| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-2148  Responded to: 31 July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I am requesting the following information regarding Police Scotland’s use of biometric and surveillance technologies between 1 January 2020 and 1 January 2025:

## Biometric Systems in Use or Trial

## List of biometric technologies deployed or trialled (e.g. facial recognition, fingerprint scanners, DNA profiling systems)

## Purpose of each system and operational context (e.g. custody, public surveillance, mobile units)

Based on the examples given in your request it is our interpretation that you mean biometric systems which have identification capabilities.

The table below details biometric technologies deployed or trialled (e.g. facial recognition, fingerprint scanners, DNA profiling systems), the purpose of each system and the operational context:

| **Biometric Technology** | **Purpose** | **Operational Context** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Scottish DNA Database | DNA profiling of samples taken from arrested persons, registered sex offenders and those provided voluntarily | Custody, Criminal Justice, Public Protection & Intelligence |
| National DNA Database |
| IDENT1 |
| Livescan | Captures fingerprints from arrested persons, registered sex offenders and those provided voluntarily | Custody, Criminal Justice, Public Protection & Intelligence |
| CAID - Retrospective Facial Matching | Used to identify victims and perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse | Criminal Justice, Public Protection & Intelligence |
| PND - Retrospective Facial Matching | Used to identify suspects from crime scene images using images taken in custody | Criminal Justice &  Intelligence |

## Vendor names and contract durations

The above-mentioned systems are owned by either the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) or the Home Office.

Police Scotland have third-party access/ use to these biometric technologies.

As such, information regarding vendor names and contracts is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

You may wish to contact the SPA or the Home Office.

## Data Retention & Access Policies

## Retention periods for biometric data (facial images, fingerprints, DNA)

## Policies governing deletion, weeding […]

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it […] is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available within our [Record Retention SOP](https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/nhobty5i/record-retention-sop.docx).

Retention and weeding requirements are governed by the following relevant legislation:

* Scottish Biometrics Commissioner [Code of Practice](https://www.biometricscommissioner.scot/media/5y0dmsq3/biometrics-code-of-practice.pdf)
* Custody & Registered Sex Offenders Samples & Data (Section 18-19C) - [Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/46/part/II/crossheading/prints-and-samples)
* Volunteer Samples & Data (Section 56) - [Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/7/section/56)
* Data Protection - [Data Protection Act 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted)

## […] and data quality assurance

Police Scotland have no specific policies in respect of quality assurance and section 17 of the Act therefore applies - the information sought is not held by Police Scotland.

## Oversight & Governance

## Role of the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner and Biometrics Oversight Board in reviewing Police Scotland’s biometric systems

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available:

[Scottish Biometrics Commissioner | What We Do | Scottish Biometrics Commissioner](https://www.biometricscommissioner.scot/about-us/what-we-do/).

## Any audits, evaluations, or ethical reviews conducted between 2020–2025

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available:

[Operations | Scottish Biometrics Commissioner](https://www.biometricscommissioner.scot/operations/):

## Minutes or summaries of internal governance meetings related to biometric technologies

I can confirm that there are no minutes or summaries recorded at present and section 17 of the Act therefore applies - the information sought is not held by Police Scotland.

A summary of recent governance discussions is available in the recently published Live Facial Recognition report:

[Live Facial Recognition Report - 10 June 2025 | Scottish Police Authority](https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/live-facial-recognition-report-10-june-2025)

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.