

Forensic Science Regulator

Terms of Reference

Medical Forensics Specialist Group

FSR-T-C07

Version 3

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document sets out the terms of reference for the Medical Forensics Specialist Group.

1.2 Implementation

The terms of reference set out in this document became effective on 22 September 2020.

1.3 Modification

This is the third issue of the Terms of Reference. It is a re-write from the previous document, entitled Terms of Reference for the Medical Forensics Specialist Group and so changes are not highlighted.

2. Terms Of Reference

2.1 Status

2.1.1 The Medical Forensics Specialist Group (hereafter referred to as the ‘Specialist Group’) is an ad hoc specialist group established to advise the Forensic Science Regulator (the Regulator), the Forensic Science Advisory Council (the Council) and other delivery partners (Home Office, Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, police, and the Crown Prosecution Service), on matters within its remit.

2.2 Remit

2.2.1 The scope of this Specialist Group will be to cover the sample collection and evidence recovery in forensic medical examinations and will not include clinical practice and care. The Specialist Group will also support the Regulator and the Council by developing quality standards and guidance, including appropriate storage and transportation of samples, and the information included in statements related to the examination of the patients (referred to as medical

forensics) to develop and assure good practice and the effective forensic science outcomes for each examination. Followed by ongoing assessment and advice on all matters related to the implementation and monitoring of such quality standards within the remit of the Regulator. The Specialist Group will:

- a. Define the scope of functions to be included in the medical forensics quality standards, with options for later extension of the scope.
- b. Recommend what best achieves quality standards in the delivery of medical forensic services and expertise to the criminal justice system.
- c. Oversee the processes for monitoring and enforcing medical forensics quality standards, including relationships with other bodies.
- d. Propose means of remedying any shortcomings, distinguishing between measures which fall within the remit of the Regulator and those which do not.
- e. Make such other recommendations as appear appropriate.
- f. Develop and assure good practice.

2.2.2 The Specialist Group will, following a request from the Regulator develop additional standards, guidance, processes or policies for consideration by the Council and Regulator.

2.3 Composition

2.3.1 The following organisations are invited to nominate suitable persons to membership of the Specialist Group:

- a. National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)
- b. Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- c. Criminal Case Review Commission (CCRC)
- d. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
- e. The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS)
- f. Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- g. Scottish Police Authority (SPA)
- h. NHS England (NHSE)

- i. NHS Wales (NHSW)
- j. NHS England for Health and Justice, Public Health and Armed Forces
- k. The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians (FFLM)
- l. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)
- m. United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)
- n. UK Association of Forensic Nurses and Paramedics (UKAFN)
- o. Health and Justice Trailblazer group

2.3.2 The Chair, Deputy Chair and members of the Specialist Group will be appointed by the Regulator.

2.3.3 The Regulator may at the request of, or following consultation with, the Chair of the Specialist Group, add to the membership of the Specialist Group or invite other individuals to serve on the Specialist Group for limited periods of time where additional skills, knowledge or experience are required.

2.4 Operation

2.4.1 The Specialist Group will operate in accordance with a detailed plan presented by the Chair and approved by the Regulator, who will be advised by the Council.

2.4.2 As a minimum, specialist group meetings will take place twice a year.

2.4.3 The Specialist Group will conduct its business out of committee as far as possible, but will meet as and when required in order to discharge its remit.

2.4.4 In the interests of public accountability, the Specialist Group will carry out its work as openly as possible, within the terms of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, subject to any necessary confidentiality requirements and any conditions set by Ministers or agreed by the Regulator.

2.4.5 No budget is delegated to the Specialist Group but such assistance as is reasonably required to enable the Specialist Group to undertake its duties will be provided, within available resources.

2.4.6 Membership of the Specialist Group is unremunerated. The Regulator may approve repayment of travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on Specialist Group business by any members who are unable to obtain reimbursement from their employers. Repayment will only be made where the Regulator has specifically agreed, in writing and in advance of the expenditure, to entertain claims from a named individual under this provision.

2.4.7 Where the business of the Specialist Group gives rise to the need for expenditure from the Regulator's budget (including any claims under paragraph 2.4.6 above), the Regulator's written approval must be obtained in advance of any commitment to the expenditure.

2.4.8 The Chair of the Specialist Group may establish such other procedures as s/he considers appropriate for the operation of the Specialist Group, providing that these are not inconsistent with the above.

2.5 Working Groups

2.5.1 The Specialist Group may, with the approval of the Regulator, establish such working groups as it considers necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of its business. Such working groups will be constituted with clear written terms of reference and will report to the Specialist Group.

2.6 Conduct

2.6.1 Members of the Specialist Group are required to observe the Seven Principles of Public Life endorsed by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life. These principles can be found via the following link: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life. Each member must at all times act in good faith and observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the conduct of the Specialist Group's business.

2.6.2 Any Specialist Group member has the right to bring to the attention of the Regulator any matter, which he or she believes raises important issues relating to his or her duties as a member. In such cases the member should, before

approaching the Regulator, raise their concerns with the Specialist Group Chair to establish whether they might be resolved within the Specialist Group.

2.7 Data Protection

- 2.7.1 The contact details that members provide will be used by the Regulator, or the Regulator’s representatives, and shared amongst the membership of the group to facilitate member’s involvement in the activities of the group as the Regulator deems appropriate.
- 2.7.2 Typically, this would mean that a member’s email address would be visible to the group to allow for debate within the group. It would also allow for members to be receive other communication as the Regulator sees fit.
- 2.7.3 Any reference made to a member in published records of meetings will be by initials and organisation where that is necessary for clarity of the record.
- 2.7.4 A group member’s contact details will not be shared beyond the group without their express permission.
- 2.7.5 Details of how the Regulator uses a member’s personal information can be found in the Regulator’s personal information charter which can be found via the following link: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forensic-science-regulator/about/personal-information-charter

2.8 Confidentiality

- 2.8.1 In accepting appointment to the Specialist Group, members are required to accept that they will not disclose any information or documents presented to the Specialist Group without the approval of the Regulator. This includes any documents marked with any GPMS security classification (including RESTRICTED) and the content of any discussions relating to such information. Members undertake not to make copies of any such documents, and to follow the advice provided by the Regulator and FSRU about the handling of such documents.

3. Review

- 3.1.1 This document is subject to review at regular intervals. If you have any comments please send them to the address or e-mail set out on the Regulator's Internet site at URL: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forensic-science-regulator

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