



**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

Police Scotland

What we do with your photograph, fingerprints and DNA



Easy Read



Easy
Read
made by



Disability
Equality
Scotland



made with
photosymbols®

What is biometric data?



Biometric data can include:

- fingerprints
- **DNA** – the code that makes up **genes**



Genes hold information that control how a body grows and works.

DNA information is found in samples taken from any part of a person's body – for example, hair or **saliva** – this means your spit.



- a photograph of a person taken in **custody**

Police **custody** is when you are taken to a police station after you have been arrested.



When you are arrested and brought into police custody we may take fingerprints, your photo or other samples from you.



Biometric data or 'biometrics' can be used to **identify** a person.

This means to find out who they are.

It is important that you understand:

- why Police Scotland takes your biometric data
- what we do with it
- how we look after it
- what your rights are



What biometric samples may be taken?



We may take:

- a photograph of your face
- a copy of your fingerprints
- mouth swabs or hair samples





The samples will be taken quickly.

Our staff will explain what is happening at each step.

A note of all samples taken, including photos will be noted on your custody record.

Why are biometric samples and images taken?



Samples and images are taken

- to confirm who you are
- for use as **evidence** if you have committed a crime



Evidence means information that could be provided to a court to see if someone is guilty or not guilty of a crime.

- or to prove that you are not involved in an **investigation**



An **investigation** is when police look for facts to find out exactly what happened and if a crime has been committed.



For example, to help an investigation:

- your image may be shown to witnesses
- your biometric data could be compared to fingerprints or DNA left at a crime scene



Will you share my data with anyone else?



Your data may be shared with other law enforcement agencies in the UK or internationally.

This will only happen if there is a policing reason to share the information.



Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services (SPA FS) will process samples and keep this data for Police Scotland.

Where will you store my samples, image and data?



Samples will be kept safe and secure by SPA FS in laboratory freezers and evidence stores.



Data from samples, prints or images will be kept on electronic databases.

How long will you hold my samples and data?

This depends on:

- what has happened:
 - in the police investigation
 - if you are being **prosecuted** after your arrest – this means you are officially accused of committing a crime



- what crime has been committed



Full details of Police Scotland's retention times for images, fingerprints and DNA are published in our Records Retention [SOP](#).

Your rights – Police Scotland

Your rights include (but are not limited to):



- the right to be told how your personal data is being used
- the right to fill out a form called a [Subject Access Request](#) to find out what information we hold about you
- the right to ask us to change or get rid of the data we hold about you



If you are unhappy with how Police Scotland or SPA FS have dealt with your personal data, you have the right to complain.



More information about your rights and complaints procedures is online at:

- <https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/complaints/>
- <https://www.spa.police.uk/complaints/>

Your rights – Information Commissioner



If you are unhappy about how Police Scotland or SPA FS have dealt with your personal data you can complain to the Information Commissioner.

The Information Commissioner is the UK's independent organisation that makes sure people get their information rights.



More information about how to make a complaint can be found on the website: ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

Your rights – Scottish Biometrics Commissioner



Police Scotland follows rules in the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner's **Code of Practice**.

A **Code of Practice** is a set of rules that explain how people should behave when they are at work.

This makes sure that biometric data is used in an **ethical** and clear way.



Ethical standards are the rules about what is right and wrong.

It means for example treating people the way you would like to be treated.



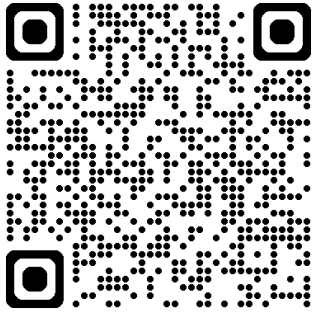
The Scottish Biometrics Commissioner checks how biometric data is used in policing in Scotland.



If you are unhappy with how Police Scotland or SPA FS have dealt with your personal data, you can complain to the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner.



The Commissioner's website has easy read versions of the [code of practice](#) and [complaints procedure](#), as well as other information including reports to the Scottish Parliament.



For more information:

- scan this QR code

- or visit the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner website:
<https://www.biometricscommissioner.scot/>

