



Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	4th May 2023
Location	Via MS Teams
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Director's report
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For noting
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update members on the recent key activities across Forensic Services.

1. Updates

Budget

- 1.1. The final Forensic Services 2023-24 settlement, approved by SPA members at the Authority meeting on 23 March 2023, allows Forensic Services to move ahead with our plans to implement our New Operating Model.
- 1.2. To balance this year's budget we have identified and are committed to deliver the savings identified through our Forensic Services Efficiencies Plan - which will meet the gap between our original plans and the final budget. As these savings are delivered we will reinvest in the implementation of our New Operating Model.

Change Team Engagement

- 1.3. With the budget settled, the Forensic Services Change Programme team have been able to move ahead on engaging with staff in all offices to update them on the timeline for change – this will also now include engaging with our new members of staff working at the new Post Mortem Toxicology laboratory in Govan.
- 1.4. As well as updating staff with the timeline for change, the team have issued a newsletter to staff and are now committed to a rolling set of future engagements where staff can raise any questions they may have about the Change Programme.

National Scenes Tasking Unit

- 1.5. On 3rd April 2023 the new Forensic Service National Scenes Tasking Unit, based in Rushton Court, Dundee, went live and is now fully up and running. The unit acts as a single point of contact for Police Scotland when requesting scene examination attendance and is responsible for reviewing all scene attendance requests submitted and the subsequent deployment of scene examiners throughout Scotland.
- 1.6. This is a considerable investment in staff and resources in Dundee. The team, comprising of 12 tasking unit officers, provide a seven-day service covering 06.30-22.30 hours. The Scenes Tasking Unit officers were appointed well in advance of the go-live date so they could complete a rigorous internal training programme, facilitated by scene examination colleagues, and there was extensive external and internal engagement about the new unit.

UKAS visits

- 1.7. On 29th March, UKAS completed their initial assessment of our new Post Mortem Toxicology laboratory in Govan, Glasgow, and recommended an extension to scope for alcohol analysis accreditation – subject to close out of findings. There was also an acknowledgement by UKAS of the large amount of work that has been undertaken to deliver the successful transfer of the Post Mortem Toxicology service and a recognition of the significant work to set up the new laboratory and the commitment of staff and colleagues across Forensic Services and Police Scotland to make this all happen.
- 1.8. While on 27th March, UKAS visited Howdenhall, Edinburgh, for an update on the progress the Forensic Services Toxicology team have made over the past few months since their last visit. UKAS recognised the significant progress that has been made, that further work and delivery of the Toxicology Development Plan was ongoing, and overall stated this was a positive assessment.

HMICS review

- 1.9. The *HMICS Assurance Review of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Toxicology Provision* was published on 25th April. I fully support the recommendations made and the review's call for a strategic, joint response to improve the delivery of drug-driving services in Scotland and the requirement for significant future investment in Forensic Services.
- 1.10. Forensic Services will continue to work closely with our partners to deliver the review's recommendations and ultimately make Scotland's roads safer from drug driving. The review acknowledged that Forensic Services staff are committed professionals making a positive contribution to public safety in a pressurised environment. I am very grateful to our scientists and staff who work **tirelessly** - often without acknowledgement or recognition - to support justice in Scotland.

Brenda Page murder conviction

- 1.11. Forensic Scientists worked on and reviewed evidence in the investigation relating to the murder of Dr Brenda Page over a 45-year period. Her family and colleagues commented on how pertinent and fitting it is that DNA played a part in securing her murder conviction given her research work in the field of DNA.

1.12. The Forensic Services cold case team played a significant role in securing the conviction, of her former husband, in March this year for the murder of Dr Page in 1978.

Policing and Trauma Conference 21st April 2023

1.13. Members of Forensic Services staff joined colleagues from Police Scotland in sharing their own personal trauma experiences and insights as we all work to take steps to try to improve the support staff and officers receive.

1.14. Last year Forensic Services launched a three-year project to assess the impact of dealing with traumatic crime scenes has on the mental health of staff. This is part of our commitment in our Forensic Strategy to ensure the wellbeing of Forensic Services staff so they are safe, supported and empowered to deliver world-class forensic services.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

3. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

5. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

6. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no social implications in this report.

7. COMMUNITY IMPACT

7.1 There are no community implications in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the information contained within this report.