

Ethical use of data and technologies guidance – have your say

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We're consulting on new guidance for data ethics and data driven technologies in policing

Consultation 3 mins read

Advances in technology mean we can be more effective, efficient, and deliver a better service to the public. Automatic number plate recognition and live facial recognition are already used to support officers to detect and investigate crime.

We want to be able to use the latest technology, like automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to:

- investigate and prevent crime
- protect the public
- free up officers' time by cutting administration

If we are using technology, the public must have trust and confidence that we are doing this for the right reasons. That means using it in a consistent, ethical, and lawful way that supports us to catch criminals and keep people safe. We also need to be transparent about how we are using it.

In January, we released our new [Code of Ethics](#), which has renewed interest in how data is collected, stored, and used by the police. It follows the [new national standards for police information management](#) and the National Police Chiefs' Council's [science and technology strategy](#).

We're building on the work in this area by seeking feedback on two new authorised professional practices (APP) on data ethics and data-driven technologies.

Data ethics

Data ethics helps identify and manage ethical issues or decisions from the beginning of any process that uses data. The data ethics principles focus on:

- the safety and wellbeing of the public
- technology supporting decision making
- high standards of respect and dignity towards individuals and groups
- operating with fairness and impartiality
- using scientific and technological advancements to improve the criminal justice system
- procedures based on robust evidence
- clear criteria to guide the commissioning or procuring of supporting technology
- accountability and the evaluation of procedures by an independent body
- introducing transparency and proportionality in the processing of personal data

The responsible and ethical use of data protects the privacy and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Our data ethics APP provides forces with guidance on collecting, storing, sharing and processing data.

Data-driven technologies

Data-driven technologies can support policing to make timely, effective and efficient decisions. This helps to reduce crime and keep people safe.

Our data-driven technologies APP ensures consistency when introducing technology that processes data, supporting innovation whilst striking a balance with the needs of operational policing. It includes:

- how to understand the problem and consider if data-driven technology is the appropriate solution
- processes for the fair and effective use of data-driven technology
- the relevant legislation for data-driven technologies so that forces understand their obligations
- training and resource considerations

We can make huge gains in productivity by turning to technology so that we can spot crime trends without officers having to trawl through thousands of pieces of data.

Using data-driven insights and innovation will mean officers can make their organisations more efficient and effective so that more time can be spent on front-line policing to keep the public safe.

Chief Constable, Sir Andy Marsh

Consultation closed

Our consultation closed at 11:59am on 11 October 2024.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback.

Consultation documents

- [Read the data ethics APP consultation](#)
- [Read the data-driven technologies APP consultation](#)

Although many aspects of this APP and associated links are publicly accessible, some areas are restricted. This is due to GDPR requirements or the sensitivity of the information. Links to those sections will be restricted only to police forces and government agencies.

Tags

Digital intelligence and investigation