References

These are some of the key policies that Big Brother Watch will be campaigning for in the coming years. Electronic copies of our research papers referred to in this manifesto are available at http://bigbrotherwatch.typepad.com/home/research.html.

1. Database State, Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, March 2009
2. It's Ours, Liam Maxwell, Centre for Policy Studies, June 2009
4. AF, AN, AM and AE v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2009] UKHL 28
5. Barging In, Big Brother Watch, December 2009
6. Big Brother is Watching, Big Brother Watch, December 2009
7. Gillan and Quinton v the United Kingdom, European Court of Human Rights, January 2010
8. Lifting the Lid, Big Brother Watch, March 2010
9. Broken Records, Big Brother Watch, March 2010
10. Cataloguing the Innocent, Big Brother Watch, April 2010
First year

Within 3 months

- Scrap ContactPoint
  A dangerously insecure database of every British child’s most personal details; with no opt out.

- Any official forcing entry to a home must have a warrant
  Power of entry to private property needs careful regulation to prevent abuse.

- Scrap the Independent Safeguarding Authority
  An unnecessary, overly powerful body which is destroying volunteerism in this country and harming childhood.

- End the intercept modernisation programme
  Stop any schemes intended to monitor and log our internet and phone use.

- End use of Detailed and Summary Care Records (the “spine”)
  Too many people have power to access and alter confidential medical records in the NHS.

- A significant reduction in the number of people entitled to enter private property and powers which allow council officials to enter the home
  There are at present too many laws affording too many council inspectors the ability to enter private property and these powers need significant reform.

- End the roll-out of full-body scanners at UK airports, and allow alternative forms of search for those who choose it
  There are privacy, health, and religious concerns about scanners, which effectively give strangers the ability to see people naked.

- Work to abolish the European Public Prosecutor, or exempt UK citizens from his remit
  The Lisbon Treaty introduced a Public Prosecutor for Europe. The post is without any real mandate and, even leaving aside sovereignty issues, it threatens our liberty and freedoms. The sooner it is challenged, the easier it will be to stop it.

- Introduce far greater control over confidential medical records, limiting number of non-medical personnel with access
  Privacy over our health records is vitally important, but they are guarded more poorly than most databases and access to them is currently all but unrestricted within the NHS.

- Ensuring EU police databases are secure
  Over the next Parliament significant efforts must be made to ensure that sensitive information about UK citizens is not leaked by authorities in European countries, who are due to have access to our police records. Any such access should require a warrant.

- A commitment to ensure that any new DNA database is subject to the same scrutiny as the National DNA Database
  The Government must ensure that the genetic profile of a non-convicted innocent person is not held, and that the database is free from misuse.

- No restart for random stop and search
  The European Court ruled Britain’s random stop and search regime unlawful. Anti-terrorism stop and search powers should only be used when there is evidence of a specific terrorist threat.

- A commitment to introduce no new large state databases and greater checks on data sharing within government
  The recipient of public services should be at the centre of IT design not, as is currently, viewed as a passive end user.

- An end to Control Orders
  Imprisonment or infringement of freedom of movement without trial is wrong. Rather than wait as these cases are lost one by one, control orders should be abandoned.

- Introduce procedures for the removal of the DNA profiles of innocent people
  Adoption of the Scottish method of DNA retention, which periodically deletes profiles of those not convicted of a crime.

- Remove the power to issue “on-the-spot” fines from council wardens
  Council litter wardens do not have the training or respect to penalise members of the public without proper evidence.

- Stop the transfer of police powers to private security firms and council wardens
  Private security firms and members of the public empowered through the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme do not have the vetting or respect afforded to professional officers.

- Strengthen the Freedom of Information Act
  Impose sanctions for unwarranted delays, remove the time limit on prosecution for breaches, and provide proper resources for the Information Commissioner’s Office.

- A European Freedom of Information Act and Data Freedom Act
  So we can know more about what the European Parliament is doing and know what the EU has on file about us.

- Requirement for local councils to have a public consultation process before installing any new CCTV system
  There’s been no debate on the expansion of CCTV, despite flaws in its ability to stop or solve crimes. Residents should have a choice – do they want money spent on cameras, or something else instead?

- End the obligation on Internet Service Providers and Telephone Companies to retain information on subscribers and supply it to government
  Anti-file-sharing measures are disproportionate and should be stopped, and people should only be tracked via their telephones with a warrant.

- A commitment to not introduce “pay-as-you-throw” legislation, opening the door for the activation of bin microchips
  Local councils should not have the means with which to monitor and variably charge for household waste.

- Any Council use of RIPA to require a Councillor’s sign off
  Some element of elected accountability should exist in the process of allowing local council officials to conduct covert surveillance.

- End the use of RIPA except for imprisoned offences
  Would eliminate the most egregious use of surveillance powers, e.g. for leaving dustbins out on the wrong day, or school catchment area claims, whilst allowing monitoring of benefit fraud or fly-tipping.

- Oblige councils and regulators to tell innocent people that they were under surveillance
  It would change the whole culture of RIPA surveillance if those conducting it knew that their actions would have to be justified to their victims.

- Reform the e-Borders Programme
  The enormous state database cataloguing the fingerprints and supra-national movements of every person that enters or leaves the UK should be significantly reformed, with access to it limited. Mass data sharing should also be stopped.

- Bring far greater transparency to the ANPR system
  There is widespread distrust of the technology used to record the numberplates of vehicles in this country, which generates significant revenue for the state. Parliament should legislate to curb and control its use.

We are grateful to No2ID and Privacy International for their thoughts, kindly given in the drafting of this manifesto.