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Dear Ethics Group Members,

Commissioning letter 2019/ 2020

I am writing to you in my capacity as Sponsor to set out the areas I believe the Group should focus on in the next year to help ensure that full ethical consideration is given to the key issues we would like to progress. This commission has been agreed by the Home Office Data Board and I trust that it provides sufficient information for you to plan your work programme in detail.

We would like two existing working groups to continue their work and to start two new ones. We have chosen themes with broad thematic relevance to the use of biometrics, forensics and large and complex data sets in the Home Office sector. Each group will be supported by a Home Office policy lead.

Commission

We would like the Group to organise working groups around the following themes:

1. Home Office Biometrics (HOB) programme and governance review:
 - a) We would like you to continue to advise on the HOB programme and their Data Protection Impact Assessments; and
 - b) Advise on the Home Office biometrics governance review, paying special attention to data sharing and oversight arrangements.

2. Use of Live Facial Recognition (LFR). Following the publication of BFEG's interim report on ethical issues arising from police use of live facial recognition (LFR) technology we would like the Group to:
 - a) Advise specific projects considering the use of LFR;
 - b) Advise on LFR collaborations between police forces and private entities; and
 - c) Advise on the use of publicly available images.

3. Use of large and complex datasets:

- a) We would like you to advise projects considering the adoption and/or use of explainable data-driven technology - that is technologies or algorithms designed to ensure identified stakeholders understand how and why decisions or conclusions are reached. Themes may include the automated categorisation of sensitive data, anomaly detection, rule evaluation in decision making and the analysis of digital evidence.

4. Development of the Home Office Data Ethics framework. To ensure ethical consideration of the use of data throughout the policy making lifecycle, we would like the Group to:

- a) Advise on the development of the framework; and
- b) With reference to the other working groups, consider what relationship the framework should have with the BFEG ethics principles (April 2018); the principles BFEG developed to guide police trials of facial recognition (February 2019); and the Government Data Ethics Framework (June 2018).

In addition to being represented at the Forensic Information Databases Strategy (FINDS) and Law Enforcement Facial Images and New Biometrics Oversight and Advisory Boards, we may also ask you for ad hoc advice on forensic information and database policy and projects; the biometric elements of the future borders and immigration system design; and policy regarding the retention of biometrics from convicted persons, should the European Court of Human Rights issue a ruling during the next 12 months which requires a significant change in Government policy.

My team will attend BFEG meetings and we will work closely with the secretariat to help you manage this commission. I look forward to working with you again over the next 12 months.

Kind regards,

Alex Macdonald
BFEG Policy Sponsor