



Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	10th August 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. Forensic Services are on target to deliver a balanced budget given the funding increase we were awarded for 2022-23. Alongside the Efficiencies Plan, we are investing in delivering our New Operating Model as and when we have the sustainable resources to do so.
- 1.2. While there has been an overspend - from the need to extend outsourcing for Post Mortem Toxicology - this has been mitigated by underspends such as staff vacancies which mean we are currently forecasting a break even budget for 2023-24.

Change & Innovation

- 1.3. There has been extensive work delivered as part of the New Operating Model in the past quarter with the new ways of working for Search and Recovery Scenes (previously Scene Examination) rolled out in July. Stage 1 of the interim staff structure was introduced from July with Stage 2 being delivered from 7th August. The new role profiles were introduced from April with full implementation by 7th August.
- 1.4. The new Search & Recovery Capability Team Managers have completed their initial training and took up their roles in July. The New Research, Development and Innovation structure is also being developed and there is ongoing Management Training throughout Forensic Services.

Criminal Toxicology

- 1.5. An extra UKAS visit to Criminal Toxicology took place on 5th July. Assessors commented on the noticeable difference and clear progression seen since their previous visit in March. They have agreed there is no longer a requirement for monthly reporting to UKAS and this can be reduced to reporting by exception only. There was also agreement that no further additional meetings or visits will be required until the annual regular visit in November.

Performance

- 1.6. Forensic Services delivered significant performance improvements during the financial year 2022-23 as a result of investment and change, planned and implemented over the past few years. This is the year that output has exceeded demand significantly.
- 1.7. Following extensive discussions with committee members, partners and stakeholders we are reporting our new Performance Report which shows our progress delivering the Forensic Strategy and highlights our Operational Key Performance Indicators. This is first time Forensic Services have reported on timeliness in this way. Improving timeliness is central to the delivery of our New Operating Model and as the change is rolled out this will allow these improvements to be monitored.

Scenes Benchmarking

- 1.8. Following discussions at the Forensic Services Committee about differences in regional recovery rates by Scene Examiners we have started to bench mark these. An initial review did not show concerning behaviours and the new National Tasking Unit, which went live on 3rd April 2023, has brought a consistency of response to Police Scotland requests and an increase in the value of attendances.
- 1.9. While initial indications are that recovery rates have increased since the Tasking Unit started, more extended data will be needed before a robust analysis can be made - including the impact of the transition to the New Operating Model for Search and Recovery - Scenes on 3rd July 2023. Once this analysis is complete, we can then make a more detailed comparison with similar UK providers and we have been in contact with Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Surrey, Sussex and the Met.
- 1.10. Future benchmarking will include:
 - Criteria for attendance at scenes;
 - Samples recovered – numbers and categories (fingerprints, DNA, trace evidence);
 - Samples progressed to analysis in laboratories;
 - Response time to scenes;
 - Value added to investigative process.

Fingerprint collaborative work

- 1.11. Collaborative work between Forensic Services, Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science, the University of Twente, and the Netherlands Forensic Institute was highlighted at the EU International Association for Identification Annual Conference in Lisbon in June.
- 1.12. At the conference, which was promoted internationally across media and social media, Forensic Services Senior Fingerprint Examiners co-presented a workshop on "*Computer-Assisted Consensus among Scottish Fingerprint Experts*".

Fire Investigators Research and Training

- 1.13. The Chair of the Forensic Services Committee joined colleagues and partners at the opening of the new Research and training Facility in Portleven, Aberdeenshire on 6th June 2023. This is significant milestone for this project and is a collaboration with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science, and the Danish Police Special Crimes Unit.
- 1.14. This innovative project uses photogrammetric recording of scenes to allow them to be reconstructed into Virtual Reality. This cutting-edge approach ensures that training opportunities are captured, recorded and can be used for many years to come - ensuring that future Fire Investigation training will be secure in Scotland.

Murder conviction

- 1.15. Connor Gibson, 20, was convicted of murdering his 16-year-old sister Amber Gibson on 26 July 2023 at the High Court in Glasgow. Another man, Stephen Corrigan, 45, was also found guilty of attempting to defeat the ends of justice and Breach of the Peace. These convictions followed extensive evidence led by Forensic Services scientists including marks found on the victim's clothes and analysis of DNA samples.
- 1.16. Welcoming the murder conviction, Detective Chief Superintendent Paul Livingstone, Head of Major Crime at Police Scotland said: "This was a challenging and complex investigation involving a range of specialist officers from within Police Scotland working closely with our partners in forensic services, all of whom I would pay tribute to

for their professionalism and dedication whilst carrying out their work.”

Post Mortem Toxicology

1.17. Forensic Services were informed by COPFS in June that the National Records of Scotland target for the 2022 cases was achieved and they will now be able to proceed to the drug death report publication date in August. This means it will be delivered to the same timescale as last year, in spite of the huge upheaval of transferring the team from the University of Glasgow while setting the new lab in Govan.

Forensic Services Excellence Awards

1.18. In September we will hold the Forensic Services Excellence Awards to celebrate and recognise the excellence and innovation our colleagues deliver to justice service partners for the people of Scotland.

1.19. There are seven categories from the award:

- Greatest Contribution to Forensic Science Award
- Service Improvement Award
- Team of the Year Award
- Science and Innovation Award
- Staff Member of the Year Award
- Wellbeing Award
- Director's Award

1.20. There has been a good response from staff and we look forward to working with our partners to judge the entries and select the winners from the excellent work carried out in Forensic Services right across Scotland.

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.