

**SCOTTISH POLICE  
AUTHORITY**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Public SPA Board Meeting</b>
<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>28 September 2017</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Jurys Inn, Inverness</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>SPA Forensic Services Director's Report</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Tom Nelson</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Noting</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) with information on the current business matters of Forensic Services as at September 2017.

## 1. FORENSIC SERVICES BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

- 1.1 **Governance Arrangements** - As at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 the Governance arrangements for SPA Forensic Services changed with the Director of Forensic Services now reporting directly to the SPA Board. In addition, the creation of a new SPA Forensic Services Committee was announced in line with the recommendation from the June 2017 HMICS thematic inspection.

As such, the change in reporting and creation of the new committee means that Forensic Services are directly accountable to the SPA Board. This increased public scrutiny of Forensic Services is welcomed. The Forensic Services Committee will exercise oversight on all areas of Forensic Services which will include current performance, the Forensic Services 2026 Strategy and the future business plans aligned to this.

- 1.2 **HMICS** - As separate paper has been submitted to members providing an update on the Action Plan for delivery of the 23 recommendations made in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services.

- 1.3 **Forensics 2026 Strategy** - Planning for Forensics 2026 continues with strategic objectives being defined to provide an overarching focus for delivery. As part of the development process a phased approach to achieving 2026 is being worked on with delivery plans being scoped for the short, medium and long term through to 2026. These will be brought to the Forensic Services Committee and then to the SPA Board thereafter for approval.

- 1.4 **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Centre of Excellence and Drugs Intelligence Unit** - On Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of June Forensic Services chaired the first meeting of the NPS Centre of Excellence and Drug Intelligence Unit for all partners on the operation and function of the NPS Centre. The second meeting of the working group is taking place on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

A proposal is being progressed to seek funding for the formal establishment of the NPS Centre of Excellence and Drug Intelligence Unit. There has been extensive engagement with both Scottish Government and many partner agencies in respect of this proposal and much positivity surrounding this wider collaborative project. This programme has in total has 19 external agencies engaging with Forensic Services. Whilst

Forensics Services will make the investment, with the proposed support of Scottish Government funding, the benefits will be delivered to Police Scotland, the NCA, the NHS and NHS24, Scottish Prison Service, COPFS and Scottish Universities amongst others.

- 1.5 **Drug Driving Toxicology Service** - The Scottish Government has announced that it will implement drug driving legislation during 2019, this will involve setting drug driving limits and allow roadside testing of motorists for this new offence. In making this legislative change Forensics Services require to set up a Drug Driving Toxicology Service which will be responsible for all laboratory analysis of drug driving samples. Police Scotland will undertake all screening activity.

A proposal to fund this new service will be requested from Scottish Government to support the legislative change. The application has been made in the current financial year given the lead in time required to purchase, commission instrumentation and gain quality accreditation for this new service.

- 1.6 **Transformation of Forensics Biology** - A proposal is being progressed to seek Reform funding to enable a transformational change within the Forensics Biology area. This change will allow Biologists to better focus on Police Scotland Investigative casework while still meeting the judicial time frames set out by the COPFS. This change aligns to the forthcoming Forensic Services 2026 Strategy which is currently in the planning stages.

In addition the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 implements a number of changes to the process for Sheriff and Jury business in the Courts. Time limits for court hearings in the Sherriff Court will mirror those in the High Court and have an impact on timeliness requirements for Forensic Services, therefore an area which must also be planned for.

- 1.7 **Information Commissioner Audit** - During August 2017, SPA Forensics were subject to an audit by the Scottish Information Commissioner. Staff members from across Forensic Services participated in interviews and provided supporting documentary evidence to the audit team. A draft report is expected this autumn which will detail findings and recommendations.

- 1.8 **Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC)** - The Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) is a collaborative and cross-

sector justice project to develop and implement a way to capture, store and share evidence digitally at every stage of a criminal investigation and prosecution. Forensic Services are engaged in this project, which is being led by Scottish Government, to ensure the forensic digital workflow capabilities are considered. A demonstration of the current forensic systems- Evidence Management System, Image Management System and Multimedia Unit court presentation packages- will be completed during September / October. Police Scotland are involved in this Project and this will ensure the ICT interdependencies for Forensic Services are considered. The overall project is at the prototype Development Stage with an associated business case outlining benefits and investment costs anticipated by March 2018.

This is a positive step for Forensic Services as should result in the enhancement of evidence presentation in Court and a more efficient means of sharing information across the justice sector.

- 1.9 **UKAS** - Planning for the 2017/18 assessment programme has been finalised with UKAS scheduled to attend all four laboratory sites during October, November and December 2017.

The UKAS visit will focus on full reaccreditation in Dundee whereas the Scottish Crime Campus, Edinburgh and Aberdeen will be quality maintenance audits.

- 1.10 **Senior Leadership Day** – Held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September at Tulliallan Castle and attended by the Director of Forensic Services, the Head of Scene Examination and a Biology Operational Manager. Some useful insights were shared during this “Your Wellbeing Matters” event, ahead of the official launch on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. Forensic Services are fully engaged in this programme and have 8 fully trained health and wellbeing champions who will support and underpin the delivery of this organisation wide wellbeing initiative.

- 1.11 **Independent Advisory Group** - Forensic Services are represented on the Independent Advisory Group on the use of Biometric data in Scotland. The group have now met 3 times and will report to Scottish Government in December 2017 on the future governance in this area.

The advisory group is considering the recommendations contained in the HMICS report ‘Audit and Assurance Review of

the Use of the Facial Search Functionality within the UK Police National Database (PND) by Police Scotland' and to advise Scottish ministers on the use, governance and oversight of the use of biometric data in Scotland.

**2. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

2.1 As noted above.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper.

**4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this paper.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with this paper.

**6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct reputational implications associated with this paper.

**7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no direct social implications associated with this paper.

**8. COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no direct community implications associated with this paper.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications associated with this paper.

**10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications associated with this paper

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.