

Attendees

Apologies

Stephen Webb	Home Office CPG Finance and Strategy, FPG Chair	Mark Whyman	Senior User, NE Region
[redacted]	Home Office CPG Finance/Forensic Policy	Diana Holl-Allen	Association of Police Authorities
Alan Pratt	Home Office Science	Chris Eyre	ACPO
Rob Coleman	CAST	Chris Sims	ACPO
[redacted]	Home Office, Police Transparency Unit	John Grealis	Attorney General's Office
Andrew Rennison	Forensic Science Regulator		
Karen Squibb-Williams	Crown Prosecution Service		
Amanda Cooper	NDNA Strategy Board		
Chris Porter	MPS Forensic Services		
Matthew Humphrey	CCRC		
[redacted]	Home Office Commercial Directorate		
[redacted]	Home Office CPG Finance/Forensic Policy, FPG Secretariat		

1. The Chair welcomed attendees and invited comments on the minutes from the previous meeting. These were agreed with no amendments or further actions arising.

#### Forensic Market

2. [REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]
3. [redacted] presented a paper to the Group on financial resilience and continuity measures. It noted that the current supplier monitoring activity may help identify trends in FSP stability. Continued quality or TRT failures may be indicative of a business in distress. In addition, the financial monitoring undertaken by the Central Management Team will show any specific financial issues, such as county court judgements. Soft intelligence around quality issues, payments to subcontractors and general discomfort in a business will also provide helpful early warning systems. The proposed Forensic Marketplace Strategy Group, to be led by Chris Eyre, may be helpful in drawing this soft intelligence together through customers. In addition, the procurement activities currently underway include probing questions. [REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]
4. The group agreed that the results of the next quarterly financial survey conducted by CMT should be brought to FPG to determine what information it provides and what further intelligence should be sought. The group also discussed whether a general waiver of UKAS confidentiality agreements with providers could be instituted to allow early sight of repeated breaches of quality standards or failures to introduce improvement measures. It is widely agreed that these could be further indications of financial distress, in addition to the obvious CJS risks of quality failure. [REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]
5. The paper went on to describe measures currently in place in a number of sectors where private companies provide critical services, such as banking, healthcare and water supply. Most of these measures require structured intervention, with some requiring specific legislation (Statutory Administration Schemes). The group agreed that these provided a helpful start point for consideration, although they were on balance not proportionate in relation to the far smaller, if strategically important, forensic service marketplace. Andrew Rennison took the view that a Statutory

Administration Scheme deserved further consideration. The group agreed to consider the paper further and provide follow-up comments.

**Action** – FPG members to provide comments on financial stability paper.

**Action** – Home Office Commercial to circulate next quarterly financial survey data to FPG

**Action** – Home Office Commercial to request that financial assessments made by the West Coast Consortium be made available and to explore any contractual barriers to sharing this information with FPG

#### Scenesafe

6. Following the closure of Forensic Science Service, there were four distinct legacy strands remaining – the FSS archive, the FSS pension scheme, FSS's remaining properties and the small consumables division, Scenesafe. The primary legacy – the forensic archive – is now fully set up as a new company, Forensic Archive Ltd, with Stephen Webb and Alan Pratt among its directors. FAL will continue to deal with the disposal of the remaining FSS property assets as well as the day to day running of the archive.

7. [REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]

#### Forensic Archive Update

8. The Forensic Archive is now well established and performing within the Service Level Agreement. This is despite a continuing pressure on SGM+ upgrade requests. The archive expects to be able to fulfil all requests within required timescales, but have raised concerns that some forces may submit high-volume requests on or near the final deadline. Amanda Cooper indicated that most regions have now submitted all of their requests.
9. Both CPS and MPS raised issues they have experienced with obtaining process information from the archive. While the Group felt that in general these issues were caused by lack of detail in the requests, it was agreed that the matter should be addressed in greater detail at the next Archive Working Group meeting.

#### Terms of Reference



10. The Group discussed the current terms of reference. It was agreed that they should reflect that FPG would be the gatekeeper of the former NPIA resources now within the Home Office, allowing them to be at the disposal of the wider CJS. It was also agreed that FPG should move away from the legacy work of Forensic Transition Board, scrutinising day-to-day matters and focusing on former FSS functions, and instead begin to think about the wider forensic functions and future business change. The Group should be setting the direction in all criminal forensic science policy areas rather than focusing on the fairly narrow range of functions provided by the commercial market.
11. The group briefly discussed the changed Ministerial portfolios and how this impacts on the reporting structures, with Jeremy Browne now holding the policy for Crime Reduction, which incorporates the majority of forensic science policy, but with James Brokenshire dealing with Science in relation to his Security portfolio.
12. The Group felt that some introduction to the other forensic disciplines might be helpful.  
**Action** – Home Office Science to provide some scene-setting material on other forensic science disciplines.  
**Action** – Home Office to review and redraft Terms of Reference

#### Forensic Market Strategy Group

13. FMSG is the group proposed by Chris Eyre to supply a customer-led forum for issues around commercial forensic provision and marketplace management. The group is expected to hold its first meeting on 11 October. In Chris Eyre's absence, discussion of the Terms of Reference was deferred until the next FPG meeting.

#### Any Other Business

14. **AOB1:** The Group were reminded that the Science and Technology Committee are expected to follow up their report on the closure of FSS with further sessions to be announced later this year. The Home Office's Chief Scientist is considering his approach to the Committee, following up issues that were raised.
15. **AOB2:** Karen Squibb-Williams raised concerns that issues being reported in Supplier Monitoring Reports were not being escalated to her in CPS. It is important for CPS to have early sight of potential issues and to be in a position to consider if it has a wider

national implication. Home Office Commercial indicated that the issues flagged as being managed locally are not being escalated to the central team for management, and it is therefore a matter for forces to report potential issues to local/regional CPS for consideration.

16. **AOB3:** Karen Squibb-Williams brought forward the updated guidance for FSPs on provision of services to the CJS, including Streamlined Forensic Reporting. Home Office Commercial confirmed that the requirement for SFR was included in the framework agreement for FSPs.
17. Karen Squibb-Williams spoke briefly with Home Office Science the possibility of a presentation on working with CPS and the wider CJS, to be further discussed separately.

Date of next meeting

18. The group agreed that while meetings should broadly be held on a quarterly basis, there was sufficient important material for discussion to require a meeting before the end of the year. An appropriate date will be determined in due course.

**Action** – Home Office to set date of next and future meetings

[redacted], Home Office  
3 October 2012

