



## Privacy and confidentiality whilst working from home

As many Mission Australia staff are now working from home due to COVID-19, it is important to highlight how we can maintain client and staff confidentiality and privacy protocols during this time.

### Go Paperless

Going paperless is ideal if this is possible for your program or for your area of work.

- Case notes should be written directly into MA Connect or MACSIMS or uploaded as an e-document and emails should continue to be uploaded onto MA Connect/MACSIMS with appropriate password protections or encryptions.
- Speak with your manager if you are not sure whether this is possible for your program or area of work.

### Using Paper Files/Notes/Documents

If you are **NOT** able to go entirely paperless use the following protocols:

- Ensure you have a lockable place to keep notes/paper files/documents such as a briefcase, suitcase with a padlock, filing cabinet.
- Ensure that client or staff details are not left in your workspace when you are not there
- De-identify client/staff details if you are writing in a notepad during a work session or use initials or pseudonym.

- Shred/destroy any papers/notes/documents that you have written or printed out and ensure that these cannot be pieced back together.

### Client work via Phone/Video Link

If you are making phone or video calls with clients from your home or they are at home, please ensure that:

- You have discussed at the beginning of the call whether you are in a private space (no-one can overhear).
- The client has moved away from other members of their household and that you have also.
- You have established agreed actions at the beginning of the call for what you will do if you are unexpectedly interrupted during the call by someone in the household.
- You pause the session if a member of your household or theirs has come in the space and the content of the conversation is sensitive or identifies the client.
- You can postpone the call rather than have sensitive content discussed in the presence of children or family members.
- In small communities especially, be sensitive to the fact that others may be able to identify a client with minimal detail if they overhear your conversation.
- **Remember that if you are calling someone with a known risk of family or domestic violence to begin the call with something like “If it is not safe to talk right now, then say “Sorry there is no Jackie here”.**

### Mission Australia work via Phone/Video Link

If you are making phone or video calls with other Mission Australia staff or third parties from your home or they are at home:

- if the conversation is commercially sensitive or confidential, ensure that to the extent you can, others cannot overhear the conversation (for example family members, flatmates or tradesman)
- you can postpone the call rather than have sensitive content discussed in the presence of others.

## Protecting Staff Privacy

When using video conferencing software to work with clients:

- in your own home, be mindful what is in the background of the camera which may reveal personal details about your life which can breach your privacy.
- be sure to end the call once the conversation or video conference is complete.

## Data breaches

If you become aware of an actual or suspected data breach, please ensure you immediately refer to and follow the [Data Breach Procedure](#) which is also located on the MA intranet.

## IT Tips

Be sure to also check out [Top tips for working more securely from home](#) as well as other useful links on our [IT team - Helpful Tech Tips](#) page on the MA intranet.