

CONTAMINATION SPECIALIST GROUP

Notes of the sixth meeting, held at 11:00am on Tuesday 16 October 2012 at St Philips Place, Birmingham

Present:

Andy Rennison	Forensic Science Regulator (Acting Chair)
Sharon Broome	DSTL
June Guinness	Home Office
Albert Kirkwood	FSNI (for Stan Brown)
Mary Newton	Independent Adviser
Kirsty Potter	NPIA
Kenny Chigbo	Home Office (Secretary)

In attendance

Kevin Sullivan	Consultant
----------------	------------

Apologies

Stan Brown	FSNI
Pierre Bernard	LGC Forensics

Welcome/Introductions

1.1 Andy Rennison welcomed all present to the sixth meeting of the Contamination Specialist Group.

Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Matters arising

3.1 The actions from the last meeting were either cleared or are agenda items.

Guidance and standards appendix

4.1 Kevin Sullivan gave an update on the contamination avoidance project he was running on behalf of the Regulator. The priority was to put together content for Appendix 1 of the Regulator's Code of Practice on the control and avoidance of contamination for laboratory activities involving DNA evidence recovery and analysis. It was necessary to have the content in place before the implementation of the new multiplexes. Appendix 2 will deal with a UK-wide approach to elimination databases. There are three main groups of individuals that need to be covered by any approach:

- Police and police-related
- Manufacturers
- Forensic science providers' staff

4.2 The proposal is for a centralised elimination database for police-related and manufacturing staff and local databases for Forensic science providers' staff. The guiding principles are that it should be transparent, relevant, responsible, and secure with good governance and assurance mechanisms. Oversight of the database should lie with the Forensic Science Regulator, while its delivery should be managed by the NDNADU, in the absence of any other suitable location.

4.3 The next steps included information gathering about what all forensic science providers were doing in terms of anti-contamination practices and procedures. June agreed to request and provide their anti-contamination policies.

Action: June Guinness

4.4 Kevin also planned to continue with the consultation process with key stakeholders such as Amanda Cooper, the Chair of the NDNAD Strategy Board, NDNAD Delivery Unit, etc. Work on developing the manufacturers' elimination database will start when Appendix 1 has been completed.

FSSoc contamination training feedback

5.1 Kevin Sullivan was one of the presenters at the workshop run by the Forensic Science Society reported that the training sessions covered the theory of contamination and risks under continuous improvement. They also dealt with better ways of reducing contamination and the detection of contamination. A summary of the feedback from delegates was briefly discussed. Andy Rennison said he was seeking mechanisms to tackle fragmentation and it would be worth running the course for Scientific Support Managers and Scene of Crime Officers.

Revised Terms of Reference

6.1 It was noted that many of the former NPIA staff have joined the Home Office's Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST), they may not be able to see the bigger picture of the risks around contamination. One way forward could be to hold a seminar for CAST and Home Office staff. It was also agreed that CAST should be represented in this group. Andy Rennison agreed to write to Rob Coleman to nominate a suitable colleague from CAST.

Action: Andy Rennison/June Guinness

6.2 The Group also required a CPS representative. There was also an outstanding action to invite a police replacement for Alan Cook. As Tim Clayton has stepped down, the AFSP should also be asked to nominate another member.

Action: Andy Rennison/June Guinness

FFLM Decontamination document

7.1 Mary Newton on behalf of the The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians has consulted and drafted an anti-contamination code of practice for forensic medical examination facilities. The draft was distributed at the meeting. This work was seen as complementing Kevin Sullivan's project. Contamination Specialist Group members were

invited to comment on the draft and it was agreed that the document could be used as another relevant appendix on contamination guidance. The Regulator agreed to endorse the document when published. Kenny was asked to circulate an electronic version to the Group.

Action: Kenny Chigbo¹

Work plan programme and schedule

8.1 The anti-contamination work plan consists of the following phases – laboratory/elimination database design, implementation, crime scene, and medical phase. The crime scene phase is likely to start early next year. It was agreed that DSTL work, which covers other areas of contamination like explosives, should be brought into the work plan. The Regulator was also thinking of involving pathology in the anti-contamination work plan.

Date of next meeting

9.1 The next meeting will be held on 15 January 2013 from 11am in Birmingham.

¹ FFLM document circulated