

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	25 August 2021
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Themes and Achievements
Presented By	Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	Presentation: Themes and Achievements

PURPOSE

To present Forensic Services Themes and Achievements for Members consideration.

This paper is for discussion

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report includes a presentation on Forensic Services Themes and Achievements reflecting back on changes in forensic science over the past 41 years.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 SPA Forensics Services Director Tom Nelson retires on 30th September 2021 after more than 41 years spent working as a Forensic Scientist.
- 2.2 In the attached presentation, he reflects on some of the key changes across forensic science during his career and looks at how SPA Forensic Services was created, has evolved and is prepared for the future.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There financial implications are noted in this report.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this paper.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no 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 direct equality implications associated with this paper.

11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to discuss the contents of the Forensic Services Themes and Achievements report.

Themes and achievements



FORENSIC SERVICES

SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY

Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services

In the beginning: forensic science in 1980

- Limited scientific interpretation
- Low level of discrimination – blood groups typically 1 in 1000's
- Hand-written reports – no computers
- Lack of regular capital investment
- Restricted professional support services

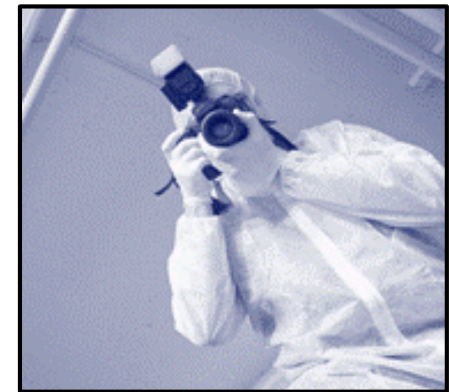
Move to Scotland: forensic science in 1995

- Worked in Lothian & Borders Police laboratory
- Reported into the Head of CID
- Scene examiners and fingerprints still part of the Force
- Early use of DNA
- Little use of intelligence gathered by scientists
- Limited capital investment and support

A single service: forensic services in 2007



- Creation of a national Forensic Service - SPSA
- Bringing together regional staff for the first time
- Four different labs using different equipment and methods
- Four limited scopes of accreditation
- Scene examiners incorporated into the new national service
- We sought to build a quality-driven system



Impartial and independent: the FS way



Crime Scene to Court



- Independent/Impartial
- Best scientific practice starting at the scene
- Optimisation
- Early engagement of expertise
- Holistic oversight
- Best forensic evidence, interpretation and presentation

Modernising and renewal

- Opening of Dundee laboratory in 2010: purpose-built £23.3 million investment in Forensic Services and a new home for more than 100 highly-skilled and trained staff
- In 2012: Forensic Services moved from a geographical to a discipline-based model
- More flexible provision and a greater consistency of forensic service across the country

Fingerprint public inquiry

- Public Inquiry over 1997 case involving Shirley McKie
- Forensic Services accepted all recommendations in the 2011 inquiry report
- I made a personal apology to Shirley McKie and her family
- Forensic Services went on to become the first large-scale forensic provider in the UK to be awarded accreditation by UKAS for fingerprint comparisons in 2016



Creation of Scottish Police Authority in 2013

The role of Forensic Services was enshrined in law.

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 states:

“The Authority must provide forensic services to the Police Service, the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner and the Lord Advocate and procurators fiscal”

Partnership working: Scottish Crime Campus

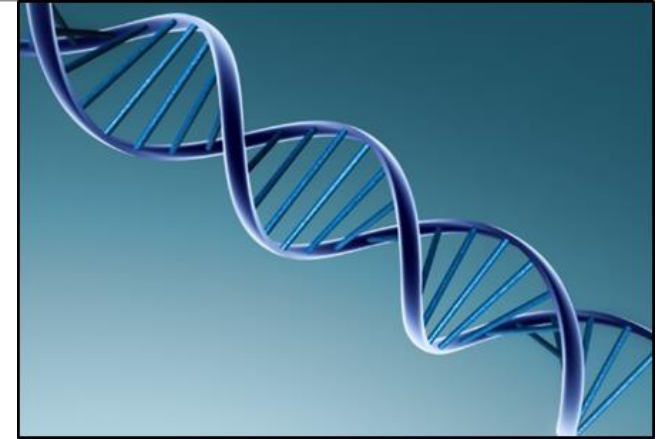
- Opening of new Scottish Crime Campus at Gartcosh in 2013



- £75 million investment in justice sector
 - Largest of the four Forensic Services offices
 - State-of-the-art facilities
 - Bringing together justice partners under one roof
- Allowing closer working with Police Scotland, COPFS, & justice partners

Cutting-edge technology: DNA 24

- In 2015 SPA invested £6 million in the latest DNA technology
- More sensitive and microscopic amounts of DNA can now be analysed
- Allows increased separation of mixed samples of DNA
- Breakthrough in cold cases including this year's conviction of Graham McGill for murdering Mary McLaughlin in her Glasgow flat in 1984
- After more than 30 years, a cold case review revealed opportunities using DNA 24 technology



Reviews and a time for change

SPA: Operational Review identified need for significant improvements in Forensic Services

HMICS: without changes the delivery of forensic services will be “at risk”

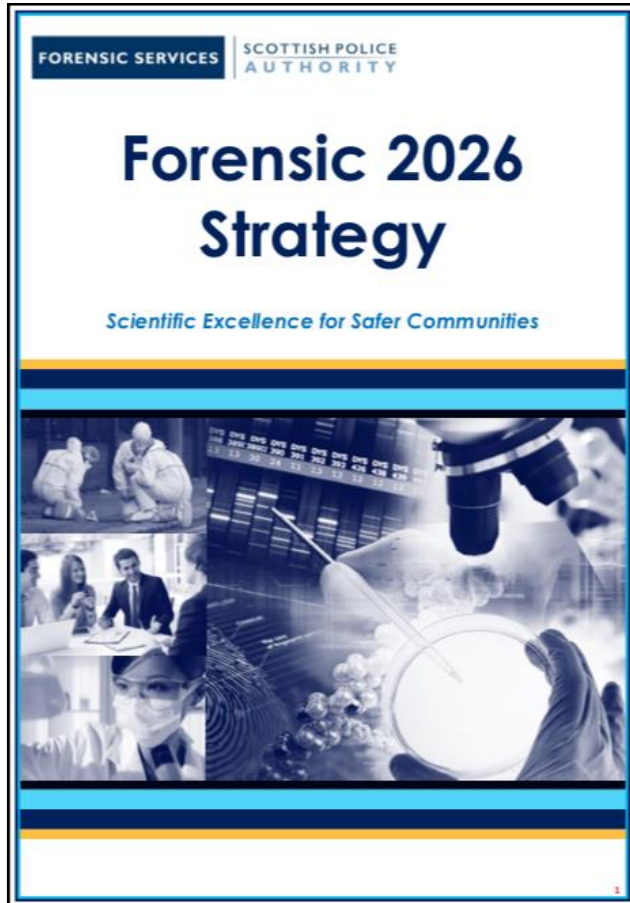
Improved governance

The SPA Forensic Services Committee was established in October 2018 by the Scottish Police Authority and provides oversight and scrutiny to the work Forensic Services and is open to the public

Ensuring impartiality

- As Director of Forensic Services, I report to the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority
- Forensic Services do not come under the remit of the Chief Constable of Police Scotland – both organisations report separately to the SPA, reinforcing independence and impartiality of our service
- An annual review of Forensic Services strategic performance is published as part of the SPA's Annual Review and laid before Parliament

Looking ahead: taking a strategic approach





FORENSIC SERVICES | SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY

Our Strategy



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES



Positive and vibrant workplace for all of our people



Responsive provision of science from crime scene to court



Effective demand management, maximising value



Deployment of cutting edge techniques in forensic science



Maintained quality standards and assurance across multi-faceted forensic expertise



Commercial capability, financial sustainability and value for money

VISION

Scientific Excellence for Safer Communities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Value and develop our people, promoting equality and wellbeing



Deliver faster, more responsive and smarter forensic science



Advance the value and benefits from quality forensic services



Transition to an efficient operating model, delivering measurable improvements



Enhance the profile and commercial potential of Forensic Services

VALUES






SPA Forensics Services today

- Forensic Services now deliver world-leading forensic service from the crime scene to the court
- We are the largest public sector forensic organisation and among the largest forensic organisations in the UK
- We have more than 550 highly-trained and skilled scientists and staff, committed to Scientific Excellence for Safer Communities who work with Integrity, Professionalism, and Impartiality
- Our people are at the heart of our ability to deliver forensic services for the people of Scotland

What has changed over the years

- Where there had been limited scientific interpretation now Forensic Services is providing significant intelligence
- Now able to use more discriminating statistics – in the millions and billions compared with the low thousands forty years ago
- Computerisation, automation, and digitisation have transformed how we now work
- Step improvements achieved from capital investments
- Professional support services from Police Scotland for ICT, P&D, procurement, estates, and strategy
- Scrutiny and accountability at SPA and FSC

Quality embedded into our service

- UKAS accreditation
- Increasing in scope
- Working to support PS





Certificate of Accreditation

Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services

Testing Laboratory No. 1873

Is accredited in accordance with International Standard ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – General Requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

This accreditation demonstrates technical competence for a defined scope specified in the schedule to this certificate, and the operation of a management system (refer joint ISO-ILAC-IAF Communiqué dated April 2017). The schedule to this certificate is an essential accreditation document and from time to time may be revised and reissued.

The most recent issue of the schedule of accreditation, which bears the same accreditation number as this certificate, is available from www.ukas.com.

This accreditation is subject to continuing conformity with United Kingdom Accreditation Service requirements.


Matt Oantley, Chief Executive Officer
United Kingdom Accreditation Service

Initial Accreditation: 1 July 1998
Certificate issued: 26 March 2020


  

Scan QR Code to verify

UKAS is approved as the sole national accreditation body for the UK by The Accreditation Regulations 2009 (SI No. 3105/2009) and operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Schedule of Accreditation

issued by
United Kingdom Accreditation Service
2 Pine Trees, Chertsey Lane, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 3HR, UK

 1873 Accredited to ISO/IEC 17025:2017	Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services Issue No: 049 Issue date: 28 January 2021	
Scottish Crime Campus Craigmethan Drive Gartcosh Scotland G69 8AE	Contact: Craig Donnachie Tel: +44 (0) 1236 818108 E-Mail: craig.donnachie@spsa.pnn.police.uk Website: www.spsa.police.uk	

Testing performed by the Organisation at the locations specified

Locations covered by the organisation and their relevant activities

Laboratory locations:

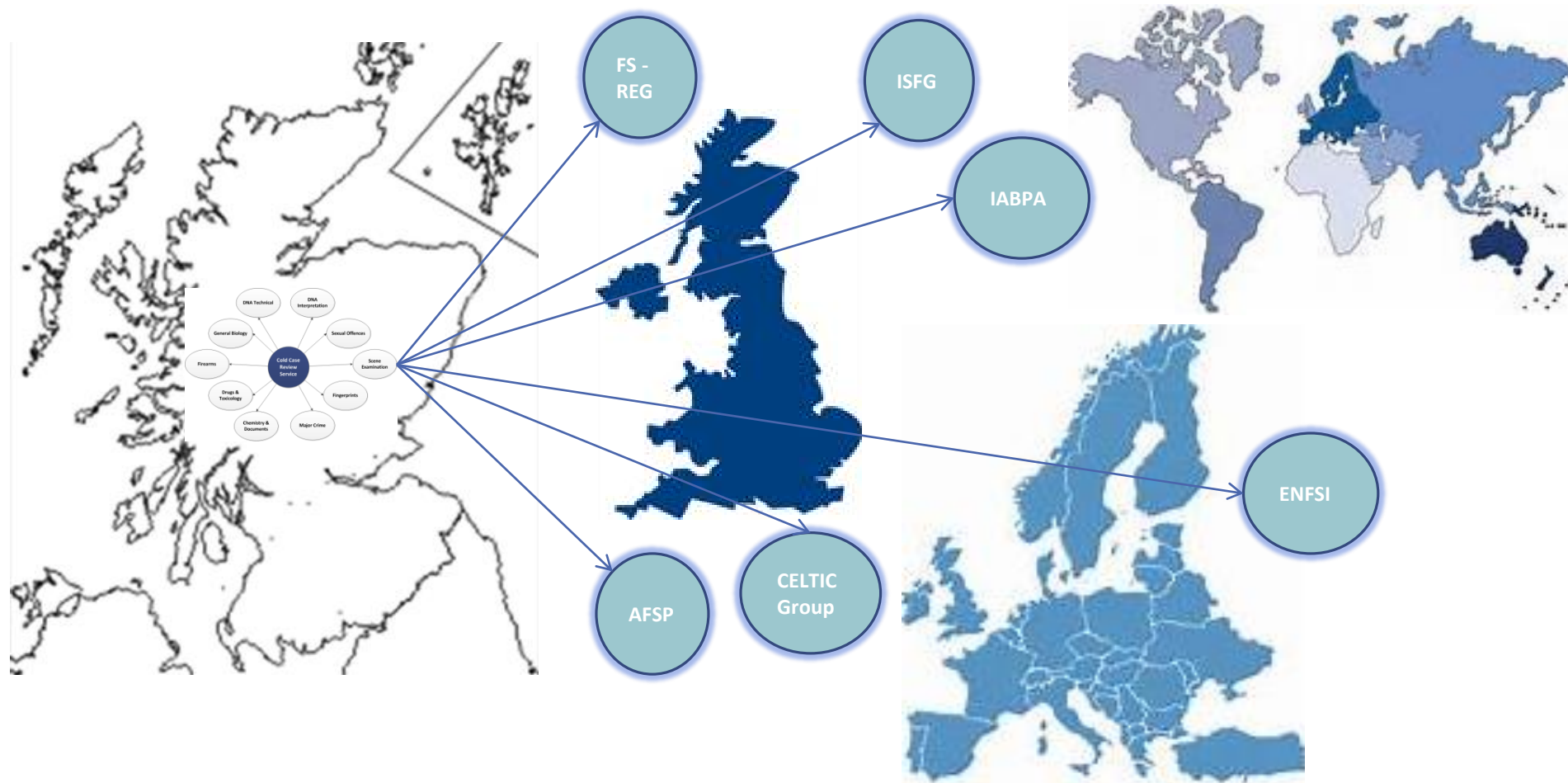
Location details	Activity	Location code
<p>Address Scottish Crime Campus Craigmethan Drive Gartcosh Scotland G69 8AE</p> <p>Contact: Craig Donnachie Tel: +44 (0) 1236 818108 E-Mail: craig.donnachie@spsa.pnn.police.uk Website: www.spsa.police.uk</p>	Forensic Analysis Quality Management	G
<p>Address Rushon Court 3 West Victoria Dock Road Dunfermline DD1 3JT</p> <p>Contact: Craig Donnachie Tel: +44 (0) 1236 818108 E-Mail: craig.donnachie@spsa.pnn.police.uk Website: www.spsa.police.uk</p>	Forensic Analysis	D
<p>Address 11 Prosser Hall Road Edinburgh EH16 6TL</p> <p>Contact: Craig Donnachie Tel: +44 (0) 1236 818108 E-Mail: craig.donnachie@spsa.pnn.police.uk Website: www.spsa.police.uk</p>	Forensic Analysis	E
<p>Address Nelson Street Aberdeen AB24 5EQ</p> <p>Contact: Craig Donnachie Tel: +44 (0) 1236 818108 E-Mail: craig.donnachie@spsa.pnn.police.uk Website: www.spsa.police.uk</p>	Forensic Analysis	A

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Joined-up justice



We have academic and international links



How these benefit Forensic Services

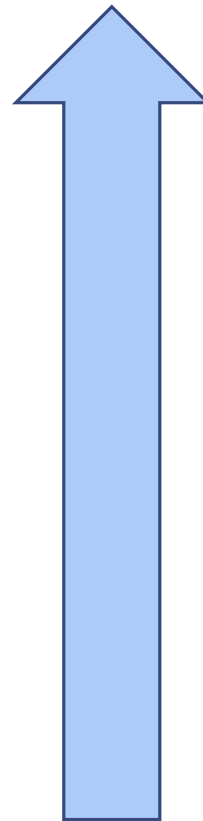
These external links have led to important work and development for staff, including me:

- Staff chairing many ENFSI groups
- Supporting the Forensic Regulator for England & Wales
- Criminal Cases Review Commission for England & Wales
- Grenfell Tower fire
- Oklahoma bombing

The future for Forensic Services

- **Forensic Services 2026 Strategy**
 - New Operating Model – Capability based. Working with partners to improve our current service. Strategy currently being refreshed
- **Post Mortem Toxicology**
 - £6m investment by Scottish Government – a vote of confidence in Forensic Services
- **Biometrics**
 - Working closely with the new Biometrics Commissioner on ethical and human rights issues
- **Digital future**
 - Supporting Police Scotland to achieve accreditation

Value of forensic science: so difficult to measure



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We deliver impartial Forensic Services for all the people of Scotland ➤ This the true value of Forensic Services 	Our communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We provide impartial specialist forensic services to policing and the wider criminal justice system 	Our partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Our people are at the heart of our ability to deliver forensic services ➤ FS has 550 staff who work with integrity, professionalism, and impartiality 	Our people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We value Scientific Excellence ➤ This helps us deliver a world-class services 	Forensic Services



Any
questions?

