12. Removing Masks

A new power has been introduced in the Policing & Crime Act 2026:

Under section 157 the police may make an order to designate an area within which it become an offence to use an item to conceal identity. One may use the item for medical, religious or work reasons. Before arresting anyone the police must take reasonable steps to inform people of where and when the order is in place.

The previously used powers are still available to the police:

If a Section 60AA (Criminal Justice Act 1994) order is in effect, a police officer can demand that any item you are wearing that is mainly used to conceal your identity, is removed. Failure to remove the item can result in an arrest.

The police can seize the item, and you don't have to be wearing this item at the time for it to be seized.

Section 60 (a blanket search power) and Section 60 AA are different powers, and can be used independently.