



**Forensic Science
Regulator**

Newsletter

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Contact details

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Message from the Forensic Science Regulator

In my last newsletter published in February 2023 I set out the laying of the draft statutory Code of Practice in Parliament would take place on 26th Jan 2023. I am now delighted to say that the statutory Code of Practice has been approved by the Secretary of State and both Houses of Parliament as required by the Forensic Science Regulator Act 2021. This newsletter sets out brief details of the approval of the Code and signposts the publication of the Code of Practice.

The approval of the Code of Practice is a significant achievement as it is the first time that a statutory Code of Practice relating to the provision of forensic science has been produced anywhere in the world. This Code underpins the statutory powers of the Regulator. The investigation powers set out in the Act came into effect in July 2022 and there will be a further Commencement Order that will bring the remaining powers into effect. The Code will come into force on the 2nd of October 2023.

Having reached this milestone we will now focus on issuing guidance documents under section 9 of the Act that support the Code, updating the compliance survey information based on the finalised Code and identifying the Senior Accountable Individuals required in the Code. While the Code is very important it is not an end in itself and in the coming months, I will be giving further thought to how forensic science regulation can be delivered efficiently and effectively. There are undoubtedly additional resources and costs to meeting the requirements of the Code but taking a steer from the Ministerial statement in the parliamentary debate I want to ensure that the Code and the requirement for

accreditation do not introduce excessive or unreasonable burdens on policing or the forensic science community.

I am also pleased to announce that I intend to organise a conference in the summer. Further details are outlined in this newsletter.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone across the forensic community and in stakeholder organisations who have supported me in finalising the Code of Practice.

Gary Pugh

March 2023

Forensic Science Regulator

Approval of the Code of Practice

The Code of Practice is issued by the Forensic Science Regulator pursuant to the provisions of s2 of The Forensic Science Regulator Act 2021.

In accordance with the provisions of the Act, this Code has been:

- a. Approved by the Secretary of State [as required by s3(3)(b) of the Act] on 25th January 2023;
- b. Laid before Parliament by the Secretary of State [as required by s3(3)(b) of the Act] on 26th January 2023;
- c. Approved by the House of Commons [as required by s3(3)(c) of the Act] on 21st February 2023; and
- d. Approved by the House of Lords [as required by s3(3)(c) of the Act] on 01 March 2023.

Link to Hansard debate in House of Commons

[Code of Practice for the Forensic Science Regulator - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

Link to Hansard debate in House of Lords.

[Code of Practice for the Forensic Science Regulator - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

The Code of Practice comes into force on 00:01 on the 2nd of October 2023.

The Code of Practice

I am pleased to confirm The Code of Practice has now been published and can be found here: [Statutory code of practice for forensic science activities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Ground Truth Data

I am pleased to see that the FCN has now produced and delivered Computer Ground Truth Data packages to every force in England and Wales. Further details here [FCN Computer Ground Truth Data updates](#)

This central ground truth test data has been generated with a high level of scientific rigor and control, to give forces trust and confidence in testing methods and tools deployed within policing and have been created in a way that enables further development and sets a baseline for an enduring capability.

The GTD package contains the physical items, files and supporting documentation to allow Digital Forensic Units to validate methods for physical capture and preservation, processing, and analysing data from Microsoft Windows 10 and 11, as well as several combinations of media types and files systems.

The kit distributed to 58 organisations over the last few weeks, comprise of 6 physical disks, 20 GTD items, and over 212 GB of data which will support Digital Forensic Units in the validation of their most common methods to meet the requirements of the Forensic Science Regulator, and to support accreditation attainment.

Forces have already provided positive feedback in highlighting how beneficial this GTD will be, not only for those not yet accredited but also for those needing to maintain validation to meet ongoing accreditation requirements. Providing a centrally established GTD such as this not only provides a significant efficiency saving compared to each force doing it locally, but it also ensures a consistently robust approach to meeting digital forensics validation objectives and demonstrating confidence in the methods deployed.

FSR conference 2023

I will be hosting my first Forensic Science Regulator Conference on Tuesday 20th June 2023, please save the date. More details including location and speakers will follow in the next few weeks.