

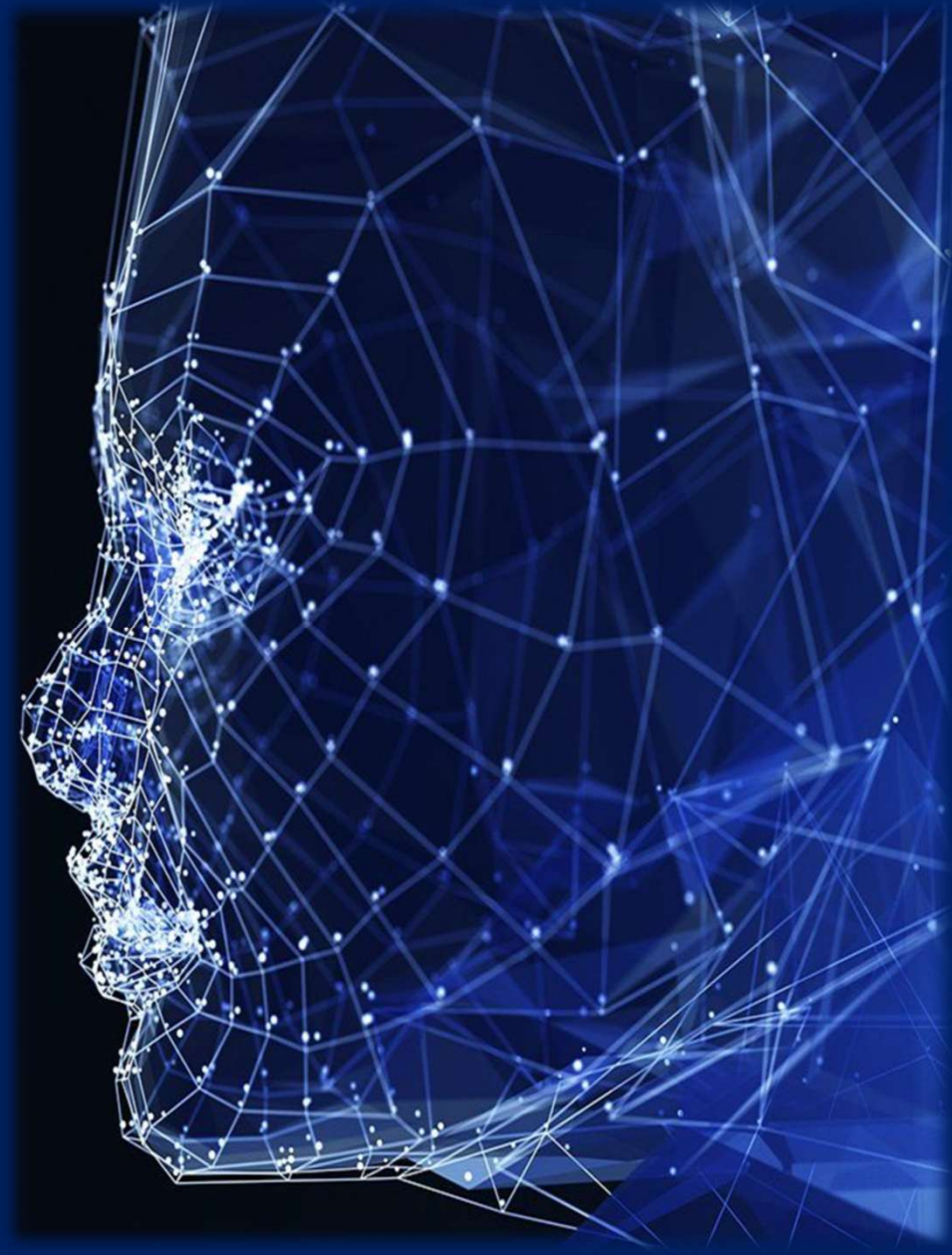
**Claudia
McCready**

Lecturer in
Policing at the
University of the
West of England

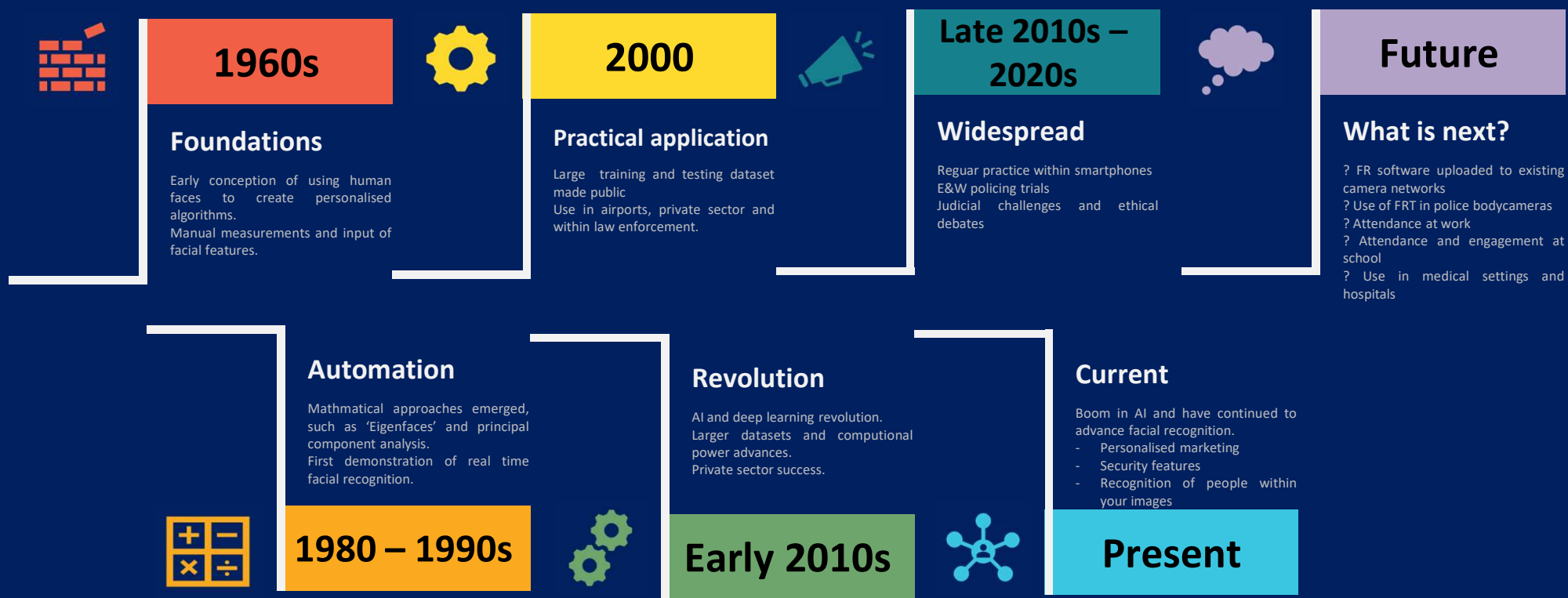
The Digital Policing Conference 2026

Live Facial Recognition

Thursday 19th
March 2026



A short history of facial recognition software





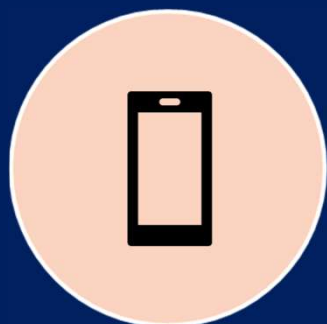
Live Facial Recognition

Scans of faces from a live video stream are compared to scans from a pre-selected database of images (watchlist), creating real-time alerts.



Retrospective Facial Recognition

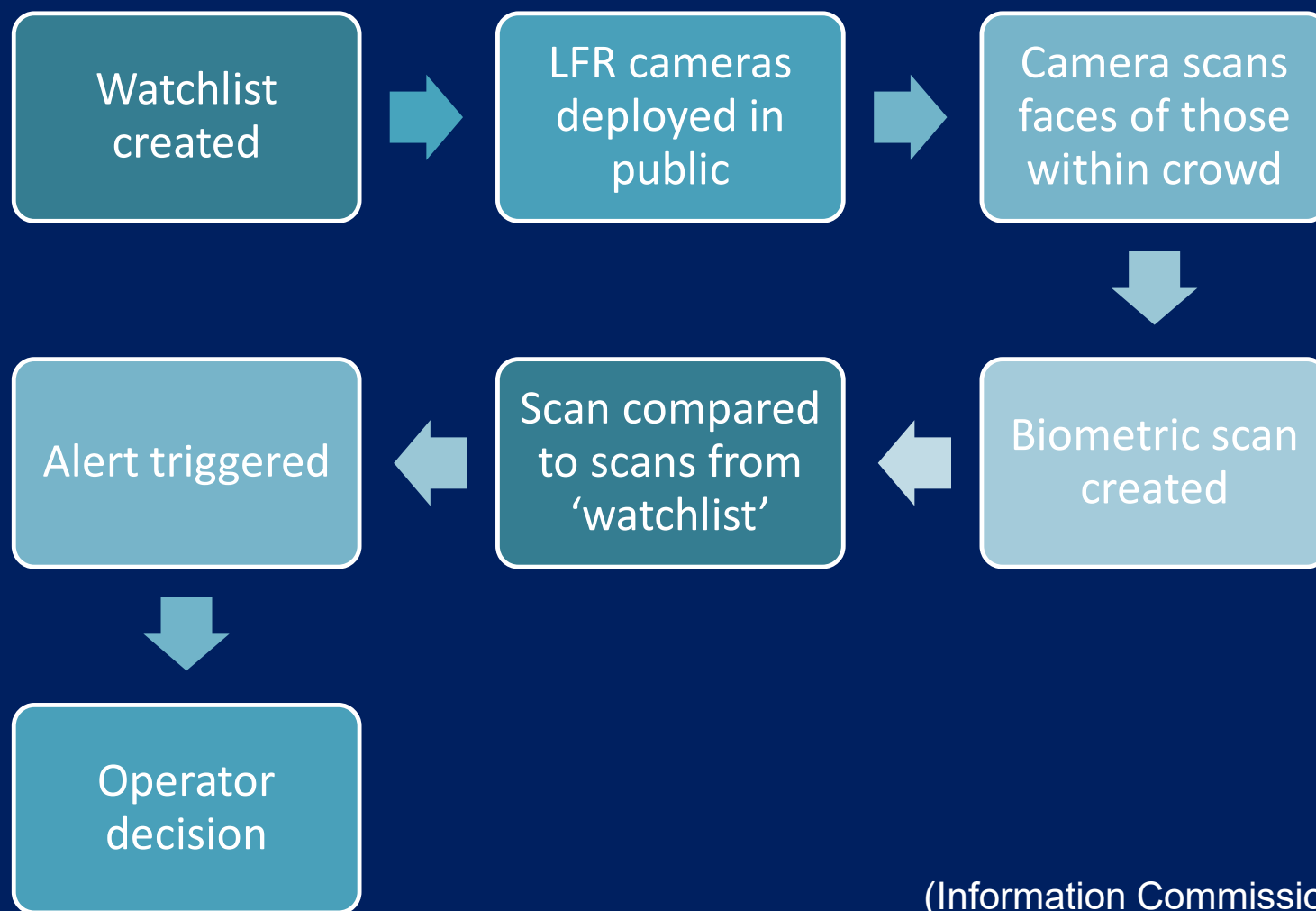
The comparison of still images of faces against an image database to identify them.



Officer Initiated Facial Recognition

Compares an image of a face taken by the officer with facial images from a pre-selected database of images (watchlist).

LFR Process



(Information Commissioner's Office, 2019)

Understanding and utilising LFR

Uses:

- Live events
- Public spaces
- Real-time
- Dynamic and fixed
- Reassure the public
- Further source of information
- Face coverings (NIST, 2020; BBC, 2021)

Watchlists include:

- Wanted by courts
- Suspected of a criminal offence
- Location restrictions
- Missing persons
- Presenting risk
- Victims, witnesses and close associates

Human rights

1. Human Rights Act 1998

Article 8 – Right to a private and family life

Article 10 – Freedom of expression

Article 11 – Freedom of assembly and association

Article 14 – Non-discrimination

The Legal Framework for LFR

1. Common Law
2. Data Protection Act 2018

Biometric data - 'personal data resulting from specific technical processing relating to the physical, psychological or behavioural characteristics of a natural person, which allow or confirm the unique identification of that natural person, such as facial images and dactyloscopic data.'

3. Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Surveillance Camera Code of Practice
 - Information Commissioner's Opinion
 - College of Policing APP

Equality and LFR

s149 Equality Act 2010 – Public Service Equality Duty

R (Bracking) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions - PSED is a positive and continuing duty

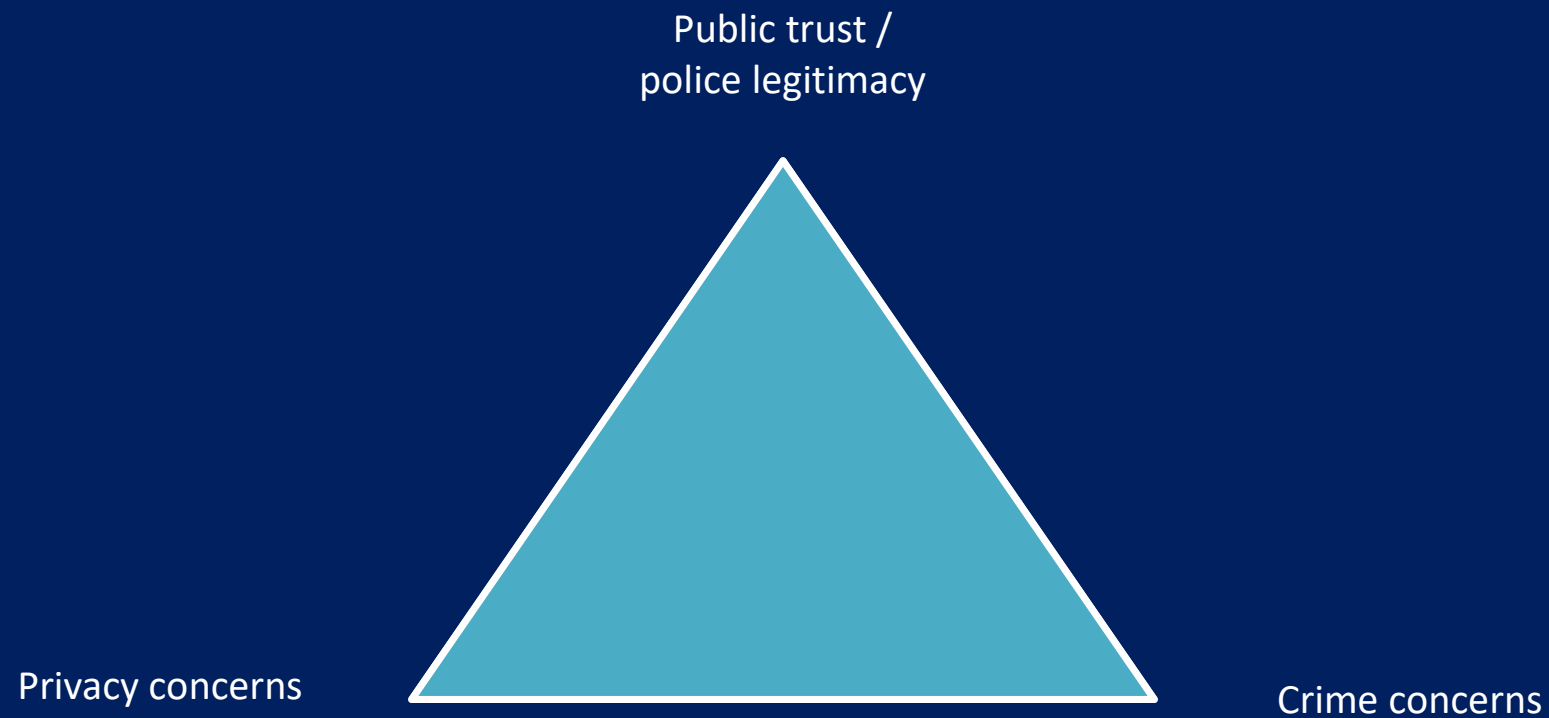
R (Bridges) v Chief Constable of South Wales Police [40] – PSED does not differ for trials

- Algorithmic performance and disproportionate error rates

(National Physical Laboratory, 2026; MPS, (n.d); Fussey and Murray (2020); Fussey and Murray (2019); Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group (2019))

- Watchlist formation
- Locations

Predictors of Public Support



(Bradford *et al.*, 2020)

Strategies for improving community perceptions of LFR

- Community advisory panels – trust is localised
- Public success stories
- Publicly available data
 - Algorithm testing
 - Breakdown of each deployment and demographic
- Media role
- Independent oversight or audits
- Consideration of crime types and seriousness

References

Statute:

- *Data Protection Act 1988* [online]. *Chapter 29*. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- *Data Protection Act 2018* [online]. *Chapter 12*. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- *Equality Act 2010* [online]. *Chapter 15*. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- *Freedom of Information Act* [online]. *Chapter 36*. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- *Human Rights Act 1998* [online]. *Chapter 42*. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000* [online]. *Chapter 23*. Legislation.gov.uk. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/23/contents> [Accessed 18 March 2026].

References (II)

Case law:

- *R (Bridges) v South Wales Police* [2020] EWCA Civ 1058
- *R (Bracking) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* [2013] EWCA Civ 1345
- *R (Catt) v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and another* [2015] UKSC 09
- *Re Gallagher* [2018] HCA 17
- *Rice v Connolly* [1966] 1 QB 414

References (III)

Written material:

- Information Commissioner's Office (2019) *Information Commissioner's Opinion: The use of live facial recognition technology by law enforcement in public places* [online]. London: Information Commissioner's Office. Available from: <https://ico.org.uk/media2/migrated/2616184/live-frt-law-enforcement-opinion-20191031.pdf> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Information Commissioner's Office (2022) *Video Surveillance (including guidance for organisations using CCTV)* [online]. London: Information Commissioner's Office. Available from: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/cctv-and-video-surveillance/guidance-on-video-surveillance-including-cctv/additional-considerations-for-technologies-other-than-cctv/facial-recognition-technology-frt-and-surveillance/> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- College of Policing (2022) *Live facial recognition approved professional practice*. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/live-facial-recognition/live-facial-recognition> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Keenan, B. (2021) Automatic Facial Recognition and the Intensification of Police Surveillance. *The Modern Law Review* [online]. 84. pp. 886 – 897. [Accessed 18 March 2026].

References (IV)

- Holmes, A.M. (2023) 'Serious and Systemic'? Live Facial Recognition Technology in the United Kingdom and its Impact on Adequacy under the LED. In: Celeste, E., Costello, R.A., Harbinja, E. & Xanthoulis, N, ed. (2023) *Data Protection and Digital Sovereignty Post-Brexit* [online]. Oxford: Hart Publishing, pp. 105-121. [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Bradford, B., Yesberg, J.A., Jackson, J. & Dawson, P. (2020) Live facial recognition: trust and legitimacy as predictors of public support for police use of new technology. *The British Journal of Criminology* [online]. 60 (6), pp. 1502-1522. [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group Facial Recognition Group (2019) *Ethical issues arising from the police use of live facial recognition technology* [online]. London: Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group Facial Recognition Group. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c755ffc40f0b603d660be32/Facial_Recognition_Briefing_BFEG_February_2019.pdf [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Fussey, P. and Murray, D. (2020) Policing Uses of Live Facial Recognition in the United Kingdom. In Kak, A, ed. (2020) *Regulating Biometrics – Global Approaches and Urgent Questions*, AI Now Institute, 1 September 2020. AI Now Institute, pp. 78 – 85.

References (V)

- Fussey, P. and Murray, D. (2019) *Independent Report on the London Metropolitan Police Service's Trial of Live Facial Recognition Technology*. Project Report. University of Essex Human Rights Centre. Available from: <https://repository.essex.ac.uk/24946/> [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- National Physical Laboratory (2026) *Accuracy and Equitability Evaluation of Corsight Apollo 4 Live Facial Recognition* [online]. Report number: 4941. Teddington: NPL. Available from: https://science.police.uk/site/assets/files/6607/corsightapollo4_mar2026.pdf [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Metropolitan Police Service (n.d) *The Metropolitan Police Service Facial Recognition Technology: Understanding accuracy and demographic differences*. Available from: https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/force-content/met/advice/lfr/new/understanding-accuracy-and-demographic-differences-v3..pdf?_cf_chl_tk=u4BP2dn4DAmD4k2Uw2pbZpZ31RIBCjhK_vcl25dHwoY-1755187270-1.0.1.1-0Rk5NUSluaczvKNhngMzBojo1uHfrPrKKA7Z1oop3rc [Accessed 18 March 2026].
- Surveillance Camera Commissioner (2020) *Facing the Camera*. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940386/6.7024_SCC_Facial_recognition_report_v3_WEB.pdf [Accessed 19 March 2026].
- Yeung, K. and Li, W. (2025) From 'wild west' to 'responsible' AI testing 'in-the-wild': lessons from live facial recognition testing by law enforcement authorities in Europe. *Data & Policy* [online]. 2025 (7), pp. e59 – e59-323. [Accessed 18 March 2026].



Claudia McCready

Lecturer in Policing, The University of
the West of England
Claudia McCready
Lecturer in Policing
The University of the West of England

UWE Bristol Staff Profile:

<https://people.uwe.ac.uk/Person/ClaudiaMccready>

Outlook:

Claudia.McCready@uwe.ac.uk

LinkedIn Profile:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudia-m-169aa1a2/>

