

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Policy for Public Disclosure.

HQ Ref:

PD 01/08

POLICY DIRECTIVE

PSNI ANPR SYSTEMS

1. POLICY IDENTIFICATION

POLICY TITLE: PSNI ANPR Systems

POLICY OWNERSHIP:

**DEPARTMENT
BRANCH**

**Crime Operations
C4 Technical Support Unit**

POLICY APPROVED BY: Chief Constable's Forum

CCF REF/OTHER

DATE OF APPROVAL

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2. POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems (ANPR) have evolved into a significant element of many criminal investigations. They may directly result in police action in response to the identification of vehicles within one of the database “hotlists”, or alternatively may be relevant through later research of the ANPR database in relation to a specific investigation.
- (2) ANPR is a cost efficient policing tool that will improve the ability of Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to enforce the law, prevent crime and detect offenders. It will enable the effective deployment of resources based on intelligence and will be part of the PSNI’s strategy for a safer Northern Ireland for it’s residents, visitors and business communities.

3. INTRODUCTION

(1) Background

- (a) ANPR is an internationally recognised tool that can significantly reduce volume crime, heighten patrol focus, increase detection rates, tackle cross-border crime and provide vital intelligence for use in counter terrorist and serious crime work. It is a technology that captures registration images displayed on all types of vehicle and transfers them to a database for intelligence, investigative and analytical purpose. PSNI will use their ANPR Systems in a lawful and ethical manner and in relation to the prevention and detection of:
 - (i) Terrorism;
 - (ii) Serious Crime;
 - (iii) Volume Crime;
 - (iv) Road Traffic Offences.
- (b) These will be achieved by more focussed and intelligence-driven police activities to deny criminals use of the roads thus complying with the National Intelligence Model (NIM). ANPR technology will play a significant role in tackling all types of criminality where a vehicle link is possible. It will also have the potential to provide a high degree of assistance to many road traffic collision investigations. The PSNI will employ the use of fixed sites for ANPR equipment based on strategic routes around Northern Ireland. These sites will be linked to the PSNI network.
- (c) An evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the ANPR systems in preventing and detecting crime has been undertaken by a management consultancy firm. Their report entitled ‘Driving down crime – denying criminals the use of the roads’ was published in October 2004 and is available on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- (d) PSNI has now purchased a number of ANPR devices for installation in police vehicles. PSNI have also taken ownership of a fixed site ANPR system with cameras located throughout Northern Ireland.

(2) Aim

Part of ANPR’s development has been to respond to criminals in real time through interception and whilst this work is very valuable, the overall capability that ANPR has to offer will open new avenues and potential lines of enquiry to investigators at all levels. ANPR will offer another policing tactic to Senior Investigating Officers (SIO’s), Crime Managers and Intelligence Managers in the investigation of serious and volume crime.

(3) Legal Basis

- (a) By virtue of Section 32 of the Police Act (Northern Ireland) 2000 police officers have a duty:
 - (i) To protect life and property;
 - (ii) To preserve order;

- (iii) To prevent the commitment of offences; and
 - (iv) When an offence has been committed, to take measures to bring the offenders to justice.
- (b) The use of ANPR systems by the Police Service will contribute to all of the duties outlined above. ANPR will assist in denying criminals the free use of the road network and in turn interrupt their unlawful activities. ANPR deployment will be used in accordance with Schedules 2 and 3 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

(1) Continuous Improvement/Efficiency

- (a) ANPR is unique in its ability to impact positively in an intelligence led and proactive basis on every key area of police business, including levels 1 – 3 criminality and counter terrorism.
- (b) ANPR systems ensure that police activity is focused on offenders or suspected offenders, while the vast majority of road users who are law abiding proceed unhindered by police.

(2) Training

- (a) All officers using ANPR equipment will receive training in the correct operation of the system.
- (b) Police officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to identify their training needs and to bring these to the attention of their immediate supervisor. Police officers are also required to maintain a high level of knowledge in relation to Service Policy and current legislation.

(3) Risks

The use of ANPR systems within PSNI is being developed and expanded. Robust enforcement of this Policy is necessary to govern ANPR utilisation within the policing environment.

(4) Bureaucracy

The introduction of this Policy will result in the cancellation of Policy Directive 12/06 dated 21 September 2006 entitled "Mobile ANPR Systems".

(5) Consultation

(a) Internal Consultation:

- (i) All ACC's;
- (ii) Head of Intelligence, C3;
- (iii) D/Chief Superintendent, Professional Standards Unit;
- (iv) PSNI Human Rights Legal Adviser;
- (v) Media and PR;
- (vi) Head of ICS;
- (vii) Data Protection Unit;
- (viii) Disclosure Unit;
- (ix) Freedom of Information Unit;
- (x) Superintendent Central Authorising Bureau;
- (xi) Deputy ACC Urban;

- (xii) Portal Intelligence Unit;
- (xiii) Roads Policing Development Unit.

(b) External Consultation:

- (i) Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC);
- (ii) Department of Regional Development – Roads Service;
- (iii) Northern Ireland Office – Policing Division;
- (iv) Durham Constabulary;
- (v) Merseyside Constabulary;
- (vi) North Wales Constabulary;
- (vii) Lothian Borders Police;
- (viii) The Metropolitan Police Service National Joint Unit;
- (ix) National Police Improvement Agency – Technical Co-ordination Group;
- (x) National Police Improvement Agency – ANPR Steering Group;
- (xi) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC);
- (xii) Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI);
- (xiii) An Garda Síochána.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY/INTEGRITY/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

(1) Human Rights

Human Rights are integral to all the police functions. The capture and recording of the movements of a vehicle will, in many cases, involve an interference with the right to respect for private life. Therefore, this must be justifiable under Article 8(2) of the ECHR. Section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 provides a sufficient legal basis for the use of ANPR by PSNI. The use of ANPR in accordance with this Policy and other applicable regulation will satisfy the requirements of Article 8(2) as it is a proportionate policing response with adequate procedural safeguards as to the use of the information obtained. In conclusion, the use of ANPR in accordance with this Policy aims to be compliant with the PSNI's obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998.

This Policy is deemed to be Human Rights compliant. It has been screened for Section 75 considerations and meets integrity standards.

(2) Equality

ANPR will be used so as to protect the community, provide reassurance to vulnerable groups and enhance the overall safety of all sections of the community.

(3) Integrity

ANPR will be used in accordance with PSNI's Code of Ethics and Acceptable Use Policy. There is nothing associated with this Policy or the use of ANPR, which would increase an officer's likelihood of wrongdoing.

(4) **Freedom of Information**

Sections 1 – 6 of this Policy are suitable for disclosure to the public under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, however the accompanying Procedures and Guidance contained in Section 7 are suitable for internal dissemination only.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- (1) The Head of Technical Support Unit is responsible for reviewing this Policy annually.
- (2) Feedback relating to this Policy should be conveyed to D/Inspector ANPR Unit, Crime Operations Department, PSNI Lisnasharragh, 42 Montgomery Road, Belfast BT6 9LD.