

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Facial Recognition Technology	
<b>REPORT OF</b> The Metropolitan Police Service – Camden Borough Command Unit	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> 7 October 2024
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>The report provides an overview of the Metropolitan Police Service’s use of facial recognition.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b></p> <p>Patrick Coulson Head of Community Safety Safer Communities 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG Telephone: 0207 974 5325 Email: <a href="mailto:patrick.coulson2@camden.gov.uk">patrick.coulson2@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>The Committee is asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.</p>	

Signed:   
 Jamie Akinola – Director of Public Safety  
 Date: 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This report outlines the Metropolitan Police Service's (Met) use of facial recognition (FR) technology. The technology can be used in several ways by the Metropolitan Police Service (Met), including to prevent and detect crime, find wanted criminals, safeguard vulnerable people, and to protect people from harm. FR can be used in real-time, retrospectively, and for identify verification.

1.2. Typical uses of FR technology for policing are:

- as a real-time aid to help officers to help them locate people on a 'watchlist' who are sought by the police.
- as an operator-initiated tool for officers who decide they need to take an image of a person and then use Facial Recognition software to help them establish who that person is. This helps the police even if that person provides false or misleading details. This use of FR can also help provide an identification of someone who is unconscious or seriously injured and unable to communicate who they are.
- as a retrospective system to be used after an event to help officers establish who a person is or whether their image matches against other media held on databases

## 2. Live Facial Recognition (LFR)

2.1. LFR cameras are focused on a specific area; when people pass through that area their images are streamed directly to the LFR system and compared to a watchlist.

2.2. In 2023, LFR was deployed on three separate occasions in 2023: 6 April, 14 April, and 8 September.

- 6 April 2023: one LFR alert led to the arrest of an individual wanted for breaching a court order. There were no false alerts.
- 14 April 2023: While no arrests were directly linked to LFR alerts, officers involved in the operation made three arrests – two for theft and one for a sexual offence. No false alerts recorded.
- 8 September 2023: two LFR alerts were generated. One results in the arrest of an individual wanted on a court warrant for criminal damage, while the other correctly identified and individual who had conditions in place but was not in breach. There were no false alerts.

2.3. LFR technology has been deployed across London, leading to the arrest of offenders in areas outside the Borough Command Unit (BCU) where they are wanted, highlighting a trend of offenders travelling across boroughs. In 2024, LFR has contributed to over 350 arrests across London.

2.4. This data demonstrates the effectiveness of LFR in assisting the Met in identifying individuals wanted for various offences and supporting broader crime prevention efforts.

### 3. Diversity Impact of Live Facial Recognition

- 3.1. A study conducted by the National Physical Laboratory in 2022, titled “Facial Recognition Technology in Law Enforcement”, evaluated the accuracy and operational considerations of the facial recognition algorithm used by the Met.
- 3.2. The technology is designed to enhance precision and reduce bias in identifying wanted offenders:
- Accuracy: when set at a threshold of 0.6 or higher, the system achieved a correct match rate (True Positive Identification Rate) of 89%, indicating a high level of accuracy in identifying individuals.
  - Demographic Differences: the study found no statistically significant differences in match performance across different racial or gender groups when using the 0.6 threshold. This indicates that the technology performs equally well across all demographic groups.
  - False Positives: the rate of incorrect matches (False Positive Identification Rate) was exceptionally low at 0.017%, meaning that the likelihood of a false match is just 1 in 6,000 people passing the camera.
  - Watchlist: the LFR system’s watchlist, which can include up to 10,000 individuals, is regularly updated and tailored to local crime types and problem profiles. Custody images are used, and data accuracy is ensured through dip sampling.
  - Officer Decision-Making: whilst LFR alerts officers to individuals of interest, the decision to engage with a person is made by the officer. If a person is not on the watchlist, their biometric data is automatically and permanently deleted.
- 3.3. This approach ensures that facial recognition technology is used to effectively and responsibly, with strong safeguards in place to prevent bias and protect privacy.

### 4. Conclusion

- 4.1. FR technology has proven to be a valuable tool for the Met in its efforts to prevent and detect crime, locate wanted individuals, and safeguard vulnerable people. The deployment of LFR in 2023 has demonstrated its effectiveness, with multiple successful arrests and no false alerts across Camden. The technology’s widespread use across London has helped apprehend offenders who operate across boroughs, contributing to 350 arrests so far in 2024.
- 4.2. The 2022 study by the National Physical Laboratory reinforces the precision and reliability of LFR, with high accuracy rates and no significant demographic disparities in performance. The system’s low false positive rate and its reliance on a regularly updated watchlist ensure that it operates efficiently while maintaining a strong focus on privacy and data protection. Officers retain decision-making authority, and individuals not on the watchlist have their biometric data deleted.
- 4.3. Overall, the use of FR technology by the Met is both responsible and effective, with stringent measures in place to reduce bias, protect privacy, and enhance community safety.

**5. Legal comments of the Borough Solicitor**

5.1 There are no legal comments arising from this report.

**6. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

6.1 There are no finance comments arising from this report.

**Report Ends**