

## **'Terrorism cell' data stick missing**

**West Midlands Police** are investigating the loss of a **data memory stick**. West Midlands Police said it could not comment on the contents of the device, but local media reports suggested it held **"top-secret information on terror suspects"**.

A force spokeswoman said: *"We can confirm West Midlands Police is investigating the loss of a data memory stick. We are conducting searches in an attempt to recover the lost item. We will not comment in relation to the contents of that memory stick."*

**The Birmingham Mail on Monday** reported that the black **4GB stick** was lost after being **taken out of a police station in Castle Vale, Birmingham, by an officer on patrol last week**. The memory stick reportedly contains details of terror cells being tracked by police, although the force refused to confirm or deny this.

A Home Office spokesman said the Government had been informed about the loss but added that he could not comment further. The Force website quotes as follows regarding personal data.

### **Principles**

Anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice. These say that data must be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully
- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up-to-date
- **Not kept longer than necessary**
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- **Secure (7th priority out of 8)**
- **Not transferred to countries outside EEA without adequate protection**

### **Subject Access**

The Subject Access provisions of the Data Protection Act **give an individual the right to have a copy of any personal data held about them**.

**The PPP comments...** this is the fourth case of personal/private or secret data being copied on to high capacity memory sticks and then going missing. As mere amateurs in the data processing business we believe that memory sticks must be the **LEAST** secure and most easily lost or stolen devices available. It is interesting to note that the loss was leaked to the press which in itself adds to the security risk. Is it possible that the above 'Subject access' was being facilitated by a 'friend' of the terrorists in the force?

**The Senior Officer ultimately responsible is Anil Patani as Assistant Chief Constable Security and Cohesion.** This **newly created position** means he has overall responsibility for **counter terrorism**, including the factors that drive terrorism, as well as public safety, confidence and reassurance. The role mirrors the national counter terrorism agenda and **will focus on building long-term links** with various communities, **in particular faith communities**, and supporting the work of local authorities and multi agency safety partnerships.

It will be interesting to see how the IPCC manage to whitewash this possibly deadly error of process and judgement.

