

F/T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

John Finnie MSP, Convener  
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing  
justicecommittee@parliament.scot

Ar faidhle/Our ref: 202000015627  
09 March 2020

Dear Convener

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Sub-Committee's report on 'Facial recognition: how policing in Scotland makes use of this technology'.

Technological advances in biometrics have brought huge benefits to police and other justice agencies in detecting, preventing and prosecuting crime. The potential use of live facial recognition technology within policing in Scotland does however raise a number of ethical and human rights considerations. I am determined to ensure that the approach to biometric data used for the purposes of policing and criminal justice in Scotland is not only lawful but also effective and ethical.

I committed to forming an independently-chaired reference group to scope the possible legal and ethical issues arising from emerging technological developments in policing. Scoping work into the remit and composition of the group continues, and I anticipate making an announcement in the coming weeks. In addition to this, the new Commissioner and the code of practice proposed under the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill will help maintain public confidence in how biometric data and technologies, including facial recognition, are to be used by the Police in Scotland.

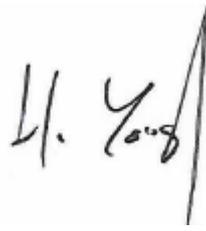
I will carefully consider the Sub-Committee's recommendations and look forward to providing further evidence on such matters at its meeting on 30 April 2020.

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG  
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

I will provide a full response to the report before that meeting.



**HUMZA YOUSAF**

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

Taigh Naomh Anndrais, Rathad Regent, Dùn Èideann EH1 3DG  
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

