

FIND Strategy Board

Protective Marking	Not protectively marked
Suitable for publication Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
Title & Version	FIND Strategy Board Minutes – 18 th December 2024
Purpose	Record of meeting
Author & Warrant/Pay No	Caroline Goryll, Home Office
Date Created	09/01/2025
Date Review	09/01/2030

Open Minutes of Meeting

18th December 2024 – Microsoft Teams

1.30pm-4.00pm

Present:

CORE MEMBERS

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)	Ben Snuggs (BS) Simon Wilson (SW)
Home Office representing the Home Secretary	Lucy Bradshaw-Murrow (LB-M)
Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)	Darryl Preston (DP) Alex Campbell (AC)

APPOINTED MEMBERS (as set out in the Governance Rules)

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner representative	Nikki Cowley (NC)
Forensic Science Regulator (FSR)	Chanda Lowther-Harris (CL-H)
Scottish Biometric Commissioner representative	Ross MacDonald (RM)
Information Commissioners' Office	Natasha Andrews (NA) Ian Deasha (ID)

FIND Strategy Board

Devolved Administration – Police Scotland	Gillian Jones (GJ)
Devolved Administration – Scottish Police Authority (forensics)	Helen Haworth (HH)
Devolved Administration - Scottish government Head of Forensics Policy: Police Powers Unit	Elaine Hamilton (EH)
Devolved Administration – Northern Ireland	Stephen Campbell (SC)
Devolved Administration – Northern Ireland department of justice – Head of policing policy	Lisa Boal (LB)

APPOINTED MEMBERS

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
NPCC – Counter Terrorism (CT) Forensic Database	Shazia Khan (SK)
NPCC – DNA	Emily Burton (EB)
NPCC - Homicide Working Group	Martin Bottomley (MB)

SECRETARIAT

Home Office Forensic Information Databases Service (FINDS) - Head of Unit	Zo-dee Ledger (ZL)
Home Office - FINDS	Caroline Goryll (CG)
Home Office FINDS- NFPO Operations and Assurance Manager	Andrew Knibbs (AK)
Home Office - FINDS	Lorna Perkin-Ball (LP-B)

FIND Strategy Board

IN ATTENDANCE

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Home Office Biometrics (HOB) Programme	Stuart Robertson (SR) Ian Betts (IB)
NPCC	Kirsty Faulkner (KF)
Home Office, Interpol and International Biometric Exchange Team	Bianca Russo (BR)
National Crime Agency (NCA)	Sian Ryles (SR)
Forensics Capability Network (FCN)	Debbie Sharp (DS)
Home Office – Deputy Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Forensic Information Services	Jennifer Leech (JL)

APOLOGIES:

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Forensic Science Regulator (FSR)	Gary Pugh
Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group representative (BFEG)	Niamh Nic Daeid
FCN	Vicki Burgin

1.0 Welcome, Introduction and Strategic Developments

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that he was resigning his position after six years, with ACC Simon Wilson taking over. He said that SW would bring a large amount of insight, experience, and crime investigation background to the role. DP said that he would like to thank BS on behalf of the Board for his good leadership and governance.

FIND Strategy Board

2.0 Previous Minutes (1224/01a & b)

2.1 No update to previous minutes from Board.

3.0 Action Review (1224/02)

3.1 The meeting went through the action register updates.

05/22 Chair and Head of FINDS to share NPCC legal advice on the retaking of samples with key stakeholders. In progress. The required change is currently being validated and tested by the PNC team. FINDS to approve the updated user interface and are looking at case scenarios before guidance is produced for forces.

11/22 FINDS & HOB to discuss MOUs between law enforcement and the Home Office in the sharing of biometric data. Chair has reviewed and approved the NDNAD documents. Board agreed to **close action**.

03/24 International Policy representative to bring updated Prüm search data to the Board. In progress, this should be available at the next Board.

10/24 Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) representative to send Head of FINDS MPS paper on assessment of potentially suitable software for Missing Persons database replacement (Bonaparte). The assessment was carried out in 2010/11, much of the information has since been archived and what can be retrieved will be provided.

11/24 Deputy Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Forensic Information Services and Head of FINDS to discuss HOB prioritisation and funding with HOB Programme Manager and clarify the process which FINDS can request HOB support. On agenda.

12/24 Head of FINDS to investigate if any of the 17,115 records involved in Operation Kilo (FINDS-ESC-099) have been exchanged through Prüm and the consequence of any matches identified. Mitigating steps are in place to check matches. Forces follow lawful match guidance as per procedure for policing. Guidance on this has been previously circulated. Board agreed to **close action**.

FIND Strategy Board

13/24 MPS representative and International Policy representative to compile a briefing for external stakeholders to highlight the milestone that the UK is now connected to all Prüm member states. Although the connections for DNA have been made, there are still some outstanding connections for fingerprints. It was proposed that a briefing is provided once all connections are made. This should be by the end of January 2025.

14/24 Chair to contact Board APCC representatives to seek their agreement with the decisions made by the Board in September. Chair completed 19/09/24 - Close action.

4.0 Risk & Issues Register (1224/03)

- 4.1 The group went through the risk register. There are nine open risks with updates, and one new risk to be raised.

Issues Log Summary: two issues remain open.

- 4.2 The group went through the issues.

Escalations Summary: Three open escalations – two were raised this quarter.

- 4.3 The group went through the escalations, one will remain open, they are proposing to close one and are raising two new ones.

5.0 Highlight report (1224/04)

- 5.1 The Head of FINDS presented the scorecard. There were no significant fluctuations in data compared with the previous quarter. FINDS have the IDENT1 Management Information (MI) reports which are being compiled together for the last year and will then be circulated to Board members. The Chair asked for additional time to be included on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss IDENT1 MI.

6.0 Biometrics Governance & Legislative Update 1224/07

- 6.1 An update was given on the response to the Gaughran judgement. Since the last meeting a set of criteria has been developed which was circulated to Board members.

FIND Strategy Board

One of the main pieces of feedback had been concern about the onus being on the individual to apply and why it couldn't be automated. This proposal is for the short term and that in the long-term automated solutions will be investigated. There were also concerns expressed about how people would know about it and how scrutiny can be applied to ensure that it is being implemented fairly which is why the Home Office would like it to be administered through the ACRO Criminal Records Office. The Home Office would also like data on these applications to be reported back through this Board.

There needs to be further discussion between the Home Office and the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), but the core members of the Board agreed to the proposal as an interim solution until a more long-term solution (such as a change in legislation) can be implemented.

- 6.2 An update on Biometrics policy was also provided. The Home Office are looking to appoint a new Biometric Commissioner on a short-term basis to carry out the casework role that the Commissioner fulfils and then, subject to ministerial approval, advertise a more long-term appointment for the full Commissioner role in September. A programme of engagement activities is also taking place to look at the use of facial recognition and the legislation and governance needed for this including the role of the FIND Strategy Board.

7.0 Access and Use Policy 1224/06

- 7.1 The Head of FINDS said that the access and use policy has been updated with the main updates being for; the incorporation of facial custody images retained on the IDENT1 fingerprint database under the governance of the Strategy Board and for general data protection clarifications.

The Board signed off the updated policy.

8.0 Strategic Facial Matching update

- 8.1 An update was given on Programme Tabula and Strategic Facial Matching. Programme Tabula looks at custody images specifically, the programme commenced in October 2023 and aims to reduce policing exposure to the risk of legal challenge and to ensure policing are lawfully and proportionately using individuals' data. The programme board has agreed the retention regime which the Board went through.

FIND Strategy Board

9.0 HOB commissioning routes and funding streams

- 9.1 The Head of FINDS outlined the challenge of obtaining sustainable funding for FINDS for the major developments that are needed to reduce risk. FINDS are currently funded by the MTA to run operational services with only minor funding for capability development. It has been agreed that FINDS will seek funding and then work with HOB to plan the resource to deliver those changes. FINDS are recruiting a change and assurance lead to support this. They will work directly with HOB to make sure that when they do get funding that they have the appropriate plans in place.

The Chair said that he would like to have a standing agenda item on this topic to keep the Board updated on the funding situation.

10.0 HOB update

- 10.1 An update on the HOB Programme was provided, many of which had been covered in other agenda items. An update was provided on the delivery of the Strategic Matcher Platform. Early parallel run between the two systems will start in January 2025, and then broadened to all bureaus during winter and spring 2025.

11.0 Mixture searching (Database Likelihood Ratio's DBLR request) - Update on review panel.

- 11.1 The Head of FINDS said that the terms of reference for the review panel and how to verify or validate software that can't be accredited under ISO17025 has been outlined. It's currently with the Regulator for review.

12.0 International DNA and Fingerprint exchange

Prüm DNA update.

- 12.1 The MPS representative said that they are connected to all countries now and continue to get ongoing matches.

FIND Strategy Board

The Chair said that now it is running as BAU it is important to understand what the Board now needs for case successes and the efficacy of the processes. He noted case studies would be helpful

Action 15/24 Board members to consider what they would like to see in the regular Prüm update section of the agenda.

Interpol DNA Exchange update and Fingerprint Prüm & Interpol update 1224/05

- 12.2 The data on Interpol DNA and fingerprint exchanges and Prüm fingerprint exchanges was presented as well as examples.

13.0 Y-STR project update.

- 13.1 An update on the YSTR project was given. The project is split into 2 parts: development of a reference database and database expansion for intelligence purposes. The reference database involves the collection of 10,000 samples.

NPCC Legal have confirmed that no legislation change is required to load YSTR records to the NDNAD. They have established an expert network group to discuss what the users would like to see from this expansion and have a rough order of magnitude cost to develop the capability from HOB.

AOB.

- 14.1 The Interpol representative requested who she needed to consult about sharing intelligence about minors in relation to DNA and fingerprints. The Head of FINDS responded that she would put her in contact with the relevant FINDS staff member.

A fourth national operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide & rape and Sexual offence (RASO) offenders.

- 14.2 A paper has been developed covering the compelling information on the need to conduct a fourth national operation to obtain DNA and fingerprints from those individuals convicted of homicide and sexual offences that have never been recorded on our national systems.

FIND Strategy Board

It was agreed that the Strategy Board would support the proposal, but that an understanding and agreement about who should be coordinating it was required. It was recommended that a small task force group is convened to work out what they think of the proposal, a quick assessment of lessons from previous attempts and what the options might be. The Chair asked the FCN to take this forward and then update at the next meeting; The FCN representative agreed.

Action 16/24 FCN representative to circulate the paper written on a fourth national operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide & RASO offenders.

Action 17/24 FCN representative to set up a group to discuss the approach to a fourth national operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide & RASO offenders.