

News story: Surveillance Camera Commissioner launches a passport for compliance

The compliance document, formerly known as an operational requirement document, is crucial to be able to specify what they want the system to do, how they want it to perform and ensure that it complies with all relevant regulations. As well as how much it will cost to procure and run.

The passport to compliance puts responsibility for system development in the hands of the organisations that operate them. It guides organisations through the stages they need to go through when planning, installing and eventually operating surveillance camera systems. It should be completed for new systems or where there is a significant change to an existing system – for example the addition of a large number of cameras.

Following the passport to compliance will help organisations meet the 12 guiding principles in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and, whilst not a guarantee, other relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act.

It's aimed primarily at public space CCTV systems such as those operated by local authorities or in large shopping centres, although it can be used for any type of surveillance camera system.

Surveillance Camera Commissioner, Tony Porter said:

I'm delighted to be able to launch the passport to compliance. It enhances, updates and simplifies the widely used Home Office operational requirement document and aims to reduce technical jargon to enable procurement experts within organisations to have the ability to properly hold suppliers to account, where non-compliance of the surveillance camera code of practice is evident.

It has been designed with the help of industry experts and thoroughly tested and I am confident that it can make a real difference to how surveillance camera systems are planned, installed and operated.

Press release: Proposed return of further powers to Rotherham

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has announced plans to return a further 5 powers to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

It follows the [latest report](#) by the government-appointed Commissioner team that noted steady improvement by the council.

Commissioners have proposed that 5 functions, which include community safety and waste collection, be returned to the council.

This council has already regained 8 powers in the last 9 months.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The council is continuing to make progress under the watchful eye of our Commissioners. So I am now inviting representations from the council before making my final decision on returning these further powers.

Steady progress by the council

The Commissioner team, led by Mary Ney, who replaced Sir Derek Myers as Lead Commissioner in April 2017, outlined continuing improvements in her progress report of 18 May 2017.

Based on evidence in that report the Communities Secretary is considering handing back control of the following functions to the council:

- performance management in each of the council's service areas
- waste collection
- community safety which includes community cohesion and domestic violence
- human resources
- asset management including both land and property assets

To give further assurance to residents, the community safety service would be returned with enhanced oversight by the Commissioner team over services supporting victims of domestic violence. This would allow the relevant Commissioner to veto any Cabinet decision if they feel necessary.

Commissioners will retain executive decision making power over children's services, special allowances, and also the appointment and dismissal of any statutory officers. They will also continue to have oversight over all returned functions.

Commissioners with executive responsibilities at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council are:

- Lead Commissioner – Mary Ney
- Children’s Social Care Commissioner – Patricia Bradwell
- Supporting Commissioner – Julie Kenny CBE

The intervention is expected to end on 31 March 2019.

Press release: PM meeting with Estonian Prime Minister Ratas: 18 July 2017

The Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with the Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas today at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister said we are leaving the EU but we are not leaving Europe and we are determined to maintain close friendships with our allies like Estonia.

The Prime Minister welcomed Estonia taking over the EU Presidency and confirmed that the UK would work to support their agenda, including on digital initiatives, cyber security, tackling online extremism and addressing the migration crisis in the Mediterranean.

The Prime Minister provided an update on the constructive beginning to Brexit negotiations and confirmed that we look forward to reaching an agreement on citizens’ rights at the earliest possible stage.

Noting that the UK and Estonia both meet the NATO 2% spending commitment, both leaders agreed that our defence relationship is particularly strong, with 800 British troops deployed in Estonia as part of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence and British fighter jets policing airspace in the Baltics region.

Finally, turning to Russia, they agreed on the importance of maintaining the Ukraine sanctions until the Minsk Accord is implemented in full.

News story: Ineos is granted environmental permit for exploratory

borehole in South Yorkshire

The Environment Agency has granted an environmental permit to allow Ineos Upstream Ltd to drill an exploratory borehole at a site in South Yorkshire.

The 'Standard Rules' permit allows the company to carry out drilling and waste management to take core samples of the rock at Common Road, Harthill. It does not allow fracking.

Standard Rules permits include fixed rules and conditions that cover common, low-risk industrial activities including low-risk testing. They are issued to companies only after they demonstrate that they understand and can manage the risks to people and the environment.

If the firm wishes to carry out additional activities on the site in the future, such as full well testing or hydraulic fracturing, it must submit a bespoke permit application that is tailored to those activities.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

Our regulatory controls for onshore oil and gas are in place to protect people and the environment. Standard Rules permits are common across industry and maintain high levels of environmental protection. They do not allow companies to carry out fracking – this activity requires a bespoke permit application which would be subject to a site-specific environmental risk assessment and extensive public consultation.

As with all decisions on whether to issue environmental permits, we will assess a company's proposals to ensure they meet strict requirements. If an activity poses an unacceptable risk to the environment, the activity will not be permitted.

News story: Minister for Human Rights statement on Russian Supreme Court ruling

On 17 July 2017 Russia's Supreme Court rejected an appeal lodged by the Administrative Centre of the Russian branch of Jehovah's Witnesses against the Supreme Court decision of 20 April which had upheld a ruling categorising

them as “extremists”. The Russian government have made commitments to freedom of religion in international fora, including in the Council of Europe.

Following this decision, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Human Rights, said:

We are deeply concerned by the decision of Russia’s Supreme Court to reject the appeal of the Jehovah’s Witnesses against their labelling as “extremists”.

This ruling confirms the criminalisation of the peaceful worship of 175,000 Russian citizens and contravenes the right to religious freedom that is enshrined in the Russian Constitution.

The British government continues to call upon the Russian government to uphold its international commitment to this basic freedom.

Further information