Instant Messages

Users of DISC systems can send 'Instant Messages' between themselves, to share urgent, important information…

The DISC App enables DISC users to send urgent, important messages instantly to each other. These are 'Instant Messages' (IMs).

The system, which must be first switched on by the local DISC Administrator, allows individual Members to send 'Push Notifications' to any or all other Members, direct from their smartphones. If 'Member Categories' are enabled, Members can send these either to all Members, or only to those that belong to specific Member Categories.

Instant Messages provide a function similar to that offered by the popular WhatsApp system. However, unlike WhatsApp, the DISC Instant Messaging system provides the Administrator with overall control of the messages themselves, because these are stored in the DISC system and not on Members' devices.

In this way DISC's Instant Messaging system, unlike WhatsApp, can be used for sharing personal data for business purposes without risking contravention of the Data Protection Act.

How DISC's Instant Messaging system works

First the DISC Instant Messaging system must be switched on by your DISC Administrator who, optionally, may wish to set up Member Categories if these aren't already configured (see below: *'How to switch on Instant Messages in your DISC system'*).

How to send an Instant Message

Where Instant Messaging has been switched on by the local DISC Administrator, all Members that use the DISC App will see an 'Instant Messages' section on their Homescreen.

The Instant Messages section on the DISC App's Homescreen

Tap on 'Instant Messages' to open the Instant Messages screen. Now tap on 'Send an Instant Message'. The Send an Instant Message screen appears.

In the Send an Instant Message screen, complete the 'Title' and 'Message' fields. To save time, consider using the voice-to-text feature in your smartphone.

If displayed, select the 'Member Categories' to which you want to send your message (don't send it to people who won't be interested). If no Member Categories are displayed your Instant Message will be sent to all Members.

If you want you can attach an image. It's simple and quick if you take a picture with your smartphone's built-in camera.

When you're done, tap on the blue 'Submit' button at the foot of the screen.

Your message will now instantly be sent as a Push Notification to the smartphones of all Members within the Member Categories that you have selected.

WhatsWrong with WhatsApp?

Nothing - as long as WhatsApp isn't used to share personal data for business purposes.

The Data Protection Act 1998 makes it illegal to do so without a designated Data Controller who is able to control the data itself. In WhatsApp, where data is transferred to, and stored indefinitely in, each participant's mobile phone, it is not possible to exert that control. Even if all participants promise to delete their data when appropriate, the Data Controller can have no way of ensuring that they do, or have done, so and therefore of monitoring participants' usage of the data.

In DISC all data is stored inside the DISC system, is stored there for no more than seven days, and is always fully under the control of the Administrator; when an Instant Message is sent through the system only the 'Push Notification' that points to the data on the DISC system is stored in participants' phones, and this is automatically deleted from the device after seven days.

If you want to read more about the use of WhatsApp for sharing personal data for business purposes, and compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, download our Guidance Note **here**.

How to read an Instant Message

When you are sent an Instant Message, a Push Notification will be displayed almost instantaneously on the screen of your smartphone, even if it's in 'sleep' or 'locked' mode, and an audible alert will sound.

Now tap on the Push Notification to open your smartphone at the DISC App: enter your Express Login to display the Instant Message in full, including any image.

You can also read any IMs that have previously been sent to you. Again, from your Instant Messages screen, tap on 'Read

Tap on the Push Notification to open your DISC App…

…and access full details of the Instant Message and any image

recent Instant Messages' to view all IMs sent to you in the last seven days. IMs are deleted automatically after seven days for DPA-compliance reasons.

'Read recent Instant Messages': shows IMs sent to you in the last seven days

How to switch on Instant Messages in your DISC system

To make Instant Messaging available to DISC users, the local DISC Administrator can simply switch it on. This is done in the DISC Admin Centre, which can only be accessed by the local DISC Administrator.

The Administrator must access Admin Centre → I want to… → Configure DISC → Instant Messaging and, in the pop-up that appears, check the tickbox and click on 'Save'.

From that moment, Members can use the DISC Instant Messaging system in the DISC App.

Enable IM: Admin Centre → I want to…→ Configure DISC → Instant Messaging

The Administrator may wish to encourage Members to send IMs only to Members like themselves – for example only to those in the same area of town, or only to Licensees etc. To enable this it is necessary for the Administrator to have implemented 'Member Categories'. Where Member Categories are set up, each Member has the option of sending IMs only to selected Member Categories.

To implement Member Categories, Administrators must access Admin Centre → I want to… → Configure DISC → Member Categories and follow the on-screen instructions.

Where IMs are sent only to specific Member Categories, only these IMs are displayed in each Member's Read recent Instant Messages screen on their DISC App (see above).

By default, all Instant Messages are automatically deleted from DISC after seven days. However at any time the Administrator (who received ALL Instant Messages, irrespective of what Members Categories he or she may

belong to) can delete an IM, for example if it is erroneous or does not comply with the rules of membership.

To do so, access Admin Centree → I want to…→ Manage Content → Instant Messages

Manage IMs: Admin centre → I want to…→ Manage Content → Instant Messages

and in the 'Actions' column click on Delete. (This dataview is also useful if the Administrator wants to copy-and-paste an IM into a general Alert or news item).

For more information please email support@littoralis.com or call 01273 900 468