GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

Date: 20/10/2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017577/F

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017577/F

I write in connection with your request for information dated 03/09/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am seeking information about databases or intelligence systems used by Greater Manchester Police to identify individuals as being associated with gangs, organised crime groups, or similar groups, and whether information from such systems is used in relation to Live Facial Recognition (LFR).

For the avoidance of doubt, I am using "gang" broadly in this request and am not asking GMP to classify any particular database using that terminology. I am interested in any system which performs the function of recording or identifying individuals as members of, associates of, or otherwise linked to gangs, organised crime groups, or similar groups.

Please could you provide:
1. Does GMP currently maintain any database, intelligence database, intelligence system, or other formal recording system which records or identifies individuals as:
o members of gangs;
o associates of gangs;
o members of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs);
o associates of OCGs; or
o otherwise linked to gangs or organised crime groups?

2. For each relevant system, please provide its current name and the relevant policy, guidance or documentation describing its purpose.

3. Is information contained within any of these systems used to determine who may be included on a Live Facial Recognition (LFR) watchlist?

4. If such information is used in relation to LFR, please state whether an individual can be included on an LFR watchlist on the basis of their recorded association with a gang or OCG, or whether additional criteria must be satisfied.

5. Please provide any current policy, guidance, Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), Appropriate Policy Document (APD), or other document which explains the criteria for selecting individuals for LFR watchlists and the sources of information used to make those selections.

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm some of the information requested is held by GMP.

However, I am not obliged to supply all of the information you have requested as an exemption applies.

When refusing to provide such information because an exemption applies, Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires GMP, to provide you - the applicant - with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

Questions 2 and 5 are exempt under **Section 21 – Information accessible to applicant by other means**. The response to this request is available online. Please follow the link to the LFR polices below.

Live Facial Recognition | Greater Manchester Police

Search - lfr | Greater Manchester Police

For question 2 - Agency and partner management information system (APMIS) - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Question 1.
Yes.

In addition, Greater Manchester Police can neither confirm nor deny that is holds the information you requested as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply, by virtue of the following exemptions:

NCND Section 31 (3) – Law Enforcement has been applied to questions 3 and 4 of this request.

Harm

A confirmation would indicate that this category of intelligence informs watchlist creation and/or reveal the criteria, thresholds, or decision-making factors applied when determining inclusion on an LFR watchlist. Conversely, a denial would reveal that such information plays no part in the assessment process.

Either response would provide valuable insight into how GMP identifies, assesses, and prioritises subjects for LFR deployments. This would disclose aspects of operational tactics, watchlist methodology, and the nature of the intelligence considered relevant to such deployments. Individuals intent on avoiding police attention could use this information to better understand the factors that may influence their inclusion on a watchlist and adjust their behaviour accordingly to reduce the likelihood of being identified or targeted through law enforcement activity.

The effectiveness of LFR technology relies, in part, on preventing those who may seek to evade detection from understanding precisely how individuals are selected for inclusion on watchlists. Disclosure through either confirmation or denial would incrementally enhance knowledge of GMP's operational capabilities and decision-making processes. Whilst any single disclosure may appear limited in isolation, when combined with other information already in the public domain, it could contribute towards a more complete picture of policing tactics and enable criminals to take steps to frustrate the prevention and detection of crime.

Furthermore, confirming or denying the existence of such arrangements could undermine future and ongoing law enforcement operations by revealing information which would assist those seeking to evade detection, apprehension, or prosecution. This would be likely to prejudice GMP's ability to prevent and detect crime and bring offenders to justice.

Factors Favouring Confirmation or Denial

Confirming or denying whether information held within the specified systems is used when determining inclusion on an LFR watchlist would promote openness and transparency regarding the use of LFR technology. Disclosure could assist public understanding of the safeguards, governance arrangements, and decision-making processes associated with the deployment of facial recognition technology, thereby increasing public confidence that such technology is being used appropriately and proportionately.

There is also a recognised public interest in understanding how policing powers and technologies are utilised, particularly where they involve the processing of personal information and potentially impact upon members of the public.

Factors Favouring Neither Confirming Nor Denying

There is a very strong public interest in protecting information that would compromise the effectiveness of law enforcement tactics and capabilities. Confirming or denying whether specific intelligence sources, systems, associations, or criteria are considered when creating LFR watchlists would reveal information about GMP's operational methodology and decision-making processes. Such knowledge would be of value to those seeking to avoid detection and could be used to circumvent policing activity.

The public has a significant interest in ensuring that GMP is able to deploy effective tactics to prevent and detect crime, protect the public, and bring offenders to justice. Releasing information that would assist individuals in understanding, identifying, or exploiting the criteria applied to LFR watchlist creation would be likely to prejudice those aims.

Neither confirming nor denying the information also prevents the gradual disclosure of operational capabilities through the so-called "mosaic effect", whereby seemingly innocuous pieces of information are combined to reveal sensitive policing tactics, methodologies, and areas of focus.

Balance Test

Whilst GMP recognises the public interest in transparency and accountability regarding the use of Live Facial Recognition technology, there is a considerably stronger public interest in ensuring that information which could undermine law enforcement activity is not disclosed. Confirming or denying the information requested would reveal operationally sensitive information relating to the assessment and selection of individuals for LFR watchlists and could assist those seeking to evade detection or frustrate police activity. GMP has therefore concluded that the public interest in maintaining neither confirm nor deny position outweighs the public interest in confirmation or denial, and Section 31(3) is engaged for these questions.