





The Infolegal Infohub

Coping with a firm's compliance and general management responsibilities can be an uphill struggle.

Not only are regulatory requirements becoming ever more complex and onerous, but communicating with and supervising those who are working remotely, or operating from another office, can also be a challenge.

To assist in dealing with these problems, Infolegal has extended the scope of its already successful online Compliance Hub to provide users with an integrated compliance and management platform that we believe will take much of the hard work out of routine regulatory and management duties.

The new **InfoHub** from Infolegal is a comprehensive yet simple to use resource. Created by lawyers for lawyers, it has been designed specifically to help solicitors' firms to manage their compliance and day-to-day information needs more effectively.

Fully customisable, and with an easy to use interface, the **InfoHub** provides firms with access to a wide range of information, documents, training modules and other guidance. In addition, it also allows them to assess, manage and record day-to-day risk and compliance, securely manage and share information with members of staff (wherever they are based) and record important data such as undertakings, complaints, data protection information and much more - all without the complexity and difficulty of similar products that are available.

Whether operating from one office, several offices or with staff working remotely, the **InfoHub** lets firms select from a number of modules designed to allow them to manage information and regulatory needs. These modules include regulatory compliance checks, experts registers, firm records, risk assessments, file reviews and departmental information.

Each **InfoHub** membership provides the ability to share the information with others in the firm* as well as giving complete control over who in the firm is able to access which resources. In the case of the training modules, it also provides access to a training management resource that will allow managers to see who has done which of the training courses and how they have performed in any associated tests.

*the number of additional users is based upon the subscription purchased

Managing Compliance Information

Legal practice in the post COVID-19 world is going to continue to be different. Even with a more widespread return to the office, remote working will continue for many and the way that most firms will work will inevitably involve far fewer face-to-face meetings and a much greater reliance upon technology.

For the many firms that do not have sophisticated IT networks, ensuring that staff continue to be supervised and are able to access the information they require is likely to remain a challenge.

Whilst case management and accounts systems can normally be accessed from remote locations, much of the general management information that staff require is not going to be so easy to find. Basic information that is easy to acquire when in the office becomes more time consuming to access when working remotely. Who, for example, is responsible in the firm for data protection? Who is in a particular department? What does the firm's equality and diversity policy state? Which investigators or expert witnesses does the firm use?

Not only is this information needed to allow members of the firm to do their everyday jobs, the provision of accessible information of many kinds is a compliance requirement of quality assurance standards such as the Law Society's Lexcel Standard and the Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS).

With the Infolegal **InfoHub**, all of this information can be stored safely and securely and accessed by relevant personnel within the firm whenever it is needed. Even information specific to a particular department can be made available to those within that department – including the provision of access to documents and templates that the firm uses. In all cases, the firm can decide who can see that information whilst also ensuring that inappropriate access is prevented.

The system allows the firm to share information about the firm itself - including contact details, supervisor details, staff lists, experts and counsel, procedures manuals, policies and processes. It also provides a means by which appropriate personnel can share with managers details of undertakings, complaints, key dates, regulatory breaches, external interests, gifts, residual client balances and much more besides. Managers can even undertake firm-wide compliance reviews, carry out risk assessments and manage information in relation to legitimate interest assessments and data subject requests.

The flexible way in which the **InfoHub** operates means that the firm can even define its own information headings and completely personalise the user experience.



Online Training

The Courses

A key compliance requirement is to ensure that all personnel know what is required of them. The **InfoHub** online training helps to achieve this.

Covering many regulatory, management and compliance-related topics, the training modules provide an overview of many of the topics likely to be encountered in practice and also required by standards such as Lexcel and the CQS. Several of the modules are tailored to address the needs of particular personnel within the firm - for example AML training courses aimed at fee-earners and support-staff.

The topics covered include:

- Money laundering and financial crime
- Data protection
- Conflict and confidentiality
- Risk management
- Accounts
- Equality and diversity,
- Duties of the COLP and COFA
- Introductions and referrals
- Retainers
- Client care
- Cybersecurity
- Financial services and
- Property and mortgage fraud.

Course Follow Up

In addition, the **InfoHub** allows users to demonstrate their understanding of the courses by taking a short quiz (with certificates available for printing and downloading) and users can take and keep notes on the course page to assist with their own learning and follow up.

Training/Course Management

Keeping a record of training undertaken is important not just to comply with SRA training requirements but also to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of Lexcel and the CQS. The InfoHub will assist firms with this.

Users can designate a user as a training/course manager. That person will be able not only to select which courses to assign and to whom but also be to see how they perform in any related tests and the notes they have made.

Where users attempt a quiz more than once, the system records how they did in each attempt and which questions were answered correctly. Quizzes can be re-issued to individuals if the firm feels that a refresher on a particular topic would be useful.

Courses are updated when regulations or circumstances change and older courses are kept in an archive section so that users can demonstrate that they have undertaken earlier versions where necessary.

All users can log in to courses under their own names and maintain their own records. They can view which courses they have taken and can download a certificate for retention on their training file as evidence of their training at compliance audits.

Firms can also download complete records of all of the courses attended by staff and how they performed in the associated tests in the form of CSV files. These can be opened in Excel, Numbers or similar programmes and can then be incorporated for use in internal reports.

Course Managers receive regular emailed reports telling them how often staff have undertaken quizzes and they can check their performance on all of the attempts.





Manual and Precedents

Regulatory Compliance

A key aim of the Infolegal **InfoHub** is to provide users with access to the various regulatory and compliance documents that they will require in order to satisfy not only the SRA requirements but also those of others such as:

- The Law Society's Lexcel quality standard
- The procedural elements of the Law Society's Conveyancing Quality Scheme
- The Specialist Quality Mark and
- The Legal Aid Agency's contract.

This is achieved in two main ways - through the template Solicitors Office Procedures Manual and by means of the various standalone precedents.

The Manual

Available in three formats to meet the needs of firms, sole practitioners and sole principals, the Manual is available to all Infolegal subscribers to download, adopt and amend as they require.

Since it was first published in 2012, the Infolegal Manual has helped many hundreds of law firms to develop or update their practice manuals and compliance documentation. It has also been widely used for the policies and processes required in applications to the SRA for authorisation as new practices.

More than just a one-off purchase, the Manual is now a complete compliance package and it is kept up to date so that firms can amend their own manuals to ensure that they remain current and in line with changes in both the law and regulation.

Key topics within the Manual include risk management, client care and complaints and equality and diversity. It also covers the SRA Accounts Rules, data and information management, financial crime and AML, cyber and technology related issues and compliance with CQS.

Precedents and Documents

The **InfoHub** provides a range of documents and precedents including retainer letters, cybersecurity precedents, data protection templates, money laundering forms and much more besides.

Whilst some, such as the retainer letters and cybersecurity precedents, are standalone others such as the data protection precedents are designed to be used in conjunction with other Infolegal resources such as Guidance Notes.

The precedents and documents include:

Retainer Letters - 20 draft letters dealing with contentious, non-contentious and legally aided matters including company, commercial, employment, property and wills. There is also a retainer letter checklist and draft terms of business.

AML - these include a Risk Assessment Form, a draft AML Policy, forms relating to Client Identity, Source of Funds and others, and draft text on the use of client identity evidence for CDD.

Cybersecurity - these address a number of cyber-related areas including emails, safe-browsing, password use, social media, clear desk policies, BYOD, information management, data breach, mobile working and security incident reporting.

Data Protection - the precedents here deal with the more common areas likely to be encountered including subject access requests, legitimate interest assessments, data processing agreements, data collection and analysis forms and a website privacy policy.

Other Precedents - these include precedents dealing with residual client balances, referral agreements, complaints handling, transparency checklists, telephone call recording, business plans and COLP/COFA terms of reference.

Factsheets, Guidance Notes and Compliance Bulletins

A key feature of the Infolegal **InfoHub** is the series of Factsheets and Guidance Notes covering many regulatory and compliance topics. Regularly updated, all are available in Word and PDF formats and can easily be incorporated into a firm's own materials or simply distributed to staff as standalone documents.

Many are accompanied by templates and precedents or tie in with issues covered in the Office Procedures Manual.

Topics covered by the Factsheets and Guidance Notes include:

- Money laundering and financial crime
- Data protection
- Cybersecurity
- Business continuity planning
- Working from home
- Issues for the COLP/COFA
- Billing, consumer contracts and retainers
- Accounting issues
- Equality and diversity
- Lexcel accreditation
- Disciplinary processes
- Vulnerable clients
- Complaint handling
- Transparency
- Financial services
- Recording telephone conversations
- Undertakings
- Recommendations and referrals and
- SRA Standards and Regulations.

In addition Infolegal produces monthly Compliance Bulletins/Newsletters addressing current regulatory issues. These are sent to all subscribers.

Tailoring the InfoHub to Your Firm

A key feature of the Infolegal **InfoHub** is its ability to allow firms to tailor precisely who sees which of the resources and who can update and manage them.

Administrators can decide on a person-by-person basis who can view which resources, ensuring that staff are able to access only those resources that are relevant to them. This can be applied equally to the information provided by Infolegal (e.g. factsheets, training courses, precedents etc.) as it can to the information provided by the firm. In the case of the latter, the firm can decide who can edit the information and who can merely read it.

To help maintain confidentiality, only administrators and managers can normally see all of the records in any section. However, the firm can change this on a person by person basis and the person entering the data will always be able to view that which they have entered.

The ability to tailor the **InfoHub** to the firm's requirements extends to the training section where courses can be assigned on an individual basis by the Course Manager.

So far as access is concerned, subject to the maximum number of users for the firm, new staff can easily be added to the system, and those who have left the firm can be removed.

The number of inclusive users a firm can have depends upon the subscription level they have purchased and whether or not they have purchased any additional user access rights. Removing those who have left the firm ensures that firms can keep their numbers within the level appropriate to their membership.

Finally, it should be noted that whilst the information that the firm enters is by default confidential to the firm itself, elements of that information can be made available to anyone with whom the firm wishes to share it, on a page-by-page basis. This might be useful when sharing firm compliance information with auditors, insurers or the SRA.





Sharing Firm Information

Being able to access information about your firm with ease may not be such a problem when everyone is sharing the same office. However, when personnel are spread over several locations, or when significant numbers of personnel are spending at least part of their time working from home, then being able to find out even the simplest of information can become more problematic.

It may be something as simple as the firm's VAT number, the contact details for someone in another department or who is responsible for an aspect of the firm's management.

The Infolegal **InfoHub** provides a resource whereby information about the firm, and records of management and regulatory issues, can be made accessible to all relevant personnel - wherever they are and on all electronic devices be they computers, tablets or mobile phones. This includes a comprehensive range of counsel/expert records where the firm can rate those who provide services to it and ensure that all personnel are using approved contractors.

The Firm Information section of the **InfoHub** provides a facility for centrally recording and sharing a range of information about the firm and the people who work in it. This includes:

Information about the practice itself - including contact details, registration numbers, details of accreditations, memberships, languages spoken within the firm and any other types of information the firm feels it appropriate and useful to share with its personnel.

Departmental information - departments within the firm can elect what information they wish to share and with whom they wish to share it. This might include details of the types of work undertaken by the department; personnel and managers; processes, policies, documents or templates used by the department; or any other information that the firm regards as appropriate.

Role holders and management responsibilities - All solicitors' practices, of whatever size, require the appointment of individuals to act as managers or role holders within the firm. This section allows the firm to record details of those role holders - e.g. COLP, COFA and MLRO - together with details of others in the firm with management responsibilities.

Staff details - a resource whereby staff members can add and update their own information which can then be accessed by everyone within the firm.

Firm's office procedures manual - the firm's procedures manual should be at the heart of its regulatory compliance programme. However, it is only of value if it is kept up to date and is easily accessible. The **InfoHub** allows the firm to maintain details of its manual in such a way that everyone within the firm can access up-to-date versions of it when required.

Plans and policies - it is a requirement of the Lexcel Standard that firms have a register of each plan, policy and procedure together with details of the person responsible for them and a procedure for their review. Using the **InfoHub** firms can not only maintain details of those policies, plans and procedures but can also make them readily available to personnel within the firm.

Experts and counsel - to help ensure that everyone within the firm is using approved experts and counsel, and to make sure that experiences with them are recorded and updated, there is a comprehensive series of tables into which details of accountants, medical experts, forensic experts, surveyors, barristers and others can be added, updated and rated according to a number of parameters such as previous performance, cost, speed of response, court room skills etc.



Firm Records

In addition to helping to manage information about the firm itself, the Infolegal **InfoHub** can also assist with management and regulatory information. This may be information that arises from the work of the firm, such as undertakings and complaints records or other management information such as IT suppliers and software registers.

As with all other aspects of the **InfoHub**, it is entirely up to the individual firm as to the extent to which they use this resource - for example they may not wish to use a particular form because it duplicates a resource that the firm has access to from elsewhere - and with whom in the firm the information is shared.

The **InfoHub** provides resources to record:

Complaints – a record of complaints received, providing the firm with useful information about problems and allowing it to deal more effectively with any defects or issues that may arise.

External Interests – preventing conflicts between the interests of the client and those of the firm or its personnel, by recording private interests that could conflict with the interests of clients.

Gifts and Hospitality – care must be taken when gifts by clients and third parties are offered to the firm or staff and any such gifts need to be registered with the practice, whether accepted or not.

Hardware - although not a regulatory requirement, a register of the firm's IT assets allows managers to see what might be out of date and therefore presenting a potential problem to the practice.

IT Suppliers – again there is no official requirement that an IT supplier register be maintained but doing so could be useful in the event that they should need to be contacted urgently.

Key Dates – missed time limits are one of the main causes of claims against practices and one that Lexcel recognises. Practices should ensure that they have a procedure to monitor key dates, which must include, inter alia, “ensuring that key dates are recorded on the file and in a back-up system”.

Personal Equipment – whether or not a firm operates a formal Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy it is wise to keep a register of those items of technology such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops that belong to staff but are used for the purposes of the business.

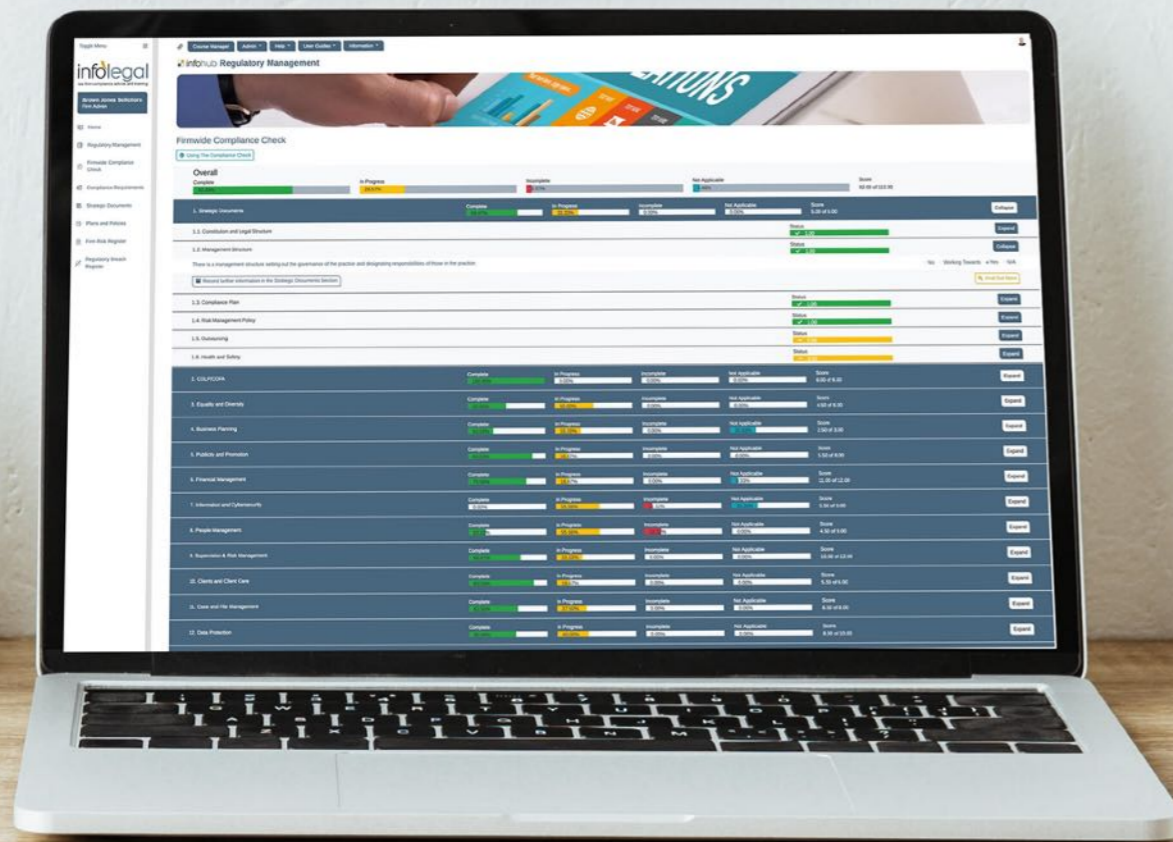
Referrals – clients who require assistance that the firm is unable to provide may be referred to someone able to provide the necessary service. The Referrals Register is used to record all such referrals and the details relating to them.

Regulatory Breaches Register – the SRA Codes of Conduct require that all regulated persons report promptly to the SRA, or other approved regulator, any facts or matters that could amount to a serious breach of their regulatory arrangements. This register assists with that process.

Residual Client Balance – where the owner of a residual balance cannot be traced, the firm may deal with that balance by giving it to charity. However, a record must be made of how it was dealt with and that record must be retained for a minimum period of 6 years.

Software Register – unlike the hardware register, it is a requirement both of Lexcel and the CQS that firms maintain a register of all software they use. It is also good practice since it allows managers to see what might be becoming out of date and could therefore present a potential risk to the firm.

Undertakings – special care must be taken in relation to the giving, monitoring and discharge of undertakings as the sanctions for non-compliance are severe and could result in a serious disciplinary offence culminating in proceedings before the SDT. Although there is no regulatory requirement for a central undertakings register, nevertheless it may prove useful in helping managers to monitor any undertakings given or received and the clients to whom they relate.



Regulatory Management

Regulatory management is a core requirement for all solicitors' practices and having an effective and comprehensive approach is essential if firms are to address the compliance duties placed upon them.

The Infolegal **InfoHub** provides a number of key compliance resources designed to help firms identify and understand what is required of them and how to take the necessary actions.

At the heart of this is the Firmwide Compliance Check - a comprehensive checklist that allows firms to monitor the extent to which they are compliant with basic regulatory requirements and which uses a "traffic light" system to highlight those areas in which the firm is compliant and those that require further attention.

To augment this check system there is a comprehensive "compliance requirements" section which takes each of the compliance headings in the check system and explains what is required of the firm and where additional resources can be found.

In order to enable the firm to find those documents, policies and plans that relate to the various regulatory requirements with ease, there is a comprehensive register that allows the firm to store and make available as necessary its various documents, policies and processes. There is also the facility to record whatever additional information the firm feels to be appropriate for each of these. It is also entirely up to the firm how many additional sections it adds to this, thereby ensuring that all of the regulatory aspects of the firm can be addressed.

To assist the firm in identifying and addressing the risks that it faces there is a risk register which allows risks to be categorised, their likelihood/impact profile assessed and a method by which they are to be minimised recorded.

To help manage regulatory breaches, there is a register into which can be recorded potential regulatory breaches so that these can be brought to the attention of the COLP/COFA and appropriate remedial/notification steps taken.

Finally, there is a whole section devoted to data protection related issues. Here the firm can record subject access and other requests and how they have been dealt with, keep a record of all consents given, undertake legitimate interest assessments and maintain a data breach register.



Other Services from Infolegal

The challenges of managing a law firm have never been greater. Economic and political uncertainty combined with the potential vagaries of the SRA Standards and Regulations, the requirements of money laundering legislation, data protection requirements and increased competition has meant that managing a legal practice requires ever-increasing amounts of time and financial commitment.

Infolegal can help to reduce the time and cost impact by providing practical, firm-focused support just when it is needed.

Consultancy

Infolegal has considerable expertise in supporting legal practices of all types and sizes and in many different ways. Our services include reviewing procedures and policies, drafting office manuals, providing advice on setting up in practice, assisting with moving to a different practice structure, putting in place systems for the COLP, COFA or MLRO and supporting firms generally on an on-going basis with regulatory and compliance advice.

Our directors and consultants have been involved in legal practice support for many years and continue to provide guidance, information and training in many areas including money laundering, data protection, cybersecurity, practice management, legal aid, Lexcel support, compliance audits, regulatory compliance advice, SRA authorisations and much more.

Key topics with which Infolegal can assist include undertaking a compliance audit designed to highlight gaps in a firm's regulatory risk management, reviewing regulatory processes and providing practical client care advice.

Training

The Infolegal directors have considerable experience and expertise in providing in-house training to legal practices of all types and sizes and has also provided services to many of the main training providers. We cover a wide range of topics including money laundering, SRA regulatory issues, cybersecurity, data protection, equality and diversity and regulatory issues such as retainers, confidentiality and business continuity.

Whatever the firm's needs, Infolegal can tailor a course on most regulatory, compliance and practice management related topics and then deliver them at a time and in a manner as suits the firm.

Wherever the firm is situated, and no matter how many staff need to be trained, Infolegal can offer a cost-effective solution to regulatory training needs and can ensure that the training staff receive is tailored to their precise needs and requirements.

Compliance Audits

Ensuring that firms are up to date in relation to regulatory and compliance issues is vital. However, the frequently changing requirements of the various regulatory bodies means that doing so is not always easy.

Infolegal can assist by undertaking a compliance audit designed to highlight gaps in a firm's regulatory processes and provide it with practical and effective solutions to deal with them.

Established in 2013, Infolegal is one of the leading providers of regulatory, compliance and management support, providing advice, guidance and training to legal organisations of all types and sizes. Our consultants and associates have been involved in legal regulatory, compliance and management for many years and have an unrivalled knowledge of how these impact upon legal practice.

The Infolegal **InfoHub** is a synthesis of their broad range of skills and is probably the most comprehensive yet easy to use resource of its kind.

Quality Services

At Infolegal, we pride ourselves on the quality of the support and advice that we provide and are constantly developing new services and methods of delivery to help all our clients cope with regulatory pressures as simply as possible.

Ideas and Experience

The Infolegal directors have between them many years' experience of legal practice. This gives them not only the ability to address a firm's regulatory needs but also to be able to offer innovative solutions to modern day problems.

Cost Effective

By keeping our overheads to a minimum and by delivering many of our services online, Infolegal is able to offer its subscribers a level of support and advice which is both comprehensive and yet highly cost-effective.

Trusted Reputation

Our directors and consultants have worked with many of the leading regulatory organisations and have over the years gained a reputation for being able to deliver the highest quality of compliance services and innovative business support.

Infolegal Limited

2 Crown Lane, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 4SU

Tel: 0203 371 1064

Email: enquiries@infolegal.co.uk

Website: www.infolegal.co.uk

Registered Office: 2 Crown Lane, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 4SU.
Company Registration Number: 7851850

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