

The Home Office's National Data Platforms

In the year to March 2019, the new National ANPR Service will roll out across all police forces (it is currently used by one).

As it rolls out, there is the opportunity for those police forces to *easily* change their internal processes (which have to change anyway) to record, when seeking senior approval for an action, or creating a charging file, whether the ANPR service was used. That gives the ability, at almost no extra work, to measure the use and effectiveness of national data services run by the Home Office.

Alongside ANPR, there is the biometric database, and the communications data processes - both also national services which lack a clear evidence base for use, even as vast sums are spent on building and running them.

The debate around the Investigatory Powers Bill (previously the Communications Data Bill) was recognised to have almost no evidence beyond anecdote on how communications data was used outside of terrorism cases. The data that was created for the 2012 Bill was created at significant expense and effort, and was neither systematic nor useful.

Oversight requires effective insight into how these systems are used in practice - and there is almost nothing systematic that shows whether this is an effective use of public funds being effectively used...

It was not controversial for the Investigatory Powers Commissioner to be able to see statistics on how the ANPR data are used by the intelligence agencies. It should be no more controversial, as it is entirely equivalent, for the equivalent statistics on police usage of ANPR to be available to the Surveillance Camera Commissioner.

The tenure of the previous Home Secretary has been one of minimal accountability and a lack of scrutiny of clearly flawed decisions. When that tenure ends, there will be some discussion of whether choices in retrospect turned out to be wise. This debate should be informed by an evidence base of facts on usage, and not just opinion.

As we move into an ever more digital future, there must be oversight of lawful use of data platforms.

Probing amendments:

Justification: Together, these amendments allow statutory Commissioners, such as the Surveillance Camera Commissioner, to request and receive statistics on data processed within their remit.

Insert at end of clause 56:

(4) Statistics on usage and outcomes shall be regularly reported to the relevant Commissioner upon request.

Insert after 62 (4) (c):

(d) any relevant Commissioner carrying out their statutory function;