

Initial analysis of the 2022 Local Authority survey of the use of surveillance camera technology

In July 2022 the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner wrote to 354 councils asking them to complete a survey about their use of overt surveillance camera systems in public places¹. This short report is based on an initial analysis of responses to key questions in the survey from those Local Authorities (LAs) that submitted a return².

Of the 354 LAs that were canvassed, 143 (40%) responded.

The main focus of the following is on the use of cameras and equipment manufactured or supplied by surveillance companies about which there have been security or ethical concerns, and any due diligence undertaken with regard to security risks, modern slavery, forced labour or other unethical conduct.

A full analysis of the returns will be published in due course.

Headline findings

- Of those LAs that made returns, the majority did not know whether they were using cameras or equipment supplied by companies (outside the UK) about which they had any security or ethical concerns.
- In most instances the vast majority did not know: in car parks with NPR it was 96%, in care homes 96%, in community centres 90%, and 98% in traffic enforcement.
- In almost every case where LAs have identified the suppliers of camera equipment used in public spaces the chief supplier was Hikvision.
- Only 112 LAs provided an answer to the question about what due diligence they had undertaken to assure themselves that the companies with whom they were in surveillance partnership were not connected to modern slavery or posed a risk to national security.
- And of those 112 LAs all but five stated that this due diligence had been considered in the procurement process.
- More reassuring is that of the 143 replies, 130 (90%) indicated that they considered the cyber security of their equipment while three stated that they didn't (the remainder made no reply to the question).

¹ The Commissioner has a statutory function under section 29(2) of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA) to encourage compliance with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (SC Code) issued by the Secretary of State. The survey is part of his assessment of compliance with section 33(1) of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the SC Code.

² In previous years Commissioners have included the findings of these surveys within their Annual Reports but the current Commissioner wanted to publish the findings separately to highlight their importance. Owing to a lack of resource the Commissioner has not been able to carry out an assessment or publish findings in his desired timescale.

The Commissioner noted that “**While the rate of returns has been disappointing, the most alarming aspect of this survey is the extent to which Local Authorities do not appear to have the most basic information on what camera equipment they are using and whether they have any concerns about the security or human rights issues. Against a backdrop of increased public space surveillance and heightened levels of concern, it is difficult to see in what basis the public can have confidence in the deployment of cameras for which Local Authorities are responsible.**”

Camera Equipment³

The following tables only show data where there have been at least 10 positive responses.

Is your local authority using any cameras or equipment manufactured or supplied by surveillance companies outside the UK about which there have been any security or ethical concerns?

Town Centres

Town Centre	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
CCTV	63	44%	80 (56%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	31	22
Dahua	11	8
Redvision	2	1
Darkfighter	2	1
DSSL	1	1
Bosch	3	2
360 vision	5	4
Samsung	2	1

Community Libraries

Community Libraries	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
CCTV	20	14%	123 (86%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	13	9
Dahua	1	1

³ In some instances LAs use more than one manufacturer of cameras.

Redvision	0	0
Darkfighter	0	0
DSSL	0	0
Bosch	1	1
360 vision	1	1
Samsung	0	0
other/do not know	4	3

Car Parks (CCTV)

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Car Parks (CCTV)	14	10%	129 (90%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	12	9
Dahua	0	0
Redvision	0	0
Darkfighter	0	0
DSSL	0	0
Bosch	2	1
360 vision	1	1
Samsung	0	0
other/do not know	1	1
Pelco	1	1
Panasonic	1	1
Indigo	1	1

Town Hall

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Town Hall	19	13%	124 (87%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	13	9
Dahua	2	1
Bosch	1	1
360 vision	1	1
Indigo	1	1
Axis	1	1
Sony	1	1
not known	2	1

Housing

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Housing	10	7%	133 (90%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	7	5
Sony	1	1
other/do not know	1	1
Vipa UK	1	1

Community Centres

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Community Centres	10	7%	133 (90%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	4	3
Panasonic	1	1
do not know	5	4

Vehicles

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Vehicles	19	13%	130 (87%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	2	1
not known	17	12

Depots

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Depots	36	25%	107 (75%)

	Yes	% (of the
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		143 LA)
HikVision	18	13
Dahua	4	3
Xtralis	1	1
Vision 360	1	1
not known	10	7
Chromavision	1	1
SAC LTD	1	1
Security Services	1	1
Axis	1	1
"Various"	1	1

Leisure Centres

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Leisure centres	24	17%	119 (83%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	13	9%
Dahua	2	1%
Bosch	1	1%
not known	9	6%

Parks and Recreation

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Parks and recreation (CCTV/BMV)	31	22%	112 (78%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	14	10
360 vision	1	1
Samsung	1	1
Baydale	1	1
Dahua	2	1
Red vision	1	1
not known	11	8

Environment Enforcement

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
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Environment Enforcement (CCTV,BWV)	20	14%	123 (86%)
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	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	4	3
Audax	1	1
other	2	2
Indigo	1	2
no details	12	8

Fly tipping

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Fly tipping (CCTV/still cameras)	20	14%	123 (86%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	5	4
Wild view camera	1	1
Trail camera	1	1
Acorn wildlife	1	1
360 vision	1	1
Dahua	1	1
PC world	1	1
other	1	1
not known	8	6

Re-deployable CCTV

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Re-deployable CCTV (CCTV, drones, ANPR)	29	20%	114 (80%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	9	6
360 vision	2	1
not known	5	4

Videosoft	1	1
CA Traffic Evo 8	1	1
Dahau	4	3
Indigo	1	1
Defender wireless	1	1
WCCTV	3	2
vemotion	1	1
axis	1	1
DSSL	1	1
drones	1	1

Other

	Yes	% (of all 143 LA)	No/ No reply/do not know/N/A
Other (CCTV, ANPR)	17	12%	126 (88%)

	Yes	% (of the 143 LA)
HikVision	5	4
not known	6	4
360 vision	1	1
drone	2	1
Dahau	1	1
Jenoptik	2	1
Camerscan	1	1
Axis	1	1
WCCTV	1	1
CA Traffic Evo 8	1	1
CA Traffic Evo X	1	1
Tagmaster	1	1
CitySync	1	1
MIC-1	1	1

Due Diligence

What due diligence have you undertaken to assure yourselves that the companies with whom you are in surveillance partnership (including third-party operators, manufacturers, suppliers and installers) are in no way connected to activities that involve any element of modern slavery, forced labour or otherwise unethical conduct and/or pose a risk to national security?

- 31 local authorities (22%) replied with N/a, no reply or none (or similar).
- Of the 112 that gave an answer to this question, all but 5 (Brentwood, Gosport, Norwich, West Norwich, West Northants) stated that due diligence is considered or involved in their procurement/tendering process.

- At least one LA (Carmarthenshire) will no longer be purchasing Hikvision: *“Due to the current issues identified regarding certain CCTV manufacturers involved in modern slavery, forced labour and unethical conduct along with the digital security issues, the Council has decided not to purchase any further equipment from Hikvision and is considering whether to remove its existing Hikvision systems/cameras/software.”*

Cyber Security

Do you as an organisation consider the cyber security of your equipment?

130 replied that they did, three said no, and 10 made no reply. Various mitigations were mentioned by those who replied to this question. 76 LAs (58% of those responding positively) noted that they had a specific person or team involved or responsible for the mitigation. Four LAs carried mentioned use of regular audits.