



**HEDDLU
GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES
POLICE**

Response Date:09/07/2025

2025/607 - Use of Facial Recognition Technology (1 Jan 2022–Present)

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

I am making this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please limit the scope to the period from 1 January 2022 to the date of this request.

I request the following information:

- 1. Is your force currently using any form of facial recognition technology? If yes, please confirm whether this use began on or after 1 January 2022, and state the type(s) of deployment (e.g. Live Facial Recognition (LFR), Retrospective Facial Recognition (RFR), body-worn camera, fixed CCTV, mobile unit, traffic enforcement cameras, ANPR systems (if facial recognition-enabled) etc.).**

North Wales Police uses PND (police national database) for a facial search capacity which compares images.

- 2. Which company or companies provide the facial recognition technology your force is currently using?**

PND.

- 3. Since 1 January 2022, has your force shared any facial recognition data in any form, or image-based intelligence, with any of the following:-**
 - **the State of Israel;**
 - **any Israeli government body or agency;**
 - **any Israeli company (including, but not limited to, those named in response to question 2, as well as private or state-affiliated entities); or**
 - **any Israeli non-governmental organisation?**

North Wales Police can neither confirm nor deny whether we hold any information in relation to your request as the duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) does not apply by virtue of the following exemptions:

- **Section 23(5) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters**
- **Section 24(2) - National Security**
- **Section 27(4) - International Relations**
- **Section 31(3) - Law Enforcement**

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**Yn gwneud Gogledd Cymru'r lle mwyaf diogel i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld yn y DU
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This request attracts a NCND response as to confirm or deny whether the requested information is, or is not, held would disclose whether or not intelligence sharing had taken place. This would have the effect of compromising our law enforcement functions, current or future investigations and be detrimental to national security. As such, Sections 24(2) and 31(3) of the Act apply.

To confirm or deny whether information is, or is not, held in relation sharing information as described at Question 3 would be detrimental to international relations between the United Kingdom and Israel. Therefore, Section 27(4) of the Act is engaged.

In addition, by neither confirming nor denying that information is held prevents disclosure of whether or not there has been any involvement of the security bodies in this matter, invoking Section 23(5) of the Act.

Harm overall

Public safety is of paramount importance to the policing purpose and must be taken into account in deciding whether to disclose information, if held, or not. To confirm or deny whether North Wales Police holds the requested information, would allow interested parties to gain an upper hand and awareness of policing decisions used to safeguard national security. As you may be aware, disclosure under FOIA is a release to the public at large. Therefore, to confirm or deny the existence of any information pertaining to information and intelligence sharing could potentially be misused proving detrimental to national security.

Confirming or denying whether any information is held would be of use to those who seek to disrupt police activity as it would, by process of elimination, enable individuals with the inclination to identify what form of intelligence has been made, and to whom. To confirm whether any information is held in respect of one piece of information and then neither confirm nor deny whether another piece of information is held, is likely to lead the public to deduce that information is held where a NCND response is applied. This would enable individuals to evade detection and compromise the ability of the police to safeguard national security.

Any information identifying the focus of policing activity could be used to the advantage of terrorists, extremist or criminal organisations. Information that undermines the operational integrity of these operational activities (whether information is or is not held in this instance) will adversely affect public safety and have a negative impact on both national security and law enforcement.

It remains our position that North Wales Police will not confirm or deny whether it holds any information pertinent to your request. This would be counter effective to the safeguarding of national security, and increase the risk of crime if North Wales Police does not take a consistent approach to requests regarding intelligence sharing. An increase in crime which arises out of an inconsistent approach to the 'NCND' principle may lead to an escalation of criminal activity that could have a detrimental effect on national security and police intelligence.

North Wales Police works in partnership with other partners in order to combat issues such as terrorism, organised crime, subversion and espionage. Confirming or denying that information exists relevant to this request would seriously undermine this partnership approach. To confirm or deny whether any information is held relevant to this request would jeopardise international relations, not only with Israel, but any other country with whom diplomatic relations are maintained.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S24 - The public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and by confirming or denying that this information is held would allow them to see where money is being spent and know that North Wales Police is undertaking its duty to robustly tackle any form of criminal and terrorist activity, which could include the sharing of intelligence.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S24 - Confirmation or denial of this nature would render 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. To counter this, a full review of security measures would be needed and additional costs would be incurred.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S27 – Confirming or denying whether any information is held would increase public knowledge about our relations with other countries, in this case Israel.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S27 – Section 27 recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. Confirming or denying that any information is held relevant to the request would further destroy that trust and confidence, which in turn would hamper international relations affecting the UK's ability to protect and promote the country's interests.

Factors favouring confirmation or denial for S31 - Confirming or denying whether North Wales Police holds information relevant to this request the public would see where public funds have been spent and allow the Police service to appear more open and transparent. North Wales Police is committed to openness and transparency with the general public. When a request for information is made it is correct that the police make appropriate information available to the general public. The provision of information, through confirming or denying whether information relevant to this request is held would accordingly, reinforce our commitment to be an open and transparent organisation.

Factors against confirmation or denial for S31 - By confirming or denying with whom North Wales Police shares intelligence, and in what form, 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.

Overall Balance Test

When balancing the Public Interest Test we have to consider whether the information, if held, should be released into the public domain. Arguments need to be weighed against each other.

The security of the country is of paramount importance and North Wales Police will not divulge whether information is or is not held if to do so would undermine National Security, our law enforcement functions or the investigative process. Whilst it is recognised that there is a public interest in the transparency of policing operations and providing assurance that the police service is appropriately and effectively engaging with the threat posed by criminals and terrorists, there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding the integrity of police investigations and operations.

As much as there is public interest in knowing that policing activity is appropriate and balanced this will only be overridden in exceptional circumstances. To confirm or deny the existence of the requested information, would allow interested parties to gain an upper hand and awareness of policing decisions about police intelligence sharing, leading to an increase of harm to law enforcement and national security.

Whilst to confirm or deny that information is held would allow for a greater understanding of how police intelligence is shared, this could undermine the role and effectiveness of any future operations. Any disclosure of information, if held, which has the potential to jeopardise an operation/investigation, or undermine international relations is therefore likely to prejudice law enforcement.

Therefore, after weighing up the competing interests I have determined that confirmation or denial of any information being held relating to intelligence sharing, by any means, relevant to this request would not be in the public interest.

However, this should not be taken as necessarily indicating that any information that would meet your request exists or does not exist.

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 08/07/2025