



OFFICE OF THE BIOMETRICS AND SURVEILLANCE CAMERA COMMISSIONER

Professor William Webster
Biometrics and Surveillance Camera
Commissioner
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9th January 2026

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/biometrics-and-surveillance-camera-commissioner>

Via email

The Lord Alton of Liverpool
Joint Committee on Human Rights
Committee Office
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Lord Alton

Thank you very much for giving me sight of your letter of 18th December to the Home Secretary regarding the launch of the Home Office consultation on the legal framework for law enforcement use of biometrics, facial recognition, and similar technologies.

Your letter highlights some really important issues, including: the investigation by Liberty on the impacts of Facial Recognition Technology use by the police to identify children; your concerns about the appropriateness of this use; the safeguards that need to be in place; as well as the disparities between people of different ethnic backgrounds and gender highlighted in the published research on the use of algorithms used by the police for facial recognition matching and conducted by the National Physical Laboratory.

I welcomed the launch of Government's consultation as a unique and important opportunity to shape this fast moving policy area where a framework for oversight is much needed and I will be seeking to give a loud and clear message in my response that the

oversight mechanisms the government needs to introduce must be meaningful and command the confidence of Parliament and the public. I agree we must ensure law enforcement agencies use of facial recognition and similar technologies are within a framework that commands confidence and where the rights of children are properly accounted for and respected, that the risk of bias in algorithms is properly addressed, and there is regular and timely data published so we have transparency in how these systems are used.

I am actively engaging with stakeholder groups as I refine my views and prepare a response to the consultation and have reached out to the Children's Commissioner amongst others. I am keen to build on the relationship you had with my predecessor, Professor Sampson, so would welcome an early discussion with you before the closing date of the consultation. My office at enquiries@obscc.org.uk would be able to arrange a suitable date at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'William Webster', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor William Webster

Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner

Email: enquiries@obscc.org.uk