

FIND Strategy Board

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Open Minutes of Meeting

15th April 2021 – By Teleconference
10.00 – 13.30 am

Present:

CORE MEMBERS

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Home Office, representing the Home Secretary	Jeremy Jones (JJ)
Association of Police and Crime Commissioners	Alexandra Campbell (AC) Jon Wasey (JW) representative

APPOINTED MEMBERS (as set out in the Governance Rules)

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Commissioner of the Retention & Use of Biometric material	Fraser Sampson (FS) Rebecca Madgwick (RM)
Forensic Science Regulator representative	Rupert Shute (RS) June Guinness (JG)
Biometric and Forensic Ethics Group Chair	Mark Watson-Gandy (MW-G)
Information Commissioner's Office	Mark Jones (MJ)

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APPOINTED MEMBERS

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
NPCC – DNA	Emily Burton (EB)

SECRETARIAT

Home Office Forensic Information Databases Service (FINDS) - Chair	Juliette Verdejo (JV)
Home Office Forensic Information Databases Service (FINDS)	Caroline Goryll (CG)

IN ATTENDANCE

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Home Office, HOB Programme	Ian Betts (IB)
Home Office, Interpol and International Biometric Exchange Team	Bianca Russo (BR)
FCN Science	Vicki Burgin (VB)
NCA	Debbie Sansom (DS)
Devolved Administration – Northern Ireland	Stephen Campbell (SC) Siobhan Green (SG)
Devolved Administration – Scotland	Gary Holcroft (GH)

APOLOGIES:

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
NPCC	ACC Ben Snuggs
Home Office	Alex MacDonald
Association of Police and Crime Commissioners	Martyn Underhill

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Devolved Administration – Scotland	Fiona Douglas
Devolved Administration – Northern Ireland	Noel Rainey
Home Office, HOB Programme	Amy Morrell
NCA	Derek Lloyd (DL)
NCA	Kathryn Clarke (KC)

1.0 Welcome, Introduction and Strategic Developments

JV welcomed everyone to the meeting. She explained that BS was unable to chair the meeting due to other commitments so the meeting would take the form of a FINDS Strategy Board Update Briefing as opposed to a full FINDS Strategy Board and it will not make decisions but recommendations for the following board on 1st July.

3.0 Previous Minutes (0421/01)

3.1 JV asked for comments on the minutes. No comments

4.0 Action Review (0421/02)

4.1 CG took the group through the action list.

19/18 Update of international policy to include Prüm searching of fingerprints.

Complete review of International exchange policy to be completed by June 21 – It was agreed that a standing international item would be added to agenda and the action would be closed.

06/19 Consider how the dashboard can consider the usefulness of the NDNAD in terms of key indicators for the effectiveness of the NDNAD

JV updated that FINDS are looking to increase resource within the team within FINDS who cover performance data impact analysis and complete a review of the data that FINDS are monitoring with a focus on analysis and effectiveness. Once the resource and audit are in place, they hope to be able to move forward the work planned with Marie Barret to look at the effectiveness of the NDNAD.

17/19 CJ to produce advice for ministers on genealogical Databases

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CJ provided an update before he left following the FSR meeting in January that they are awaiting further developments on this pilot to see if it raises any policy issues and if so whether these need to be reported to ministers. JJ said that as guidance had previously been provided to ministers on this was further guidance necessary. To be discussed further at next meeting.

03/20 to convene the relevant parties for a decision on the use of Genealogical databases.

JG provided an update. SK is chairing a group to look at carrying out a pilot study on the use of genealogical databases. There are a number of work streams, and they are meeting every 2 weeks.

07/20 CG to look at the error figures in the highlight report.

CG said that the outstanding part of this action is "Take forward the reporting of crime scene errors from forces and include it in the data assurance strategy". She said that she had had her first meeting with forces and FSP's to scope what crime scene error information they collect and what they would be able to provide. Both forces and FSP's expressed the difficulty in collecting this data and outlined the challenges in collecting it.

19/20 AMacD and PW to discuss the issue relating to young offenders. Where forces are using procedures to deal with young offenders that don't involve charge and don't lead to them gaining a PNC record and whether forces can apply for a 63G request to retain the Biometrics.

RM said that she had had an e-mail discussion with BS on this. FS queried the wording on the action he said that if there is no legal basis for them to retain the biometrics, they can't do it. HO policy, Biometric Commissioner and Ben Snuggs to discuss further. JJ asked if there was a change in the law that forces wanted to request; he said consideration would need to be given to how controversial changes in the law would be. JJ to discuss further with FS.

23/20 GH to bring a paper on Scotland having control of their records on NDNAD & IDENT 1.

GH said that work is progressing well on Scotland having control of their own records. Dr Brian Plastow has been appointed as the Scottish Biometric Commissioner. GH said that they have a good dialogue with Jenny Stewart on the project and the action can be closed but that he will raise any issue with the Board where appropriate.

24/20 BR said BR to update Board on work being carried out by Lee McKean to look at the outcome of Prüm matches.

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BR said that this applies to when successful Prüm match data is progressed to step 3 and is passed onto the requesting police force. Lee McKean has been working on collecting information on the outcome of these matches. The ICCC have taken on a larger role in this process and they are looking at standardising the process across forces. BR said that she will provide a regular update on this work as part of the international/Prüm standing agenda items. – close action

Strategy board workshop actions.

4.2 CG took the Board through those actions which have been updated.

WS-08 - Provide clarity of TOR for the Board, function of the Board, membership and its interface with operational policing. JJ outlined that we need to ensure that the Board operates in the statutory footing and this is done through the published terms of reference. FS said that he had already touched on this in discussions that he had had and that BS's view needs to be sought on this and the scope of the Board needs to be looked at.

WS-12 - Ensure continued engagement between Home Office International and the Strategy Board about the strategic plans for biometric sharing outside Prüm. – CG said that this action needs to be more specific and we need to understand what Board members want to see for this. BR said that she is the lead on Prüm data exchange and there is not currently a generic international biometric sharing policy lead. JV suggested that she and BR have a meeting to discuss what information is available for the Board.

WS-14 - Ensure that there is consideration given to policy/ministerial decisions from an Operational perspective. JJ said that this has come about because of the issues created from the change in legislation relating to VA's he said the current mitigation for this action is to produce impact assessments for these legislative/policy changes. He suggested that this action can be closed, JV agreed and recommended it is closed.

5.0 Operational Risks and performance

Risk & issues Register (0421/03)

5.1 JV took the Board through the risk register

No new risks added. Points to note:

STRAT 10 Following the UK-EU deal secured in Dec 2020 and the legislation passed for the European Union Future Relationship Act 2020, Prüm exchange provisionally continues as normal until re-evaluations are complete.

STRAT 15 Overall risk reducing with HOB funding confirmed for CED in FY 2021-22.

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STRAT 16 Overall risk reduced now NDNAD2 in place. NDNAD2 is fully legislatively compliant. One outstanding integrity piece around the time stamps of data held within the database is expected to be resolved in May/June 21. HOB still planning an audit by HOB QAT to provide assurance that integrity standards are maintained in future developments.

STRAT 17 FINDS relocation completed at the end of Jan 2021. Currently reviewing impact of new posting arrangements on PT BFAI provision. Impact reduced to Low.

Issues Log - One existing issue remains open.

SBIS04 There has been some improvement in CPIA data provision. FINDS to discuss with new Biometric Commissioner.

Highlight report (0421/05)

5.2 CG presented the scorecard.

- Loads to the NDNAD have increased following the drop due to COVID-19.
- The large increase in force subject errors identified through FINDS integrity activities is accounted for by a large increase in samples being taken for non-recordable offences; these are due to a back log in these investigations by FINDS.
- The error rate has decreased this quarter following the rise last quarter. FINDS are also seeing a more consistent return from forces.
- There has been a large decrease in the number of lost samples; it is thought that this is due to the orphan stub report not being sent out to forces rather than a true reduction.

CG said that the international figures cover criminal investigation searches; data on international missing persons searches is also available. She asked if Board members also want to see this.

IDENT1 Change Control

JV said FINDS NFPO and HOB have organised a workshop later in April between some of the IDENT1 special collection / ad hoc container owners (including DSTL and NCA), those affected by the issue, NFPO and HOB.

The aim is to understand what caused the issue (lessons learned) and discuss ideas on how we can mitigate and improve the level of governance and change management process of the functionality within these collections.

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She said FINDS hope to have an update from the workshop for the July FIND SB with proposals on how we can move forward, which will likely include improved communication and testing.

International DNA and Fingerprint exchange.

- 5.3 JV said that a comprehensive review and update of the HO FINDS International DNA and Fingerprint data exchange policy has started following the EU exit.

There are several exchange mechanisms that require update, most notably the Interpol exchange, for which the previous Biometrics Commissioner has questioned the concurrent exchange of tenprints and demographic information which is different to the equivalent DNA process. There are also updates required to the Prüm text following EU exit.

A review is also underway of the Prüm Step 2 data management (Fingerprints and infographics) process for the legal basis of the exchange following EU Exit.

Prüm Update 0421/05

- 5.4 BR gave an update on Prüm. She said that they have started to look at producing a fingerprint dashboard to go alongside the DNA one. The fingerprint roll out will be slower than the DNA one. The UK needs to be reevaluated for Fingerprint and DNA exchange; they need to go through the evaluation process again.

The work for the PNC change to enable the exchange of suspects DNA profiles in the same way as convicted persons is ongoing.

JV said the fingerprint dashboard should be circulated to the Board alongside the DNA one.

DDAT activities to replace databases.

- 5.6 IB provided a verbal update; the work to move IDENT 1 (criminal) and IABS (international) to the new supplier Leidos is now all completed. Work has been done on knowledge transfer and understanding the system with forces. Work has just started on moving Leidos to a cloud system.

The closure meeting for the NDNAD 2 project is due to be held later in the week.

Work on the mobile enhancement project is making good progress; they are working on the technical solution and with policing.

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6.0 Strategic change and delivery to Strategy Board timeline.

Biometrics Governance

- 6.1 JJ gave an update on Biometrics Strategy Board. CC Matt Dukes (South Wales) has replaced Andy Cooke as chair of the Board.

JV provided an update on the National Fingerprint Footwear strategy Board.

Fingerprints

- Fingerprint load data during Covid continues to be updated on a monthly basis. A clear reduction of fingerprint loads was observed at the time of the 3rd national lockdown social distancing measures in place since January.

Footwear

- Access and Use Policy draft in progress and to be finalised once the FCN sample retention guidance is complete.
- The BlueStar Contract has been signed. IP issues resolved – BlueStar own the National Footwear Reference Collection and Database application and supporting technology platform, FINDS / policing owns the data held within the system and any distributions of the reference collection outside the CJS need to be approved by FINDS.
- There was a temporary loss of access to NFD for FINDS during January and February 2021 due to decommissioning of the CJX at the Home Office, which has now been resolved.

Legislative Update (Paper 0421/06)

- 6.2 JJ provided an update on the paper, HO policy have worked with the NPCC and the College of Policing (CoP) to produce draft national live facial recognition guidance. The guidance tackles a range of issues, including those raised in the Bridges judgement, such as the categories of people who can be placed on watch lists, the criteria for determining where facial recognition technology can be deployed, and the need to comply with the public sector equality duty. They have been working with key stakeholders before going out to wider consultation.

They have been looking at the manifesto commitment to empower the police to use new technologies. He said that they want to understand what policing wants from these technologies over the coming years and encouraged Board members to talk to him about it.

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Currently forces do not automatically delete custody images for non-conviction. Policy are engaging with Home Office Biometrics colleagues to progress policy and technical options to enable the automated deletion of custody images. This work will be progressed through the Biometrics Strategy board but the FINDS Strategy Board will be kept updated.

The Forensic Science Regulator Bill will have its Committee stage in the House of Lords on 15 April. Following this it will require only a final Report stage/Third reading before it can get Royal Assent. We will work closely with stakeholders on implementation of legislation and to advise on a commencement date for the legislation to take effect.

FS said that he had been involved in a meeting where the custody images and legal points had been discussed and it had been raised that they can only act on matches to images which are legally held.

He has had initial discussions with the new Scottish Biometric commissioner and they have discussed the difference in approaches to what is covered by biometrics.

Transforming Forensics and Forensic Capability Network

6.3 VB provided an update through a presentation. They have developed 6 problem statements and are Identify the key priorities and needs of policing. They are taking a holistic approach to R&D and are carrying out work to ensure the right people are in the right positions.

Under TF they have a project to look at the forensic market place; it has been running for 18 months and has been ran by Paul Gibson.

They have been working with FINDS on the development of the DNA futures capability roadmap. They are continuing to put in bids for funding for R&D projects but some of these have been impacted by Brexit. To coordinate all of the R&D they have implemented a research and innovation capability Board.

They have been working on the production a paper showing the DNA journey; this can then be overlaid with emerging biometrics such as voice and face and used as a blueprint.

DNA Good Practice Manual sign off.

6.4 VB said that they have been working on the update of the DNA Good Practice Manual and were wanting a steer on what the sign off process for this should be. CG said that they had discussed with BS at the pre-meet and he said the DNA Operations Group should be signing it of but that the FIND Strategy Board should have oversight that the review had be completed correctly.

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Taking fingerprints for vetting for new and transferring officers (0421/07).

- 6.5 VB presented a paper on Taking fingerprints for vetting for new and transferring officers. Inconsistencies remain between forces administration of the Police Elimination of fingerprint samples and the Board was asked to support the establishment of a working group to consider next steps and understand options in more detail, benefiting from lessons learnt.

It was proposed that this is agreed at the next meeting in July.

Updates from Board Members.

- 6.6 JG said that the FSR unit have published their rapid DNA guidance which should complement what FINDS are doing. They have completed a fingerprint collaborative exercise with DSTL with the purpose of understanding the landscape.

VB asked if FCN could see the rapid DNA guidance. JG said it had been published on-line but that she could also send it to them.

Action 01/21 JG to send VB DNA rapid hit guidance.

MJ Jones said the only update he has is that the ICO is particularly interested in facial recognition.