

Protecting some crucial IDs

Important - This resource is aimed at advisers to discuss with clients, **not** as a potential handout

A client needs certain forms of identification if at all possible. Identification is critical for many things when making a new start, and is one of the most common things that clients fleeing domestic violence and abuse are lacking.

The most valuable forms of ID are:

- o Birth certificate (and if they're married, a marriage certificate)
- o Passport
- o Driving License

Older clients may worry about their national insurance card: this is not important as long as they know their national insurance number. They can write this down, or text or e-mail it to themselves.

Utility bills are of limited use, as they are linked to a client's old address (which will be on the bill) and once they leave this address they should not use this for anything whatsoever. However, knowing the reference numbers and so on can be really useful, so a scanned copy or a photocopy is good to have.

Cloud storage

A useful compromise with forms of ID such as passports and driving licenses is to scan them and e-mail them (to themselves, or a friend). This way, they stay in the 'cloud' and the client can access them whenever and wherever they need. If a scanner is not an option, a good quality photograph from a smartphone is worth sending.

However, although this will keep all the *details* of the ID, most bodies will still not accept this form of ID as sufficient proof and will want original copies instead. It does mean however that a client can print out copies of their ID to have certified by a professional (for example, a doctor can sign the back of a photocopy of a passport to confirm it is an accurate likeness of the client). In addition, due to

centralised databases, it is always useful to have things such as the passport number itself.

Using Arkhive

This is a new service offered by Timpsons. It creates safe online storage for important documentation which can then be accessed through Timpson stores on the high street if a client needs approved hard copies printed out.

The ArkHive app allows a person to keep your important documents such as their driving license, passport and birth certificate in a hyper secure online data store. They can then choose to securely share this information with another user. For example, they might choose to share a verified digital copy of their passport with your employer.

An ArkHive account is free, including storage of verified documents. More information on it can be found at <https://arkhive.com/#/>

Advisers should look into 'arkhive' themselves and make a judgement as to whether it will be useful for clients. It is a new service, and clients may not trust the idea of it. It may also require quite a high degree of digital skills and confidence from clients, as it is run through a smartphone app.

Substitute copies

Some clients may be able to access their ID, but will have concerns that taking it may alert their partner to their intentions to leave. They may either leave it there (see section on **Awareness**) or get a high quality colour photocopy of their birth certificate or driving license and substitute it with the original. They can then keep the original safe somewhere that it won't be found, leaving the copy in its usual place in the home so as not to arouse suspicion. This approach is only worth taking if the ID is only infrequently accessible and the client may not be able to get hold of it at the time they choose to leave.

Although it's **not** impossible to get any and all of these forms of ID later once having left the situation, the reality is that there are costs associated with doing this and this will come at a time when a client will find their financial situation to be very taxing. If a client can **safely** get these details themselves, it makes things easier later on.

Key tip - Awareness

Many clients will be in a position to access ID, but often leave in such a hurry that it is left behind. Ask a client to find all their crucial ID one day when they have time, even if they do not plan to leave their situation immediately. This means that they will then know where it is (and can even move it somewhere safe), which in turn means that they won't need to spend hours looking for it if their need to leave becomes urgent.