



The Covid diaries: Day 23 - Big Brother

A daily fly-on-the-wall blog about running a legal business during the Covid-19 crisis.

By **Darren Isaacs** - 17 April

Boy, are we glad to see the end of this week.

Long weekends are great, but the downside is that you sometimes end up with 5 working days of work, squished into 4 days. Such was the week just gone. It has been hectic.

So, as we race towards the end of another UK Friday, all I can say is that it cannot get here soon enough.

I recently wrote about some of the more practical challenges for a law firm during lockdown (see [Day 21](#)). But the pandemic - and the government's responses to it - also continue to throw up interesting and new legal problems. If you have been reading our diaries, you will be tired of hearing all about furlough (though that particular topic keeps on keeping on - so, like Rocky Balboa, it will soon be making a comeback).

One thing I have been considering today is the potential new UK government Covid-19 app. Like governments elsewhere, the UK government has been working on some sort of contact tracing app that we will be 'encouraged' to download (or is it upload? I get so confused these days) onto our phones. The idea is that if someone you have been in close contact with tests positive for the virus, the app can alert you (and anyone else necessary).

I am half in awe of the very practical use of apps and GPS technology - and I am half horrified by it.

The HR lawyer in me - spurred on by a client query - is now wondering how it would all square off against the GDPR and what the potential issues are for an employer if the employee only has a work phone. Will the app be voluntary (like in Singapore)? Will the government try to make it compulsory (like in China)? Will the employer have to make sure IT puts it on everyone's work phones? If the phone gets returned to the employer, would the employer have access to the data? And who else, for that matter, might be able to access the data? What will the ICO say (the UK's privacy regulator)?

It's all too much for a Friday so, maybe if I have a glass of wine someone else will think of some clever answers over the weekend. We can only hope.

If you would like to read our **Covid diaries starting from day 1** please click [here](#).