overheard.

Please be aware that as this is a Crown Court Hearing – it is being recorded on the DARTS system and retained in the usual way. BT MeetMe has a facility to record the hearing by pressing \*8 on the telephone keypad and then following a number of other prompts. However, as the hearing is being held in a court room, the preferred way of recording is by using DARTS in the usual way and advocates must not activate the recording function nor record the hearing in any other way.

Your attendance for the hearing will be noted on the XHabit log by the Court Clerk. This will ensure the LAA and CPS are notified of your attendance. You do not need to log in using the terminal in the robing room.

Good practice is to mute your microphone when you are not speaking (by pressing \*[star]6) and please be aware of your background environment.

## Step by step guide

1. When the Judge takes her/his place, the Clerk will begin the conference call.
2. The Clerk will act as “Chairperson” and take the necessary steps to set up the hearing including announcing the hearing for the benefit of the DARTS system before beginning to connect the advocates.
3. When the Clerk connects each advocate that advocate will receive and accept the call in the usual way and then:
  - Press **\*1** on their handset to confirm they want to connect to the hearing

- Record their name and press the # key
- 4. Any participant's name, previously recorded by a participant when she/he joined the call, will then be heard. That advocate will now be connected to the call.
- 5. The process at 3 will be repeated by the Clerk until all advocates are included in the hearing.
- 6. When the hearing begins with all participants present, the Clerk will go through her/his introductory remarks:

*"Can I remind parties that they should be in a private, quiet area if possible so that you are not overheard and can hear.*

*Whilst this hearing is being recorded by HMCTS, you must not make any personal or private recording or publish any part of this hearing. It is a criminal offence to do so.*

*Can everyone hear clearly?*

*Can each person on the call, when prompted, please state their name and role?(This will start with the Judge)*

*(Each party gives their name and role)*

*"This hearing is being conducted over telephone conferencing but that does not change the serious nature, or the importance of the hearing."*

*"This hearing is sitting as ... Court"*

*Case Name – The name of the case being heard*

*Case Reference – The Case Reference number*

*Date/Time – The date and time of the hearing*

*"During this hearing, if you are not currently speaking, can I ask that you place yourself on mute by pressing \*[star]6 and to come off mute again pressing \*[star]6, thank you. Is this clear to everyone?"*

*Are there any questions at this point?*

*If at any point you have a question or cannot hear, please tell me."*

- 7. The hearing can then begin. Please note that if a defendant is in custody and appearing over the Prison Video Link, it is unlikely she/he will be able to hear the participants, and vice versa. The Clerk's amplification microphone will be placed as close as possible to the speaker on the telephone, but this may still not resolve the problem. The Judge will summarise for the benefit of the defendant what has been said over the telephone and ask the advocates to confirm that the Judge has summarised the position accurately. Similarly, the Judge will relay to the advocates anything said by the Defendant.
  - 8. At the conclusion of the hearing the Clerk will press ## which will securely end the conference.
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