


Britain To Put CCTV Cameras Inside Private Homes

- By Charlie Sorrel 
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As an ex-Brit, I'm well aware of the authorities' love of surveillance and snooping, but even I, a pessimistic cynic, am amazed by the governments latest plan: to install Orwell's telescreens in 20,000 homes.

£400 million (\$668 million) will be spend on installing and monitoring CCTV cameras in the homes of private citizens. Why? To make sure the kids are doing their homework, going to bed early and eating their vegetables. The scheme has, astonishingly, already been running in 2,000 family homes. The government's "children's secretary" Ed Balls is behind the plan, which is aimed at problem, antisocial families. The idea is that, if a child has a more stable home life, he or she will be less likely to stray into crime and drugs.

It gets worse. The government is also maintaining a private army, incredibly *not* called "Thought Police", which will "be sent round to carry out home checks," according to the Sunday Express. And in a scheme which firmly cements the nation's reputation as a "nanny state", the kids and their families will be forced to sign "behavior contracts" which will "set out parents' duties to ensure children behave and do their homework."

And remember, this is the left-wing government. The Shadow Home Secretary Chris Grayling, batting for the conservatives, thinks these plans are "too little, and too late," implying that even more obtrusive work needs to be done. Rumors that a new detention center, named Room 101, is being constructed inside the Ministry of Love are unconfirmed.

UPDATE: Further research shows that the Express didn't quite have all its facts straight. This scheme is active, and the numbers are fairly accurate (if estimated), but the mentions of actual cameras in people's homes are exaggerated. The truth is that the scheme can take the most troublesome families out of their homes and move them, temporarily, to a neutral, government-run compound. Here they will be under 24-hour *supervision*. CCTV cameras are not specifically mentioned, not are they denied, but 24-hour "supervision" certainly doesn't rule this out from the camera-loving Brits.

It remains, though, that this is still excessively intrusive into the private lives of citizens, cameras or not. I have added links to the source and also more reliable reports. Thanks to everyone who wrote in.

[Sin Bins for Worst Families](#) [Sunday Express. Thanks, Annaliza]

[Government calls for tough family intervention to prevent youth crime](#) [Home Office]

[Sadly not from the Onion](#) [Metafilter]

[Family Intervention](#) [Home Office/Respect.gov]

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<http://www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2009/08/britain-to-put-cctv-cameras-inside-private-homes/>