Police Use of AI | Oversight Group Meeting #1

Minutes

Details
Date: 12.11.24
Time: 10:00-12:00
Location: MS Teams
(Temporary) Chair: Carly Walker-Dawson

Attendance
Oversight Group
- Andrew Stafford (Research and Innovation Network Manager, Office of the Police Chief Scientific Advisor)
- Dr Felicity O'Connell (Researcher, The Police Foundation)
- Ellen Lefley (Senior Lawyer, Justice)
- Lewis Lincoln-Gordon (Chief Staff Officer to Alex Murray (NPCC AI Lead))
- Prof Lewis Griffin (Professor of Computer Science, University College London)
- Prof Shane Johnson (Director of the Dawes Centre for Future Crime, University College London)
- Steve Barnabis (Founder of Project Zero, Project Zero)
- Tim Davies (Research and Practice Director, Connected by Data)
- Zoe Amar (Director, Zoe Amar Digital)
- Alex Campbell (Senior Policy Manager, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners)

Home Office
- Cian Bates (Senior Policy Advisor, Home Office)
- Charlotte Moore (Principal User Researcher, Home Office CoLab)
- Sally Halls (Head of CoLab, Home Office CoLab)

Sciencewise
- Daisy Thomson (Engagement Lead, Sciencewise)
- Carly Walker-Dawson (Director of Capacity Building and Standards, Sciencewise)
- Elizabeth Cunningham (Program Manager, Sciencewise)

Thinks Insight & Strategy
- Carol McNaughton-Nicholls (Managing Partner)
- Lucy Farrow (Partner)
- Jonny Harper (Director)
- Paul Carroll (Director)
- Adina Pintilie (Associate Director)

Independent evaluator
- Sophie Reid

Apologies
- Dr Meropi Tzanetakis (Assistant Professor in Digital Criminology, University of Manchester
- Scott Morgan (Senior Research Officer, College of Policing)

Minutes
Item 1: Welcome
- Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

- Apologies were made for Dr Meropi Tzanetakis and Scott Morgan.

Item 2: Introductions
- Temporary Chair facilitated introductions from Oversight Group, Home Office, Sciencewise and Thinks.

Item 3: Background to project
- Home Office and Co Lab facilitated this item and informed Oversight Group members of the background to project. Contextually, the Home Office wishes to understand public perceptions and attitudes towards the use of AI in policing. AI has great potential for improving policing's ability to prevent, detect and investigate crime, but comes with public concerns including the use of personal data, the potential for automated decision making, and bias from unrepresentative data used in algorithms. Meanwhile, the views of those most affected, and those of the wider public, are not well understood. Findings from this dialogue will inform policy regarding police use of AI technologies, and support Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners to make informed decisions about their use of AI tools. It was explained that the Home Office is keen to take on board a range of public views, be more transparent about the engagement processes being undertaken, and potentially replicating this type of engagement process in the future.

- Oversight Group members were informed of existing Home Office background to the research, and it was explained that hypothetical / potential use cases will include improving administrative & operational functions, crime prevention & detection, communication & engagement, as well as evidence & investigation support.

- It was acknowledged that there are important concerns about ethics and what the public thinks about AI. Members were informed of the key project goal to develop an understanding of the public's views and concerns regarding specific AI use cases in policing but excluding facial recognition. It was explained that facial recognition technology research and public engagement on this theme sits within the Data & Identity Directorate, who are conducting independent research. It was also explained that the proposed use cases for this research are under-researched in terms of public opinion, and that this research project is aiming to bridge this gap.

- Members were given an overview of the governance of the project, which included explaining that the National Police Capabilities Unit is the commissioning body, CoLab and Sciencewise are the oversight and co-founding bodies, the Oversight Group will provide advice, and Thinks Insight is tasked with delivery, which will be evaluated by an independent evaluator.

- Members were informed that invitations for follow-up Oversight Group meetings are forthcoming.

- Members raised questions on engagement with the research conducted by the Data & Identity Directorate and opportunities to learn from it. Home Office reassured there are regular check-ins being had with team who lead this research, and regular information-sharing processes are in place. Home Office offered to answer any specific questions members may have following the session.

Item 4: Terms of reference
- Temporary Chair facilitated this item in plenary. Members were split into two breakout rooms, one facilitated by the Engagement Lead at Sciencewise, the other by a Thinks Director.

- In plenary, members shared reflections on the terms of reference, which included:
  o The existing terms of reference feel appropriate and largely comprehensive.
  o Openness and transparency around the membership of the Oversight Group was welcomed.

- Members were invited to contribute amendments to the existing terms of reference. The following were agreed as additions:
  o Regarding the aim:
    ▪ Reasoning behind the exclusion of facial recognition technology to be made explicit.

  o Regarding the role of the group:
    ▪ Members to have the ability to request information about the project and materials. Members proposed the following specific wording: "Oversight group members can ask questions or ask for details of materials in or between meetings, and where possible, information will be provided."
    ▪ Members to be explicitly described as critical friends, who will contribute their expertise, in particular at the dialogue stage. Members agreed the role of the Group will not be to encumber the review process of materials and outputs.
    ▪ Members to be given the opportunity to observe the deliberation process, and as appropriate, the online space.
    ▪ When commenting on key questions to be addressed, explicit mention to be made of including use cases or scenarios where the technology had unintended consequences, or specific individuals or groups were negatively impacted.
    ▪ The field of research to be described as constantly evolving. Members commit to being engaged with latest developments and sharing them with the group and delivery partners (Thinks).
    ▪ Members to have the ability to feed into specific definitions used for materials development by the delivery partners (Thinks).

  o Regarding impartiality and openness:

- Members to be allowed to participate as individuals, as well as representatives of organisations on a case-by-case basis.

  o Regarding dissemination and outreach:
- Members to be instructed by the Home Office on project specifics which are sensitive and cannot be made public. Members proposed the following specific wording: "Oversight Group members may reflect publicly on their general involvement and learning from the group but should make the Chair of the Oversight Group and Home Office aware of what is proposed before sharing detailed information. The Home Office will not prevent open communication about the process but would like to be prepared to engage."

  o Regarding frequency of meetings:
    - Members to be engaged at strategic points in the project.

  o Regarding communication:
    - Members to have the ability to see and approve minutes before publishing, with a commitment of all feedback being returned within 5 working days.
    - Members to commit on best efforts to comment on any materials within 5 working days.

- Members were invited to send any additional comments to the Home Office by the end of the working week.

Item 5: Methodology
- Thinks facilitated this item. Thinks provided an introduction to the project methodology, which includes a quantitative survey of 1,000 respondents which will inform the design of the deliberation materials (rather than be a comprehensive quantitative exercise), dialogue and deliberation sessions with 60 people across 3 locations connected by an online space.

- Members raised questions and discussion points based on the methods which included:
  o On use cases:
    - Suggestions to include evidence and investigation support as well as administrative and operational efficiency use cases. Home Office clarified that the use cases presented were selected following consultation with policing stakeholders. Members suggested prioritising use cases that have the potential to deliver the biggest benefit to the police.
    - Agreed to remove use cases which include facial recognition in CCTV footage.
    - Members suggested that for each of these high level 'use cases', a more concrete example should be worked up. This could include a range of concrete cases that affect different kinds of groups/communities (including e.g. impacts on street crime, corporate crime etc.). Members also suggested including use cases of the technology which would reduce police time spent on something that may be uncontentious but would free up resource to do activities that humans are good at.

- ▪ Members suggested use cases should clarify uses of AI (e.g. whether it is cloud based or operating at the edge).
- ▪ Members raised questions over how AI will be defined in the context of this research and whether there will be a catch-all AI definition which includes automation or any references to machine learning.

- o On the quantitative elements:
    - ▪ Members raised questions on the sample size and scope. Members suggested considering boosts on the sample based on the rapid evidence review, to reflect certain populations who are more heavily affected be aspects of policing and need to ensure as much statistically significant input from these sub-populations can come through. Similarly, members suggested there could be value in boosting representation of minority groups and groups who have previously reported lower levels of trust in the police.
    - ▪ Members also suggested including or using questions to identify sub-groups of which include victims of crime who may benefit from police use of AI.
    - ▪ Members suggested the questionnaire should include careful framing of AI and include questions which measure respondents' own interactions with AI.

- o On the dialogue and deliberative elements:
    - ▪ Members raised questions on the specific dialogue participants, and it was clarified that the same participants will attend both sessions in order to build understanding over time.
    - ▪ Members suggested one of the locations should be rural, as types of crime are different, communities are different, operational differences for police cover a larger area, and there are likely to be potential connectivity differences.
    - ▪ Members would like deliberation materials to also include discussions of disproportionality, which include the viewpoint that technology can be used in a biased way.
    - ▪ Members raised questions on the accessibility of the proposed research for participants. Thinks explained the online space approach has been successfully used before to bookend a process with face-to-face engagement to provide info and allow for reflection. Thinks committed to also provide offline alternatives for that information provision. Thinks will need to think carefully about the recruitment and including accessibility in the survey element.

Item 6: Evaluation plans
- ● Independent evaluator facilitated this item.

- ● It was explained to members that the project will be evaluated against creating quality and impact and the difference that it makes to participants, stakeholders and policy making audiences. The process will be evaluated against Sciencewise principles.

- ● Independent evaluator explained evaluation activities along the process will include observing the process, talking to participants themselves, as well as observers. The evaluator will compile two internal facing reports: one up front following the setup and one after the engagements.

- Given that impacts are likely to come after the final deliverables are complete, the evaluator will compile a final report in October 2025.

- The evaluator explained she will reach out to some of the members as part of the evaluation process.

- Members shared evaluation learnings could be drawn from previous dialogues, such as the [Justice Data Matters dialogue](#).

Item 7: Group composition and chair
- Temporary Chair facilitated this item.

- Members felt the group would be strengthened by the inclusion of representatives from Responsible AI UK, who advice on application of AI in various settings and have previously worked in policing and national security spaced. A question was raised over whether Prof Marion Oswald should be included. Home Office clarified there was a clash of timetabling with Prof Oswald and that she is already linked with other projects relating to this research theme more broadly.

- Suggestions for permanent chairs were put forward by members. These could include representatives of the Ada Lovelace Institute or the Turing Institute.

Item 8: AOB
- No AOB was raised by members.

- Temporary Chair concluded the meeting.