

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 230914015

Thank you for your request dated 14 September 2023 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

I would like to submit a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 regarding the Homicide Prediction Project that is currently being developed within the MoJ Data and Analysis Directorate.

1. **Specifically, I would like the following information in relation to the Homicide Prediction Project:**
 - a. **What is the stated purpose of the project?**
 - b. **What will the predictions or risk assessments from the project be used for?**
 - c. **Is there an end date to the pilot?**
 - d. **Will the predictions from the pilot project be given to police for use in operational policing?**
 - e. **What types of data are being used to predict or calculate the risk of homicide or very serious violence (e.g. PNC criminal history data, nationality data, ethnicity data, education data, employment data, immigration status data, relationship status data, financial data)?**
 - f. **Which other agencies or parties are you working with on this project (e.g. government agencies or departments, police forces, other law enforcement authorities, private companies, local councils)?**
 - g. **Have Data Protection Impact Assessments and/or Equality Impact Assessments been carried out in relation to this project? If yes, please provide these.**
 - h. **Please provide any available internal analysis documents or other documentation in relation to the project, such as project outline, strategy or planning documents.**

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested and I have provided it as detailed below for each part of your request in the form of narrative

explanation and by reference to documents which have also been supplied as part of this response:

Part a:

The project is a data science pilot to:

- Review offender characteristics that increase the risk of committing homicide.
- Explore alternative and innovative data science techniques to risk assessment of homicide.
- Explore the power of MOJ datasets in relation to assessment of homicide risk.
- Explore the additional power of the Police National Computer dataset in relation to assessing homicide risk.
- Explore the additional power of local police data in relation to assessing homicide risk.
- Provide evidence towards improving risk assessment of serious crime, and ultimately contribute to protecting the public via better analysis.

Part b:

This work is for research purposes only, no direct operational or policy changes will come as a result. The assessments will not be used at an individual level and so will not affect any person's journey through the justice system. The analysis will be used to answer three questions:

- Is there evidence that supports the use of more advanced data science techniques than the current RSR¹-like predictors, which use logistic regression?
- Is there evidence that supports the need to use local police data as well as Ministry of Justice data when predicting serious violence offending?
- What police force level data are available that may support a better understanding of offenders' risk, including differences between different forces, and should Ministry of Justice prioritise future collaborations with local police forces?

Part c:

The currently projected end date of this work is 31/12/2024.

Part d:

There are currently no plans or intentions for predictions from this pilot project be given to or shared with police forces for use in operational policing.

Part e:

The cohort is people who had at least one conviction before 01/01/2015 and a full OASys Risk Assessment.

The variables that will be tested for predictability come from:

- Delius (Probation Caseload Management System, which contains personal and criminal history data)
- OASys (Probation Risk Assessment System, which contains probation officers' assessments on motivation, need and risk)
- NOMIS (Prison Data, which contains incidents, alerts and custody information)
- PNC data (National PNC data, which contains criminal history data)

¹ The Risk of Serious Recidivism (RSR) calculation is used to assess how likely offenders are to commit a seriously harmful re-offence within the next two years. Its purpose is to link an actuarial score with the practitioner's clinical judgements, thereby ensuring a robust risk assessment has been completed.

- Local police data (which contains crime data). The only data acquired from PNC and local police data are for the defined cohort.

Part f:

We have agreements in place to work directly with Greater Manchester Police to acquire their local police data.

Currently, we do not have agreements in place to work with other police forces. We have initiated early discussions with the Metropolitan and West Midlands police forces regarding potentially setting up similar agreements in the future, however these discussions have taken place on an informal basis, and no decisions or agreements have yet been made.

We are also engaging with the Home Office on the project.

Part g:

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this project was carried out, and that is attached as part of this response.

Part h:

The following documents have been provided as attachments as part of this response:

- Data Protection Impact Assessment
- Project Timeline
- Target Variable Definition
- Internal Risk Assessment
- Data Sharing Agreement with Greater Manchester Police

Please note that some of the personal information contained within some of the documents as referenced above has been redacted. This includes details such as the names of officials, telephone numbers, email addresses and signatures.

If a request is made for information, the MoJ must consider whether this could lead to the identification of individuals and whether disclosure of this information would be in breach of our statutory obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and/or the Data Protection Act 2018. We believe that the release of some of the specified information would risk identification of the individuals concerned.

Section 40(2) and section 40(3A)(a) of the FOIA taken together mean that personal data can only be released if to do so would not contravene any of the principles set out in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Individuals have a clear and strong expectation that their personal data will be held in confidence and not disclosed to the public under the FOIA. Also, although s40 is an absolute exemption, we have considered whether there is a wider public interest in disclosing this personal information, that would override the fundamental rights of those concerned. We have concluded there is no such public interest in this instance.

We believe releasing the specified information into the public domain would be unlawful; the personal information is therefore exempt from disclosure under section 40(2).

This is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test under the FOIA.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

**Data and Analysis (D&A),
Ministry of Justice**