

# Reality CCTV Check

## Part Two

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Please see <https://compassionincare.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Reality-CCTV-Check-Oct-2017.pdf> for our earlier work on these issue.

### Introduction

It is important to note that when we refer to CCTV, we are referring to CCTV installed in a care home by the company that owns the home.

Covert cameras installed by families in their relatives bedroom are an entirely different issue.

We must emphasise the difference between covert cameras and CCTV because of media headlines such as

“ *Elderly women’s abuse captured on CCTV*” when in fact its nearly always the case that it was a relatives covert camera that captured the abuse.

There has been a marked improvement in media reporting since our first report on this issue was published but there is still a great deal of work to be done.

Public perception as a result of flawed media reporting is that a high percentage of abuse has been captured on CCTV, when the reality is that only a tiny percentage of abuse is ever captured on CCTV. Most abuse has been captured on covert cameras owned by the family of the victim.

### Protecting the Abuser

A disturbing theme has emerged via our helpline data from care home whistlers (whistleblowers) regarding care homes who have installed CCTV.

Whistlers (whistleblowers) calling our helpline regarding widespread abuse in care homes have

included issues regarding the use of CCTV being relied upon by abusers as a means of defence.

Total helpline calls involving this issue over a two year period, 178

The following whistler testimonies have been fully anonymised.

*“I worked at the home a short while before I started to see the abuse, three staff were involved. These three staff punched people, pinched people and the verbal abuse was always whispered, always pure hate. I reported all the abuse I witnessed, I could not understand why nothing was done about it. I found out eventually that these abusive staff were relying on the CCTV to protect them. I felt sick, the abusive staff were always very careful in front of the CCTV, they would come across as so caring unless you knew what they did to people”*

*“ I saw this staff member (R) really punch people hard, pull peoples hair, tell them to hurry up and die. R was the trainer at the home, she trained all the new staff as she had all the qualifications. She would play up to the CCTV, really put on a good show. When R found out I had reported her she came right up to me and said that I could tell all the tales I liked as the Cameras don't lie and no one would believe me. I left after this, I could not bear to see the pain R inflicted every day.”*

*“ I know what I saw this staff member do, they really hurt defenceless people and got off on it. They physically assaulted people all the time. I reported it but doing that just made me the problem. The abusive staff member still works there because they used the CCTV to show what a good caring person they were, but out of sight of the cameras it was jekyll and Hyde”*

*“ when the home said it was going to install CCTV, I actually thought that was a great idea, what a bloody idiot I was to think that. An abusive staff member (T) came to work at the home and the bloody nightmare began. T was awful to the residents, she would taunt them but never in front of the CCTV, she would dig her nails into people and whisper awful things to them. T was very manipulative, she would put on a good show in front of the CCTV, be extra nice, do everything by the book and even pull up other staff if they cut any corners but out of sight of the cameras the mask dropped. I reported T but after a short investigation the allegations were not upheld. T said to me that the CCTV proved her innocent and that everyone thought I was a bloody liar”*

*“ There were a few residents that screamed a lot, not for any particular reason it was just because they had advanced dementia. The abusive staff member (A) would abuse all the residents but in front of the CCTV, (A) thought it was really funny to go up to those residents who screamed a lot and pinch them really hard and when they screamed (A) would play to the cameras and look like the poor care worker who was trying her best to care for really difficult people. When I reported (A) no action was taken because the CCTV only showed the good care worker, the cameras did not pick up the pinching. People did have bruises, but safeguarding did not want to know about that, (A) is still abusing people”*

*“ Now I know what the term, hiding in plain sight means. These two abusive staff knew how to perform for the cameras, the care these abusers delivered in front of the CCTV was called exceptional by those investigating my whistleblowing. What these abusers did to people in the toilets and bathrooms will stay with me for ever, they slapped people round their heads, I seen them pull one women's nails back with tweezers only far enough to cause extreme pain but leave no mark. They pulled one mans penis so hard he was sobbing, they called him a filthy piece of shit. Every shift I worked with them this kind of abuse was happening. I had to leave knowing that I could not*

*stop them. The CCTV protected them, that's not supposed to happen"*

### Summery

The above are just a few examples from many harrowing testimonies. It is quite clear that the most abusive staff are viewing CCTV, not as a deterrent but as a defender, a means to deceive should allegations be made. This is a real concern as power and complacency abusers cause the most harm.

Many of those investigating abuse do not have the skills, understanding or time to see beyond the obvious and this results in a lazy over reliance on CCTV footage.

CCTV does not stop abuse, it shifts the abuse to the darker corners of a care home. There are also many ways to abuse someone in front of a camera.

Anyone who has seen a power or complacency abuser operate first hand knows that CCTV will never stop abuse or abusers, but when CCTV is manipulated to protect these same abusers, there is clearly a real problem and meanwhile advocates of CCTV continue to cite CCTV as the way to fix all ills.

Eileen Chubb

