



## COVID-Safe Guidelines for Conferences – February 2022

This guide provides a general set of instructions for Vinnies NSW Conferences to ensure that Conference activities and locations are as safe as possible in relation to COVID-19 and our members, volunteers, employees, and clients are protected.

### Conference Locations:

- A COVID-Safe Officer is required at each site. For Conferences, the Conference President will be the COVID-Safe Officer.
- Proper signage should be visible to all that clearly outlines social distancing requirements. For example, maximum occupancy of x number of people for each space/room. A template for room/space signage can be found [here](#).
- Conference Presidents will determine the re-entry/re-start of Conference activities in line with State Council decisions, Vinnies' policy and the NSW government easing of restrictions. Conference Presidents will communicate to their Regional Director about the timing and scope of activities.
- Conference Presidents will ensure availability of adequate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as masks, hand sanitisers and cleaning products, as necessary. Note that PPE is available at many Vinnies Service Centres, including a supply of P2/N95 masks at Metro Service Centres.
- The COVID-Safe Officer will ensure implementation of safety controls, as outlined below.

### Responsibilities of the Conference President:

As well as the above, the Conference President will:

- Nominate an acting COVID-Safe champion for when they are away from Conference activities for any extended period of time.
- Assist in monitoring use and availability of PPE (particularly masks and sanitiser) including ordering and replenishing stocks.
- Ensuring all Conference members are aware of the importance of mask-wearing and PPE, such as use of hand sanitiser, when undertaking conference visits or any Society activity.
- [Read the COVID-Safe site champion overview](#) and ensure they understand their role and responsibility.
- Ensure people are inducted to COVID safety requirements both at any Conference sites and while they are undertaking Society work.
- Monitor compliance with COVID safety requirements.
- Inform the Regional Director if there is any change to the service operations in a timely manner.
- Ensure the recording of member and volunteer vaccination records (in Society People). *Noting that in some areas employees may be working with Conferences to ensure this is recorded.*
- Notify the relevant Regional Director of any known COVID-19 exposures, per the Risk Management section below.

### Risk Management:

**Conference Presidents will immediately notify their Regional Director if they believe there has been a COVID-19 exposure doing Society work** or if they believe there is an increased level of risk at



Conference sites or as part of Conference activities such as visitations. Examples of circumstances where an escalation is required include:

- a diagnosed positive COVID-19
- change in circumstances leading to an unsafe working environment
- no immediate supply of PPE where required
- COVID-19 outbreak in the local community
- as directed by NSW Health or the Public Health Unit.

## Home visitation from February 2022 onward

**Conference Presidents will decide together with members whether they are ready to return to home visitations.** Consideration should be made of ways to support any members who are not ready or able to return to home visitations, such as undertaking other support for the people we assist or continuing to undertake some support sessions and interviews remotely.

When returning to visitations, the following guidelines will make your return as safe as possible.

1. When arranging home visits, politely ask the client if they have been fully vaccinated. (For Conferences that operate from Support Centres, the Support Centre staff can do this. For Conferences that do not, this can be done by members in the initial call arranging the visit).  
*If the client advises **YES**, proceed to book in the home visit.*  
*If the client advises **NO**, they are un-sure to disclose this information, arrange a discussion and offer support over the phone.*
2. When undertaking visits, all members must abide by COVID-Safe practices, including:
  - a. Wearing face masks (N95/P2 masks preferred)
  - b. Hand hygiene (sanitising or washing with soap and water regularly)
  - c. Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
  - d. Keeping a distance of 1.5 metres
  - e. Do not shake hands, hug or kiss as a greeting
  - f. You may offer clients and/or attendees a surgical mask. These can be carried to visits (kept in the car) and offered to clients when arriving at the home.
  - g. Consider undertaking the visit in an outdoor home area where this is possible, for example sitting on a veranda, porch or in a garden. Where this is not possible, sit in the largest space possible, and where windows can be opened if possible.
3. Upon reaching the home of the client, if members feel unsure about entering a premises, they may ask to see a person's vaccination status, **but there is no legal obligation for the client to comply**. If uncomfortable or the client is not willing to show their vaccination status, members can:
  - conduct the home visit at the door or in an open space; or
  - arrange to undertake the interview and provide support via the phone.

Notes:

- Members, employees and volunteers in client facing roles and those that support them, like home visitation, are required to be fully vaccinated to undertake these good works.
- The St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW will support any person seeking assistance regardless of their vaccination status.



- The St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW will not record the vaccination status of people seeking assistance.

### Further Information and Resources:

- The MAVS site contains a range of resources and up-to-date information from the Society:  
<https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/covid-19-response/>