

Remote Working – Virtual Meeting Platforms

With the distinct possibility that face to face visits will need to be temporarily suspended, there are a number of ways that you can still communicate with clients to complete virtual visits/assessments. Depending on how savvy the client is, rather than having a single platform that TalkLink uses, we need to prepare to be flexible to use multiple platforms and to ideally use a platform that the client is already familiar with rather than asking them to learn something new.

Zoom

One of the world's most popular video conferencing tools, Zoom is widely used and therefore many people may be familiar with its use already from their workplace. Zoom is free for one to one calls, and free for up to 40 minutes for group calls (group calls longer than this duration require at least one of the users on the call to have a paid account). You can share screens on Zoom which makes it easier for the other party to see what you're talking about. It is important that you have your own Zoom account rather than sharing an account, because Zoom will only allow one account to be on one call at any given time. You can also record Zoom calls if needed.

Price: Free (for one to one calls [unlimited duration], and group calls of up to 40 minutes; data charges may apply)

Compatible with: Windows, iOS, Mac OS, Chrome, Android

Supports Group Calls: Yes

Find out more and get support: <https://zoom.us/meetings>

Installer: <https://zoom.us/download>

Skype/Skype for Business

Skype for Business (formerly known as Microsoft Lync) is already installed on TalkLink computers, so is a good option. Skype for Business allows you to make audio and video calls to other Skype and Skype for Business users, including group calls. Please note, group calls only work if connecting with other Skype for Business users, not traditional Skype users. If you are wanting to have a group call with traditional Skype users, you also should download traditional Skype to do this. Skype/Skype for Business also support screen sharing as well as the ability to control the other user's device (Skype for Business only).

Price: Free (Skype), Subscription (Skype for Business); data charges may apply

Compatible with: Windows, iOS, Mac OS, Windows Phone, Chrome, Android, Xbox, Amazon Alexa, others

Supports Group Calls: Yes

Find out more and get support: <https://www.skype.com/en/>

Installer: <https://www.skype.com/en/get-skype/>

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a messaging and calling app recently acquired by Facebook. It is designed primarily for use on a mobile phone (and a mobile phone is required in order for the app to work), although there is a basic desktop application available which supports the messaging features of the app (but not calling). WhatsApp is great for one to one voice and video calls and messages, as well as group chats and calls. The most popular app in the Northern Hemisphere, WhatsApp is gaining popularity here too, particularly for group messaging, and it is compatible with most mobile devices so there are good odds that the person you're calling will have heard of/used WhatsApp.

Price: Free (data charges may apply)

Compatible with: iOS, Android, limited support for Mac OS and Microsoft Windows

Supports Group Calls: Yes

Find out more and get support: <https://www.whatsapp.com/features/>

Installer: <http://whatsapp.com/dl>

FaceTime

If both you and the other party have an Apple device (iPhone, iPad or Mac), you can use Apple's free FaceTime service to make audio calls or video calls. The calls are made over wifi or mobile data depending on what's available to you at the time. FaceTime comes automatically installed on all new Apple devices meaning that if you have an apple device, you are already good to go.

Price: Free (data charges may apply)

Compatible with: Apple Devices only.

Supports Group Calls: Yes

Find out more and get support: <https://support.apple.com/en-nz/HT204380>

Specific support for group calling: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT209022>

Installer: <https://apps.apple.com/nz/app/facetime/id1110145091>

Viber

Although not as ubiquitous as Skype and WhatsApp, Viber remains a popular messaging and calling app. Well designed for both one to one and group chats. Viber has the edge over WhatsApp for its desktop application which not only supports messaging, but unlike WhatsApp, also supports calling and video calling straight from the computer.

Price: Free to call Viber users, call charges apply if calling a landline/mobile from Viber; data charges may apply

Compatible with: iOS, Android, MS Windows, Mac OS, Linux Ubuntu, Linux Fedora

Supports Group Calls: Yes

Find out more and get support: <https://www.viber.com/features/>

Installer: <https://www.viber.com/download/>

Facebook Messenger (Messenger)

New Zealand's most popular app. Nowadays, you can set up a Facebook Messenger account without needing to also have a Facebook account, so setting up a work Facebook Messenger profile that is tied to your work phone number is a viable option. Messenger supports chats, group chats, one to one and group calling. Note, that unlike WhatsApp, Skype, FaceTime (iMessage) and Viber, Messenger chats, audio calls and video calls are not end to end encrypted and so sensitive client information should not be shared on Facebook Messenger.

Price: Free (data charges may apply)

Compatible with: iOS, Android, MS Windows, Mac OS, Chrome, all web browsers, others

Supports Group Calls: Yes (specific support here: https://www.facebook.com/help/messenger-app/ipad/1759354747722950?helpref=uf_permalink)

Find out more and get support: <https://www.facebook.com/help/messenger-app>

Installer: www.messenger.com

Telephone

There's nothing wrong with a good old-fashioned telephone call. If someone doesn't have internet access, or has metered internet access (i.e. they have an allocation of data rather than an unlimited plan), then a telephone call could be the most pragmatic solution.

Price: Standard call charges apply

Compatible with: Mobile phones and landlines

Supports Group Calls: On 2degrees and Spark mobile only.

Get support: Contact your service provider.