![bsia logo](british security industry association)

A guide to **Access Control** in **care homes**

What is access control?

Access control provides the ability to control, monitor and restrict the movement of people, assets, or vehicles in, out and around a building or site.

Access control is essential in the protection of people and assets and has the additional benefit of being expanded from controlling, for example, a single entrance door to a large integrated security network.

There are also huge potentials in terms of integrating access control with other systems, such as CCTV and intruder alarms, allowing for cost savings and greater security benefits.

What risks do care homes face and how can these be countered by access control?

Care homes face a number of risks including opportunists looking to steal personal possessions from residents or valuable healthcare equipment kept on-site, not to mention the entry of unauthorised visitors or the risk of vulnerable residents leaving an area without adequate supervision.

Recently, the BSIA carried out a survey of its Access and Asset Protection section members to discover the trends in care home security over the last year. 60% of respondents felt that the use of private security measures by the care sector had increased over the last twelve months, with a further 60% anticipating that it would increase further over the course of the next year.

In terms of the biggest threats facing care homes, 80% of respondents perceived the well-being of residents to be the most important consideration, with one respondent commenting that "managing access is high on the agenda for care homes" in order to minimise the risks of vulnerable patients wandering into unsecured areas. The threat of intruders was also identified as the second biggest threat.

Patient safety and well-being has, and will continue to be, a primary focus in the care home sector, with 100% of survey respondents revealing that the awareness of duty of care among care home management has increased over the past year. Access control systems can play a fundamental part in ensuring a high standard of care.

Designed to permit access only to people with the necessary authority to enter a particular area, these systems ensure that people and their possessions are protected, whilst helping to manage known or anticipated threats.

Generally, systems are comprised of three main components:

1. The physical barrier – to physically restrict access to a building or area. This can be achieved through methods such as:

    * Doors – secured by either a magnetic or strike lock, or can be revolving or sliding.
    * Turnstiles and speedgates – designed to limit access to one person per identification device.

2. The identification device – there are a number of different technologies available to identify users of an access control system, including:

    * A proximity card and reader via Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) – these cards can be programmed to work at a short or long read range.
    * A smart card and reader.
    * A swipe card and reader.
    * PIN pads.
    * Biometric devices such as fingerprint or iris scanning.

3. The door controller and software – these are at the heart of the access control system and are used to decide who can gain access through which entry point and at what time of the day are they permitted. These can vary depending on the size of the system and how many readers or sites you are trying to control from one point. Some of the options include:

    * A stand-alone door controller linked to a single door with no software.
    * A number of door controllers all linked together to a single PC to control one site.
    * A number of sites all interlinked together over a wide network area.

■ The added benefits of access control

Access control systems can offer a wide range of benefits, including Human Resource management and integrated security systems.

Time and attendance

Patients at care homes often require round-the-clock assistance, meaning that staff are required to work varied shift patterns throughout the week, not to mention the need for access of regular visitors and medical delivery services. As such, access control systems can be a valuable asset when it comes to staff management.

Badge/token technology can be used to record employee hours and monitor visitor movement within a specific site. If appropriate, these can be processed against working hours, applicable for both temporary and permanent staff. This can work in real time to feed transactions through to the company's payroll. Time and attendance systems also accurately help keep employers on the right side of the European Working Time regulations and manage holidays and absences effectively.

Fire roll call

Health and safety is a key consideration for any care home. Since care homes employ multiple staff members with varying shift patterns and welcome numerous visitors throughout the day, it can be difficult to keep track of all employees and visitors during an emergency. Fire roll technology generates a report containing crucial information in relation to who is within the building and potentially where they are. This software operates via the access control smart card or fob that an employee uses to gain access to or exit a building. In the event of an emergency, the fire roll-call software alerts occupants to the emergency whilst simultaneously activating the report at a safe pre-determined remote point.

Please note: In order for the roll call software to effectively carry out its function, employees and visitors must always present their card or badge. The use of smart card or RFID controlled turnstiles can help in this situation.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition

To monitor the movement of vehicles around an area, CCTV-style cameras and computer software can be used to identify number plates of vehicles. Some systems can also store photographs of the driver and vehicle for subsequent analysis. This sophisticated software allows critical information to be passed on to the police to assist in the pursuit, identification and capture of offenders should an incident occur. For example, if a thief flees the scene of a crime via a vehicle, ANPR cameras situated around an area could help identify the criminal. ANPR systems can also be useful in the case of unauthorised parking at a care home. Visual proof of parking offences with the corresponding time and date information is provided as evidence and to avoid disputes. Using a Drive and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) link, monitors are then able to identify the owner of a vehicle and process the offence automatically.

Integrated security systems

For maximum security, care home environments can benefit from a fully integrated access control system with CCTV, intruder alarms, fire detection and building management systems. One way to attain this is by adopting the use of Internet Protocol (IP) technology, which allows these systems to communicate with each other to maximise their effectiveness. Separate access control and intruder alarm systems, for example, could allow an employee to access an area that is set with an alarm.

However, unless the employee has the authority to unset the system, the access would result in a false alarm being activated – potentially causing panic to residents. An effectively integrated system would recognise that the user does not have the authority to unset the system, so would not allow them in the area to begin with.

■ Case studies

Securing nursing homes in Piteå, Sweden – Kaba

BSIA member Kaba identified that a key issue facing many care homes was whether or not they should lock their doors at night. The dilemma was that care homes do not want to lock people in against their will, yet at the same time, would like the option of locking doors for security reasons. After trying out numerous solutions, Piteå Municipality, in the north of Sweden, found a solution that offered their homes a safe and humane option, provided by Kaba.

Kaba's access control solution is based on a portable transmitter, in the form of a key fob or card holder, which uses the natural static electricity generated by the human body to transfer the signal to a sensor in the door handle. Such technology, developed by Kaba themselves, is known as Resistive Capacitive Identification (RCID). Users are given a badge to keep in their pocket or wear around the neck; as a result, they simply need to touch the door handle to open the door. The door handle is also designed so that the door can always be opened from the inside.

Each door is programmed separately, ensuring that residents can only open their own door, and not someone else's, avoiding the issues that typically arise when residents go through the wrong door. This also adds additional security benefits for any resident concerned about their personal belongings going missing.

> " At our home, most residents can't remember which door is theirs, so they go from door to door using trial and error. The new system stops them from entering the wrong apartment, which avoids the type of conflict that can so easily happen. That's the most significant benefit for us."
> Elisabeth Lundqvist, Manager of Munkberga nursing home which specialises in caring for dementia patients.

Kaba's systems have been finding success so far, with Munkberga nursing home installing the system in all of its 40 apartments. Similarly, Österbo residential and nursing home increased the number of system units from 9 to 20 over the summer last year.

Providing simple solutions in the Netherlands – Kaba

Kaba has also been finding success with its access control solutions at Pius care home in Hoensbroek, Netherlands. Built in 1982, the care home provides accommodation for 100 people. Undergoing renovations in early 2012, the owners decided it was the perfect opportunity to install new access control systems provided by Kaba.

The new system combined RCID technology on individual doors, along with another system on the main and associated entrances, meaning residents had unrestricted access to permitted areas and residential units and private areas could be kept secure. Associates and family members of the residents were also given access cards to open the doors.

Alongside the protection of residential rooms, medicine cabinets were also fitted with digital systems to prevent any misuse of substances.

The high level of convenience, combined with optimum security, has been well received at Pius with residents and associates particularly praising the ease of use.

Managing time and attendance at West Sussex Housing Society Ltd – Tensor plc

West Sussex Housing Society Ltd operate two highly rated homes in Worthing and Southwick, providing long term care, short stay, convalescence and respite care.

In 2005, the Director and management committee were exploring ways to improve the management of staff attendance recording at the two homes. In particular, they were looking to modernise their payroll and time and attendance system. A key requirement of the system was that it needed to reduce the paperwork involved in calculating the hours worked by employees, along with reducing calculation errors involved in the existing manual process.

After reviewing numerous options, the housing society decided to install an advanced, yet affordable and reliable system, provided by BSIA

member company Tensor plc. The new system combined biometric fingerprint reading units with high-end clocking stations that communicated over their IP network back to the PC infrastructure.

The first smart card and biometric time and attendance system was installed in late 2005, with a second one being implemented some time afterwards. No problems were encountered with the installation of either the hardware or the software, with managers receiving basic on-site training to become familiarised with the new system.

" Denise Waller, Manager of Rosemary Mount Residential Care Home in Worthing praised the new system for being "simple and easy to use."

Cost effective solutions for Forest Care – Tensor plc

Forest Care, a family owned and managed business, provides high quality care and accommodation to the elderly.

The Director of Forest Care was looking to replace the existing time and attendance system in place at the homes with a new system that would achieve greater cost-effectiveness. They were also looking for a supplier that would provide better support than they were currently receiving from their existing supplier.

After assessing the options, Forest Care chose an affordable and reliable enterprise-oriented time and attendance system provided by BSIA member Tensor plc. The new system used smart card badges which are connected to an advanced clocking station, and has been installed in each of Forest Care's three homes.

> " Tensor plc was willing to provide a cost-effective, easy to use system for each of our homes, and they had good after-sales support."
> Mark Vickery, Director of Forest Care

What else should you know when considering access control?

An initial risk assessment of an area can determine the level of security required and subsequently influence the access control system you choose. BSIA access control members and professional security consultancies can assist with this.

BSIA members are subject to rigorous checks before they are admitted into membership, meaning that you are selecting a quality company. Below are just some of the reasons why BSIA members can offer you peace of mind:

- They are independently inspected to the quality standard ISO 9001 with a UKAS accredited inspectorate.
- They comply with relevant British and European Standards and codes of practice.
- Are financially sound.
- Professional.
- Staff vetting has been conducted where necessary.
- They are technically proficient and committed to quality training and development.
- They are up-to-date with the latest developments in British and European policy and legislation.

What legislation should you be aware of?

The Disability Discrimination Act was amended in 2005 and has a significant impact not only in terms of the design of new systems, but also means that many systems may need to be upgraded to ensure compliance and adequate, user friendly access to the building for all staff and visitors. The BSIA has created a guide to help design access control systems following the introduction of these revisions, which can be downloaded by **clicking here.**

Other considerations to be aware of:

- National minimum care standards
- Health and Safety at Work Act
- Occupiers Liability Act
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

Where can I go for further information?

For more information on the work of the BSIA Access and Asset Protection Section, visit **www.bsia.co.uk/sections/access-asset-protection**

To find an access control provider in your area, visit **www.bsia.co.uk/find-a-security-company**