**The Use of CCTV in Foster Carers and Supported Lodgings Homes**

**RELATED REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE**

**National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)**

**Domestic CCTV: using CCTV systems on your property (GOV.UK, 2015)**

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**1. Introduction**

This guidance document is intended to support the appropriate use of CCTV both inside and outside the foster home. An individual has the right to protect their property and this can be done by using a CCTV system as a security measure. The use of these systems in a domestic dwelling to protect the residents from crime and anti-social behaviour is not uncommon and there is some basic information and guidance that householders should be aware of if they have this security measure in place. This guidance document will consider the use of CCTV cameras both inside and outside of the foster home and has been informed by the Government Guidance ‘*Domestic CCTV: using CCTV systems on your property*’ published December 2015. The Data Protection Act (DPA) covers images being recorded by CCTV which extend beyond the property on which the camera is installed. These would not be regarded as domestic processing and therefore exempt from the DPA.

**2.General Guidance**

There are a number of basic questions to consider prior to installing a CCTV system in the home, this includes:

* **What are the reasons for installing the CCTV system?** Are there other measures by which the home could be safeguarded i.e. improved lighting? Is it clear what is to be viewed and recorded?
* **How might the CCTV system affect others?** Where will the camera need to be positioned to ensure that the privacy of others is not intruded upon for example a neighbour’s property and pavements in use by the public?
* **Who will have access to the images captured by the camera?** Is it clear who will take responsibility for the viewing and disposal of the camera footage? Who will ensure that the camera is positioned appropriately?

If there are any questions regarding the use of CCTV cameras that record images that may be regarded as ‘beyond the confines of the property’ the **Surveillance camera code of practice (2013)** will clarify this and the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) can be contacted at [**scc@sccomissioner.gsi.gov.uk**](mailto:scc@sccomissioner.gsi.gov.uk)**.**

**3.The External Use of CCTV**

There should be transparency with regard to those around you when a CCTV system is or will be installed. This can be done by:

* Informing neighbours that a CCTV system is or will be installed on your property
* Putting a notice up informing people that recording is taking place.

The cameras should not intrude on neighbour’s property or may not be compliant with the Data Protection Act. This could also result in complaints and accusations of invasion of privacy.

Recordings should be regularly deleted and kept for only as long as necessary to protect the property. The issue of CCTV recordings should be addressed within the Family’s Safe Care Plan including their retention period.

**4.The Use of CCTV Inside the Home**

Where a CCTV system is to be used within the foster home care should be taken to ensure that its use is appropriate, proportionate and all occupants are aware of its existence. The following should be adhered to at all times:

* All members of the household are aware that cameras are in place and why
* The cameras are only positioned in communal areas and not in bedroom, bathrooms or toilets
* It should be clear in the Safe Caring Policy that cameras are in use within the foster home and states where they are positioned
* You should make clear to all members of the household what happens to the information captured by the cameras
* It should be clear to all members of the household who has responsibility for the camera(s)
* The information is not used for any purpose other than protecting the property and in particular is not used as a way of supervising children within the foster home. Consideration should be given to a signed agreement from the children/ young people depending on their age and understanding.
* Any request for the exceptional use of CCTV which falls outside of this guidance should be directed to your Fostering Social Worker or Fostering Manager who will address this through the appropriate processes.
* **Note:** It should also be remembered that there are other instances where cameras or recording equipment may be in use. Dashcams for example can record both inside and outside of a vehicle. Baby monitors can also record and relay sound to a receiving monitor. Anyone affected by the use of this equipment should be made aware of its existence.

**5.Informing Placing Social Workers/ Leaving Care Workers that CCTV is in Use**

The responsible case management workers for any children placed should be made aware of the use of CCTV cameras in the home. They should be informed of where the cameras are positioned, why they are in use and when, who is responsible for the camera(s) and what happens to the footage. The Fostering Service should also be made aware of the use of the CCTV system and ensure that this is incorporated into the Safe Caring Policy. It should be clear that the cameras do not replace or supplement the carer’s supervision of the children in placement.

**6.Taking Responsibility for the CCTV System Including the Storage and Retention of Images**

It is essential that it is clear who has responsibility for the CCTV system. This will include its correct installation, responsibility for all information recorded by the system and its appropriate use.

The system should be recording dates and time accurately and have enough recording space for the time span that it is required to record. The information recorded by the camera(s) should not be stored indefinitely and should be deleted as soon as it no longer necessary to protect the home. The information should be kept securely. You should ensure that the information recorded by the system is only used for the purpose for which it is intended. If the information you have is required to be used as evidence in any setting (e.g. by the police for purposes of crime investigation) then the Fostering Service should be made aware of this as should the Social Worker of any child placed.

CCTV Policy - November 2019