

Friday, 28 August 2026
Our ref: 01/FOI/26/017464/X

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: 01/FOI/26/017464/X

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14/08/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

This request pertains to a Greater Manchester Police deployment of Live Facial Recognition (LFR) technology in Ashton-under-Lyne town centre on 13 August 2026. I am requesting the administrative records and legal justifications backing this specific deployment.

Please provide the following information:

- 1. The LFR Deployment Authorisation Document: Please provide a copy of the formal authorization sheet signed by the authorizing officer (typically an Assistant Chief Constable) for this specific deployment.*
- 2. The Watchlist Criteria: Please state the category or composition of the "watchlist" loaded into the LFR system for this deployment (e.g., individuals wanted on court warrants, individuals subject to Sexual Harm Prevention Orders, or missing persons). (Note: I am not requesting the personal names or identifiable data of individuals on the watchlist, but the legal categories and criteria used to build it).*
- 3. The Crime and Intelligence Justification: Please provide the documented intelligence rationale, localized crime statistics, or specific policing objectives that were used to meet the threshold of "strict necessity" and "proportionality" required to justify scanning the public in Ashton-under-Lyne town centre on this date.*
- 4. Operational Statistics: Please state the total number of faces scanned during this deployment, the number of system alerts generated, the number of false alerts, and the number of subsequent arrests made.*
- 5. Guidance Given to On-Scene Officers: Please provide any operational briefing notes or verbal instructions provided to the frontline officers present at this deployment regarding how they should answer public queries about the scope, purpose, and targets of the cameras.*
- 6. System Calibration and Demographics: The specific threshold setting (similarity score percentage) used by the software to trigger a match during this deployment. Additionally, please provide any local Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) data*

holding demographic performance metrics used to ensure the system did not exhibit racial or gender bias during this specific scan.

7. *Legal and Policy Basis for Public Notice: Documentation or internal logs showing the exact date, time, and digital platform where the mandatory advance public notice for this Ashton-under-Lyne deployment was published, to satisfy the transparency requirements set out by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).*
8. *Body-Worn Video and Audio Interactions: Any internal logs, policy documents, or directives specifying whether frontline officers managing the LFR van were instructed to activate their personal Body-Worn Video (BWV) cameras to record members of the public who actively questioned, filmed, or attempted to walk around the LFR scanning zone.*

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm that the information you have requested is held by Greater Manchester Police. However, I am not obliged to provide all of the information requested as exemptions apply.

1. Exempt S24 & S31
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4. Exempt S21 – This is on the GMP website [here](#) – Under 'Related documents', file name 'Form 12 - LFR Register of Deployments updated 220826.docx'
5. Briefing notes are exempt under S24 & S31. Officers are given leaflets to hand out to members of the public who have questions which also has a link to the website where all the documentation is sited
6. The system has been independently tested by the National Physical Laboratory where the system is set on the algorithm recommended by them. The DPIA is a document posted on the GMP website here [IVRO - NineWorks - DPIA Screening Questionnaire](#)
7. Exempt S21 – All future deployments are published on GMP's website [here](#)
8. All officers are reminded to activate BWV re any interactions following alerts from LFR however this is down to the individual officer to activate should they deem it necessary.

GMP has published useful information on our website about the Live Facial Recognition. Please follow the below link for more information:

[Live Facial Recognition | Greater Manchester Police](#)

Parts 1, 2, 3, and 5 are exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemptions:

- **Section 24(1) – National Security**
- **Section 31(1)(a)(b) – Law Enforcement**

Sections 24 and 31 are prejudice based and qualified, so there is a requirement to articulate the harm that would be caused in confirming or not whether information is held as well as carrying out a public interest test.

Evidence of Harm

Disclosure of the requested information is likely to compromise law enforcement capabilities and tactics, by revealing low-level data about deployments.

FOI must be considered a broadcast to the world and not a private transaction. Although not questioning the motives of the applicant, the requested low-level data is information in scope of the wider tactical picture for current and future Live Facial Recognition (LFR) deployments, and the resultant picture formed though disclosure risks providing criminals or those with criminal intent valuable information that would allow them to identify tactical patterns and plans at historic deployments. In turn, this could be used to evade detection at future deployments. In short, disclosure would undermine current and/or future LFR deployments, compromising the effective prevention and detection of crime, and apprehension of offenders.

LFR deployments are intelligence led and therefore the operational objectives are widely varied and formulated on a case-by-case basis. However, it must be considered that there is potential at any deployment for these objectives to include matters related to serious and organised crime, terrorism, or extremism.

The risk from terrorism and extremism cannot be ignored. It should be recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UK faces a sustained threat from violent terrorists and extremists, with the current threat level to the UK given as 'severe', meaning a terrorist attack is highly likely.

In consideration of this threat level, any disclosure of information which undermines the tactical function of LFR would, by extension, make national security measures less effective and risk compromising the security or infrastructure of the UK.

The personal safety of individuals is of paramount importance to the Police Service and must be considered in every release of information. In this case, disclosure of details for LFR deployments would undermine the tactic, subsequently increasing the risk of harm to the public.

Public Interest Test

S24 – National Security – Factors favouring disclosure

Disclosure would support that the police effectively safeguard matters of national security. It would improve public confidence in the work of the police.

S24 – National Security – factors favouring non-disclosure

If the police were to disclose the requested data, the resultant picture could prejudice the UK's ability to maintain national security, particularly in the identification and apprehension of serious and organised criminals as well as terrorists and extremists. This places the public in grave danger, which is clearly not in the public interest.

S31 – Law Enforcement – factors Favouring Disclosure

The Police Service publish information about Live facial recognition deployments, and that, in itself, could be a factor favouring disclosure. Disclosure would reassure the public that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by the criminal fraternity.

S31 – Law Enforcement – Factors Against Disclosure

Disclosure of the information would undermine policing, specifically the effective apprehension of offenders, by revealing details in scope of tactical planning at LFR deployments. Any disclosure of information that compromises law enforcement tactics and leads to more crime being committed by reducing the opportunity to apprehend offenders, would not be in the public interest.

Balance Test

The Police service is already open and transparent in relation to Live Facial Recognition deployments, publishing a wide variety of information, including general location details of historical deployments as well as notifications about future, planned deployments. It is felt these publications meet the public interest in transparency regarding the operational use of Live Facial Recognition.

In terms of the disclosure of data lower than the published level, as much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of law enforcement, this will be overridden in exceptional circumstances. Any disclosure which prejudices the police service's capabilities, and assists criminals is one such circumstance, as it cannot be in the public interest to disclose information that results in this operational compromise.

Therefore, at this time, we feel that balance test favours non-disclosure of the Parts 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the requested data.