

20<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 22.009473**

**REQUEST**

**Questions 1-6 relate to the period January 2022-January 2023.**

- 1. Has South Yorkshire Police deployed live facial recognition?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each deployment.**
- 2. Has South Yorkshire Police used any form of retrospective facial recognition?**
  - a. If so, please provide the dates and locations at which the images or footage was obtained.**
- 3. Has South Yorkshire Police deployed operator initiated facial recognition?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each deployment.**
- 4. Has South Yorkshire Police deployed any type of facial recognition in conjunction with body-worn video?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each deployment.**
- 5. Where live facial recognition has been used:**
  - a. How many images were on the watch list used in each instance?**
  - b. From where were these images taken?**
  - c. How many of those on the watch list were not wanted for arrest in each instance?**
    - i. For what other reasons were these people included?**
- 6. At each deployment, how many alerts were generated?**
  - a. How many times did police officers consider the match sufficiently credible to stop individuals and perform an identity check?**
  - b. Following an identity check, how many stops were verified as correct matches?**

**Questions 7-10 relate to the period from February 2023 onwards.**

- 7. Does South Yorkshire Police plan to deploy live facial recognition?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each known planned deployment.**
- 8. Does South Yorkshire Police plan to use retrospective facial recognition?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each known planned deployment.**
- 9. Does South Yorkshire Police plan to deploy operator initiated facial recognition?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each known planned deployment.**
- 10. Does South Yorkshire Police plan to deploy any type of facial recognition in conjunction with body-worn video?**
  - a. If so, please provide dates and locations for each known planned deployment.**

## **RESPONSE**

South Yorkshire Police's response is as follows:

Q1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9 – We do not use facial recognition- No Information Held.

Q4-10 – No plans. No Information Held

In addition for Q4 and Q10 in regard to any Covert use please see the following partial NCND statement below.

South Yorkshire Police can neither confirm nor deny that we hold any further information relevant to this request by virtue of the following exemptions:

### **Section 24(2) National Security**

### **Section 31(3) Law enforcement**

Section 24 and Section 31 are both qualified exemptions and as such there is a requirement to evidence any harm that confirming or denying that any other information is held, in addition to considering the public interest.

### **Harm in confirming that information is held**

Any disclosure under FOI is a release to the public at large. Confirming or denying that any other information relating to the practise of facial recognition would show criminals what the capacity, tactical abilities and capabilities of the force are, allowing them to target specific areas of the UK to conduct their criminal/terrorist activities. Confirming or denying the specific circumstances in which the Police Service may or may not deploy the use of facial recognition would lead to an increase of harm to investigations and compromise law enforcement. This would be to the detriment of providing an efficient policing service and a failure in providing a duty of care to all members of the public.

### **Public Interest Test**

#### **Section 24 - Factors favouring confirming or denying that any other information is held**

Confirming or denying that any other information exists relevant to the request would lead to a better informed public and the public are entitled to know how public funds are spent.

#### **Section 24 - Factors against confirmation or denying that any other information is held**

Confirming or denying whether any information is or isn't held relating to the use of facial recognition technology would limit operational capabilities as criminals/terrorist would gain a greater understanding of the police's methods and techniques, enabling offenders to take steps to counter them.

It may also suggest the limitations of police capabilities in this area, which may further encourage criminal/terrorist activity by exposing potential vulnerabilities.

#### **Section 31 – Factors favouring confirming or denying that any other information is held**

Confirming or denying whether any further information is held would allow the public to see where public funds have been spent and allow the Police service to appear more open and transparent.

## **Section 31 - Factors against confirmation or denying that any other information is held**

By confirming or denying whether any further information is held would mean that law enforcement tactics would be compromised which would hinder the prevention and detection of crime. This may lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infra-structure on the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Security arrangements and tactics are re-used and have been monitored by criminal groups, fixated individuals and terrorists. These security arrangements and tactics would need to be reviewed which would require more resources and would add to the cost to the public purse.

### **Balancing Test**

The Police Service is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. The security of the country is of paramount importance and the Police Service will not divulge whether any other information is or is not held if to do so would place the safety of an individual at risk or undermine National Security.

This detrimental effect is increased if the request is made to several different law enforcement bodies. In addition to the local criminal fraternity now being better informed, those intent on organised crime throughout the UK will be able to 'map' where the use of certain tactics are or are not deployed. This can be use information to those committing crimes. It would have the likelihood of identifying location-specific operations which would ultimately compromise police tactics, operations and future prosecutions as criminals could counteract the measures used against them.

Any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists or criminal organisations. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these activities will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both National Security and Law Enforcement.

It is therefore my opinion that for these issues the balancing test for confirming or not that any further information is held, is not made out.