

One surveillance camera for every 11 people in Britain, says CCTV survey

Britain has a CCTV camera for every 11 people, a security industry report disclosed, as privacy campaigners criticised the growth of the “surveillance state”.



The survey included all cameras in public and private areas, regardless of whether the images are recorded or watched “live” Photo: ALAMY

By David Barrett, Home Affairs Correspondent

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The British Security Industry Authority (BSIA) estimated there are up to 5.9 million closed-circuit television cameras in the country, including 750,000 in “sensitive locations” such as schools, hospitals and care homes.

The survey’s maximum estimate works out at one for every 11 people in the UK, although the BSIA said the most likely figure was 4.9 million cameras in total, or one for every 14 people.

Both projections were higher than previous estimates which ranged between 1.5 million and four million.

Simon Adcock, of the BSIA, said: “This study represents the most comprehensive and up to date study

undertaken into the number of CCTV cameras in use in the UK.

“Because there is no single reliable source of data no number can ever be held as truly accurate however the middle of our range suggests that there are around five million cameras.”

He added: “Effective CCTV schemes are an invaluable source of crime detection and evidence for the police. For example, in 2009 95 per cent of Scotland Yard murder cases used CCTV footage as evidence.”

But Nick Pickles, director of the privacy campaign Big Brother Watch, said: “This report is another stark reminder of how out of control our surveillance culture has become.

“With potentially more than five million CCTV cameras across country, including more than 300,000 cameras in schools, we are being monitored in a way that few people would recognise as a part of a healthy democratic society.

“This report should be a wake up call that in modern Britain there are people in positions of responsibility who seem to think ‘1984’ was an instruction manual.”

The survey included all cameras in public and private areas, regardless of whether the images are recorded or watched “live”.

It estimated there are between 291,000 and 373,000 cameras in public sector schools, plus a further 30,000 to 50,000 in independent schools.

Surgeries and health centres have an estimated 80,000 to 159,000, while there are believed to be between 53,000 and 159,000 cameras in restaurants, the report said.

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