

Data Rights  
PO Box 313  
Sidcup  
DA15 0HH

Email:  
[MPSDDataOffice@met.police.uk](mailto:MPSDDataOffice@met.police.uk)

[www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk)

Your ref: FOI-23846-25-0100-000  
Our ref: 01/FOI/25/047237/I

Dear Chris Jones,

**Freedom of Information Request Reference No: 01/FOI/25/047237/I**

I write in connection with your request for information which was received by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on 04/09/2025. I note you seek access to the following information:

*Metropolitan Police officers routinely film protests, demonstrations and marches. Please provide information regarding the following:*

1. *What is the legal basis for filming protests, demonstrations and marches? Please provide references to specific provisions within legislation and jurisprudence.*
2. *With regard to how footage is retained and used:*
  - a. *For how long is footage retained after any given protest? If there is policy, guidance or similar relevant documentation on this issue, please provide copies.*
  - b. *Under what legal powers is footage of protests, demonstrations and marches retained and used?*
  - c. *What is footage used for? Please list the purposes (e.g., intelligence-gathering, investigation, prosecution)*
3. *With regard to how footage is processed:*
  - a. *Is video footage cross-referenced with other types of data or information, e.g. on mobile phone network usage and access?*
  - b. *If there is policy or guidance dealing with these issues, please provide copies.*
4. *How is the decision to film a protest taken? What are the thresholds for deciding to film a protest? If there is policy, guidance or similar documentation on this issue, please provide copies.*

## SEARCHES TO LOCATE INFORMATION

To locate the information relevant to your request searches were conducted with MO2 Met Intelligence. The searches located information relevant to your request.

## DECISION

I have today decided to disclose the located information to you in full.

Please find below information pursuant to your request above.

In answer to question 1 *What is the legal basis for filming protests, demonstrations and marches? Please provide references to specific provisions within legislation and jurisprudence:*

***In Wood v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis 2009 EWCA Civ 414, the Court of Appeal made it clear that a common law right exists to take and retain photographs. They state the taking and retention of photographs must be for a clearly defined policing purpose(s) and be necessary and proportionate to the circumstances.***

In answer to question 2 *With regard to how footage is retained and used:*

- a. *For how long is footage retained after any given protest? If there is policy, guidance or similar relevant documentation on this issue, please provide copies*
- b. *Under what legal powers is footage of protests, demonstrations and marches retained and used?:*

***Footage is generally retained for 31 days, if footage is considered to be of potential evidential value it may be retained as part of the prosecution case or other investigation. Footage containing intelligence may be retained if this is justifiable, in accordance with management of police information (MoPI) Guidance (s7 Review, Retention and Disposal).***

***In accordance with MoPI, footage taken to record the character of a public order event without targeted individuals, may be retained for a period of up to 6 years. This is also consistent with the civil action limitation period. Where significant criminal activity occurs, the retention period is 50 years.***

- c. *What is footage used for? Please list the purposes (e.g., intelligence-gathering, investigation, prosecution):*

***Footage can be used for all the purposes as listed in the question. The purpose for filming needs to be a legitimate Policing purpose, such as protecting life and property; preserving order; preventing the commission of offences; bringing offenders to justice; and any duty or responsibility arising from common or statute law.***

In answer to question 3 *With regard to how footage is processed:*

- a. *Is video footage cross-referenced with other types of data or information, e.g. on mobile phone network usage and access?*

***Should Video footage be used in an Investigation/Prosecution, it may be that it is cross-referenced with other types of data or Information***

- b. *If there is policy or guidance dealing with these issues, please provide copies.*

***Yes there is an Overt Filming Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)***

*In answer to question 4 How is the decision to film a protest taken? What are the thresholds for deciding to film a protest? If there is policy, guidance or similar documentation on this issue, please provide copies.*

***As per above, there is an appropriate SOP and a form 850a should be completed. Ultimately this decision sits with the Silver Commander for the event and as such the decision would lie with MO6 Public Order Command and not MO2 Met Intelligence.***

Should you have any further enquiries concerning this matter, please contact me using the email or postal addresses at the top of this document, quoting the reference number for this request.

Yours sincerely,

**Julia – c743565  
Data Rights**

In complying with their statutory duty under sections 1 and 11 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to release the enclosed information, the Metropolitan Police Service will not breach the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. However, the rights of the copyright owner of the enclosed information will continue to be protected by law. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of the attached information should be addressed to MPS Directorate of Legal Services, 10 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, WC1N 3NR.

## **COMPLAINT RIGHTS**

### **Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?**

You have the right to require the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to review their decision.

Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome to discuss the response with the case officer who dealt with your request.

### **Complaint**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of the MPS made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information you can lodge a complaint with the MPS to have the decision reviewed.

Complaints should be made in writing, within forty (40) working days from the date of the refusal notice, and addressed to:

FOI Complaint  
Data Rights  
PO Box 313  
Sidcup  
DA15 0HH  
[DataRights@met.police.uk](mailto:DataRights@met.police.uk)

In all possible circumstances the MPS will aim to respond to your complaint within 20 working days.

### **The Information Commissioner**

After lodging a complaint with the MPS if you are still dissatisfied with the decision you may make application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk). Alternatively, write to or phone:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Phone: 0303 123 1113