

FDR Conferences by Teams

This guide is to help solicitors participate with their clients in **Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) Conferences** via the **Microsoft Teams** digital platform. In some situations, FDR Conferences can be held via Teams and can be as effective as being in the same room. Sometimes they may be the preferred alternative to a face-to-face session.

Teams Conferences are particularly useful where:

- parties live in remote or regional areas,
- parties cannot attend in person, or
- there are safety concerns or extenuating circumstances.

Before a Teams Conference

Please refer to the [FDR Conferences \(Pre-litigation\) Guide for Solicitors Factsheet](#) regarding the process of preparing for and participating in a FDR Conference. Once a Conference has been arranged and is ready to proceed, you will receive a confirmation email from the FDR Unit containing a Teams link.

You should check that you can access the Teams link from your laptop or other device well ahead of the scheduled time of the Conference. You may need the Microsoft Teams application to do this. Testing your software will ensure the Conference can proceed smoothly and on time. Please ensure you are in a quiet confidential space with your client to join the Teams Conference at the allocated time.

What happens at a Teams Conference?

Once you have clicked the Teams link to join the meeting, the Conference Chairperson will greet you and allocate you and your client to a confidential digital room.

The Chairperson will provide information to each party about the process. Usually, once the Chairperson has spoken separately with each party, the Chairperson will then convene a Conference with the parties. The other parties involved in the Conference may or may not be legally represented at the Conference.

The Chairperson will facilitate the discussion by Teams and assist the parties to reach an outcome. Each party will be able to speak privately with their lawyer (if they have one) during the Conference.

The Chairperson as the convenor of the Teams Conference will manage all parties joining the Conference, allocate confidential rooms for private discussions, facilitate the Conference and bring the Conference to a close.

Next steps

If parties can't reach agreement at a Conference, the Chairperson will discuss next steps and whether a s 60I Certificate or Certificate of Dispute Resolution should be issued.

If an agreement is reached at the Conference, it should be recorded in writing by the lawyers (in a Heads of Agreement or draft Minutes of Consent order) and a signed copy should be provided to each party at the end of the Conference. In some cases a Review Conference can be scheduled in the future to review how the agreed arrangements are working, particularly if the child consultant has been involved with the family.

Contact

To confirm your participation in a Teams Conference or if you have any other queries, please contact the FDR Unit at fdrsecretary@lsc.sa.gov.au or call 8111 5534.

This information is general and not a substitute for legal advice. The Legal Services Commission provides free advice for most legal problems. 04.24