Monitoring and Surveillance Policy

1. **Statement of Purpose**

* Omega Care Group aims to support children and young people in positive environments in which they can flourish.
* Omega Care Group may use equipment to support the safety of children and young people, staff and visitors.
* This Policy will be reviewed annually or in the light of changes in legislation or regulatory guidance.

1. **CCTV**

* Omega Care Group 16 plus provision operates closed-circuit television (CCTV) across the range of its provision in order to promote the security of the provisions. This is in communal areas and entrances.
* Omega Care Group will treat the CCTV system, all information and recordings, (both those obtained directly and those subsequently used) as data protected under the Data Protection act 2018.
* Appropriate signage indicating clearly that CCTV is in use will be prominently displayed, as mandated by the Code of Practice of the Information Commissioner.
* Omega Care Group Children Residential Homes may use CCTV, if reasonable risk was evident.
  1. **Protocols**
* The CCTV system is registered with the Information Commissioners Office under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018
* The system complies with the Commissioner’s Code of Practice for CCTV 2014
* The system complies with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2014.
  1. **Objectives**
* To support the maintenance of a safe environment.
* To support and promote the safeguarding and welfare of young people.
* To protect the physical premises and other assets.
* To support the police in deterring crime in line with Merseyside police 10-point check list, and the national protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked after children
* To work in line with *Human Rights (ECHR) as incorporated into the ‘*[Human Rights Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)’.
  1. **CCTV as an effective solution**

The appropriateness of, and the reasons for, using CCTV have been considered by Omega Care Group, and it has been determined to be a justified and effective solution, offering a proportionate response to the promotion of safeguarding for all individuals.

CCTV enables visitors to be seen pre-entry and promotes safeguarding for all. The presence of CCTV also contributes towards the monitoring of the physical security of the building.

* 1. **Location of CCTV**

CCTV is installed in the entrances, offices and communal areas of the 16 plus provisions. This, although set to record cannot be visible to staff on a monitor unless a safeguarding necessity dictates at which point the following should be implemented.

* Documented reason for viewing
* Start time of viewing
* Chronology of events
* End time for viewing
* Information shared with line manager and safeguarding officer.
  1. **CCTV Equipment**

1. All equipment is owned by Omega Care Group and images are strictly controlled by authorised staff only.
2. The CCTV equipment is a closed system which does not make audio recordings. All cameras are fixed position and clearly visible-that is, not hidden from view, digital recorders and visual display monitors are maintained within the office space of each unit.
3. . The camera is intended to address safeguarding issues and to provide protection for individuals, and to have minimal impact on personal privacy.
4. The feed from the camera sited in the lounge will not be live on the monitor,. Young people are fully aware of CCTV arrangements.
   1. **Camera Arrangements**
5. Omega Care Group will make every effort to position cameras so that adjacent properties are unaffected.
6. Omega Care Group will display clear signs indicating an area covered by CCTV.
   1. **Security**

* Live viewing and monitoring is restricted to authorised staff (Omega Managers / seniors)
* Access to the CCTV system, software and recorded data is limited to Managers only.
* Viewing of recorded images should take place in a private area.
* No covert surveillance will be undertaken.
* Images are securely stored only where necessary, for a limited time and access is limited to managers.
* CCTV will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on all sites.
* Recorded data will not be retained for longer than is necessary and will be deleted from the system automatically after 31 days, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018
* Recorded material will only be viewed by authorised operatives for the purposes of investigation.
  1. **Access**

1. It is important that access to and disclosure of images recorded by the CCTV system is restricted and appropriately controlled. This ensures the rights of the individual are preserved and the chain of evidence remains intact if required for evidential purposes.
2. Requests for access will be dealt with in accordance with the Omega Care Group Data Protection Policy.
3. All requests for access should be documented.
4. If access is denied the reasoning should be documented.
5. The release of recorded images will only be made in the following limited and prescribed circumstances and to the extent required or permitted by law:
6. The police or other law enforcement agencies - where the images recorded would assist in a specific criminal enquiry.
7. Prosecution agencies - such as the Crown Prosecution Service.
8. Relevant legal representatives - such as lawyers or barristers.
9. Persons who have been recorded and whose images have been retained, and where disclosure is required by virtue of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.
10. The Director or his designated individual (a Senior Manager), are the only individuals who can authorise disclosure of information to the police or other law enforcement agencies.
11. Any downloaded media required as evidence must be properly recorded, witnessed and packaged securely.
    1. **Download from CCTV Procedure**
12. When required to provide images to external bodies – police/other authorised bodies – NB\* images taken by police are done so using their body cameras
13. Each download video DVD must be identified by a unique mark, the date and time and the number of the camera which recorded the image.
14. The date and time of any download should be recorded.
15. Downloaded media must be properly indexed, stored securely and destroyed after appropriate use in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018
16. Images may be viewed by the police and recorded in writing for the prevention of crime, this should take place in a restricted area. An incident log of recorded images that have been viewed will be maintained in each unit. The log should record all viewing of recorded images both by external agencies and authorised Omega Care Group staff managers.

The log should include details of:

* Date and time of viewing
* Individual viewing
* Date and time of incident
* Nature of incident
* Action
* Signature.
  1. **Subject Access Requests**
* Individuals have the right to request CCTV footage of themselves under the Data Protection Act.
* All requests should be made to the director. Sufficient information should be supplied to identify the footage-time and date etc.
* Omega Care has the right to refuse access to CCTV footage if this would a) prejudice the legal rights of another individual or b) jeopardise an ongoing investigation.
  1. **Omega Care Group commits to:**
* Operating CCTV with a legitimate aim and a specific purpose-that of safeguarding young people.
* Having awareness of the effect on the individual
* Transparency
* Deleting images after a defined time
* Restricting access to retained images and information and having clear guidelines as to who may access this material.
* Maintaining the CCTV system to a high standard.
* Reviewing the CCTV Policy annually to reflect changes in legislation and guidance.
  1. **Complaints**

Any complaint concerning Omega Care Group and its use of CCTV should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Director.

1. **Other Monitoring equipment**

**Door Alarms**

* Omega Care Group provisions may also use door alarms which is linked to the monitoring system in the office of the home.
* Children Residential Services may use door alarms if risk is evident
* Door alarms are used to safeguard children and young people any may be used on bedroom doors, communal doors and the home’s entrances and exits