Police use of live facial recognition technology – have your say

Published on 17 May 2021

Public consultation on national guidance launched

Consultation   2 mins read

The College of Policing is seeking views from members of the public on new national guidance which will set consistent standards around how police forces in England and Wales use live facial recognition technology.

Our public consultation, which closes on 27 June, forms part of the process to develop new Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on the use of the technology.

Live facial recognition (LFR) technology allows people who are sought by police to be found by comparing live camera feeds of faces against a pre-determined watch list.

It can be used in a number of different scenarios and to date has been deployed at sporting events, music concerts, public gatherings and protests. Police use specialist LFR cameras to help locate people who are suspected of committing criminal offences, are wanted by the courts or are vulnerable, such as missing people.

When the technology identifies a possible match to a person of interest it generates an alert which is sent to police and this allows them to deploy officers and staff in real time to carry out further investigations.

> *Live facial recognition technology can be a valuable policing tool to help forces keep the public safe by preventing and detecting crime and by bringing offenders to justice.*
>
> *Our national guidance aims to ensure forces are taking a consistent approach when it comes to the overt use of this technology, ensuring it is necessary and proportionate and is used within a clear legal and ethical framework.*

We also want to reassure members of the public about how police will use this technology and the safeguards, policies and governance arrangements which police must have in place.

To ensure our draft guidance is as comprehensive as possible we want to hear the views of the public, policing organisations and other stakeholders from across England and Wales.

David Tucker, crime lead, College of Policing

Live facial recognition technology has previously been used by a small number of police forces as a tactic to prevent crime and keep people safe. Following a judicial review, and subsequent appeal, on policing use of the tactic the Court of Appeal found there was a sufficient legislative framework to cover policing use of LFR.

However, the court identified a number of issues which need to be addressed, so the College of Policing, the Home Office and policing experts developed the current draft APP to provide consistent guidance on the use of LFR for police forces across England and Wales.

It will also be available for adoption by other police forces and law enforcement agencies.

Chief officers will need to establish a suite of policy and operational documents, in line with this APP, detailing the framework for operating LFR in their force and the standard operating procedures that will be employed.

Consultation closed

Thank you to all of those who provided feedback.

Tags

Digital intelligence and investigation   APP   Consultations

Related resources

- **Live facial recognition – APP consultation (pdf) 697.9 KB**

- **Live facial recognition – questionnaire (docx) 136.92 KB**