



Ten Old Square addresses GDPR compliance with Cloud and mobile solution from Advanced, and finds digital environment transformational



At Ten Old Square, we are a multi-award winning Chancery chambers, with 25 barristers specialising in private client, partnership and commercial chancery work, based in Lincoln's Inn, London.

The challenge

We were previously operating in an environment that was paper-heavy; we'd frequently have trolley-loads of documentation. Data was also held independently by barristers on their hard drives. Data was encrypted but kept in silos, so there was no single system that barristers could use to access new instructions, input their written work or communicate with clients or the courts.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was the driver that encouraged us to make the move to the Cloud. The Independent Commissioner's Office (ICO) had made it clear that holding data on paper came with a number of risks, such as documents being lost or failing to be secured, and this was going to be a key focus for them. Under the GDPR, no set of chambers or any barrister can ignore the need to work in a secure manner, protecting documents and data. We needed to address this challenge, but we were also keen to take advantage of the many benefits a digital environment can offer.

The solution

Our Senior Clerk, Keith Plowman, comments, *"We understood that technology would support our chambers' drive towards GDPR compliance, and we spent time reviewing the market so we knew that MLC V and the mobile and case collaboration toolkit from Advanced was a perfect fit for our requirements. It is designed with barristers in mind, helping with all aspects of our work. The innovative solution has built-in Cloud capabilities enabling secure remote working and providing centralisation of data and documentation."*

We now have all our information held centrally, but within secure partitions to ensure the barristers can only access details of the cases they are working on. Having all written work entered digitally, as well as having our documents stored securely in the Cloud, means barristers are avoiding the use of less secure, locally stored data or even paper files.

Supporting the transition

Keith adds, *"Of course, people are generally wary of changing working practices, but the GDPR isn't something that can be ignored. However, our people have seen the immediate benefits of Advanced's Cloud solution. It is giving the barristers everything they need for the duration of a case, from the initial case review right through to court presentation or the delivery of advice to the client."*

Client >

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Sector >

Legal

Project >

MLC V mobile and case collaboration toolkit

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Senior Clerk >
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To support the transition, our barristers were given a short training session to show how easy the new solution is to use, and the many benefits they will see from it. Even the less technically savvy embraced it straight away.

We also provided barristers with an informative guide and checklist on the GDPR as the deadline approached. It meant that barristers didn't spend unnecessary time worrying about the GDPR when they could be focusing on client work. The GDPR buck does stop with barristers (as data controllers), and they can still be fined by the ICO if they are non-compliant or if there's a breach. However, we see our barristers as a valuable asset we need to invest in and protect. So, at Ten Old Square, we put in the groundwork and acquired the right technology so that our barristers could concentrate on what they do best – advising and representing their clients.

The benefits

Beyond helping us to adhere to the GDPR, we have been taking advantage of MLC and all the other benefits of working in a digital environment.

Keith comments, *"The solution is transforming the way we operate and enhancing how the clerks and barristers work together. For example, our barristers can now access the chambers' IT environment securely wherever they are and at any time, creating and saving their work while liaising with the clerks and immediately sharing drafts with the clients. Having our documents in the Cloud means they are off the hard drives, eradicating risk from lost devices. Our clients also get a faster response to their instructions, improving client service levels."*

Timekeeping has improved drastically too and become far more efficient. Barristers used to write down the time spent with clients on a timesheet, via email or even on a sticky note.

Some records were therefore reported late, or not at all. It meant a few clients would never get charged and we lost fees as a result. Using the Cloud-based mobile toolkit from Advanced, our barristers are now easily able to record time spent on each case anywhere and at any time. The assigned clerk can see it instantly too within the MLC system, so there'll be no missed or late bills.

Crucially, it will also improve our relationships with solicitors. After all, an isolated incident of sending a bill months after a case has been completed can be ruinous and cause significant friction. A solicitor may not have the funds to pay the bill at that time. In other cases, the clerk decides to write-off the fees to preserve the relationship and so the solicitor is never even aware of the additional work. We wanted to address this inefficient approach and thanks to embracing the Cloud and mobile technology, we have.

Keith sums up, *"We are already noticing that the ease of use is reaping benefits, with the system operating like a 'virtual clerk'. As soon as barristers finish a piece of work they click on the time entry in the case file in MLC to record the work. They also provide a brief explanation of what's been completed. The clerks can complete the administration of cases much more easily and the amount of lost billable time will reduce as a result. I predict a 10% increase in the amount of work being billed, purely down to more efficient time recording by the barristers. MLC will pay for itself within months."*

"We now work and practice in an increasingly digital world, and the best way to operate a legal services business efficiently is through the use of technology. This Cloud and mobile solution can help our barristers adapt to the continued digitisation of the legal system and adhere to regulatory and compliance obligations - while serving our clients ever more efficiently."

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Keith Plowman >
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