

Step To Shelter Merseyside CIC Body-Worn Camera Policy

Reviewed Date: Friday 23rd October 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and procedures for the use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) by staff and volunteers of Step To Shelter Merseyside CIC. The use of BWCs is intended to:

- **Promote the safety of staff, volunteers, and service users**
- **Deter and document incidents of aggression, abuse, or criminal behaviour**
- **Support safeguarding and accountability**
- **Provide evidence for investigations or legal proceedings**

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers who are authorised to use body-worn cameras during the course of their duties. It covers the use, storage, access, and disclosure of recorded footage.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the following legislation and guidance:

- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**
- **Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (Home Office)**
- **Safeguarding legislation and best practice**

4. Principles of Use

- **BWCs will only be used where necessary and proportionate to the situation**
- **Recording must be overt (i.e. visible and with clear signage or verbal notification)**
- **Individuals must be informed when recording is taking place, unless it is unsafe or impractical to do so**
- **Recordings must not be used for surveillance or monitoring without lawful justification**

5. Activation and Deactivation

- **BWCs should be activated at the start of an incident or when a risk is identified**
- **Users must announce that recording is taking place where possible**
- **Recording must be stopped once the incident has concluded or the risk has passed**
- **Users must not edit, delete, or tamper with footage**

6. Data Storage and Retention

- All footage will be securely stored in an encrypted system
- Access to footage will be restricted to authorised personnel only
- Footage will be retained for a maximum of [Insert Retention Period, e.g. 30/60/90 days], unless required for investigation or legal purposes
- After the retention period, footage will be securely deleted

7. Access and Disclosure

- Individuals have the right to request access to footage in which they appear, subject to data protection laws
- Footage may be shared with law enforcement, safeguarding authorities, or legal representatives where necessary and lawful
- All disclosures must be logged and authorised by a senior manager or data protection lead

8. Training and Accountability

- All BWC users will receive training on lawful and appropriate use, including data protection and safeguarding
- Misuse of BWCs may result in disciplinary action
- Regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with this policy

9. Complaints and Concerns

Any concerns or complaints about the use of body-worn cameras should be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the organisation's Data Protection Officer. Complaints will be handled in line with our Complaints Policy.

10. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, technology, or operational needs.

Approval and Review

Approved by: Dylan Williams

Position: Head of Service

Date Approved: Friday 24th October 2025