# Facial recognition technology trial to begin in Croydon



Facial recognition technology is set to be trialled in Croydon, south London, with cameras being installed on street furniture as part of a new pilot scheme announced by the Metropolitan Police. This initiative follows previous applications of live facial recognition (LFR) technology in various London boroughs, including Croydon.

The Metropolitan Police stated that LFR functions by mapping individuals' unique facial features and matching them against blacklists of known offenders. This method has drawn concern regarding the usage and storage of personal data. Green Party London Assembly member Zoe Garbett has voiced her apprehensions, characterising the pilot as “subjecting us to surveillance without our knowledge.”

Under the new scheme, while the facial recognition cameras will be permanent installations on street furniture, they will only be activated when law enforcement officers are actively employing the technology in the vicinity. The police clarified that their procedures ensure any biometric data from individuals not currently being sought by police will be deleted immediately and permanently.

The police force confirmed that there are no intentions to expand the pilot project beyond Croydon at this time. The Metropolitan Police asserted that the implementation of LFR is a response to community concerns regarding serious crime, including violence, theft, and criminal damage in the Croydon area. A spokesperson for the Met stated, “The Met is committed to making London safer, using data and technology to identify offenders that pose a risk to our communities.” The spokesperson added that over 500 arrests were made utilizing LFR last year, targeting individuals involved in serious crimes such as strangulation, stalking, domestic abuse, and rape.

LFR technology is not a recent development; it has been employed numerous times across various boroughs in London, including during significant events such as the King's Coronation in 2023. Since January 2024, it has reportedly been used over 30 times in Croydon alone. Garbett, who has been vocal against the pilot, remarked on the broader use of LFR, stating, “Facial recognition subjects everyone to constant surveillance, which goes against the democratic principle that you shouldn't be monitored unless there's a suspicion of wrongdoing.” She further questioned the characterization of LFR’s usage as successful, noting the low arrest rates and the implications of treating millions of Londoners as potential suspects.

The introduction of facial recognition technology in public spaces is a developing topic among community leaders and privacy advocates who continue to scrutinise its implications for civil liberties in urban areas.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/community-safety/393-community-safety-news/60419-borough-to-have-first-static-facial-recognition-cameras-in-london> - Corroborates the establishment of the first static facial recognition cameras in Croydon town centre as part of the Metropolitan Police's initiative and provides details about the technology's deployment and concerns over privacy.
* <https://www.gbnews.com/news/facial-recognition-cameras-permanent-croydon-police-first> - Supports the permanent installation of facial recognition cameras in Croydon, outlining their operational specifics and plans for potential future expansion across London.
* <http://www.peteraclarke.com.au/2025/03/25/metropolitan-police-in-uk-install-first-permanent-facial-recognition-cameras-in-london/> - Confirms the installation of facial recognition cameras in Croydon as a permanent pilot project that could extend to other London areas, highlighting both the technology's benefits and privacy concerns.
* <https://www.courts.michigan.gov/492eca/siteassets/publications/benchbooks/evidence/evidbb.pdf> - Provides information on evidence handling and authentication in legal contexts, which could indirectly relate to how facial recognition data is treated in legal frameworks.
* <https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/dl> - Although unrelated to facial recognition directly, it shows how complex investigations involve data analysis and legal considerations, which can inform discussions about surveillance technology.