

## **Fingerprint Quality Standards Specialist Group (FQSSG)**

### **Note of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 via teleconference.**

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies**

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

#### **2. Minutes of the FQSSG meeting on 4 February 2020**

- 2.1.1 The previous FQSSG minutes were approved as an accurate reflection of the discussion held and the secretariat was asked to publish them.

**Action 1:**

- 2.1.2 The Secretariat to publish the minutes of the FQSSG meeting held on 4 February 2020 on GOV.UK.

#### **3. Actions and Matters Arising**

- 3.1.1 The following matters arising from the previous FQSSG meeting were discussed:
- a. Action 1: Publish minutes of the October 2019 meeting. This action was complete.
  - b. Action 5: Bureau tool to be presented at the next meeting. This action was on hold until it was possible to hold a face to face meeting.
- 3.1.2 All other actions were complete.

## **4. Work Plan**

### **4.1 Agree and sign off additions**

- 4.1.1 The group discussed delivery dates for documents on the workplan. The delivery date of the standards had been brought forward to September 2020 as there is a publication deadline of the 22nd of September 2020.
- 4.1.2 The AFIS/searching algorithm timescale needed to be adjusted from winter 2020 to spring/summer 2021 as the algorithm would not go live until March 2021.
- 4.1.3 The research/knowledge collation document on interpretation issues was ready for publication following the accessibility updates. No further updates could be made to this document at this time.
- 4.1.4 The timescale for the interpretation guidance document was noted as winter 2020/spring 2021, however it had been established that the first meeting of the working group for this document would need to be a workshop and this may be challenging to run virtually. These dates would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- 4.1.5 The Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) input into the CSI/Bureau engagement workstream on fingerprint vetting and submission would be covered in the review of FSR-C-127 and FSR-C-128 that was scheduled for September 2020. CSI engagement in the imaging, transmission and receipt workstream would also be covered in the extension of FSR-C-127.
- 4.1.6 The collaborative exercise had been added to the workplan as requested in the last meeting. A date of spring 2021 was proposed for some feedback to the group on this exercise.
- 4.1.7 The updates and amendments to the workplan were agreed.

### **4.2 FSR-C-127 Update**

- 4.2.1 An update on the progress of the FSR-C-127 document was provided. The document had been reviewed by the sub-groups and a version with their annotations had been shared with the FQSSG. Members of the sub-groups were working on actions to progress this document and all members were

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asked to provide feedback on the sub-group's comments ahead of the next meeting of the working group.

**Action 2:**

4.2.2 All members to feedback on working group's comments and amendments to FSR-C-127 by the 18th of June.

4.2.3 The representative from UKAS asked whether the new version of FSR-C-127 would include detail on examinations at scenes. This would be followed up with the sub-group and input from scene-going fingerprint enhancement practitioners would be sought if required. It was proposed and agreed that the UKAS representative review the document from the perspective of accrediting activities of fingerprint enhancement practitioners at scenes and share any initial thoughts and pointers with the FRSU.

**Action 3:**

4.2.4 UKAS representative to review FSR-C-127 from the perspective of fingerprint enhancement laboratory staff carrying out work at scenes by the 18th of June.

**4.3 FSR-C-128 Update**

4.3.1 An update on the progress of the FSR-C-128 document was provided. The views of the group were sought on the implementation date for the standard and the equipment section of the document.

4.3.2 The update to the standard included the use of the new automated fingerprint search algorithm as a required accredited activity. Given that the new algorithm would not go live until March 2021 an initial implementation date of April 2022 had been proposed. This would give a full year assessment cycle from the roll out. The views of the group were sought on this date.

4.3.3 The representative from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) commented that as March 2021 would be the start of the roll out there would be a delay in uptake. It was highlighted that bureaux with IDENT 1 in scope should be moving to implement the new algorithm quickly to maintain their accreditation. For bureaux without IDENT 1 in scope the rate of uptake would depend on requirements from UKAS.

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- 4.3.4 The UKAS representative highlighted that comparison work needed to be accredited under the requirements of the statutory instrument and highlighted that if the implementation dates were long there was a risk that bureaux would not get accreditation for the use of IDENT1, this had been seen with the current version of IDENT1 for which very few bureaux have accreditation. The UKAS representative asked whether obtaining accreditation for the use of the new algorithm should be part of the implementation plan so as not to breach legislative requirements.
- 4.3.5 The roll out plan would come from the Home Office Biometrics Programme and the representative from the FSRU commented that this may require support from the fingerprint board and the Forensic Capability Network (FCN).
- 4.3.6 Views were sought from the FCN representative. The FCN was looking to support provision of data sets and validation guideline documents, as part of the accreditation documentation. An implementation plan and a roll out agreement would make sense and proposed that an implementation date of October 2022 could be considered with the caveat that depending on roll out this would be expected to be earlier.
- 4.3.7 The representative from UKAS stated that forces should have an implementation plan for roll out of the algorithm and this should be shared with UKAS for visit planning. Accreditation of use of automated fingerprint search algorithms would be simplest if included in a surveillance visit. The UKAS representative would expect the accreditation requirements to be similar across bureaux and would foresee a pack of data to demonstrate the validation.
- 4.3.8 The group discussed who would assist with preparation of this data pack. FCN were working with HOB to produce a validation dataset and validation guidance documentation for bureaux to use to support accreditation. The representative from the MPS highlighted that those bureaux who already had accreditation for IDENT 1 would have a small window to implement the new algorithm and have it accredited and asked about timeframes for delivery of a data pack. The representative from FCN responded that they were working with HOB to understand more about the roll out programme and there was an upcoming

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meeting to review this in Transforming Forensics (TF) and that the FCN recognised the need to move quickly.

- 4.3.9 The representative from UKAS also highlighted that accreditation would require additional elements to validation such as, updated documentation including Standard Operating Procedures, and updates to training records and these would be expected in the implementation package.

**Action 4:**

- 4.3.10 Representatives from the FCN, TF and HOB to discuss requirements for an accreditation pack for IDENT 1 update
- 4.3.11 The date of October 2022 would be used as the implementation date with a footnote highlighting earlier implementation would be expected depending on roll out timing.
- 4.3.12 The group reviewing FSR-C-128 also discussed the content of the equipment section and have suggested that the health and safety section should be broadened particularly regarding lighting and eyesight testing.
- 4.3.13 The working group were also asked if Annex 2 should be retained in FSR-C-128. The working group had commented that this should be retained, however most of the members felt that their in-house resolution processes for critical conclusions of complex marks were appropriate and that Annex 2 should be used for disputed marks that had already been reported and required an external review. The Chair of the FQSSG was in support of this approach.
- 4.3.14 The FQSSG agreed with the proposed changes and updates to FSR-C-128 discussed.
- 4.3.15 An annotated version of FSR-C-128 with the proposed changes from the sub-group had been shared with the FQSSG. All members were asked to provide feedback on the sub-group's comments.

**Action 5:**

- 4.3.16 All members to feedback on working group's comments and amendments to FSR-C-128 by the 25th of June.

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- 4.3.17 The Chair of the FQSSG and the representative from FSRU wished to record their thanks to the members of the FSR-C-127 and FSR-C-128 working groups for their significant contributions in updating these documents.

## **5. Updates**

### **5.1 Accreditation updates**

#### **UKAS**

- 5.1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on assessments and remote assessments would continue until October at the earliest. Priority was being given to surveillance and reassessment visits. This prioritisation would continue once site visits restarted.
- 5.1.2 The group were informed that UKAS document TPS 47 had been updated to provide a clear expectation that not only do laboratories and Inspection Bodies need to take part in proficiency testing or inter-laboratory comparison prior to accreditation being granted, but that this needs to be satisfactory, or that actions are taken to address any unsatisfactory performance. This would have always been an expectation, but this update provided clarity.
- 5.1.3 UKAS had received questions around whether the activity of undertaking Fingerprint Comparison for the purposes of Prüm was covered by the accredited scope that had already been assessed. The view from UKAS was that this had not been assessed and therefore was not included in the scope of accreditation for any bureau. If bureaux were interested in adding this as an extension to scope this could be done as a remote assessment as it would be document based. UKAS could be contacted for more information if required.
- 5.1.4 UKAS held a virtual workshop with their Fingerprint Comparison Technical Assessors on the 12th May. The UKAS representative noted that the format worked very well and allowed for updates and discussion over key topics including remote assessment and the new FSR Codes of Practice. In addition, an update was given on the new Fingerprint Workflow.
- 5.1.5 In terms of Crime Scene accreditation, it had been determined that given the nature of Scene of Crime activity, and because this would be a new area of

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accreditation for police forces, UKAS would not undertake remote initial assessments for applications for Scene of Crime activity. UKAS were developing slots from October to allow Police Forces to reserve a slot for assessment.

- 5.1.6 UKAS would start assessments against the new version of the FSR Codes of Practise from 22 August, 4 months from publication. Organisations will need to show what they have updated to comply with new codes. UKAS have published a Technical bulletin on their website on this.

**NPCC – CSI workstream**

- 5.1.7 The update was focused on fingerprint activity; The workstreams through the expert network were continuing remotely, this included workstreams on:
- a. Documentation and case files. This was primarily looking at service level agreements and memoranda of understanding.
  - b. Vehicles and property, looking at electric vehicles and the health and safety considerations for collision investigation.
  - c. Training and competency.
  - d. Validation documents, FCN were working with some police forces on validation documentation and DNA validation exemplars had been produced this would continue with fingerprint documentation.
  - e. Anti-contamination, looking at products and methods to ensure good anti-contamination practise at scenes. A review and update of FSR-G-206 CSI anti-contamination guidelines had been initiated in conjunction with the FSRU.
  - f. Consumables, FCN had been working with Dstl on national acceptance criteria for fingerprint powder batch testing, this work would be supported by Portsmouth University. The national consumable contract governance would be moving to the FCN and the terms of reference had been reviewed for a governance board for consumables.
  - g. Accreditation support team, visits were planned but these were on hold. The FCN would like to encourage forces to submit accreditation documentation for review prior to a UKAS visit as a readiness test for an assessment visit.

## **5.2 Quality/Scientific/Development Updates**

### **HOB**

- 5.2.1 At the last meeting the group were informed that there was a 3-month delay from Fujitsu on implementation of the new strategic matcher and as a result there had been significant re-planning activity. Most of the build work was complete and a large amount of testing was underway. Testing to demonstrate that the system built had the same accuracy as agreed had been pushed back to October however the testing was progressing to plan, and the go-live date of March 2021 was on target. The representative from Home Office Biometrics (HOB) highlighted that while the system would go-live in March 2021 there were early and full parallel runs that would be completed before the system was released for use, this was expected to be around July 2021.
- 5.2.2 The group were updated on a second large piece of work for HOB. The contract for the current service provider for IDENT1, NG, would expire on 30 September 2020 and provision would transition from NG to Leidos. Work was in progress on knowledge transfer and moving test environments which needed to be completed before the end of the contract. The group were informed that this presented some challenges as Leidos was new to HOB and would need to integrate the current IDENT 1 platform with the new strategic matcher while work on the new matcher was ongoing.
- 5.2.3 The HOB central validation work was continuing although Covid-19 movement restrictions had affected access to data on the HOB BAT environment. The validation data would be shared on the library in the knowledge hub.
- 5.2.4 HOB have also been working with the three police forces with accreditation for IDENT1 on the Data Privacy Impact Assessments and to provide the background data to support local validation work of the new strategic matcher.

### **Dstl**

- 5.2.5 The Sandridge site closed early at the end of March as a result of Covid-19 travel restrictions and laboratory kit remains there waiting to be moved to Porton Down. The new laboratories will not be available until Christmas 2020 at the



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earliest. Interim laboratories should be available to carry out limited laboratory work from August.

- 5.2.6 During the laboratory down time Dstl would be working on updates to the Fingerprint Visualisation and Imaging Codes of Practise and Conduct.
- 5.2.7 Dstl had been working with a private company that had developed test targets for quality assurance of amino acid fingerprint reagents. A small pilot study was run in the UK at the same time as a Royal Canadian Mounted Police study using the same batch of test targets. The initial results looked very promising and Dstl expected to run a larger trial next year and were considering using these for next year's collaborative exercise.
- 5.2.8 Dstl had produced draft batch testing guidelines for fingerprint powders. Dstl were in discussion with Home Office Commissioning and the FCN as part of this work as there was a need to demonstrate that the initial powder validation work carried out 15 years ago was still valid.
- 5.2.9 Dstl and the University of Leicester were engaged in an ongoing programme of work on the science behind the physical developer process and had jointly produced new process instructions. Implementation workshops had been planned for this summer however Covid-19 travel restrictions meant this was not possible. The physical developer process instructions would be published in the next newsletter.
- 5.2.10 Dstl had also engaged with a University to investigate development of fingermarks on compostable and biodegradable materials, this would be an area for funding investment.
- 5.2.11 Visualisation samples had been sent out to 24 laboratories for the collaborative exercise instigated by the FSRU. Samples were on wrapping paper with a challenging pattern to visualise. Six laboratories had returned their samples and, as the workshops planned for June to discuss results and findings had been postponed to the autumn, the deadline for returning samples had been extended to the 31st of July. The identification tests had been road-tested with PSNI and these should go out in mid-June.

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- 5.2.12 Dstl supported the application for accreditation for RECOVER:LFT by the MPS and the findings from Dstl on this would be published in the newsletter at the end of June.
- 5.2.13 Guidance had been sought from Dstl on handling of exhibits possibly contaminated with Covid-19. New guidelines would be issued that exhibits could be handled safely after 72 hours and this would be circulated by the national lab group.
- 5.2.14 Dstl had been working on creating a website as a repository for all their newsletters and have been advised that a gov.uk website would be created for this. Dstl have requested that this be created in time to be included in the reference list for FSR-C-127.

**Action 6:**

- 5.2.15 Dstl representatives to share weblink to new gov.uk website once launched for inclusion in the reference list for FSR-C-127.
- 5.2.16 Other work in Dstl included a proof of concept trial with HOB on contactless fingerprint enhancement.

**NPCC – Transforming Forensics (TF) and Forensic Capability Network (FCN)**

- 5.2.17 Transforming Forensics continued to work on the digitisation of the fingerprint process and development of a series of tools that will allow fingerprint practitioners to digitally capture, transmit and compare friction ridge detail images and record the analysis, comparison and evaluation process and decision. Most recently TF had been developing tools for open and blind verifications of fingerprints and working on improving the comparator tool.
- 5.2.18 Earlier in the year TF visited regional representatives for beta-testing of apps and discussion of training needs analysis. A test manger was in place at TF who was developing a plan for testing, validation, training. A revised time line for implementation of the fingerprint tools had been agreed and the first products to be rolled out would be bureaux app, CSI web app, and FEL web app.

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- 5.2.19 FCN launched on the 1st of April. The SFR board had moved to FCN Science and at the recent National Board meeting new guidance document and forms were agreed to deliver compliance to the requirements of the FSR in respect of Accreditation status for disciplines being reported. Paper-based forms would be rolled out from July with the intention to deliver a full automated form by the end of the year.
- 5.2.20 In March, a supplier was selected for the electronic quality management system (eQMS). The eQMS will go-live on FCNXchange in the autumn to enable the community to access and share accurate and up-to-date information.
- 5.2.21 FCN had been in discussion with the Forensic Science Regulator on how to improve the quality and availability of appropriate proficiency testing.
- 5.2.22 FCN had received a request from a police force to support the IDENT1 printer validation centrally and were working with forces on this.
- 5.2.23 The FCN were also looking to create a Ground Truth Database to support training, validation and proficiency testing and were working with the College of Policing on this.

**NPCC – NFFSB and Enhancement Labs**

- 5.2.24 This group had not been able to meet recently as a result of the Covid-19 travel restrictions. A meeting was scheduled for the beginning of April but was cancelled due to the business continuity in forces taking priority. These meetings were planned to move around locations, and this been beneficial for demonstrating different laboratories.
- 5.2.25 The two-day conference planned for June had been cancelled and a meeting had been re-scheduled for September 2020.

**5.3 Professional Updates**

**R&D/ENFSI**

- 5.3.1 There was no update from research and development as the laboratories had been closed because of Covid-19 restrictions. The group were informed about two publications that would give an overview of global research in fingerprints

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(Publication trends in forensic science research: Friction ridge discipline and Interpol review of fingerprints and other body impressions 2016 – 2019)

**College of Policing**

- 5.3.2 Work was continuing on the fingerprint learning programme the structure had changed slightly in that the court training had been separated into a third stage. Documentation was sent out for comment by end of May and these have been received back. The documents for stage 1 have been agreed and reviewed by the legal team. The optional elective modules were being developed.
- 5.3.3 The College of Policing was working with FCN to create a GTD of images for training and assessments.

**CSFS**

- 5.3.4 The next CSFS conference was planned for November in Leeds and a decision was yet to be made as to whether this would go ahead. A fingerprint workstream was planned for this conference and the CSFS would welcome TF or FCN input into this if that would be beneficial.
- 5.3.5 The representative from the FSRU highlighted two calls for research, one on fingerprint documentation and one on CSI coping strategies. The secretariat was asked to circulate these calls to the group.

**Action 7:**

- 5.3.6 Secretariat to circulate calls for research information.

**6. AOB**

- 6.1.1 The Regulator joined the meeting to provide an update on the Interpretation appendix. Significant progress had been made with this document, further consultation with the working group was required and the Regulator expected to be able to share a draft with the FQSSG in the coming months.
- 6.1.2 The next meeting would be held on the 26th of November 2020 in Birmingham, or via teleconference.

## **Annex A**

### **Organisation representatives present:**

Forensic Science Regulator

Forensic Science Regulation Unit (FSRU)

Scottish Police Authority (SPA)

Lausanne University

Dstl

United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

Home Office Biometrics (HOB) Programme

The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS)

East Midlands Special Operations Unit - Forensic Services

Transforming Forensics (TF)

Forensic Capability Network (FCN)

College of Policing

Fingerprint Associates Limited

Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

Home Office Science Secretariat (HO)

### **Apologies:**

Regional Scientific Support Services Yorkshire and the Humber

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)