

Boss won't pay? - Here's some ammunition

By Sam Lincoln

If the data relating to the views of our new [Introduction to RIPA Part 2 course](#) is an accurate indicator, it's clear that there is a great deal of interest in a form of learning that is accessible to many from a place and at a time of their choice. Great! That was why we've undertaken the task and spent so many months getting it to you.

But interest at individual level may not be matched by corporate decision-makers enthusiasm. And you, as an individual, are right to assert that RIPA training is a corporate not individual responsibility. So you need some ammunition to persuade your boss that this course is a good return on investment right? Let's see if we can help you respond to challenges we suspect you may face:

“RIPA is about to be replaced by a new Act – let's wait”

It's true. In light of several assessments conducted by [Mr Anderson](#), [RUSI](#) and the [Intelligence Services Committee](#) the Home Office has, I believe, embarked on a revision of current legislation. The poor image of RIPA suggests that an Act bearing that name may not exist for much longer. However, it takes a significant amount of time to obtain Royal assent. In the meantime, RIPA applies and this course will keep people on track. It's also highly likely that revision will not undermine the legal tests of necessity and proportionality. Nor is it likely that definitions will be amended significantly. If anything, future legislation is likely to constrain the discretion of public authorities. This course assists you to think about covert surveillance and to understand what can and cannot be done. It will be adapted to accommodate future change.

“It's only necessary for investigators and authorising officers to take the course”

Emphatically we say “No!” As the OSC's Chief Inspector, I was acutely aware that RIPA was perceived to apply to a few members of a local authority. It doesn't it applies to all. It's easy – particularly when conducting research online or dealing with information provided by the public – to cross into the covert domain. Recognising when – or at least being alert to the possibility and asking for guidance – is vital if human rights are to be respected. RIPA compliance applies to every member of a public authority (and anyone who acts on behalf of a public authority). This course was deliberately created with the widest and least knowledgeable audience in mind; although it provides a useful refresher for those with previous RIPA

training. The pricing is designed to encourage you to purchase multiple licenses at a reducing cost per head. Early adopters may receive benefits in future versions!

“I like the idea of e-learning but it’s not very good”

Harsh maybe and, once I’ve wiped away my tears and calmed down, I’ll concede that producing a product before it’s been requested is a challenge. Style and design is personal. We’ve kept the cost down by producing it in-house – more professional teams of instructional and graphic designers and voice-over talent are expensive and the cost would have to be transferred to you. I hope that the audio and visual quality plus the choice of e-learning software is acceptable. My graphic design talent will improve with your help! We hope that there’s a good balance between lecture and interaction. We’ve not locked down navigation nor set standards ... it’s possible for each authority to set its own assessment standards for differing groups of learners. In-house production also means that we can make adjustments quickly to ensure that the course remains relevant and meets your exacting needs. So the obvious response is if the course does not match expectations tell us where it can be improved and/or what other performance support products you want. Let’s move forward together ... it’s much better for you to tell us what you want rather than us to assume that we know what you need.

If you face other concerns please let us know what they are so that we can address them. In the meantime, we hope that you find this course useful as a basis for assessing the knowledge of all your staff. Being able to evidence learning and knowledge levels to the OSC is useful. Being able to assess return on investment (by recording courses undertaken and assessment scores) and tracking them over time is useful to senior managers.

Most importantly, having an assessment which is available across collaborating authorities and useful as comparison with other local authorities may prove useful. We want to become your learning and development partner. If that sounds good to you ... we need your encouragement with evidence that we’re on the right path too. We want this to be a collaborative project where we do the heavy lifting that saves you time, effort and money and which makes you look good! The more who join this partnership, the lower will be the overall cost and the more relevant the product. Please join us in this venture.