



**Police Headquarters**  
London Road  
DEVIZES  
Wiltshire  
SN10 2DN

Date: March 5, 2026

**Our ref: FOI 2026/035**

Reply contact name:

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

**You Wrote:**

Please provide information for the past 2 years:

1. An Excel spreadsheet detailing all any deployments of live facial recognition technology to protests in the past 3 years. Please include the date, approximate location, what technology was used (cameras, algorithms) number of matches, number of arrests following identification, what suspected crime any arrests were for, and details of any charges/referrals to CPS following successful identification and arrest at protests.
2. An Excel spreadsheet detailing all instances where footage of protests captured by police officers has been analysed by retrospective facial recognition technology. Please include the date and approximate location the footage was taken, the brand and model of camera or device the footage was taken on, any matches, whether those matches were against a local database or the police national database, what suspected crime any arrests resulting from matches were for, and any charges/referrals to CPS
3. An Excel spreadsheet detailing any instances of arrests following identification with operator-initiated facial recognition at protests. Please include the date, approximate location, what software or algorithm was used, the suspected crimes for which people were arrested, and if those crimes were charged/ referred to the CPS.

You only said you don't use overt live LFR, but my second and third questions refer to RFR and OIFR

**Keeping Wiltshire Safe**

## **Response:**

On reviewing your original Freedom of Information request, the response provided and your request for an Internal Review, I can respond as follows:

Wiltshire Police do not use overt Live Facial Recognition technology.

However, Wiltshire Police can neither confirm nor deny whether any covert facial recognition software is used by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24(2) – National Security

Section 31(3) – Law Enforcement

## **Overall Harm**

Any disclosure under Freedom of Information is a release to the public at large. Whilst not questioning the motives of the requester, confirming or denying that any other information relating to the covert practice of facial recognition technology 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 technology would lead to an increase of harm to covert 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.

The threat from terrorism cannot be ignored. It is generally recognised that the international security landscape is increasingly complex and unpredictable. The UK continues to face a sustained threat from violent extremists and terrorists. It is well established that police forces use covert tactics and surveillance to gain intelligence in order to counteract criminal behaviour. It has been previously documented in the media that many terrorist incidents have been thwarted due to intelligence gained by these means. Confirming or denying whether any information is or isn't held relating to the covert use of these technologies would limit operational capabilities as criminals / terrorists 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. 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 useful 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.

## **Public Interest Test**

### **Section 24**

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## **Factors Favouring Confirmation or Denying**

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. The information simply relates to national security and disclosure would not actually harm it.

## **Factors Against Confirming or Denying**

To confirm or deny whether Wiltshire Police hold any additional information would allow inferences to be made about the nature and extent of national security related activities which may or may not take place. This could enable terrorist groups to take steps to avoid detection, and as such, confirmation or denial would be damaging to national security. By confirming or denying any policing arrangements of this nature would render national security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

## **Section 31**

### **Factors Favouring Confirmation or Denying**

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

### **Factors Against Confirming or Denying**

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. 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.

## **Balance 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. Whilst there is a public interest in the transparency of policing, providing assurance that the Police Service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat from criminals, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding both National Security and the integrity of the police in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced in matters of National Security. This will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances, which this Freedom of Information request is not.

No inference can be taken from this refusal that the information you have requested does or does not exist.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c)

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states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

Exemptions applied:

S24(2) – National Security

S31(3) – Law Enforcement

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours Sincerely,

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



## **Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN



## **Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure**

### **1. Who Can Ask for a Review**

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

### **2. How to Request a Review**

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit  
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,  
London Road, Devizes,  
Wiltshire,  
SN10 2DN

Email at [disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk](mailto:disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk).

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original Fol request.

### **3. Review Procedure**

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

### **4. Conclusion of the Appeal**

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

**Keeping Wiltshire Safe**

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Tel: 01625 545 700  
Fax: 01625 524 510  
Email: [mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

**Please note that the ICO's offices will be closed for the foreseeable future and are therefore unable to receive correspondence via post.**

**If you should wish you contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>**