

Summary of substantive policy discussions
at Liberty Council meeting
June 2012

Draft Communications Data Bill/ “Snoopers’ Charter”

Liberty’s Policy Director introduced a discussion on the Government’s Draft Communications Data Bill intended to extend the collection and retention of communications data (the where, how, when, who of every email, phone call, text message etc). The meeting discussed Liberty’s policy ‘red lines’; alternative policies that Liberty could promote; the best arguments that Liberty could use to convey concerns to different audiences.

An engaged and thorough discussion took place where it was agreed that Liberty would oppose the Bill outright. In so doing Liberty would highlight: the deeply personal nature of the information that will be stored; the contentious nature of the present EU Communications Data retention framework; the threat the Bill poses to encryption and online security that may have unintended consequences for the banking and other industries as well as for legal professional privilege; the implications for commercial communications service providers that would be required to retain additional and communications data and effectively spy on their customers; the adverse security implications of retaining extensive additional data; the consequential cost to the public purse of the project.

Additionally the meeting discussed the possibility of a legal challenge under Article 8 of the HRA and comparative research on retention in other jurisdictions.