



Biometric Forensics Ethics Group
Home Office
London
SW1P 4DF

March 2018

Dear Ethics Group Members,

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. In line with the addition of new members, it would be useful if the group could consider the following topics as part of your forward work plan.

These issues could be considered in the short term (next 6-12 months)

Police use of facial recognition systems

- Several police forces are trialling live facial recognition software, including the Metropolitan Police Service, who will demonstrate a trial to the BFEG
- The BFEG will be invited to sit on a new oversight Board which will oversee police use of facial recognition systems

These issues could be considered in the longer term (12+ months)

Retention of biometrics from convicted persons until they are 100 years old

- The Government submitted observations to the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Gaughran* in December
- The BFEG shared their initial views in a letter in November
- If the Court issues a ruling which requires a significant change in Government policy, we would welcome a working group to provide advice on biometric retention periods

Forensic Information Databases Strategy Board

- The Forensic Information Databases Strategy (FINDS) Board provides governance and oversight over the operation of the National DNA Database (NDNAD) and the national fingerprint database
- The BFEG has been briefed and asked for views on issues presented by FINDS, such as the Access and Use Policy and the International Exchange Policy
- The BFEG is asked to further consider ethical angles of ongoing projects that inform the Strategy Board work programme, which will be discussed at the Board, such as continued input on the piloting of Rapid DNA technology by the police and work being carried out on YSTR profiling

Home Office Biometrics Programme

- The Home Office Biometrics (HOB) programme is delivering a unified biometric service for government that is effective, adaptable, efficient, proportionate and lawful. The programme consists of three main modalities: DNA; fingerprint identification; and facial recognition. The programme will run until 2020, and provide continuity of existing services, cost savings and will develop future capabilities
- In 2016 the BFEG established a working group and provides ethical and privacy advice on a range of Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) that are integral to the HOB programme and have resulted in the delivery of multiple robust PIAs to date
- The Home Office Biometrics (HOB) programme is delivering a unified Continued support and challenge to the HOB programme team to deliver the remaining PIAs and to revisit and refresh existing PIAs at key stages in the programme life-cycle
- BFEG may wish to consider topics set out in the PIA, such as questions around the Data Protection principles, external and internal information sharing, and whether the wider sharing or aggregation of data held poses a risk of injustice to groups or individuals

Transforming Forensics Programme

- At the December meeting, programme leads stated that they would continue to proactively liaise with the Group
- We expect that they will raise further queries directly with you.

Kind regards,

Alex Macdonald
Head of Identity Policy Unit