HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE

Response Date:10/11/2026

2026/1139 - Manipulated imagery

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

How often do investigations involve images that are suspected to have been manipulated?

If you mean images that have been altered by someone or AI then we do see these but I am unable to give a definitive answer on how often as it is not currently recorded specially around manipulated images.

Which offences are manipulated imagery more common?

I cannot answer this question as cases where manipulated images are present do not current get marked as containing manipulated images.

What are some examples of current processes in detecting manipulated images?

At present processes to detect manipulated images are built into the investigation process predominately image comparisons, along with exif data analysis.

Do you use a software called Amped Authenticate or other Amped software?

North Wales Police can neither confirm nor deny that information is held relevant to your request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

Section 24 (2) National Security
Section 31 (3) Law Enforcement

Section 24(2) National Security and Section 31(3) Law Enforcement

Section 1 of the Act places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17 of the Act requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which: a) states that fact; b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption(s) apply.

North Wales Police needs to be alert to requests for certain types of information, and there is a need for consistency when neither confirming nor denying whether information is held in order to protect policing information.

Factors in favour of disclosure:

Confirming or denying whether the requested information is held would enable the public to have a better understanding of the type of policing tools and tactics employed by North Wales Police in carrying out their law enforcement role. This would give more confidence to the public that we are using (or, as the case may be, not using) policing tools and tactics to help us detect and prevent crime appropriately.

Factors against disclosure:

To confirm or deny whether any other information relating to the use of a particular investigative tool or software is held would harm the integrity of sensitive policing tactics used to prevent and detect crime and safeguard national security.

Any disclosure under FOI is a release to the public at large. Whilst not questioning the motives of the applicant, confirming or denying if a particular policing tool of this type (in this case Amped software) is used as part of an investigative process is different from confirming if, in principle, commercial tools generally are used to assist with searches against information that may be found online.

Given the sensitive areas in which tools of this type may be used, to disclose if any particular tools are used would allow criminals and other adversaries to focus on evaluating the particular capabilities of a particular tool, With this knowledge it would allow criminals and other adversaries to take steps to counteract a specific tool – be it adjusting how they interact and present themselves to take advantage of any weaknesses or gaps in capability they identify. At a simple level, if a policing tool doesn't search 'X 'social media site or was unable to identify 'Y' format of images and criminals can establish this, they will exploit this position. The more sophisticated adversaries may be able to go further and take more proactive measures to undermine the tool and/or its provider, and a specific confirmation allows efforts to be focused accordingly. 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 tools are or are not deployed. This can be useful information to those committing crimes. It 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.

Balancing test

Accordingly, in a position taken in common with other law enforcement agencies, confirming or denying if NWP uses Amped software would lead to an increase of harm to investigations and compromise law enforcement. This outweighs the benefits to disclosure, not least as disclosure 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. Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test favours neither confirming nor denying that information is held.

If it exists, the disclosure of this information to the public by North Wales Police would undermine the integrity of police investigations and operations and in maintaining confidence in North Wales Police.

The effective delivery of operational law enforcement is of paramount importance to North Wales Police in their duty to ensure that the prevention and detection of crime is carried out and the effective apprehension or prosecution of offenders is maintained.
Therefore it is our opinion that for these issues the balance test favours neither confirming nor denying that information is held.

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 02/11/2026