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# Contact Management. Are you Compliant?

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In the past, contact management could mean any number of things. Any contact with clients, be it appointments, meeting notes, telephone calls and outstanding events might, if you're lucky, be recorded in a single area or, as in most cases, in a variety of disconnected ways. One thing for sure, these events were hard to record/access and did not lead to a smooth and easy ride for retrieval or disclosure if needed.

So, how important is good contact management to your business? If you are a sole trader, all the above might even be in your head! Even then, important events are easy to miss or forget.

And what if an adviser is away from their office? The ability to record and easily retrieve all contact with prospects and clients is even more essential if important events are not to be missed; either remotely by the adviser or by someone else who has been left with the challenge.

Contact management is vital to the successful running of any organisation, regardless of company size. Good systems, thereby having good practice, will help to enable clear oversight especially from a compliance aspect.

Let's look at the various components of good contact management:

**Telephone Calls:** The FCA has, for some time, indicated it may insist all calls are recorded. Although many may feel this is overkill, **it is** important staff can easily log when a call is made or received in case any future actions are required. Manual records in A4 notebooks or on sticky notelets should be a thing of the past. Many practices simply email their consultants, but a good audit trail in your database will streamline and improve this area of your business and keep your business compliant.

**Appointments:** Who are you seeing, when, where and why? These should all form part an audit trail. If your administration staff are making appointments on behalf of the consultants, they need to know when and where you can be available.

**Emails:** Did you know outgoing and incoming emails can be attached to your client database for reference and easy retrieval? These can be stored against a client, or even the specific policy, to give a complete audit trail for all levels of contact. Emails can continue to reside in Outlook, but a benefit of holding all contact details in one area, gives far better access to client related events.

**To Do Lists:** When integrated with excellent tracking processes, all outstanding actions/events can update individual consultants 'to do lists'. These lists are fully integrated with their diary and ensure important and relevant dates are highlighted. In addition, to ensure that all business and compliance processes are completed on time, office managers can view lists for other members of staff. Put simply: a single entry of data ensures events are logged and any related events are not forgotten.

Finally, when integrated with your back office system, all forms of contact management will help to streamline your business processes and ensure members of staff are able to work together, sharing client data and action where necessary. Important events will not be overlooked as, until they are dealt with, outstanding tasks will remain highlighted. The resulting audit trails will help to enable compliance but equally as important, they will result in offering a streamline and the efficient management of your business and increase productivity.

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