

DNA ANALYSIS SPECIALIST GROUP

Notes of the tenth meeting, held at 12:30pm on 22 September 2011, at Macdonald Burlington Hotel, New Street, Birmingham

Present:

June Guinness	Forensic Science Regulation Unit (Deputy Chair)
Brian Irwin	FSNI
Simon Iveson	Forensic Science Regulation Unit
Ben Mallinder	Scottish Police Service Authority (for Martin Fairley)
Andrew McDonald	Orchid Cellmark
Sue Pope	Forensic Science Service (for Jonathan Whitaker)
Dorothy Ramsbottom	Forensic Science Laboratory, Ireland
Adam Shariff	NPIA
Denise Syndercombe-Court	International Society for Forensic Genetics
Jim Thomson	LGC Forensics (for Kerry Way)
Des Van Hinsberg	Forensic DNA Services
Kenny Chigbo	(Secretary)

Apologies

Karen Squibb-Williams	CPS (Chair)
David Balding	Royal Statistical Society
Kathryn Dagnall	Met Police
Martin Fairley	Scottish Police Service Authority
Shirley Marshall	Forensic Science Society
Tony Nash	Met Police
Kerry Way	LGC Forensics
Jonathan Whitaker	Forensic Science Service

Item 1: Opening and welcome

1.1 June welcomed those present to the tenth meeting of the DNA Analysis Specialist Group. She gave apologies for the Chair and said they will be meeting on 6 October and asked the Group to send her any issues they want brought to the Chair's attention.

Item 2: Minutes from the last meeting

2.1 The following amendment was made to the minutes of the meeting on 30 March 2011:

- Paragraph 11.1: "on-source" should be "un-sourced".

2.2 The minutes of the meeting on 30 March 2011 were agreed subject to the above amendment.

Item 3: Matters arising

3.1 Actions from the last meeting were either cleared or are agenda items for this meeting.

Item 4: Interpretation of DNA evidence

4.1 June thanked all for their contributions/amendments to the paper.

4.2 The DNASG suggested these further amendments to the draft:

- Principle 9 on page 22 should read: “The methods used to determine the homozygote threshold should be by validation.” The last sentence should be removed.
- Add “therefore it may not match” to the second sentence of “Complex DNA profile” in the glossary.
- The definition of electropherogram should be “graphical representation of the DNA profile”.
- “Partial” should be removed from the definition of contamination.
- Principle 1 on page 6 should read “validated continuous probabilistic methods”.
- Probabilistic should be removed from the glossary.

4.2 June will make the suggested changes and circulate the final draft to the DNASG. It will be published on the Forensic Science Regulator’s website and permission will be sought for publication in scientific journals.

Action: June Guinness

Item 5: Draft DNA appendix

5.1 The document has been updated in line with comments received from the DNASG. The latest version was circulated with the minutes of the last meeting and no further comments were received. The group further commented on the appendix as follows:

- There is a typo in 1(a) of paragraph 5.4.2.
- “Technique” should come after probabilistic in 1(b) on top of page 4.
- The first line of paragraph 1.2 of the scope should read: “The requirements are for STR and where appropriate chromosomal analyses..”

5.2 Simon will make the suggested changes.

Action: Simon Iveson

Item 6: Update on Codes

6.1 Simon reported that the Codes of Practice were ready for publication subject to proof-reading. It is expected that the Codes will be published in October subject to final decisions on commencement dates. There has been some discussion whether the DNA appendix should be published at the same time as the Codes. It has been suggested that the DNA appendix be held back for a period after publication of the Codes or the commencement date be staggered, both options will be put to the Regulator.

Item 7: PAS - Consumables

7.1 The brief paper was circulated as an update on the new project to develop a PAS for the consumables used for the collection and processing of forensic material. Kevin Sullivan is the technical author for the PAS, with BSI supporting the Regulator on the contract. A steering group will be set up to provide strategic leadership and trade associations have been asked for nominations to the steering group. The steering group will review the first draft of the PAS from Kevin and the second draft will go out for consultation. Publication is expected by April 2012. The PAS will cover consumables for forensics with specific requirements for DNA.

7.2 It was also reported that Australia were considering the development of an ISO standard for DNA consumables. A draft outline was being compiled to be submitted to the ISO by the end of the month.

Item 8: New PCR chemistry - Update

8.1 Adam Shariff reported that the negotiations have been concluded for the contract. The terms and conditions are being finalised for the successful bidder. The contract is expected to be signed by next week and the NDNAD will be ready with the changes by the end of 2012. A project manager will be recruited to implement the changes. The changes will enable the population frequency databases to be centralised.

Item 9: NDNAD Technical Standards

9.1 Adam informed the DNASG that progress on this has been slow. Three technical documents have been reviewed. The next steps are to link the standards to Peter Gill's paper, the Regulator's Code of Practice, etc. The three documents are likely to be published before the end of December. An input would be needed from the DNASG and the Group will be updated when necessary.

Item 10: Error rate Calculation - Implementation

10.1 Adam gave a presentation about a new approach called the Confirmed Error Rate (CER). This is the rate of mis-designation as a proportion of total

profile records loaded on the NDNAD within a certain time frame. The next steps will be to pilot the new approach in October.

10.2 It was agreed that Adam should look again at the recommendations in the DNASG paper that was tabled in May 2010. Simon agreed to supply the paper to Adam so it could be considered for re-circulation.

Action: Simon Iveson

10.3 Error rate calculation should be an agenda item for the next DNASG meeting.

Action: Kenny Chigbo

Item 11: AOB

11.1 Adam reported that the NDNAD delivery unit's update was circulated in July. They are about to start editing the next edition. There has been minimal feedback on the content of the update. He appealed to DNASG members to provide feedback.

11.2 June will be asking the Chair when they meet about next steps on the Q&A for prosecutors. Adam asked June to also chase up a response about an inquiry he made to her about the CPS including exhibit IDs.

Action: June Guinness

Item 12: Date of next meeting

12.1 The next meeting should be arranged for January next year.

Action: Kenny Chigbo

LIST OF ACTIONS

4.2	June will make the suggested changes and circulate the final draft of Peter Gill's paper to the DNASG.	June Guinness
5.2	Simon will make the suggested changes to the draft DNA appendix	Simon Iveson
10.2	Simon agreed to supply the [error rate] paper to Adam so it could be considered for re-circulation.	Simon Iveson
10.3	Error rate calculation should be an agenda item for the next DNASG meeting.	Kenny Chigbo
11.2	June will be asking the Chair when they meet about next steps on the Q&A for prosecutors. Adam asked June to also chase up a response about an inquiry he made to her about the CPS including exhibit IDs.	June Guinness
15.1	Kenny to schedule next meeting for January next year	Kenny Chigbo