



**HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE**

Response Date:07/05/2025

2025/416 - Facial recognition technology

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

Questions 1-6 relate to the period from January 2023 to present.

1. Has North Wales Police deployed live facial recognition?

Yes, information publicly available

a. Please provide dates and locations for each deployment.

[Live Facial Recognition | North Wales Police](#)

2. Has North Wales Police used any form of retrospective facial recognition? yes

a. Please specify whether this is via the Police National Database (PND), any other database, or a combination. PND

b. If any database other than the PND was accessed for the purposes of retrospective facial recognition, please specify the database(s) and the number of searches that have been conducted. N/A

3. Has North Wales Police deployed operator initiated facial recognition? No

a. Please provide dates and locations for each deployment. N/A

4. Has North Wales Police deployed any form of facial recognition in conjunction with body-worn video? No

a. Please provide dates and locations for each deployment. N/A

5. Where live facial recognition has been used:

a. How many individuals were on the watchlist used in each instance?

[Live Facial Recognition | North Wales Police](#)

b. How many of those on the watchlist were not wanted for arrest in each instance?

Holyhead – 102

Wrexham - 95

a. For what reasons were these people included?

Holyhead

- Sexual Harm Prevention order – 26
- Domestic Violence Protection Order – 76

Wrexham

- Football Banning Order – 16
- Football Violence Marker – 72

Pencadlys yr Heddlu,
Glan-y-Don, Bae Colwyn LL29 8AW
www.heddlugogleddcymru.police.uk

Police Headquarters,
Glan-y-Don, Colwyn Bay LL29 8AW
www.northwales.police.uk

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6. At each deployment, how many alerts were generated?

[Live Facial Recognition | North Wales Police](#)

a. How many of these were true alerts (confirmed and unconfirmed) and how many were false alerts (confirmed and unconfirmed)?

Holyhead – N/A

Wrexham – 11 true alerts

b. Please provide the engagement outcomes for each deployment, showing how many resulted in arrest, other disposal, or no action.

No official police disposal from any engagement.

7. Does North Wales Police plan to deploy live facial recognition?

No recorded information about future deployments

a. If so, please specify dates and locations of any planned trials or deployments.

8. Does North Wales Police plan to deploy operator initiated facial recognition?

No recorded information about future deployments

a. If so, please specify dates and locations of any planned trials or deployments.

9. Please provide any internal policy document, guidelines or legal basis governing North Wales Police's use of facial recognition technology, including any Data Protection Impact Assessment.

[Search - facial recognition | North Wales Police](#)

PND Facial Searches are governed by the Policing Purpose principal.

I have attached our Guidelines and Process map.

Staff details have been redacted out of the 'Guidelines' under Section 40 (2) Personal Information.

Therefore, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice under section 17 (1) of the legislation.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 06/05/2025



North Wales Police Guidance in the use of Police National Database (PND) Facial Search Functionality

Effective (Start) Date	TBC
Last Review Date:	N/A
Next Review Date Due:	N/A

Business Area/Department	PND – Police National Database NWP
Guidance Author:	...
Guidance Owner:	NWP PND Manager - ...
Business Lead Approver:	TBC

Date	Version	Purpose/Change	Author
18/12/2023	v1.0	First version	...
20/12/2023	V1.1	PND compliant	...
21/12/2023	V1.2	Review Document Layout/wording	...
16/01/2024	V1.3	Review Document wording	...

Key Contacts in Respect of Guidance

Name	Role	NWP contact (full direct dial landline and mobile)
...	PND Manager	...
...	Guidance Author	...

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1 - Introduction

1.1 – Retrospective Facial Recognition (RFR) Technology is a viable and valuable method of identifying unknown persons who for a variety of reasons become of interest to the police in their course of their duties. It involves the use of an algorithm to compare an image of an unknown individual against a pre-determined dataset to establish if their identity is known.

1.2 - This guidance is intended to provide officers and staff within North Wales Police with an understanding of the concept of RFR, definitions and guidance regarding its use within the Police National Database policing framework. For expediency, where reference is made to officer(s), it will also refer to staff.

1.3 - There are three types of facial recognition:

- **Retrospective Facial Recognition** – this is used after an event has already taken place and helps officers establish who a person is or whether the same image matches against other media held. It can be used to generate persons of interest or to assist in developing a formal case through the Criminal Justice process.
- **Live Facial Recognition (LFR)** – this enables the live-time matching of video camera footage of individuals to locate people on a watchlist, alerting a human operator where a suspect identification has been made. (not currently in use in North Wales)
- **Operator Initiated Facial Recognition (OIFR)** – this describes a situation where the image of a person is directly captured by an officer specifically for the purposes of establishing their identity. (not currently in use in North Wales)

1.4 - North Wales Police are only using Retrospective Facial Recognition (RFR) at this time via the PND Facial Search functionality.

1.5 – PND Facial Search functionality compares a ‘probe’ image against a national dataset of custody images shared by all police forces in the UK that numbers in excess of 20 million images. (October 2023)

1.6 - The PND is a secure system and only officers and staff who have been afforded appropriate training and access will be authorised to complete facial searches.

1.7 - Facial Search Technology provides intelligence and is not yet considered as evidence.

1.8 - This guidance document aims to provide information regarding North Wales Police’s strategic and operational aims for the use of Facial Search within the PND.

2 – Guidance

2.1 - Images obtained during an investigation or other police activity may come from a variety of sources: CCTV, mobile phone, video doorbell footage, dashcams, social media or Body Worn Video. This list is not exhaustive and other sources of imagery may be used.

2.2 - The strategic use of PND Facial Search within North Wales Police aims to:

- Maximise the opportunities to progress investigations and bring offenders to justice.
- To deter criminals from committing crime within North Wales Police.
- To promote public confidence in North Wales Police.

PND Facial Search Administration

2.3 - The North Wales Police PND Manager will be responsible for the administration of Facial Search. The PND Manager will ensure that the processing of every image is consistent, accurate, coherent and in line with local and national investigation policies and current criminal investigation legislation.

Process and Procedure

2.4 - Following an event which has resulted in police obtaining an image(s) of a suspect, victim or witness who is yet to be identified, officers should forward in an e-mail the image(s) to the North Wales Police PND team via the “PNDImpactAdmin” mailbox. The e-mail should contain sufficient information that identifies the occurrence and the Involvement role of the individual in the occurrence. Where several unidentified persons feature in any image(s) it should be clearly shown which of them is relevant to the request.

2.5 – PND trained staff will assess the quality of the image and ensure that it is appropriate to be used for Facial Search within PND. If the image can be used and the search is in line with a recognised ‘policing purpose’ a search will be undertaken.

2.6 - Once a speculative search has been completed, the PND Users will undertake a visual assessment of the results. In the event of a ‘potential match’ being found, the PND User will provide sufficient details and a copy of the ‘match’ to the requesting officer/staff in the prescribed manner for progress.

2.7 – Where a ‘potential match’ has been made a document with the relevant information will be added to the Reports tab on the Niche occurrence and marked Intelligence Only – Official Sensitive. The officer will be notified and the Officer Enquiry Log (OEL) endorsed as set out at 2.9 below. The officer is then expected to develop the intelligence by use of other force information systems, including an additional PND request and investigative techniques as per the North Wales Police crime management plan.

2.8 - If there is no 'match', it is at this stage the investigating officer should arrange for the image(s) to be circulated by the appropriate North Wales Police Intelligence Unit in line with force policy in respect of "ID Required Briefing Document". This will then allow officers and staff to view the images and suggest identification of the individual in the image to the investigating officer in line with PACE.

2.9 - The PND User who conducted the PND Facial Search will at the conclusion of the search place one of the below corresponding entries within the Niche OEL and complete the necessary actions:

- **Potential PND Facial Match** - *A PND Facial Search has been conducted of the image(s) and a 'potential match' has been made. This is not a formal identification, but the image should **NOT** be circulated to all officers on an "ID Required Briefing Document" as suspect identification is now known in line with PACE Code D.*

Details of the 'matched' person will be added thereafter. Where the 'matched' person has an existing record in Niche RMS, the PND User will link them to the Occurrence as a 'Suspect.' Where the 'matched' person has no known record on Niche RMS the PND User will advise the Requestor (and supervisor where necessary)¹ to create the person record and link it to the occurrence as 'Suspect.'

- **Negative PND Facial Search** - A PND Facial Search has been conducted of the Image(s) with a negative result. This image will now need to be circulated on an "ID Required Briefing Document" for potential identification by police officers or staff.
- **Failed PND Facial Search** - Where a Facial Search has 'failed' because of the quality of the probe image. The OEL will be endorsed accordingly, and every effort should be made to resubmit a request if a better image is obtained or downloaded to NICE.

PND use guide flow chart can be found at = Appendix 1

Investigating Officer/Staff and Line Managers Responsibilities

2.10 - Investigating officers and Line Managers are then responsible for continuing with the criminal investigation and ensuring that the appropriate suspect classification and linking is completed. Whilst the identification itself cannot be used in evidence, the intelligence it provides can form the basis for further enquiries to prove/negate the individuals involvement in the offence and is intended to provide reasonable grounds for arrest. Any reference to PND Facial Search should be limited to the MG6D Sensitive Material form.

¹ to expedite an effective & efficient investigation, particularly where the investigating officer/staff may be on leave or other absence/abstraction

Urgent Out of Hours Facial Search Requests

2.11 – North Wales Police I24 operators are trained and licenced to carry out Facial Search with PND. Any urgent out of hours requests should be directed to the I24.

3 - Responsibilities

Monitoring

3.1 - As with all policing systems, access and usage of PND is monitored and audited regularly and Users must provide a Justification for the searches they have completed. PND Users can only use the system, including Facial Search functionality for a policing purpose only and in line with force policy.

Author

3.2 - ... and ...are the authors of this Police National Database Facial Search Guidance document.

Owner

3.3 – ...PND Manager will ensure that the guidance document is monitored and reviewed to ensure the content remains current and relevant and that the guidance is developed where appropriate in line with North Wales Police force procedure and guidance. The guidance owner will ensure that the guidance document is published internally and externally where appropriate in line with North Wales Police force approval process.

4 – Appeals

4.1 - Persons affected by the exercise of powers, directives or action under this guidance document have the right to make representations and/or challenges and/or appeals to the decisions involved, via judicial processes (e.g. Civil Law) and or non-judicial processes (e.g. internal management, grievance and complaints procedures). They may wish to consult with their legal advisor and/or their respective staff association representative when considering such processes or procedures.

5 – Human Rights

5.1 - The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the Articles contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic law, making it unlawful for public bodies to act in a way which is incompatible with the Convention. I confirm that this document has been drafted to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998.

6 – Freedom of Information

6.1 - Public disclosure for this guidance document is determined by the document owner, in consultation with the Information Compliance team as required.

7 – Data Protection

7.1 - This guidance has been reviewed and drafted in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

8 – Health and Safety

8.1 - This document has been drafted to comply with the requirements as detailed in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, including amongst others the general duties to:

- (i) Secure the health safety and welfare of persons at work.
- (ii) Protect persons other than persons at work against risks to health and safety arising out of or in connection with the activities at work.

9 – Training

PND Training is delivered in line with College of Policing teaching modules and PND Users who are trained and licensed will have access and use of Facial Search functionality.

10 - Communication

The following methods will be adopted to ensure North Wales Police officers and staff are aware of Police National Database Facial Recognition Technology and the force Guidance around the use of the technology. The information below is part of the North Wales Police PND action plan in December 2023.

- Video on benefits of PND and RFR to be recorded by CC Blakeman (January 2024)
- Need to Know document to be prepared and shared with all officers and staff.
- SMT's across the force to be provided with information to share with their teams.
- Guidance document to be published on Force book as guidance for officers and staff.
- New officers to receive awareness input from PND Manager
- Supervisors and Managers to receive awareness videos.
- MRU team to consider having PND trained staff on each rota moving forward.

11 – Review / Approval of Guidance Document

The North Wales Police PND Manager maintains outright ownership of this guidance and any other associated documents and in-turn has responsibility for its continued monitoring.

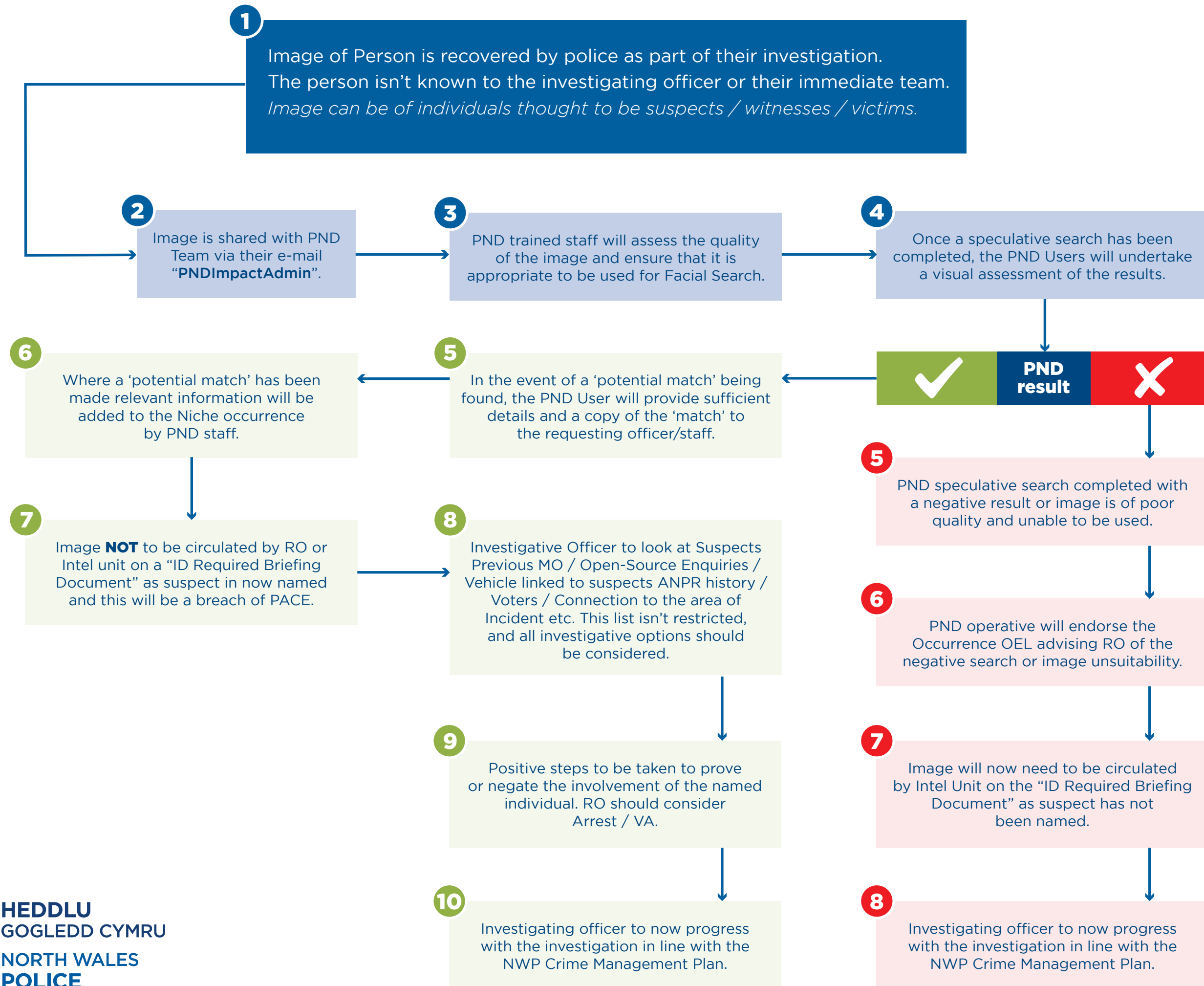
The guidance should be considered a 'living document' and subject to regular review to reflect upon any Force, Home Office/NPCC, legislative changes, good practice (learning the lessons) both locally and nationally.

Appendix – 1 – PND Flow Chart - Users Guide



88815 PND Flow
Chart.pdf

PND FACIAL SEARCH PROCESS



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