

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	08 August 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Demonstrating Value
Presented By	Fiona Douglas
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update members on progress on:

- Update demonstrating the work to assess the value of forensic science.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. It is well recognised that forensic science adds significant value to the criminal justice system. Without forensic science, individuals may not be identified, charges may not be brought and convictions may not be possible. Indeed the confirmation of those responsible for crimes committed would be a lot less reliable.
- 1.2. Whilst this value is not in dispute, being able to quantify what this value is or allow for value measures to be identified is an area which requires more work. Being able to measure the value of forensic science is important:
 - To understand the contribution of forensic science within the Justice System
 - To determine how forensic science contributes to overall public safety, crime prevention and confidence in policing
 - To influence decision making in the justice process
 - To influence research and innovation
 - To support change and future strategic direction
 - To use resources effectively
 - To define and track investment outcomes
 - Demonstrate value for money to the taxpayer
- 1.3. Gaining a better measure and understanding of the value of forensic science is not easy. There are differing views of value amongst those that use Forensic Services and a general need to share a common view on what value is, how it is measured and how it can be used to grow the delivery of forensic science services.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1. There is a requirement to undertake assessment of value work in Scotland for the reasons identified. Not the least of which aligns value judgements into decision making within the revised Memorandum of Understanding to ensure the best utilisation of Forensic Services capacity. This also aligns to previous HMICS recommendations with regards to eliminating, as far as possible, failure demand.
- 2.2. Work on minimising failure demand in Forensic Services is well under way with consideration being given within the procedure development work in the Joint National Forensic Gateway (JNFG). This will result in enhanced triage process and scrutiny of the potential value of work being instructed at the outset of the forensic submission process.

- 2.3. In addition to the JNFG, detailed work has been undertaken within the Deployment of Scene Examination Project (part of the Forensic 2026 Programme) to establish an enhanced request process for scene examinations that can be managed through a National Tasking Unit. These processes will further ensure that Scene Examination and Scientific staff are deployed to those scenes with the maximum opportunity to add forensic value to any investigation.
- 2.4. In order to consider the wider question of value, and not just value to the justice sector, but beyond that, how forensic science contributes to public health, safety and wellbeing required a working group to be established.
- 2.5. This working group will identify the contribution of forensic science and take a holistic approach to assessing where value is added at each layer.



- 2.6. Areas of consideration for discussion in the working group could include the value that forensic services play in:
- Supporting Missing People
 - Protecting Vulnerable Communities
 - Improving Community Safety

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- Improving Public Health
- Delivery of Justice

2.7. On 27th May 2022 the working group met for the first time. The group included members from Police Scotland (including digital forensics), SIPR, The Leverhulme Institute and Forensic Services and was co-chaired by the Director of Forensic Services and Jane Ryder (Deputy Chair of the SPA). COPFS were invited but unable to attend the first meeting.

2.8 The working group considered a range of areas;

- The presumption of value
- Priority of the proposition
- Consideration of value now or value in the future
- The challenge of data silos in how we can measure how good we are and how this relates to outcomes to the public
- Assessment of value through different lenses, the victim, the suspect, investigator, prosecution and defence, the judiciary, courts etc.
- Consideration of what is addition value, for example the science vs. the speed of the provision of the scientific results

2.9 In order to define a scope of work that would limit the wider range of areas that could be considered, it was agreed that focus on sexual offences and the role that forensic science plays in delivering justice in these types of crime would be of most benefit to the system. It was agreed that the following areas could be covered;

- Understanding the process and mapping it across the justice system
- To focus on areas of convergence where multiple agencies are making key decisions and then considering a measure of downstream outcomes in terms of maximising value through both impact and timing
- To bring in the voice of the public into the discussions and also to include the prosecution, defence and judiciary

2.10 Given current workload priorities this work will progress and report around the autumn 2023, the initial priority will be to hold a workshop with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the current process and to identify areas for focus, The Leverhulme Institute have agreed to facilitate this.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There may be reputational implications of this paper due to the inability to directly assess the value of forensic science in keeping the communities of Scotland safe and delivering our vision of 'scientific excellence for safer communities'.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1. There are no community impacts associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note:

- The current position with regards to work to demonstrate the value of Forensic Science

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