How do I find out what information the police hold on me?

The police record a variety of information, or 'intelligence' on people attending protests. This information is retained on databases and shared with other police forces, government institutions and, in some cases, private companies.

You do not need to have committed an offence to become a target for intelligence gathering, and by merely attending a demonstration your presence might be logged. Legal safeguards that limit who and what the police can record are virtually non-existent.

There is a mechanism in place that you can use to obtain information about yourself that the police hold in certain databases. This is known as a Subject Access Request.

This guide will help you make a Subject Access Request by telling you who to contact and what information to request.

1. Why might I want to make a Subject Access Request?
2. What information might be stored on me, and by who?
3. Making a Subject Access Request

1. Why might I want to make a Subject Access Request?

In recent years it has become apparent that the police have been recording vast amounts of data on people attending all forms of protest.

This information is recorded by police units such as forward intelligence teams (FIT), intelligence gathering teams (EGT), and the notorious police liaison officers (PLO). It is processed, then stored in databases including the Police National Database (PND) and the National Special Branch Intelligence System (NSBIS) and a most likely in a recently created facial recognition database.

> **NSBIS is also known as the "Domestic Extremism database". Until very recently the police denied it existed.**

The recorded data is used to look for patterns and connections, so that the police can build an overall picture of who is attending a protest and how they might act. In a way, it contains "meta-data" associated with individuals at demonstrations.

There is reason to believe that data gathered in secret, with no checks and balances and no effective accountability, is not only unnecessary and intrusive but also riddled with gossip and rumour.

You might want to find out what information the police hold on you in order to challenge it's accuracy, to assist with a compensation claim, if you're concerned about surveillance, or as part of a campaign.

2. What information might be stored on me, and by who?

Any amount of information can be stored about you. This might include:

- **Details of meetings that you've attended, protests or actions you've been on and the identity of people you've spoken with.**
- **Photographs and videos of you at meetings, protests and other events.**
- **Your criminal record (if you have one), your arrest record, when you've been stopped on the street.**
- **Any interactions you've had with police liaison officers.**
- **Travel information when crossing international borders, or internally on ANPR or on public transport and that of companions you have been travelling with.**

Information is stored across various police databases, including:

- **National Special Branch Intelligence System (NSBIS)**

- Police National Computer (PND)
- CRIMINT (police criminal intelligence database).
- Facial Recognition database.

3. Making a Subject Access Request

You can make a Subject Access Request (SAR) under the Data Protection Act.

As the process involves handing over a certain amount of personal information (including your address and your date and place of birth), it is only worthwhile submitting a Subject Access Request if you think there is a reasonable chance that your details are held on police records. There is no point feeding the surveillance officers with information they don't already possess.

The Network for Police Monitoring (Netpol) have written a guide to making a Subject Access Request as part of their "Don't be on a database" campaign.

> **» Make a Subject Access Request (via Netpol)**

You can also find our more about Subject Access Requests through the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

- **ICO – Get access to your personal data held by the criminal justice system**