STOP THE SCAN:

Police use of mobile fingerprinting technology for immigration enforcement

A report by the Racial Justice Network and Yorkshire Resists

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About us

The **Racial Justice Network (RJN)** is an anti-racist charity based in West Yorkshire. RJN brings together groups, organisations and individuals from across the West Yorkshire region (and beyond) to proactively promote racial justice and address colonial legacies. Our organisation aims to raise awareness about, and mobilise around, racial inequality and injustice by listening and working with disempowered communities, taking positive action for justice and solidarity.

Yorkshire Resists is a network of organisations and individuals working to resist the Hostile Environment across Yorkshire. Together with RJN we launched the #StopTheSCANdal campaign to fight against the implementation of biometric fingerprint scanners across West Yorkshire.

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The Biometric Service Gateway

The Biometric Services Gateway (BSG) is a portal that connects an app on a phone or mobile device to two databases. First, the Home Office (through the Immigration and Asylum Biometrics System (IABS) database) and second, the police (through the IDENT1 database used by law enforcement agencies).

The BSG retrieves data from these databases, interprets it, performs the necessary actions and sends it back to the mobile device. This system allows personal information to be quickly requested and shared between law enforcement and immigration enforcement. Practically speaking, the BSG consists of an app on a police officer's phone, along with a mobile fingerprint scanner, which can be used to almost instantly check fingerprints against biometric data stored on either of the two databases.

This report is part of the Racial Justice Network and Yorkshire Resists campaign, #STOPtheSCANdal, to draw attention to the impact of the Biometric Services Gateway on both the communities targeted by police for fingerprinting as well as the wider public. There has been no public consultation on the roll out of the devices or consideration of the harmful aspects of the fingerprint scanner and sharing of biometric data. We are concerned and alarmed about the disproportionate use of BSG on racially minoritised and migrant communities. You can find more information about the Stop The Scan campaign and how the Biometric Services Gateway works here: **stopthescan.co.uk/**

This report details the data collected via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to all police forces in the UK[1] concerning their use of mobile fingerprinting scans using BSG. The request asked for police statistics in the period March 2019 to June 2020.

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[1]We excluded two Special Forces namely the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and Ministry of Defence because they do not conduct mobile fingerprinting on the public.

Key Numbers

- There are 45 territorial police forces and 3 special police forces in the United Kingdom.[2]

- Seventeen forces refused or did not respond to our FOIs.[3]

- Twenty-seven police forces responded to our FOI request. More than half use mobile biometric fingerprint scanning technology (18) with four more in the process of acquiring the software with the potential to start scanning in a year.

- Only seven of responding police forces have no plans to use it in the future.[4]

- Thirteen police forces who responded to our FOI were using the BSG between March 2019 to June 2020.

- The Metropolitan Police conduct more scans (28,056) than the rest of the country combined (38,702).[5]

- The highest number of scans per area are Met Police (34 in 10,000), Surrey Police (24 in 10,000) Cheshire Police (17 in every 10,000) and Lincolnshire Police (15 in 10,000).

- For every White North European person stopped and scanned in every 10,000 people, 48 Arabic people are scanned on average across the police jurisdictions.[6] Similarly, 14 Black residents are scanned for every White North European, 14 Asian people, almost 4 Chinese people or 2 South East Asian people.

- Focusing on immigration scans, Kent Police overwhelmingly have the highest proportion of immigration arrests (17% of scans led to immigration arrest) and contact with Home Office Command and Control.

- 67% of scans were conducted because details provided were 'doubted or refused.'

- Only five police forces provided data for the reason why someone was scanned. In addition, Surrey Police disclosed 318 checks were made specifically because of an immigration reason.

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[2] 45 police forces in UK: Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cheshire Constabulary, City of London Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary (excluded from FOI), Cleveland, Cumbria Constabulary, Derbyshire, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Durham Constabulary, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, Gwent, Hampshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire Constabulary, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police Service, Ministry of Defense Police (excluded from FOI), Norfolk Constabulary, North Wales, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Police Scotland, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk Constabulary, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, West Mercia, West Midlands, West Yorkshire and Wiltshire police.

[3] Police forces who did not respond to our FOI: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cumbria, Durham, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Sussex, West Midlands, Wiltshire.

[4] Police forces with no plans to implement BGS at the time of our FOI: City of London, Cleveland, Gwent (participated in pilot for 3 months), North Wales, Police Scotland, Warwickshire and West Mercia.

[5] Police forces using BGS: Cheshire, Devon and Cornwall, Dyfed-Powys, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Metropolitan, Merseyside, Norfolk (from June 2020), Northamptonshire, Suffolk (from July 2020), Surrey and West Yorkshire.

[6] When compared proportionately to the number of self-defined Arabic residents in the area.

Key Themes

- Systematic racial bias was evident in every police force that provided race data.

- The majority of police forces are either currently using mobile fingerprint scanners or are in the process of acquiring it.

- The roll out of mobile fingerprint scanners has taken place very quickly with no public consultation or equality impact analysis. See our report on the Public's perception of the Biometric Service Gateway **here** where we demonstrate very little public awareness of the implementation of this technology, a strong opposition to its use (96%) as majority believe it embeds racial profiling.

- Immigration arrests were made using BSG. Our report on the public's perception of BSG (see above) showed that 89% of participants felt police should not have access to the immigration database. The use of this technology disproportionately affects Black and Brown migrant communities leaving them in vulnerable situations as 88% of migrant participants in our **report** said they would not feel safe to go to the police to report a crime or seek help.

- There is no consistency across police forces as to when or why they use this technology. There is no consistent approach to checking fingerprints through the databases. Each police authority implements a different approach with no clear justification or rationale. It is very unclear why police search only the immigration database (IABS) or the police database (IDENT 1) or both.

- England is the only country in the UK that piloted this technology and is in the process of hastily deploying it. Two police forces in Wales piloted the scheme in 2019 and are not continuing its roll out. Police Scotland and North Wales Police emphatically stated they have not and will not use mobile fingerprint scanning.

[1]We excluded two Special Forces namely the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and Ministry of Defence because they do not conduct mobile fingerprinting on the public.

Recommendations

1. The use of mobile fingerprint scanners should immediately cease until equality impact assessments have been completed with rigour.

2. If or when mobile fingerprinting scanners are reinstated, race data should be closely monitored with public oversight (with a particular focus on those who are most directly affected).

3. Police forces must implement recommendations from the **MacPherson report[7]** to address institutional racism within it as well as the suggestions made in Liberty and Southall **Black Sisters' police super complaint[8]**.

4. The Home Office must apply the recommendations made by the **Windrush Lessons Learned Review[9]**.

5. Rigorous and comprehensive consultations with the public should be undertaken to ascertain whether they agree with the deployment of this technology and in what circumstances they consent to its use. **Reports [10]** such as the one carried out by RJN and Yorkshire resists show that 96% of the public oppose the use of this technology. Consultations should be independent and led by community advocates and grassroots organisations.

6. Police officers should have no direct link to the immigration database first and foremost because it undermines the objective of policing to serve all residents. Second, mistakes have consistently been found in immigration information putting the police at risk of legal challenge.

7. Police should institute a 'firewall' between victims and witnesses of crime so residents feel safe to report crime.

8. Remove "immigration control" exemption in Schedule 2, Part 1, paragraph 4 of the Data Protection Act 2018[11], which allows data processors to set aside an individual's GDPR data protection rights if fulfilling those rights would prejudice "the maintenance of effective immigration control" or "the investigation or detection of activities that would undermine the maintenance of effective immigration control."

9. Fund community advocates and grassroots organisations who are supporting racially minoritised individuals and migrant communities, particularly if they have been victims of hate crimes.

10. End Hostile Environment policies which disproportionately affect Black and Brown migrant communities.

[7] UK Government (1999) 'The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny' (Accessed 02/04/21) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf

[8] UK Government (2020) 'Police super-complaints: police data sharing for immigration purposes' (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-data-sharing-for-immigration-purposes-a-super-complaint

[9] Williams W (2020) 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review' 19th March 2020 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874022/6.5577_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_WEB_v2.pdf

[10] Racial Justice Network and Yorkshire Resists (2021) Public's Perception on the Biometric Services Gateway (Mobile Fingerprint App) January 2021 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://racialjusticenetwork277579038.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/report-public-perception-biometric-gateway.pdf

[11] UK Government (2018) Data Protection Act 2018 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted

Introduction
Police and Home Office cooperation in a Hostile Environment

Historically the UK Government has made the British Isles a hostile place for newcomers. However, since 2010, the UK Government made this an explicit aim of the immigration system.

The then Home Secretary, Theresa May's stated objective was to make the UK a hostile environment for migrants making life so difficult that they would voluntarily leave the country[12]. Since 2010, this aim has come to encompass all areas of policy-making and beyond. Banks, teachers, landlords, doctors, nurses and universities now have a duty to report someone to the Home Office. Immigration concerns have come to supersede all other professional duties. The hostile environment has made us all into border guards.

Police have been at the forefront of immigration enforcement expansion into everyday life in the UK. 'Operation Nexus' is the name of the interagency agreement between the Metropolitan Police and the Home Office, first implemented in 2012. It has now been rolled out across the UK, fundamentally changing the UK's approach to deportation. The aim, according to the Home Office[13], is to 'improve the management of foreign nationals and foreign national offenders (FNOs)' by improving joint working between the Home Office and the police. It comprises two strands. Under 'Nexus Custody', immigration officers are embedded in police stations in order to check the immigration status of 'foreign nationals', identify 'illegal entrants suitable for detention' and refer them for further action. Under 'Nexus High Harm', individuals 'deemed to be a threat to the public' are referred by the police to Immigration Enforcement for removal. In practice, UK residents have been deported for petty convictions as well as 'non-convictions' such as withdrawn charges or acquittals (Griffiths and Morgan, 2018). Operation Nexus has been criticised for removing the rights of non-citizens and facilitating their deportation, including those with no criminal convictions (De Noronha 2020).

Moreover, the hostile environment policy has introduced a range of measures (for example through the Immigration Act 2014[14]) making it more difficult for non-citizens to legally challenge immigration decisions. By implementing a new process for referral for removal, Operation Nexus makes it particularly difficult to challenge allegations and 'denies protections of the criminal justice system' (Yeo 2018, Luqmani Thompson and Partners, 2014).

NGOs, academics, lawyers and others have raised a number of concerns about the increasing cooperation between the police and the Home Office. First, it targets individuals who cannot be considered to be 'high harm', such as rough sleepers and those with no criminal convictions. Second, NPCC guidance [15] (2018) states that if status of 'no leave to remain' comes to light through intelligence research on an individual, they should be referred to Immigration Enforcement. Yet this is not a general statutory duty of police officers (Morris, 2020). In prioritising immigration enforcement, police are neglecting their duty to safeguard victims and witnesses of crime, and are not focusing their resources on prosecuting perpetrators of crimes. Third, there is evidence that these new practices undermine trust in the police and deter victims and witnesses of crime with insecure immigration status from reporting crimes. It is more difficult for victims to access support and leave abusive situations. Non-reporting prevents police from investigating crimes including domestic abuse, modern slavery and trafficking, which in turn increases the risk of exploitation and abuse of victims, for example by intimate partners or landlords (McIlwaine et al., 2019).

Fourth, specific concerns have also been raised about data-sharing by the police with the Home Office resulting in a super-complaint by Liberty and Southall Black Sisters (Justice Inspectorates, 2020)[16]. The investigation found 'many inconsistencies in police practice and a lack of clarity in policy' and that 'police officers are not always clear on their priorities on safeguarding victims and immigration enforcement' (Justice Inspectorates 2020: 11). They recommended 'a review of the law and policy in this area, to provide clarity to police on their priorities' and establishment of 'safe reporting pathways, informed by the realities of victims' experiences, that reflect existing laws on everyone's right to data protection', as well as for victims of domestic abuse 'a separation between the police response to a victim's report of domestic abuse and the handling of their immigration status' (ibid.: 6).

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[12] The Telegraph (2012) 'Theresa May Interview: "We're Going to Give Illegal Migrants a Really Hostile Reception".' (Accessed 02/04/21) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/9291483/Theresa-May-interview-Were-going-to-give-illegal-migrants-a-really-hostile-reception.html

[13] Home Office (2017) Operation Nexus – High Harm (Version 1.0) (Accessed 02/04/21) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/599878/Operation-Nexus-High-Harm-v1.pdf

[14] UK Government (2014) The Immigration Act 2014 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/contents/enacted

[15] National Police Chiefs' Council (2018) Information Exchange regarding Victims of Crime with No Leave to Remain (Accessed 02/04/21) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767718/Appendix_1.pdf

[16] Justice Inspectorates (2020) Safe to share? Report on Liberty and Southall Black Sisters' super-complaint (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-data-sharing-for-immigration-purposes-a-super-complaint

Fifth, concerned about the impact on migrant victims of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the lack of institutional protection, voluntary sector organisations have campaigned for amendments to the recent Domestic Abuse Act [17]. The Joint Committee made a series of recommendations, including extending the rights of migrant women with 'no recourse to public funds' and establishing 'a firewall separating the reporting of a crime and access to support from immigration control'. However, the government following its Review rejected these, and the House of Commons then voted against legislative amendments to the Bill[18]. This was despite concerns raised by the House of Lords that '27 out of 45 police forces (60%) in England and Wales share victims' details with the Home Office prioritising immigration control over victims' safety and access to justice'.[19] The House of Lords called for 'the incorporation of a clear statutory obligation which prevents public authorities and other support services from sharing data with the Home Office for the purpose of immigration control, to ensure that safe reporting is available to all women, regardless of their immigration status' (2020: 5)[20].

Finally, it is worth noting that Home Office figures indicate the annual number of enforced removals of non-EU nationals has fallen over the last decade, 'from around 14,900 in 2010, to 2,733 in the year ending June 2020', and removals of EU nationals have halved to 2,571 between 2017 and 2020[21]. As Griffiths (2017) has observed, it is therefore questionable whether the Hostile Environment policy has achieved its aim of addressing unauthorised mobility.

The next phase of the hostile environment seems to be digitizing immigration enforcement, using technology to increase further the reach of immigration enforcement. One area this is taking place is sharing immigration databases with public services and placing a duty on frontline workers to check immigration status before delivering services.

In this case, police are acquiring new technology to be able to check immigration databases when they routinely stop and search residents in the course of everyday policing. This is alarming for two main reasons. First, the Windrush scandal has shown Home Office data is replete with fatal mistakes[22]. If police forces use this data, it opens their organisations to legal challenge. Second, there has been no equality impact assessment of this technology, no guidelines to ensure its consistent and fair use, no consultation with the general public and no systematic monitoring or data collection.

The link with biometrics further extends the links between the police and the Home Office, more fully entwining the idea of migration with criminalisation (we can see the effects of this in the USA). These contracts also involve large private sector companies. For example, the Home Office paid £96.4 million to Leidos,[23] a US based Fortune 500 'defence, intelligence and homeland security' company.[24] This contract involves converging the UK Government's police and immigration databases. The criminalisation of migration is being embedded in the digital infrastructure of the Home Office.

[17] UK Government (2021) Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2709

[18] Southall Black Sisters and Latin American Women's Rights Service (2020) Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Review Findings (Accessed 02/04/21) https://southallblacksisters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SBS-and-LAWRS-joint-response-to-the-Migrant-Victims-of-Domestic-Violence-Review.pdf

[19] House of Lords (2021) Domestic Abuse Bill. Volume 809: debated on Monday 1 February 2021 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-02-01/debates/3D604C08-7BD7-46DF-A1F6-71B8A7DB91B5/DomesticAbuseBill

[20] House of Lords (2020) Domestic Abuse Bill Briefing on Safe Reporting Mechanisms and End to Data-Sharing. September 2020 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmpublic/DomesticAbuse/memo/DAB19.htm

[21] Home Office (2020) National Statistics. How many people are detained or returned? 24th September 2020 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned

[22] Williams W (2020) 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review' 19th March 2020 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874022/6.5577_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_WEB_v2.pdf

[23] Tussell (2019) 'Award Notice for Home Office, London, United Kingdom' (Accessed 02/04/21) https://client.tussell.com/award_notices/397530-0dc8e28b78f4dcb5d9e1cf48633d858d-strategic-central-bureau-platform-scbp

[24] Leidos (2019) 'Home Office appoints Leidos UK to deliver transformation of its biometrics platform' 1st October 2019 (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.leidos.com/insights/home-office-appoints-leidos-uk-deliver-transformation-its-biometrics-platform

STOP AND SCAN
– Context, process and developments

In light of these developments, RJN and Yorkshire Resists have raised concerns about the recent roll out of a mobile fingerprint scanner. Used in conjunction with an app on police officers' phones, this technology has led to the new practice of 'stop and scan'.
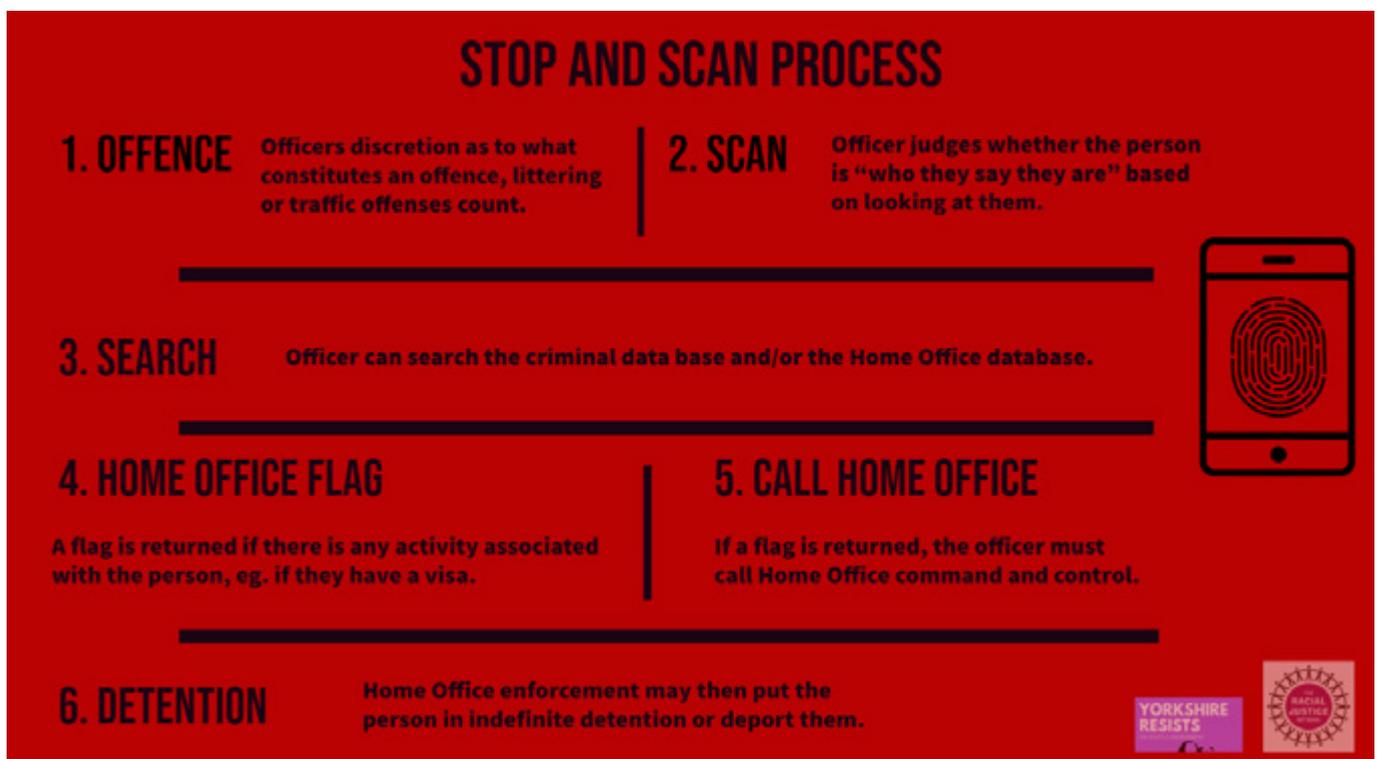
As described in our previous report (RJN, 2021) mobile biometric devices are handheld fingerprint scanners that police officers can use to check, on the spot, a person's identity by matching the image of the fingerprint taken against the IDENT1 criminal record database and the Home Office IABS database without taking the individual into custody. The scanners can be connected to any mobile phone or tablet that also runs a corresponding app that allows the biometric databases to be searched. The use of these scanners is regulated under Section 61(6A) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)[25] and further outlined in the PACE Code D (2017)[26]. Section 61 PACE and Code D also provide officers with the power to take a fingerprint by force by virtue of Section 117 of the Act. The use of the scanners differs from Stop and Search in that officers can only scan the fingerprints of an individual in the case that:

- An offence has been committed (or suspected to have been committed).

- Either no name is provided by the individual OR the name provided is suspected to be false.

As stated in our previous **report**, anyone suspected of committing a crime or 'lying' about their identity can be stopped in the street and have their fingerprint scanned on the spot and searched in the Police and Immigration databases (RJN 2021: 10). Police officers use their own discretion to determine how authentic or reliable a given identity is. Accordingly, this is a subjective judgement that has the potential to lead to even further discrimination against, for example, trans or non-binary people within Black and Brown communities.

Anyone with a migrant status (someone on a visa, with Indefinite Leave to Remain, asylum seekers, refugees or precarious migrant status) will have their fingerprint in the Home Office immigration database, and so will trigger an alarm on the app if scanned by the police. The police are obliged to contact the Home Office to clarify if there is a need to detain a person due to an immigration issue.

There has been very little public information on this new development and no discussion of the ethical implications following the pilot in West Yorkshire in 2018. There are fears that migrants with insecure immigration status could be detained or deported for minor offences, and that racialized or minoritised individuals will be targeted for 'stop and scan' searches and treated as potential criminals.

STOP AND SCAN PROCESS

1. OFFENCE Officers discretion as to what constitutes an offence, littering or traffic offenses count.

2. SCAN Officer judges whether the person is "who they say they are" based on looking at them.

3. SEARCH Officer can search the criminal data base and/or the Home Office database.

4. HOME OFFICE FLAG A flag is returned if there is any activity associated with the person, eg. if they have a visa.

5. CALL HOME OFFICE If a flag is returned, the officer must call Home Office command and control.

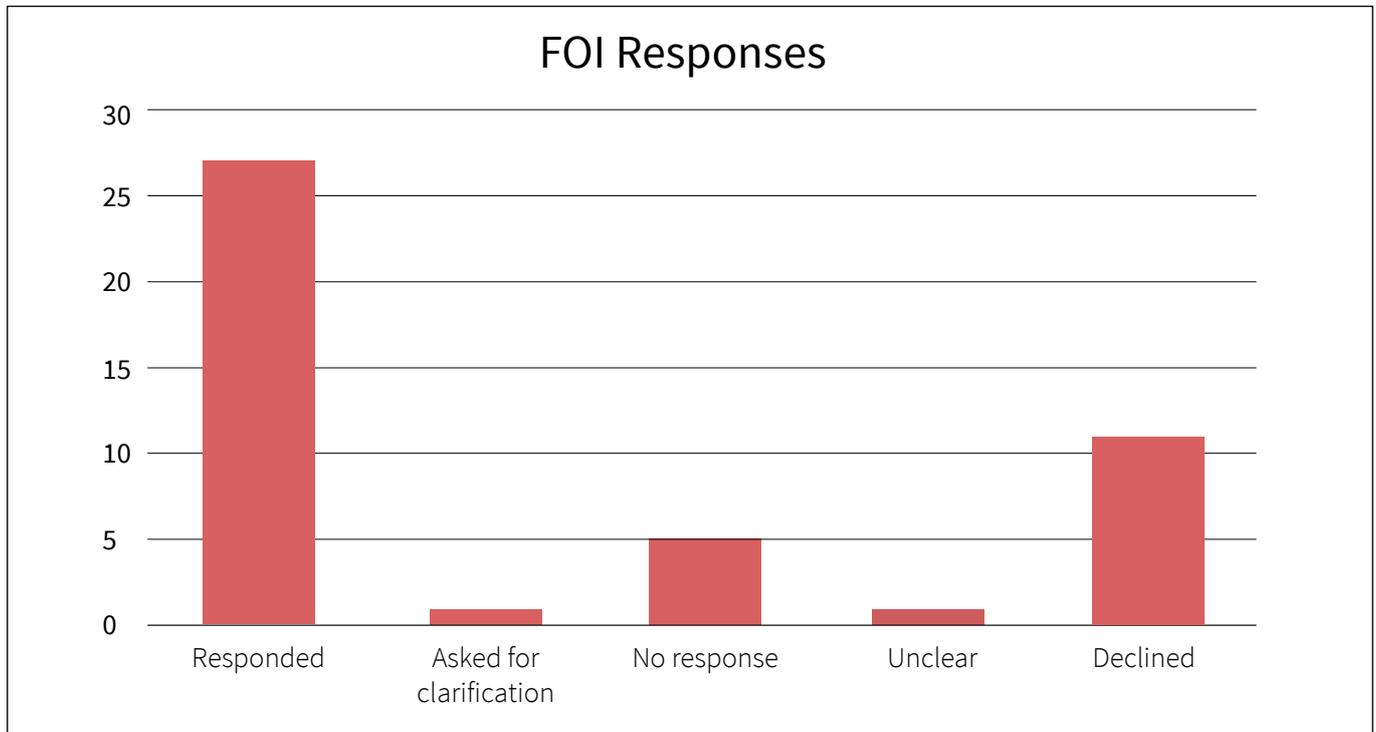**6. DETENTION** Home Office enforcement may then put the person in indefinite detention or deport them.

[25]UK Government (1984) 'Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) codes of practice (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.gov.uk/guidance/police-and-criminal-evidence-act-1984-pace-codes-of-practice

[26]UK Government (2017) 'PACE Code D 2017' (Accessed 02/04/21) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pace-code-d-2017

Methodology

We sent an FOI request to all police forces in the UK (England, Wales and Scotland) except two special police forces (Civil Nuclear Constabulary and Ministry of Defence). This resulted in requests to forty-four territorial police forces and one special police force (British Transport Police).

FOI Responses

Category	Value
Responded	27
Asked for clarification	1
No response	5
Unclear	1
Declined	11

It was clear from the responses that data collection on the use of technology is patchy and inconsistent. There is no systematic monitoring or evaluation of this technology nationally or within individual police forces. The primary stated justification for the deployment of mobile fingerprint scanning technology is 'efficiency'. However, it is unclear how police forces can assert this claim if they are not collecting or evaluating data. Moreover, given the potential seriousness of the use of this technology and the lack of public debate and consultation, it was concerning eleven police forces refused to answer our request and five police forces did not respond.

Police use of Biometric Service Gateway

Twenty-seven police forces responded to our FOI request. More than half use mobile biometric fingerprint scanning technology (18) with four more in the process of acquiring the software with the potential to start scanning in a year.

The data suggests there has been a hasty roll out of the technology. West Yorkshire Police began using the mobile fingerprinting devices in a three-month pilot and then rolled out the technology from 2018 along with Surrey Police who have also been using the technology since October 2018.

Kent Police and Devon Police began their widespread use of the technology from May and August 2019 respectively. The British Transport Police planned to have the technology rolled out by the third quarter of 2020 along with Norfolk and Suffolk Police. Dorset and Hampshire aim to roll out the technology in 2021 following Home Office accreditation. Avon and Somerset, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Thames Valley Police are in the process of enquiring about implementation and acquiring the technology.

Police Scotland were the only police force that actively stated that they would not be using the technology but did not provide justification for this decision. Gwent Police and Dyfed-Powys participated in a three-month pilot from September to November 2019 but stated that they will not be rolling out the technology across their police force. North Wales reported that they have not used the fingerprint scanning technology. **England is the only country in the UK that continues to use this technology.**
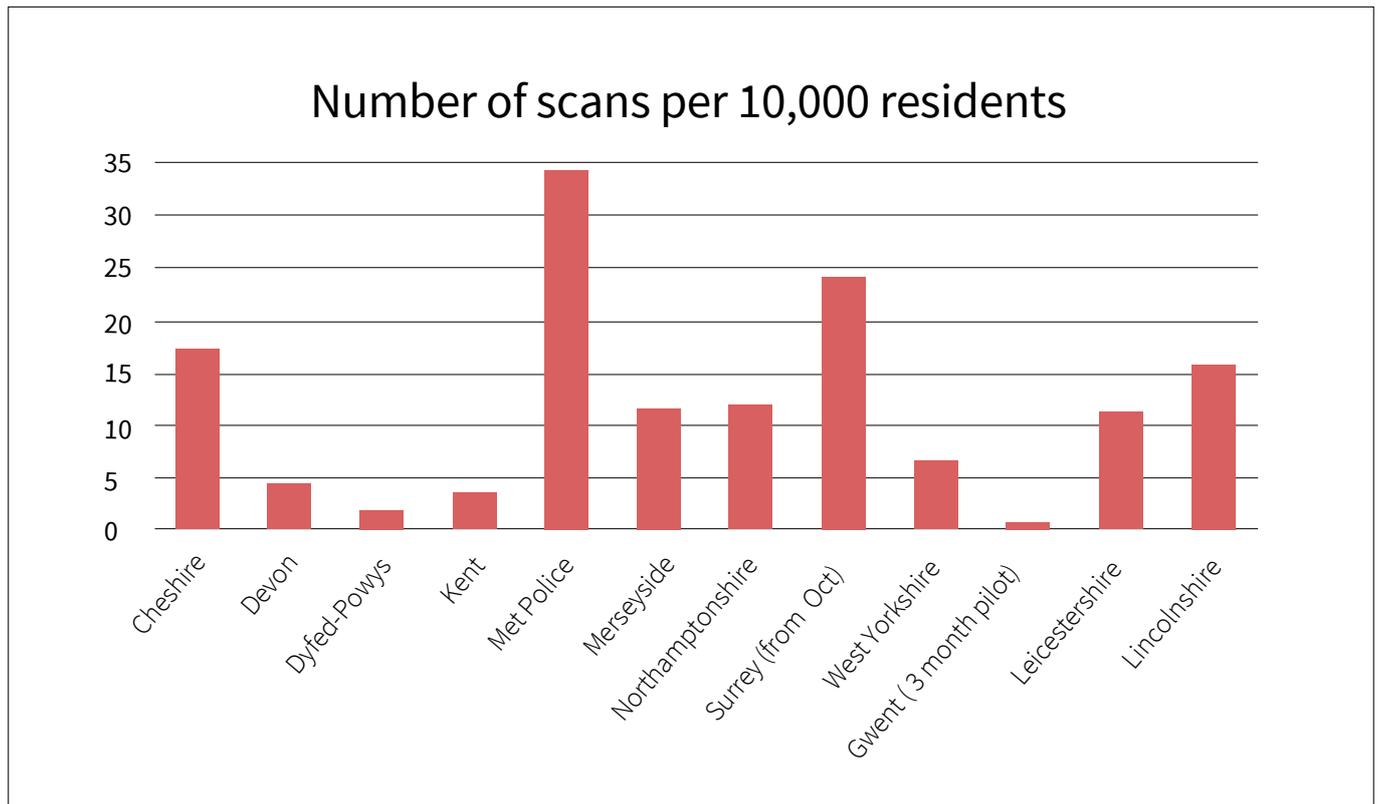
Biometric use and start date		Acquiring technology	No biometric use
West Yorkshire	2018	Avon and Somerset	North Wales
Surrey	2018	Thames Valley	Police Scotland
Kent	2019	South Yorkshire	Warwickshire
Dyfed-Powys	2019 (pilot)	Staffordshire	West Mercia
Gwent	2019 (pilot)		City of London
Devon and Cornwall	2019		Cleveland
British Transport Police	2020		
Norfolk	2020		
Suffolk	2020		
Hampshire	2021		
Dorset	2021		
Metropolitan	No record		
Derbyshire	No record		
Leicestershire	No record		
Lincolnshire	No record		
Merseyside	No record		
Northamptonshire	No record		
Cheshire	No record		

Number of scans

The Metropolitan Police are executing the overwhelming majority of scans. More than 38,000 scans took place between March 2019 and June 2020 with the Metropolitan Police accounting for more scans (28,056) than the rest of the country combined.

The highest number of scans per area are Metropolitan Police (34 in 10,000), Surrey Police (24 in 10,000) Cheshire Police (17 in every 10,000) and Lincolnshire Police (15 in 10,000).

Number of scans per 10,000 residents

Area	Scans per 10,000
Cheshire	17.5
Devon	4.5
Dyfed-Powys	2
Kent	3.7
Met Police	34.3
Merseyside	11.7
Northamptonshire	12
Surrey (from Oct)	24.2
West Yorkshire	6.7
Gwent (3 month pilot)	0.8
Leicestershire	11.4
Lincolnshire	16

There is no consistent approach to checking fingerprints through these databases. Each police authority implements a different approach with no clear justification or rationale. It is very unclear why police search only the immigration database (IABS) or the police database (IDENT 1) or both.

Police force	IABS (immigration)	IDENT 1 (police)	Both	Total
Cheshire	605	604	0	1,209
Devon	18	232	82	332
Dyfed-Powys (3-month pilot)	N.D. [27]	N.D.	N.D.	87
Kent	113	398	0	511
Met Police	N.D.	N.D.	N.D.	28,056
Merseyside	495	1,103	0	1,598
Northamptonshire	29	303	482	814
Surrey (from Oct 2019)	1,289	1,455	0	2,744
West Yorkshire	N.D.	N.D.	1,472	1,472
Gwent (3-month pilot)	N.D.	N.D.	39	39
Leicestershire	N.D.	N.D.	727	727
Lincolnshire	8	578	527	1,113

For those that did provide disaggregated data between checks on the immigration database and the police database, only West Yorkshire Police stated that they routinely conduct both checks. This seems to be common practice in other police forces (Dyfed-Pows, Gwent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire Police) but it was not a stated guideline. **No police forces disclosed the justification for their approach.**

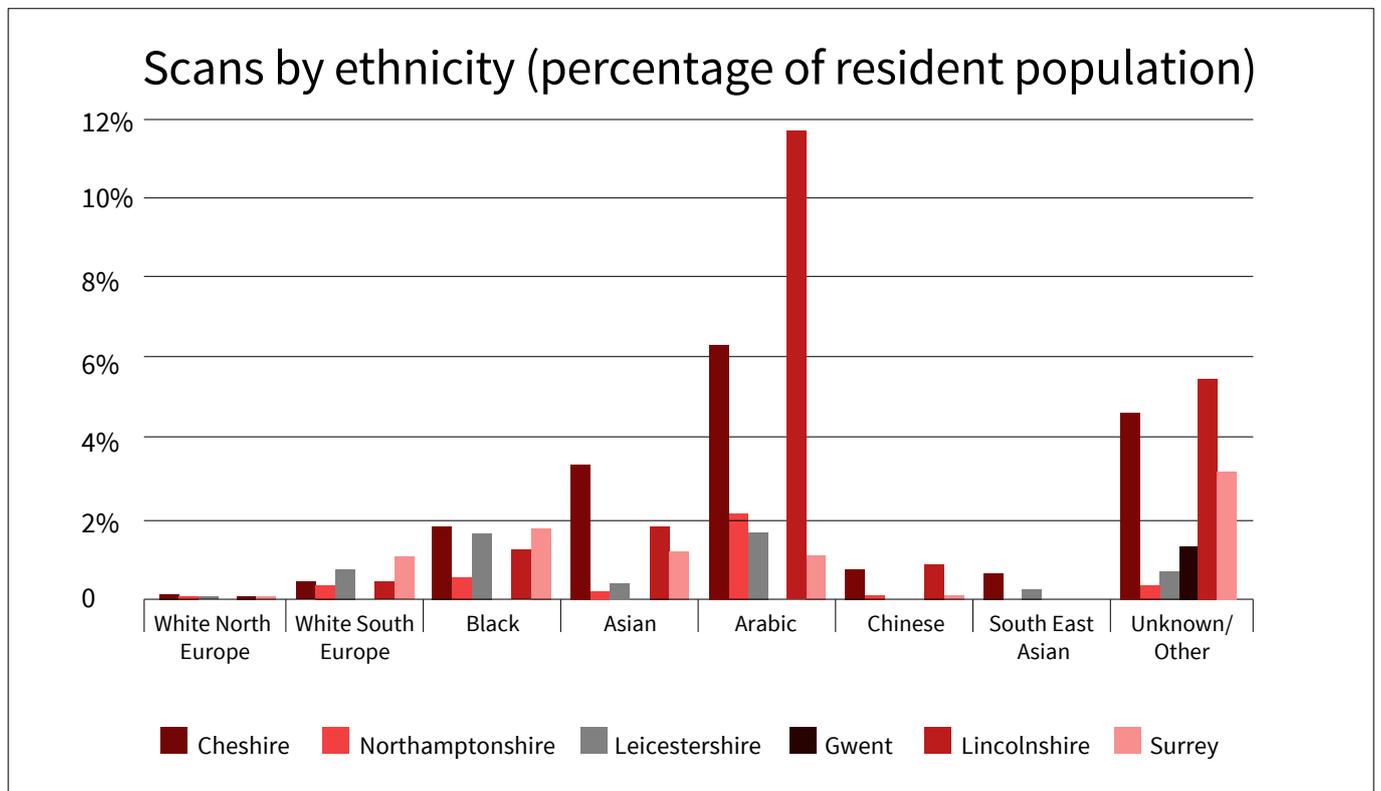Percentage immigration scans of total scans
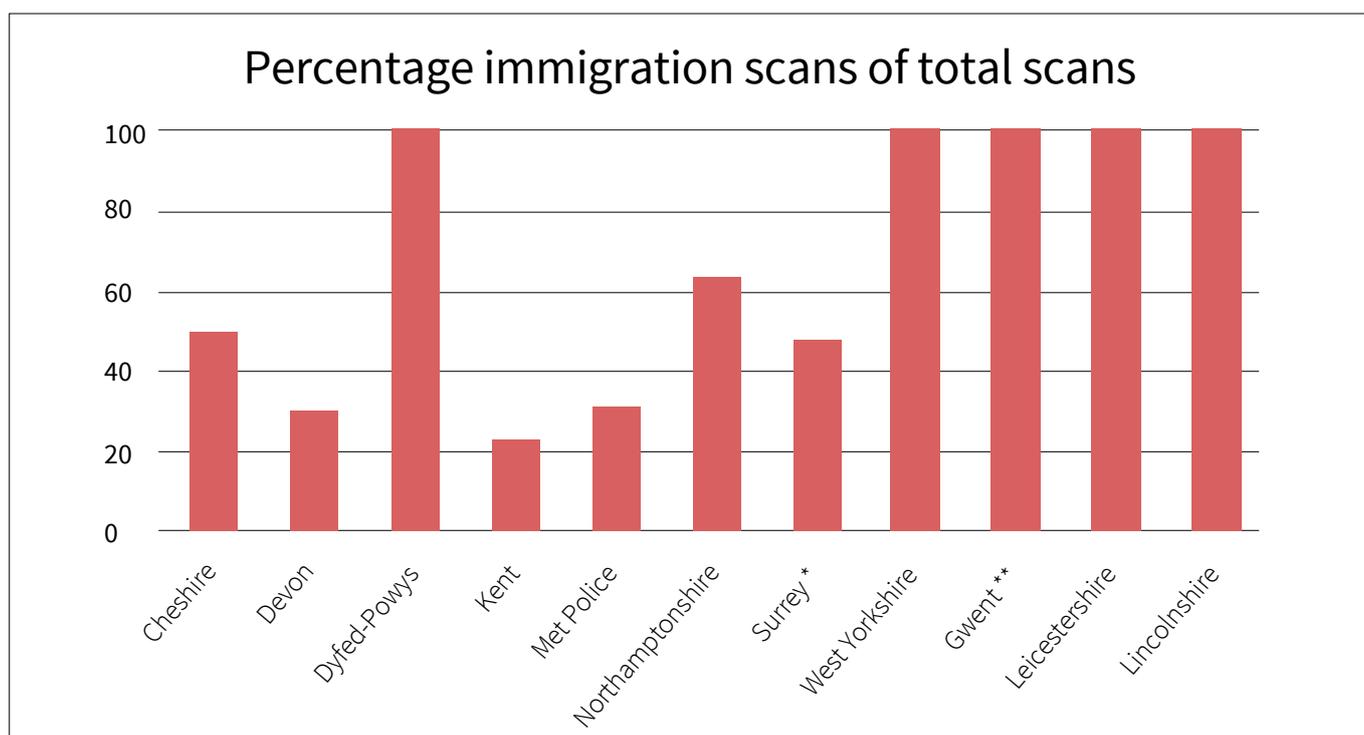
Immigration

Focusing on immigration scans, **Kent Police overwhelmingly have the highest proportion of immigration arrests** and contact with Home Office Command and Control.

Police force	Total immigration scans (IABS only and IABS+IDENT 1)	No. arrests from immigration scans	% arrests from scans
Kent	113	19	17%
West Yorkshire	1,472	18	1%
Gwent	39	1	3%
Lincolnshire	535	6	1%

Ethnicity

While in absolute numbers White North European have been scanned the most, when compared to the percentage of resident population by ethnicity[28], White Europeans consistently have the lowest rate of being stopped and scanned. **Those who were defined as 'Arabic' consistently have the highest rates of being scanned across all police forces.** For example, the equivalent of almost 12 percent of the Arabic population residing in Lincolnshire has been scanned by the police[29].
Those defined as Asian and Black also have consistently high percentages of being stopped and scanned across the six police forces that provided disaggregated ethnicity data. It is alarming given the long history of well-documented racial profiling and racial bias in police stop and search that some police forces are not collecting ethnicity information in order to monitor their execution of these scans. Kent Police confirmed that they do not record ethnicity data of those scanned, whilst other police forces did not answer this question.
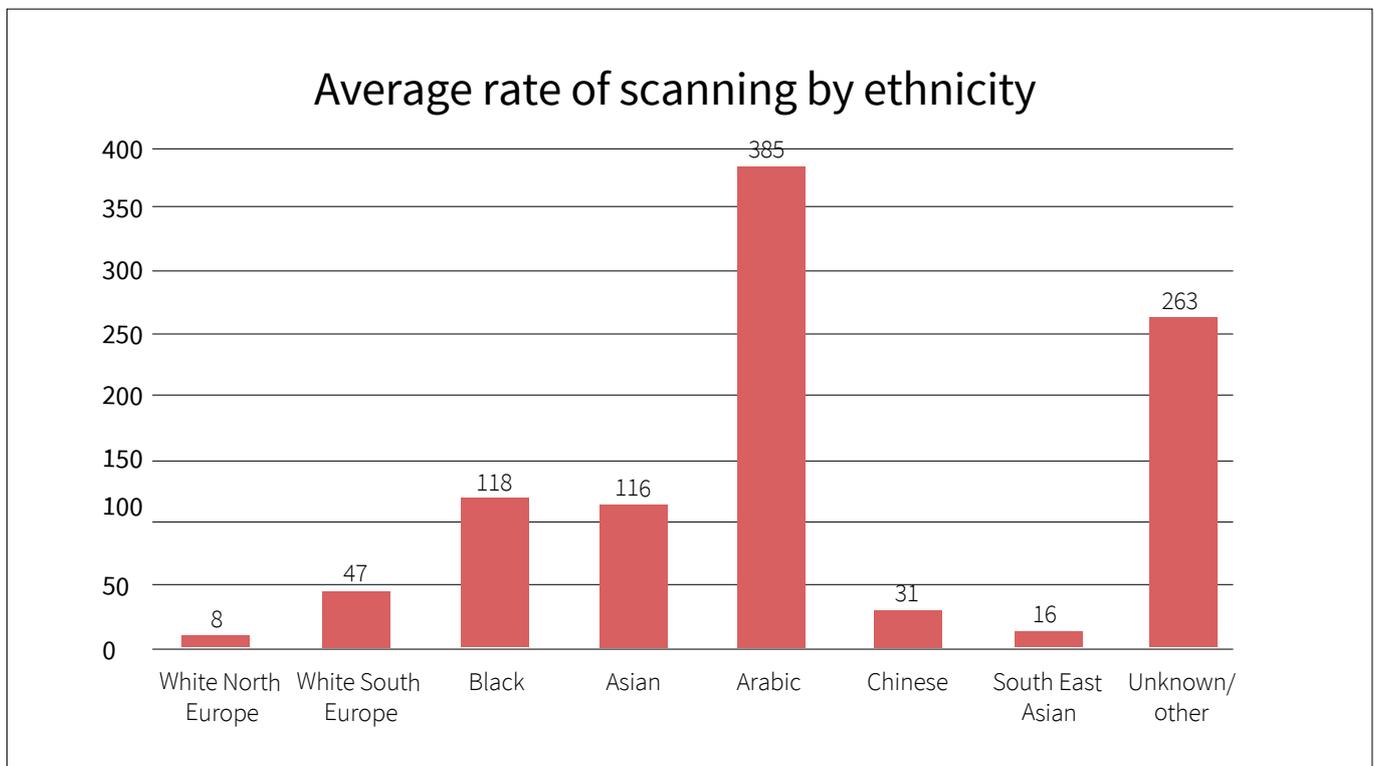

Scans by ethnicity (percentage of resident population)

Legend: Cheshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Gwent, Lincolnshire, Surrey

[28] Data from Census 2011

[29] It is not clear from the data whether the same person has been stopped and scanned multiple times.

When compared to the self-defined ethnicity of residents in each jurisdiction[30], 'White North Europeans' had between a 0.001 and 0.00001 (0%) chance of having their fingerprints scanned and checked through the immigration or police database. Whereas all other ethnic groups had between a 1% and 12% chance of having their fingerprints scanned and checked through either the immigration database, police database or both.
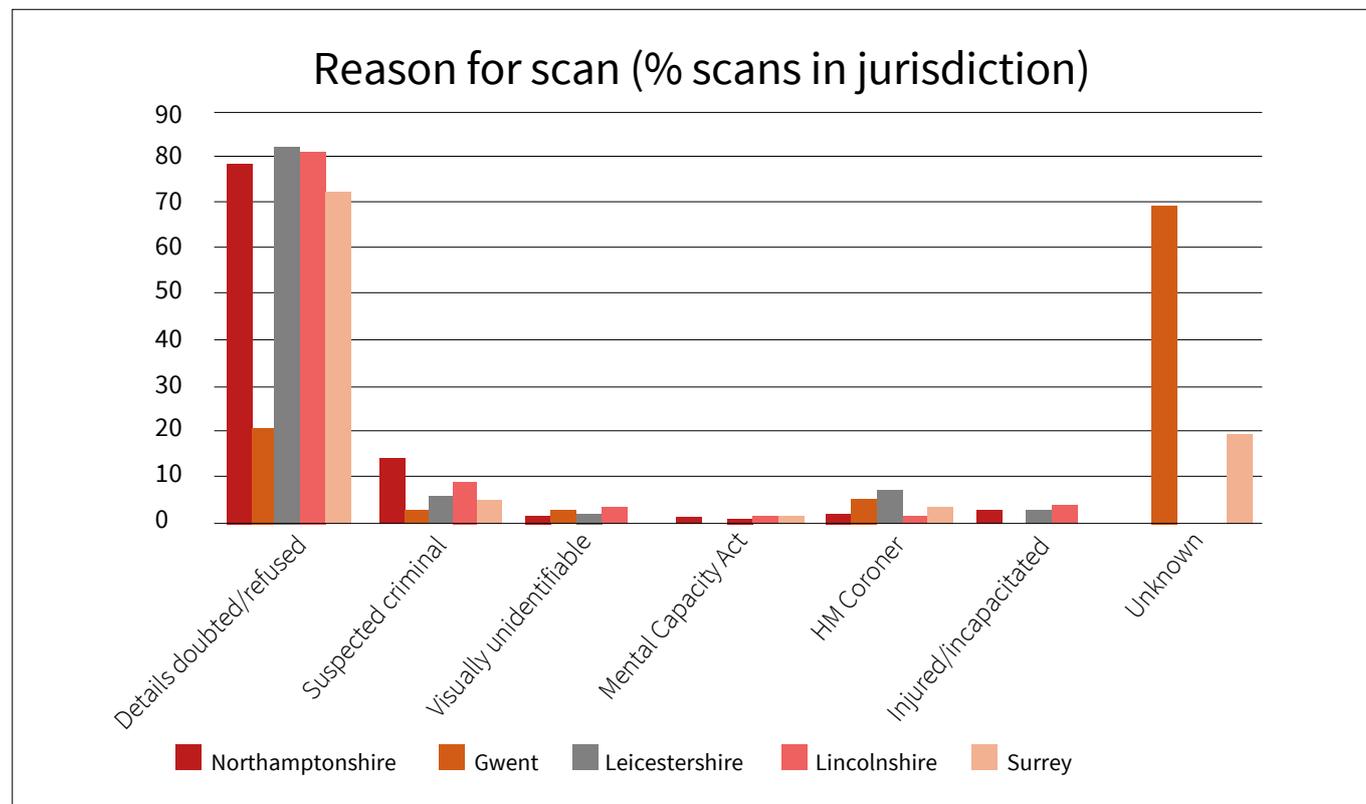
For every White North European person stopped and scanned in every 10,000 people, 48 Arabic people are scanned on average across the police jurisdictions[31]. Similarly, 14 Black residents are scanned for every White North European, 14 Asian people, almost 4 Chinese people or two South East Asian people. **These stark figures reveal the extent of racial bias embedded in the use of this technology. This data highlights the urgency of disaggregated ethnic data collection in the use of this technology and the need for constant monitoring and public oversight.**

Average rate of scanning by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Value
White North Europe	8
White South Europe	47
Black	118
Asian	116
Arabic	385
Chinese	31
South East Asian	16
Unknown/other	263

[30] This data is taken from the 2011 Census.

[31] When compared proportionately to the number of self-defined Arabic residents in the area.

Very few police forces disaggregated the reason why they executed a stop and scan. Only five police forces provided data for this question. In addition to the results detailed in the table below, Surrey Police disclosed 318 checks were made specifically because of an immigration reason. **This indicates that the police have fully taken on board immigration and border guard duties and immigration alone can be a justification for police enforcement.** The link between immigration and criminalisation is being exacerbated by scanning technology.

Reason for scan (% scans in jurisdiction)

Legend: Northamptonshire, Gwent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Surrey

Categories: Details doubted/refused, Suspected criminal, Visually unidentifiable, Mental Capacity Act, HM Coroner, Injured/incapacitated, Unknown

Conclusion

We are alarmed and concerned about the hasty and unconsidered roll out of mobile fingerprint scanning. First, the Windrush Horror has most notably shown Home Office data is replete with fatal mistakes. If police use this data, it opens their organisations to legal challenges, to say nothing of the lives that are torn apart. Second, there has been no equality impact assessment of this technology, no guidelines to ensure its consistent and fair use, no consultation with the general public and no systematic monitoring or data collection. The main argument for the use of this data (by the private technology companies that are lobbying for its deployment) is 'efficiency'. However, there is no systematic monitoring or evaluation of the scheme and therefore no basis on which efficiency can be claimed.

The report has also shown dramatic racial inequalities in the use of the technology. What is perhaps more alarming are the police forces who are not collecting this data. In light of this report **we call on all police forces to accurately keep race and ethnicity data and consistently monitor this data with community oversight.** It is not acceptable that racially minoritised residents are more likely to be stopped and scanned by those who are identified as 'White North European'.

Moreover, the stated aim of the police is to serve all residents in their jurisdiction. The recent debates regarding the Domestic Abuse Bill have made it clear that **police cooperation with immigration enforcement reduces the likelihood that victims and witnesses of crimes will come forward.** There is also an impending danger of the use of this technology being further used against protesters, demonstrators and other marginalised groups such as racially minoritised, sex workers, lower income, Roma and Traveller communities who are particularly vulnerable to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill currently being tried as law in 2021. We urge the police to consider the far-reaching detrimental ramifications to community trust in the police.[32] In particular, we call on all police forces who currently execute or are planning to execute this technology to complete a rigorous public consultation of the increased use of biometric data and data sharing within their everyday practice.

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[32] Police failed to fully investigate cases of missing and murdered men and one victim was never reported to the police because of fears of family members about their immigration status https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-47046262

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