

CCTV, Cameras and Smart Devices Policy

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Purpose

This policy sets out our position as Elizabeth Finn Homes on the use of CCTV and other recording devices, with specific reference to residents' bedrooms and private spaces.

It ensures that any use of surveillance:

- Is lawful, ethical, and proportionate
- Respects residents' rights to privacy and dignity
- Complies with regulatory, safeguarding, and data protection requirements
- Is subject to appropriate governance, oversight, and review

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Elizabeth Finn Homes residents
- Family members, representatives, and visitors
- Employees, volunteers, agency staff, and contractors
- Any third party seeking to install or operate recording devices within the home

Policy statement

We recognise that, in exceptional circumstances, the use of cameras in a resident's bedroom may be requested to support reassurance or safeguarding. However:

- Bedrooms are considered private spaces
- Cameras in bedrooms are not routine practice
- Covert surveillance is not permitted under any circumstances

All decisions must be demonstrably necessary, proportionate, transparent, and in the best interests of the resident.

Legal and regulatory framework

This policy is informed by, and must be read in conjunction with, the following legislation and regulatory guidance:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998 (Article 8 – Right to respect for private and family life)

In addition, we align our practice with guidance issued by the following regulatory bodies:

- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
Guidance on the use of surveillance, privacy, dignity, and person-centred care can be found at:
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/all-services/surveillance-cameras-care-homes>
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)
Guidance on data protection, CCTV, and video recording in care settings can be found at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/cctv-and-video-surveillance/>

Compliance with this framework is mandatory and subject to governance oversight, audit, and review.

Use of CCTV in communal areas

- CCTV may be used in communal areas (e.g. entrances, external car parks) for security and safety purposes.
- Clear signage must be displayed.
- CCTV must never be installed in bathrooms, toilets, or changing areas.

Cameras in residents' bedrooms

General position

We do not install or mandate cameras in residents' bedrooms. Any proposal to use a camera in a bedroom will only be considered where:

- There is a clearly articulated and documented rationale
- Risks cannot be mitigated through less intrusive measures
- Appropriate consent or best-interest decision-making is in place
- Senior management approval has been obtained

We may require CCTV to be switched off in defined circumstances, for example:

- During personal care
- Where dignity is compromised
- During safeguarding investigations

Consent

- Written, informed consent must be obtained from the resident where they have capacity.
- Consent must be voluntary, specific, time-limited, and subject to regular review.
- Residents retain the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Residents lacking capacity

Where a resident lacks capacity:

- A Mental Capacity Act best-interest decision must be completed
- The decision must evidence necessity, proportionality, and benefit
- Family members and relevant professionals must be consulted
- The decision must be formally documented and reviewed

Family-installed cameras and recording devices

Disclosure requirement

Families and representatives must formally declare any intention to install a camera or recording device in a resident's room.

No camera may be installed without the knowledge and agreement of us as Elizabeth Finn Homes.

Covert recording

- Covert or undisclosed recording by families or representatives is strictly prohibited.
- This includes hidden cameras, recording devices, or audio recording without agreement.

If covert recording is identified:

- Immediate action will be taken to address the breach
- Removal of the device may be required
- Safeguarding, HR, and legal advice will be sought as appropriate

Conditions of approval for family-installed cameras

Where a family-installed camera is approved:

- Written consent or best-interest documentation must be in place
- Audio recording is not permitted
- Camera positioning must minimise intrusion, protect dignity and be agreed by us as Elizabeth Finn Homes
- Other residents and communal areas must not be captured
- Staff and visitors must be informed
- Purpose, access, and review arrangements must be clearly agreed

Use, access, and storage of footage

- Footage constitutes personal data and must be processed lawfully and securely.
- Footage must only be used for the agreed purpose.
- Sharing footage publicly or on social media is not permitted.
- Cameras must not be used as a routine staff monitoring tool.
- Requests to use footage as part of investigations will be managed in line with HR, safeguarding, and data protection processes

Staff considerations

- Staff must be informed where cameras are in use.
- Staff retain the right to dignity, privacy, and fair treatment.
- Cameras must not replace appropriate staffing levels, supervision, or care planning.
- Any concerns regarding camera use must be escalated immediately.

Governance and assurance

Before any camera is permitted in a resident's bedroom, the following must be completed:

- Risk assessment
- Consent or best-interest decision
- Data protection considerations
- Senior management approval
- Defined review date

Compliance with this policy will be subject to internal audit and governance review.

Use of Voice-Activated Devices (e.g. Alexa) in Residents' Bedrooms

General position

We recognise that some residents choose to use voice-activated smart devices (such as Alexa) to support independence, wellbeing, and daily living.

These devices may be used in residents' bedrooms only where their use does not compromise privacy, dignity, or data protection requirements.

Recording and listening functions

Voice-activated devices are capable of:

- Continuous listening for "wake words"
- Recording and storing voice interactions

- Transmitting data to third-party servers (e.g. Amazon)

As such:

- Recording or audio-storage functions must not be used to monitor residents, staff, or visitors
- Devices must not be used as a covert recording tool
- Devices must not be used for safeguarding, supervision, or staff monitoring purposes

Consent and capacity

- Where a resident has capacity, they must give informed consent to the presence and use of a voice-activated device.
- Where a resident lacks capacity, a Mental Capacity Act best-interest decision must be completed, specifically considering:
 - The recording capabilities of the device
 - Risks to privacy and dignity
 - Whether less intrusive alternatives are available

Configuration and safeguards

Where voice-activated devices are in use: (i.e. Alexa and Alexa-type devices)

- Recording history should be reviewed and deleted regularly
- Unnecessary skills or features should be disabled
- Devices should not be positioned in a way that captures private care interactions where possible
- Staff must be made aware of the presence of such devices

Families and representatives must inform the home if a device has been installed or if settings enable recording or data storage.

Covert audio recording

The use of voice-activated devices to covertly record conversations is not permitted.

Any device found to be used for undisclosed or inappropriate recording may:

- Be required to be reconfigured or removed
- Trigger safeguarding, HR, or data protection review
- Be escalated in line with governance procedures

Governance position

Voice-activated devices:

- Do not replace appropriate care, supervision, or engagement
- Must be used transparently and ethically
- Must comply with data protection and human rights legislation

We will take a proportionate, resident-centred approach, balancing independence and innovation with privacy and dignity.

Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every three years
- Following any incident, complaint, or regulatory change

Summary

Our position is clear:

- Cameras in bedrooms are exceptional, not routine
- Covert recording is not acceptable
- Transparency, consent, dignity, and lawful practice are mandatory
- The resident's rights remain paramount at all times

Review date	Next Review Date
February 2026	February 2029