



Fingerprint Quality Standards Specialist Group (FQSSG)

Note of the meeting held on 8 February 2018 at 109 Lambeth Road, London.

1.0 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. A full list of the attendee organisations and apologies is provided at Annex A.

2.0 Minutes of the last FQSSG meeting on 03 October 2018

2.1 The previous FQSSG minutes were approved as an accurate reflection of the discussion held, subject to minor amendments, and the Secretariat was asked to publish them.

Action 1: The Secretariat to amend and publish the minutes of the FQSSG meeting held on 30 October 2018 on GOV.UK.

3.0 Actions and Matters Arising

3.1 The following matters arising from the previous FQSSG meeting were discussed:

3.2 Action 6: The Regulator to discuss with Transforming Forensics the potential for incorporating known-samples into the HOB programme. This action was complete. In the last meeting a 2017 AAAS report, *Forensic Science Assessments – A Quality and Gap Analysis – Latent Fingerprint Examination*,¹ was discussed. A section of the report referred to introducing known-source research samples into the routine flow of casework. It was suggested that the Home Office Biometrics (HOB) programme incorporate regular blind testing capability into its platform.

3.3 Incorporating known samples is not in the current HOB matcher and central contract specifications, but two requests for change through the Transforming Forensics programme to facilitate this had been proposed. The requests would require input from the FQSSG group that would subsequently be taken up by the TF programme. A member suggested a potential way of testing the system was to load pseudo sets (ground truth) onto the database which are then removed after 24 hours. The Metropolitan Police had been using this as a method of validation and competency testing of staff. It was felt that nationally the approach should be unified.

Action 2: To seek clarification from the FINDS strategy board the governance around loading pseudo sets (ground truth) to the national fingerprint database. The MPS representative (LH) agreed to provide a paragraph for the Regulator to appropriately frame the query

¹ Available from: <https://www.aaas.org/report/latent-fingerprint-examination>

3.4 Action 7: FQSSG members to feedback to the Regulator justification for the use of the term 'identification' and suggest possible alternatives by the end of October. This issue had been discussed at the National Fingerprint Board as it was seen to be fundamental to the fingerprint community. It was decided that an expert network should be created, for which the chair for the fingerprint strategic network (FSN) had compiled a list of potential co-optees and would convene the first meeting. Any outcomes of the group would be considered at the FQSSG.

3.5 CC reported he had been involved in discussions about the term 'identification' that took place at the US Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Fingerprint Committee. A document considering the term, including a broad definition of 'identification', had been produced and would be agreed at the upcoming meeting in March. CC agreed to share the final document with the chair for the FSN (WYP).

Action 3: CC to share document produced by OSAC fingerprint working group with WYP.

3.6 In the previous meeting the group had discussed the potentially misleading use of the term 'identification' in Streamlined Forensic Reports (SFRs). Generally there had been a number of problems with the application of SFRs, as highlighted in the Regulator's annual report. Members felt that any uncertainty was not clearly presented in SFRs, which can easily be addressed in longer statements. It was felt that more work is required around the comprehensibility of SFRs. The Regulator agreed to raise the issue at the National SFR group.

Action 4: The Regulator to have further discussions on categorical identification in SFRs at the National SFR group.

3.7 Action 9: FSRU lead to discuss research opportunities concerning fingerprint interpretation with CC. Following discussions a document had been circulated listing possible fingerprint research areas using Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems (AFIS) that could provide empirical data around fingerprint interpretation and identification.

3.8 The Metropolitan Police reported they had carried out some basic research on the performance of the matching algorithm using pseudo sets (ground truth). It was suggested a PhD student managed by the Metropolitan Police with access to the algorithm and the IDENT1 database could develop this work further. Access would need to be facilitated by HOB and funding would need to be obtained. The research would require access to the matching algorithm as part of the contract with the supplier, the detail of any access was unclear. It was suggested that the SRO for the HOB matcher project is contacted as the appropriate person to take this forward.

Action 5: FSRU lead to contact the SRO for the HOB matcher project around the issue for appropriate access to the matcher to enable appropriate research to be conducted.

3.9 It was suggested that members of the fingerprint community might also approach research on fingerprint interpretation in a federated manner. The FQSSG would be the appropriate group to consider such research.

Action 6: FSRU lead to facilitate small sub-group of the FQSSG to scope research opportunities in fingerprint interpretation. Members of the sub-group to include members from MPS (LH), EMSOU (AP) and University of Lausanne (CC).

3.10 All other actions from the previous meeting were either complete or were included as agenda items in the current meeting.

3.11 FSR Annual Report. The FSR annual report was published on 19th January and had been circulated to members for information.²

4.0 Accreditation Updates

4.1 Members heard that since the last meeting, 5 accreditation visits to UK police force fingerprint bureaux had been completed. Accreditation to ISO/ IEC 17025 would be required by October 2018 according to the Regulator's Code of Practice and Conduct. Of the 5 visits, only one bureau has achieved accreditation, and one further offered accreditation subject to a follow-up visit. The low success rate was concerning and the readiness pre-assessment checks suggested that many others were not yet ready for assessment.

4.2 The NPCC were determining how they can assist fingerprint bureaux in obtaining accreditation, but anticipated that only 13 would gain accreditation by the October deadline. It was suggested that a 'buddy' system might be implemented, whereby those bureaux which had already received accreditation share lessons-learned with others. Concerns were raised that this may cause resourcing issues for those who had already obtained accreditation.

4.3 To successfully see all bureaux gain accreditation, a culture change and senior-level buy in is required; especially given that investment is a key part of the strategy. Following on from the joint letter sent by the FSR and NPCC fingerprint lead to police Chief Officers, the Regulator agreed to keep pushing this message alongside the NPCC.

4.4 One issue noted in fingerprint bureaux was a general lack of producing contemporaneous notes, which was felt to impact service delivery by staff. To encourage more note-taking, digital systems could be implemented to make the process easier, which the Transforming Forensics programme has been supportive of. UKAS were not prescriptive in the method for note taking, and were open to different practices to achieve the same goal. It was suggested that a working group could be convened to assess the practices of taking contemporaneous notes and how these can be improved by the FSN.

5.0 NPCC – Enhancement Labs

5.1 The National Scientific Support Laboratory conference was planned for 27 February 2018 at GMP Hough End Centre.

5.2 Communications have been circulated around the upcoming Fingerprint Enhancement Laboratory (FEL) expert network meetings in April and October and volunteers had been requested for a training focus group requested by the College of Policing as part of the review of their forensic learning programmes.

² Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/forensic-science-regulator-annual-report-2017>

6.0 HOB

6.1 An update was provided on the HOB programme, including the roll-out of MobileID technology, Livescan 3, latent mark searching from IDENT1, the fingerprint matcher, HOB central (the service transition of IDENT 1 and IABS), fingerprint bureaux landscaping, and Prüm.

6.2 Members were informed that a paper with the current status of scope of the HOB fingerprint projects had recently been refreshed. GC agreed to share this paper with the FQSSG via the secretariat.

Action 7: GC to send HOB fingerprint projects paper to secretariat who will forward to FQSSG members.

7.0 NPCC – Transforming Forensics (TF)

7.1 The group was provided an update on the Transforming Forensics programme. A funding bid for the programme had been submitted to the Police Reform Transformation Board which had been recommended for funding. A conditional release of funding for the initial 4-5 months had been granted to allow assessment of the business case. The Home Office was due to publish a project assessment review in April. The next stage would be to go out to visit the 44 forces to discuss the business case. A 'ready-reckoner' would be provided to forces to help them determine how to proceed. Ideally the proof-of-concept phase of the project would start at the end of this year.

8.0 Work Plan

8.1 The work plan had been updated based on the discussions that took place at the last FQSSG meeting. If members wished to make any further points, these were to be sent to the FSRU lead.

Action 8: Members to send any further feedback on the work plan to the FSRU lead.

9.0 Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS) Update

9.1 The CSFS reported that they have now put out advert for recruitment of an experienced forensic practitioner for their training manager role. Members were informed the annual conference would take place in November and would be around the theme of the value of forensic science to society. It was reported that the Fingerprint Society had now become a division of the CSFS, but that they were attempting to maintain the fingerprint element as separate entity within the society. A series of workshops involving CSI and fingerprint experts were being planned and will be held in the north and south of England for which the dates are yet to be confirmed.

10.0 Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST)

10.1 Members were provided an update on the work of CAST, which would shortly be merging with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), thus reporting to the Ministry of Defence. All staff and facilities would be moved to Dstl commencing on 1 April 2018 and the transition was due for completion by April 2020. The move provided an opportunity for commissioning and prioritisation of work, which would be carried out via a commissioning body in the Home Office.

10.2 Version 2 of the fingerprint source book, which was prepared as an internal reference document drawing together all of the information held by CAST regarding internally managed research and experimental work on fingermark enhancement techniques, had been published on GOV.uk.³

11.0 R&D/ European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI)

11.1 It was reported that projects funded under the EU 2016 Direct grant scheme were planned to start imminently.

11.2 Members asked if and when the report on proficiency testing by ENSFI that was funded would be published. It was thought that the report would not be published until 2019.

Action 9: SPA representative to find out whether a report of proficiency testing would be published by ENSFI this year.

12.0 AOB

12.1 East Midlands Special Operations Unit representative informed members a 2 day workshop with Itiel E. Dror (on cognitive bias) would be held for the East Midlands Police and that they would provide feedback to the FQSSG on the event.

12.2 Members were informed that the next ENSFI fingerprint working group meeting would be held in Lausanne between 4-7 September at the University of Lausanne School of Criminal Science.

12.3 Dates of future meetings. Meetings would be held in early May, early September and early December. West Yorkshire, UKAS and West Midlands had offered to host.

Action 10: Secretariat to find suitable dates and share with those who had offered to host.

³ Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fingerprint-source-book-v2>

Annex A

Organisation Representatives Present:

Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) - Chair
Home Office - CAST
Greater Manchester Police (GMP)
College of Policing (CoP)
West Yorkshire Police (WYP)
Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS)
Home Office - FSRU
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)
UK Accreditation Service (UKAS)
East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU)
Home Office - Science Secretariat
University of Lausanne
West Midlands Police (WMP)
NPCC Transforming Forensics
Home Office – Biometric Programme (HOB)
Scottish Police Authority (SPA)

Apologies:

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)