Virtual Training Policy

Policy Created: October 2023

Last Reviewed: March 2026

Next Review: March 2027 (or sooner if significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational activities occur)

Reviewed by: Laurence Clark

Responsible Officer: CEO

Approved by: CEO

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1. Introduction and Commitment

Pathways Associates CIC is a disabled-led Community Interest Company dedicated to enabling people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families to live the lives they choose as equals in their local communities. The organisation is committed to delivering high-quality, inclusive virtual training that fosters learning, collaboration, and respect while ensuring participant safety, wellbeing, and data protection. This includes creating safe spaces, promoting positive etiquette, accommodating reasonable adjustments, maintaining zero tolerance for abuse or harassment, and managing cancellations, payments, and evaluations fairly to optimise resources and value.

Virtual training is a key part of our hybrid model, offering accessibility and flexibility. As of March 2026, this policy aligns with current best practice, including ACAS guidance on inclusive online meetings (updated 2025), EHRC recommendations on digital accessibility and reasonable adjustments, Ofsted/CQC standards for training environments, UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 for data handling, and the Equality Act 2010. It emphasises trauma-informed approaches, neurodiversity inclusion, mental health support, and transparent contractual terms in virtual settings. This policy supports our Equality and Diversity Policy (inclusive access), Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy (safe spaces), Co-production Policy (participant involvement), Staff Training Policy (delivery competence), Health and Safety Policy (risk management), Information Governance and Data Protection Policy (secure data), and standard terms and conditions for services and training courses (payments, cancellations, IP).

It reflects our values of being led by lived experience (Experts by Experience co-designing training etiquette and evaluations), partnership (collaborating with participants for positive experiences), inclusion and respect (zero tolerance for harm), innovation (flexible virtual tools), and integrity (transparent cancellation and data processes). We commit to safe, empowering virtual training that values all voices, ensures equitable participation, and complies with contractual obligations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all virtual training sessions, workshops, webinars, CTRs, and online events hosted or facilitated by Pathways Associates CIC, whether free, funded, or paid. It covers etiquette expectations, safe space creation, reasonable adjustments, responses to abuse/harassment, cancellations, payments, evaluations, data protection, and intellectual property. The policy applies to trainers, facilitators, participants, Experts by Experience, associates, volunteers, and observers using platforms like Zoom, Teams, or similar.

3. Key Objectives

The organisation aims to create respectful, inclusive virtual environments that maximise learning and engagement while protecting data and wellbeing. It seeks to accommodate diverse needs through reasonable adjustments, maintain zero tolerance for abuse or harassment with swift responses, manage cancellations and payments efficiently to respect resources and planning, comply with equality, data protection, and contractual laws, evaluate sessions for continuous improvement, and learn from feedback to enhance virtual delivery.

4. Core Principles

Virtual training is conducted in safe, welcoming spaces free from discrimination, with mutual respect and active participation encouraged. Reasonable adjustments are proactive and personalised to ensure accessibility. Abuse/harassment is not tolerated, with protective measures prioritised. Cancellations and payments follow clear, fair terms to maintain sustainability. Data is handled securely and transparently per UK GDPR. Intellectual property is protected while allowing fair use. Evaluations are used to measure impact and improve. Accessibility ensures all can participate fully (e.g., captions, breaks). Transparency involves clear expectations, consent, and feedback loops.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board oversees policy compliance and reviews annual feedback on virtual sessions. The CEO holds accountability for implementation, platform security, and contractual adherence. Training/Event Leads facilitate sessions, enforce etiquette, arrange adjustments, process cancellations/payments, and manage evaluations. The Safeguarding Lead/Equality Champion advises on safe spaces, adjustments, and

responses to harm. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) ensures GDPR compliance in data handling. Trainers/Facilitators brief participants, monitor behaviour, and collect evaluations. All participants follow etiquette, provide feedback, and report concerns. Experts by Experience contribute to reviews and co-production.

6. Procedures

6.1 Safe Space Statement All sessions begin with a co-produced safe space statement: "This is a respectful, inclusive space where everyone's voice matters. We value diverse perspectives and commit to kindness, confidentiality, and support. If you feel uncomfortable, please speak up or contact the facilitator privately."

6.2 Etiquette Participants are expected to join on time with video on if comfortable, mute when not speaking, use chat respectfully, respect confidentiality, avoid distractions, and contribute positively. Trainers ensure breaks, clear agendas, and inclusive interactions. Disruptive behaviour is addressed promptly.

6.3 Reasonable Adjustments Requests are welcomed pre-session (e.g., via booking form) for captions, interpreters, breaks, or alternative formats. Adjustments are provided per Equality Act and reviewed for effectiveness. Ongoing needs are accommodated in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

6.4 Abuse and Harassment Zero tolerance for bullying, discrimination, or harm. Incidents are addressed immediately (e.g., muting/removal from session) and reported to the Safeguarding Lead. Investigations follow our Safeguarding Policy, with support offered to affected individuals (e.g., debriefs, referrals).

6.5 Cancellations and Payments By booking, participants agree to these terms. Cancellations by participants:

- More than 28 days' notice: Full refund/no charge
- 14–28 days: 50% charge
- Less than 14 days: 100% charge No-shows are charged in full.

Organisation cancellations: Due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness, technical issues); full refunds or alternatives provided with at least 24 hours notice where possible.

Payments: Invoices due within 30 days; overdue incur interest at 8% above Bank of England base rate per Late Payment of Commercial Debts Act 1998. Default may lead to legal action for recovery plus costs.

6.6 Evaluations and Data Protection Pathways values evaluations to measure impact. Post-session forms are anonymous/optional; data is used for improvement and shared with funders (anonymised). Longer-term evaluations may be conducted with consent. Data is processed per UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 and our Information Governance Policy: collected lawfully, stored securely, retained as needed, and deleted on request. Personal data is not shared without consent unless required by law.

6.7 Intellectual Property Materials (slides, recordings) are owned by Pathways; fair use allowed for personal/learning purposes. No reproduction/sharing without permission. Recordings require participant consent.

7. Training, Awareness, and Support

Annual virtual facilitation training covers etiquette, adjustments, safe spaces, and GDPR (accessible). Induction briefs new facilitators. Awareness via pre-session guides and statements. Support includes debriefs, wellbeing resources, and signposting (e.g., for technical issues).

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement

Policy reviewed annually or post-incident. Monitoring via feedback, logs, and evaluations. Learning co-produced with Experts by Experience. Feedback welcomed; annual summaries in CIC report.

9. Conclusion

Pathways Associates CIC is dedicated to virtual training that is safe, inclusive, and empowering. By promoting respect, accessibility, and fair processes, we uphold our disabled-led values and enhance learning for all.