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Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998

The Data Protection Act governs the way in which organisations collect, process and store private data. There are eight key principles:

- Data should be processed fairly and lawfully.
- Personal data can only be obtained for clearly stated purposes.
- The amount of data collected and stored should not be more than required.
- Personal data should be accurate.
- Personal data should only be used for the purpose for which it was collected.
- Personal data should only be processed within the rights of the data subject.
- Personal data should be protected from theft or unlawful access.
- Personal data cannot be transferred to anywhere outside of the EU unless the country to which it is being transferred has the same level of legal protection for data as set by the DPA.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000

This Act covers the power of public bodies to carry out investigations and surveillance. This includes surveillance of communications.

Table 2.2 Types of surveillance

Type of power	Typical use
Interception of communication	Reading post, email or phone tapping
Use of communications data	Investigate the type of communication used but not its content
Directed surveillance	Following people
Covert human intelligence sources	Undercover agents, informants
Intrusive surveillance	Bugging houses, tracking devices on cars

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

This is a wide reaching Act that ranges from strengthening the Freedom of Information Act through to how DNA, fingerprints and footprints should be stored, handled and destroyed.

Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003

(amended 2011)

This Act governs the ways organisations can use electronic communications to contact customers. The core theme is privacy, including the right to be able to relax without interruption at home, so for example, not being bothered by unsolicited emails or phone calls.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

This Act provides the public with the 'right to access' information about the activities carried out by public authorities. As a general rule, the Act defines public authorities as organisations that are funded by the state. However, charities, for example,