

SCOTTISH POLICE  
AUTHORITY

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>SPA Board Meeting Public Session</b>
<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>28 November 2017</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling FK9 4AE</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Update on Joint National Forensic Gateway Rejection Rates</b>
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>9.2</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Fiona Douglas, SPA</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Noting</b>
<b>Appendix Attached:</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

To provide SPA Board with further information on rejection rates recorded in the Joint National Forensic Gateway.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Joint National Forensic Gateway is based within the Scottish Crime Campus, in Gartcosh and is a collaborative partnership between Forensic Services (SPA), Police Scotland and COPFS.
- 1.2 The JNFG takes oversight of the forensic submission process which is designed to evaluate and prioritise scientific examinations undertaken by Forensic Services (SPA), primarily requested by Police Scotland and COPFS.
- 1.3 Within Police Scotland the JNFG is underpinned by three local portals based in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Gartcosh. These portals manage the work within each of the three geographical regions.
- 1.4 Each of the partners has representation within the JNFG with associated staff and management.

## 2. APPROVALS AND REJECTION PROCESS

- 2.1 In order for a case to be approved for submission into Forensic Services it is assessed against a set of criteria by each respective partner to ensure that the request for forensic science is prioritised in accordance with threat, risk and harm and assessed in terms of relevance, necessity, proportionality and the potential added value to the investigative and evidential process. If it is determined by the JNFG that the submission would not provide this added value to the investigation or prosecution the case will be rejected at this point.
- 2.2 **Rejecting cases from submission into Forensic Services at this early stage is imperative in order to minimise downstream failure demand, and to ensure best value is delivered for the criminal justice system and to the public.**
- 2.3 The JNFG consider the quality of the submission in terms of its completeness i.e. that all documentation and productions that are required to enable a successful outcome are included. If the submission requires further information or for further productions to be submitted the JNFG will return the case to allow for the investigating officer to provide the additional material and resubmit the request for analysis to facilitate effective assessment.

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**2.4 Rejecting (returning) incomplete submissions is critical to ensure that the scientist has access to all of the information required at the appropriate time to progress the work and formulate an effective forensic case strategy. This allows critical quality standards to be met.**

2.5 A number of initiatives have been and are ongoing within Police Scotland to minimise the number of incomplete submissions that require rejection by the JNFG. This includes a LEAN Sigma review of this process, the recommendations from this are also captured within the action plan related to the HMICS review of Forensic Services.

### **3. ONGOING MONITORING**

3.1 The rejection rate relating to the Police Scotland requests for forensic science are reported routinely into the Forensic Performance and Operational Group (FPOG)

3.2 At the current time it is not possible to break the overall rejection rate into those cases where forensic science was deemed as not required and those where the submission required further information in order to be progressed

3.3 It is imperative that forensic submissions are appropriately and robustly scrutinised in order to ensure that resources are being used as effectively as possible within Forensic Services. This also ensures that the timeliness of service and utilisation of forensic resource is optimised as far as possible to deliver the best outcome for the whole Criminal Justice System.

3.4 Rejection rates continue to be reviewed proactively within the FPOG meeting on a bi-monthly basis, any target to reduce rejection rates should be considered carefully so as the positive benefits of rejections at this stage are not lost.

3.5 Further granularity of management information would be of benefit should IT systems in future support the addition of a rejection category. This would allow for a more sophisticated method of reporting rejection rates and identifying any adverse trends for action.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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4.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

**5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

**7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper.

**8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

**9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

**11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are requested to:

Note the process in place to monitor rejection rates from the JNFG and the value that this offers to the utilisation of forensic science resources.