



## Guidelines for Online Circuit Breaker Groups:

Given the current exceptional circumstances around Covid-19 and the requirement of strict social distancing, it has been suggested that many Circuit Breaker groups be undertaken through online video platforms (such as Zoom, Skype, Messenger etc). If providers choose to do this, they must bear in mind that this creates extra risks as far as privacy and safety are concerned. Before deciding to host a Circuit Breaker group online, please consider the following risks and suggestions for how these can be mitigated:

### Risks:

- Privacy and safety may be compromised if people are using a webcam and microphone in their home where others are able to see and/or overhear a group conversation.
  - This creates a privacy risk for sensitive information shared
  - This creates a privacy risk for people being identified by others outside of the group
  - This creates a safety risk if those overhearing conversations react to what is said or use it for blackmail
  - At the very least, it creates a risk to the intimacy of group sharing if participants feel nervous about privacy
- Privacy and safety may be compromised if online platforms have the ability to be recorded, forwarded or shared

### Mitigation of Risks:

- Every person involved needs to be made aware of these potential risks and must not feel obliged or manipulated into accepting them if they are not comfortable with online meetings with a particular group of people
- Every group member must be given the option to opt out, and it shall be at the discretion of the group facilitators if a continuing with a particular group is viable and advisable
- Group members involved in online Circuit Breaker groups must be confident in their ability to deliver the following:
  - An agreement that they will be able to spend the duration of their online session alone in a private space where others will not enter, pass through, overhear, or be able to observe the group
  - An agreement that they will not record video or audio of the session
  - An agreement that they will use headphones if at all possible
  - An agreement that they will turn off phones, TVs and any other devices which would distract them from full focussed involvement in a group session, and ensure that there is a reliable plan to avoid being interrupted by children, pets or partners

In these current exceptional circumstances only, links to course videos and passwords may be given to participants one week at a time on the understanding that they will not share these to any third party.