National Video Conferencing Service
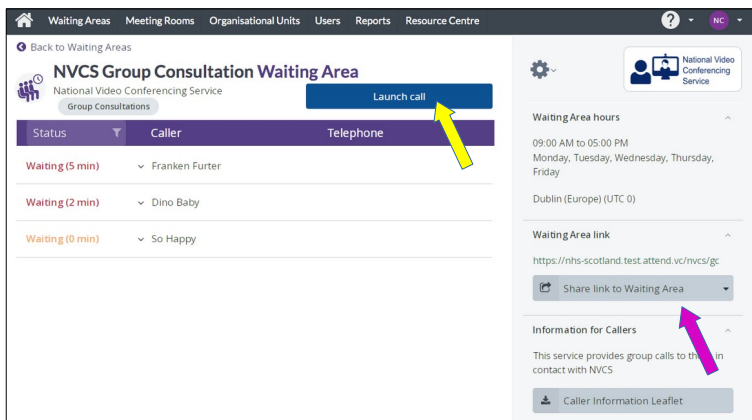
# Near Me: Group Calls (beta) – Service Provider Detailed v.1.4

Basics
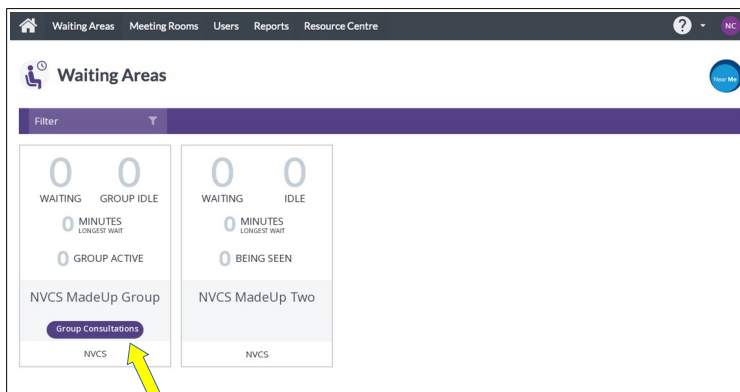
Once logged in, if you have a choice of Waiting Areas, you'll see Group Consultation ones clearly labelled.

Functionality is similar to standard Near Me Waiting Areas, with you able to send the entry link to callers by SMS or email (pink arrow).

N.B. You can't enter into a group call before you have callers in the call queue.

Once you have a caller or callers waiting, as here, click the blue Launch Call button (yellow arrow) to enter the group call.
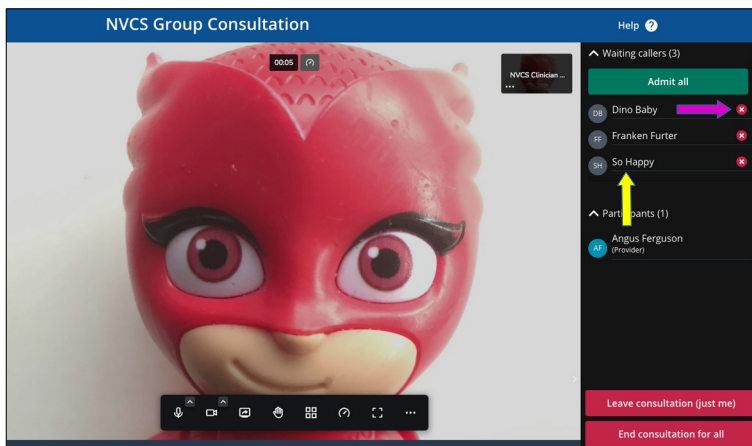
On entering, you're presented with a self-view, with a list of the callers waiting in the lobby area, to the right (yellow arrow).

Click Admit All to let them all in.

Should you wish to deny a caller entry, click the x to the right of their name to end their call before you admit the others.

Caller's microphones will be muted on entry.

Call controls are at the bottom of the screen. They auto-hide but will reappear if you move your mouse (or tap, if using a tablet or phone).
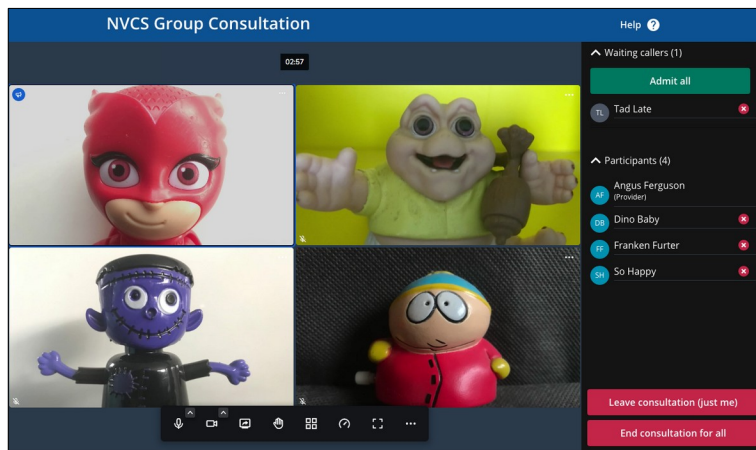
If more callers arrive later, they'll appear in the lobby too. There is no audio or pop-up prompt in this release (Jan 2022).

Once admitted, participant names will be displayed below the lobby.

You, like other callers, will only see a caller's initials in the call window - when you hover over their image.

There are additional controls for each caller: accessed by clicking the three dots to at the top right of their tiles.

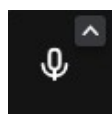The end call options are in red.

More detail: Call controls

Provider call controls

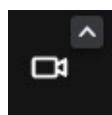Call controls are similar to many video platforms.

Caller call controls

Your callers have most of the same buttons. They cannot share content (Jan 2022) and have a separate button for changing in their background.
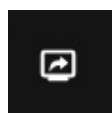

Microphone mute/unmute.

The arrow allows a change of microphones and audio output devices should the system in use have multiples of either.


Video mute/unmute.

The arrow allows a change of camera should the device in use have more than one.


Screen-sharing. You can choose either individual windows or other browser tabs. **Do not share entire screen** as there's a possibility you could transmit your callers' full names to all other participants – callers may see the participants list, to the right of your call screen.
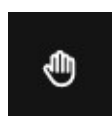
Used to alert other users you'd like to speak.
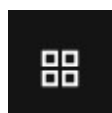
Alter tile layout. This does not alter the layout for your callers – they can alter their individual layout in the same way.
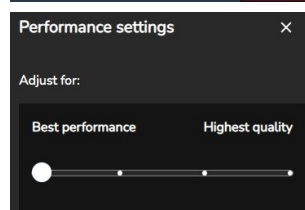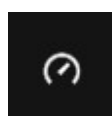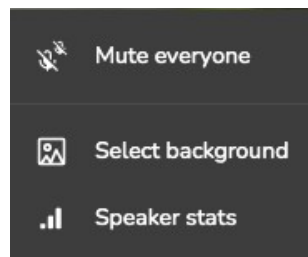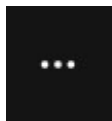

Change bandwidth usage, should problems be encountered.

N.B. Adjusting all the way to 'Best Performance' results in an audio only call.

 Full screen mode

 Other controls:

Mute all other callers (they can unmute themselves).

Choose background e.g. blur

Stats of the currently speaking participant.

Further controls

You have control over individual callers. To exert that control, click on the caller's tile. You'll see three buttons to at the top-right corner of the tile (pink arrow). Click them.

You can:
Send an onscreen message for them to unmute;
Mute all other callers except them;
Stop their video;
Disable all others' cameras;
Change the volume you receive from them.

Tips

As with all browser based video calls, many problems can be prevented from happening by clearing your browser's cache before your calls. It's simple to do. See the top guide here.

We'd advise other applications that may use camera, microphone or heavily use system resources, such as MS Teams, should be completely shut down before logging into Near Me.

Wired network connections, rather than wi-fi or 4G are preferable. If using wi-fi, try to be reasonably near your wireless access point.

If forced to use a tablet or smartphone rather than computer, prop up your device in landscape orientation.

If working away from NHS premises, remote access methods such as VPNs, DirectAccess, etc. can often give problems with WebRTC calls. If working from home, it's perfectly acceptable to use a persona device for the video call while using your NHS computer for data entry.

At present (Jan 2022), the maximum run-time for a Group Consultation is 2 hours. Don't forget to schedule comfort breaks. When one is due, remind your guest they'll have to re-join then end the call for everyone. You'll get a further two hours on rejoining.

Our help-desk: further information, advice and problem solving

Monday - Friday, 08:00 - 18:00 01224 816666