

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	25th April 2022
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Update on HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services
Presented By	Vicki Morton
Recommendation to Members	For Information
Appendix Attached	Yes

PURPOSE

To provide Forensic Services Committee members with an update on work to implement the improvements set out in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 HMICS Published its *Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services* in June 2017. The review made 23 recommendations. Authority members noted the publication of the review and its recommendations at the Public Board meeting on 22 June 2017. The Forensic Services Committee has a clear remit as per the terms of reference:

"Oversee the implementation of improvement recommendations made in relation to the Forensic Service by scrutiny/inspection bodies or the SPA"

- 1.2 Forensic Services developed an Improvement Plan to address the recommendations in the review and this was approved by the SPA Board in September 2017.

- 1.3 In addition to the above the Audit Committee has a remit to:

"Assess the Authority's and Police Scotland's response to any recommendations and seek assurance that there is a process in place to implement these recommendations which is being managed appropriately and monitor progress of discharge of related actions."
As such the effectiveness of the process and controls is also reported to the Audit Committee.

2. ENGAGEMENT/REPORTING

- 2.1 The majority of outstanding recommendations align with the Forensic Services 2026 Change Programme and are discussed at the Forensic Services Change Programme Board. Engagement with Police Scotland and COPFS has continued as appropriate through specific engagement meetings.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 All **23 recommendations** have now been formally closed by HMICS, with Recs 4, 12 and 18 reviewed and closed since the last Forensic Services Committee update in February 2022.
- 3.2 The full list of closed recommendations are included at Appendix A.

- 3.3 Forensic Services recognises the significant activity by our people, Police Scotland and COPFS to enable closure of the recommendations, but also that work continues to improve the services we deliver now and in the future. This work aligns to the Forensic Services Strategy approved in September 2021, the ongoing Change Programme and operational service improvements, to ensure we are fit for purpose now and in the future.
- 3.4 Forensic Services Senior Management Team would also like to acknowledge HMICS, particularly Gill Imery QPM, previous Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, for the ongoing support and scrutiny of forensic service provision that we deliver for our communities and criminal justice partners.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications within this report.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no direct 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 requested to note the content of the paper, and formal closure of all recommendations from the HMICS 2017 Thematic Inspection of Forensic Services.

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Appendix A – Recommendations closed by HMICS

HMICS No.	Recommendation	Date closed by HMICS
Leadership and Governance		
1	The SPA and SG should engage in the implementation of the Home Office Forensic Science Strategy to inform the approach in Scotland, explore common standards and support future interoperability (<i>mention of provision of services on commercial basis in future by FS</i>)	25/06/2018
2	The SPA should deliver a forensic strategy, aligned with those of Police Scotland and COPFS and their strategic planning cycles, with a supportive investment plan	04/07/2018
3	The SPA should institute a formal Forensic Committee as a matter of urgency (<i>to support and publicly scrutinise the delivery of forensic services; senior representation from PS and COPFS as observers</i>)	25/06/2018
4	The SPA should review its partnership governance structures for FS and undertake a fundamental review of the MoU ensuring the process is thereafter undertaken on a regular basis with appropriate consultation with PS, COPFS and PIRC	14/03/2022
5	The SPA should review the senior management structure for FS	24/11/2021
6	The SPA should develop capability and capacity within FS to deliver change and improvement. This should complement the creation of a specialist Programme Management Office (PMO) within PS and provide dedicated programme and project management expertise to FS	04/02/2020
Outcomes		
7	The SPA should work with PS and COPFS to design and implement a new performance management framework for the demand and delivery of Forensic Services	04/02/2020
8	The SPA should implement a systematic approach to the gathering and reporting of feedback and complaints on FS delivery	24/06/2019
9	PS should consider quality accreditation for digital forensics in line with FSR recommendations, UK Forensic Strategy and wider good practice in order to support effective public performance reporting and assurance. Police Scotland	05/07/2018
Management of Demand		
10	PS should review the role and capacity of Portal Gateway Managers to improve local liaison around investigative priorities and ensure greater involvement in tasking and co-ordination processes linked to	06/07/2021
11	The SPA and PS should implement a new decision making framework and appropriate guidance to support the prioritisation of forensic examinations. The implementation of this should be formally evaluated.	21/12/2021
12	The SPA should work with PS and COPFS to develop capability and capacity within FS to systematically address failure demand	14/03/2022
Planning and Performance		
13	The SPA and PS should review and implement the new Crime Scene Attendance policy to support a national approach with a focus on maintaining quality of service to the public and assuring operational competence of officers undertaking scene examination	06/11/2017

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14	PS should work with the SPA to develop a national approach to productions management, storage and transportation of items seized for forensic examination.	23/09/2021
15	The SPA and PS should implement the recommendations of the previous PS led Lean Six Sigma review	24/11/2021
16	PS and the SPA should introduce processes to dynamically monitor and report on the caseload including backlogs within FS at both a national and local level.	21/12/2021
17	The SPA and PS should implement an improvement planning process aligned within its strategic planning cycle and develop capability and capacity in applying the best practice tools and techniques for continuous improvement	06/07/2018
18	The SPA should develop a transparent workforce and demand planning model for Forensic Services.	14/03/2022
People		
19	The SPA should develop an enhanced staff and Union engagement approach within FS which includes the introduction of PDCs across all FS staff groups with immediate effect	06/07/2018
Resources		
20	The SPA should develop a forensic services costing model with appropriate support and expertise to support demand management and future income generation	06/07/2018
21	The SPA should commission a review of EMS functionality and investment profile against business requirements and link process efficiency work into future EMS development and refinement	04/02/2020
22	PS should further consider the impact of i6 cancellation on FS and ensure that interfaces and provision of other business support systems are included in the development of their future ICT investment plans.	06/07/2018
23	PS should develop formal SLA for the delivery of corporate support services to FS, reflecting agreed service levels, performance measures, regular monitoring and Customer Relationship arrangements	04/02/2020