

FIND Strategy Board

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Open Minutes of Meeting

1st April 2025 – In person - 2MS

10am-1pm

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)	Alex Campbell (AC)

APPOINTED MEMBERS (as set out in the Governance Rules)

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group representative (BFEG)	Niamh Nic Daeid (NND) Fauzia Ashraf (FA)
Forensic Science Regulator (FSR)	Gary Pugh (GP)
Scottish Biometric Commissioner representative	Ross MacDonald (RMD)
Information Commissioners' Office (ICO)	Natasha Andrews (NA) Ian Deasha (ID)

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Devolved Administration – Scottish Police Authority (forensics)	Lara Lee (LL)
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APPOINTED MEMBERS

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
NPCC – Counter Terrorism (CT) Forensic Database	Shazia Khan (SK)

SECRETARIAT

Home Office Forensic Information Databases Service (FINDS) - Head of Unit	Zo-dee Ledger (ZL)
Home Office - FINDS	Caroline Goryll (CG)

IN ATTENDANCE

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Home Office Biometrics (HOB) Programme	Ian Betts (IB)
Home Office, Interpol and International Biometric Exchange Team	Bianca Russo (BR) Phoebe Buchanan (PB)
National Crime Agency (NCA)	Sian Ryles (SR)
Forensics Capability Network (FCN)	Debbie Sharp (DS)

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APOLOGIES:

ORGANISATION	MEMBER
Devolved Administration – Police Scotland	Gillian Jones
Devolved Administration - Scottish government Head of Forensics Policy: Police Powers Unit	Elaine Hamilton
FCN	Vicki Burgin
Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC)	Darryl Preston
Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner representative	Nikki Cowley
Devolved Administration – Northern Ireland	Stephen Campbell
NPCC – DNA	Emily Burton
NPCC - Homicide Working Group	Martin Bottomley
Home Office Biometrics (HOB) Programme	Stuart Robertson
Home Office – Deputy Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Forensic Information Services	Jennifer Leech
Devolved Administration – Scottish Police Authority (forensics)	Helen Haworth
NPCC-HOB	Guy Mantoura

1.0 Welcome, Introduction and Strategic Developments

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that it was his last meeting as Chair of the Strategy Board. He will be replaced by ACC Simon Wilson.

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2.0 Previous Minutes (0425/01a & b)

2.1 ICO representative asked for a change to the spelling of his name.

3.0 Action Review (0425/02)

3.1 The meeting went through the action register updates.

05/22 The Chair and Head of FINDS to share NPCC legal advice on the retaking of samples with key stakeholders. In progress. Testing has been completed for this change; FINDS are awaiting a release date from PNC.

03/24 International Policy representative to bring updated Prüm search data to the Board. In progress.

10/24 Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) representative to send Head of FINDS paper on assessment of potentially suitable software for Missing Persons Database replacement (Bonaparte). Propose to close due to length of time since MPS carried out their assessment. **Board agreed to close.**

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. Due to some fingerprint connections taking longer than expected; this may just cover DNA.

15/24 Board members to consider what they would like to see in the Prüm update section of the agenda. It was noted that there is a similar action from the International Biometrics Board, therefore it was recommended that the content is the same to ensure effort to compile is not duplicated. The International Policy representative said that the aim is to collate the data on both fingerprints and DNA to feed into the new Prüm dashboard that they are compiling (action 03/24). This Prüm dashboard will then be used for all Boards. The International Policy representative said that her team will be responsible for taking forward this report. **Board agreed to close action.**

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16/24 FCN representative to circulate the paper written on a fourth national operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide and Rape and Sexual Offence offenders. This has been circulated – close 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 & Rape and Sexual Offence offenders. On agenda – close action.

01/25 MPS to update on the pilot to use the Counter Terrorism (CT) data extract from the NDNAD for searching against the MPS partials DNA database – 9-month review point. This is a new action to bring an update on the pilot on the use of the CT extract for searching against the MPS partials database to the next Board.

4.0 Operational Risks and Performance

Risk Register (1224/03)

4.1 The group went through the risk register. There are ten open risks with updates.

Issues Log Summary: two issues remain open.

4.2 The group went through the issues, there are two open issues.

Escalations Summary: Two open escalations – One to be closed.

4.3 The group went through the escalations, two will remain open and they propose to close one.

Escalation Process.

4.4 The Head of FINDS said that FINDS have reviewed the escalation process internally to ensure it is clearer for FINDS SLT to follow and that all relevant stakeholders are updated at the appropriate time.

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5.0 Highlight report (0425/04)

- 5.1 The Head of FINDS presented the scorecard. There were no significant fluctuations in data compared with the previous quarter. FINDS now have the IDENT1 data incorporated after challenges extracting it from the database. The Head of FINDS took the Board through the IDENT1 data for the last year in detail. The data will be presented quarterly going forward.

6.0 Biometrics Governance & Legislative Update

- 6.1 Home Office Policy representative gave an update on the Spending Review and planned forensic reform as part of the Home Secretary announced police reform. The work on the Police Reform white paper is on-going and a Director of Forensic Services will be appointed to lead this reform.
- 6.2 An update on police use of biometric technology was given, particularly police use of facial recognition technology. The Policing Minister has publicly stated that she will ensure the police have clarity on the use of facial recognition. The Home Office continue to work with stakeholders, including members of the FINDS Board, to develop options, including possible legislation. The International Policy representative said that PRUM II will likely include the sharing of facial images.
- 6.3 An update on the Gaughran judgement was provided.

Action 02/25 BS to speak to head of ACRO Criminal Records Office (ACRO) to understand how they might coordinate a central review process for the deletion of records following the Gaughran judgement.

7.0 HOB update

- 7.1 An update on the HOB Programme was provided. They are currently within stage 1 of Strategic Matcher, the early parallel run phase involving parallel searching of IDENT 1 and Strategic Matcher. No significant issues have been identified so far. The main parallel run will commence in early May and will include the unified collections and the special collections of imagery. It will run for 4 weeks, and HOB have 7 fingerprint bureaus that they will complete this with. The Strategy Board chair will sign off this testing for policing.

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8.0 Law Enforcement Data Service update.

- 8.1 The Head of FINDS provided an update on the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) which is due to replace the Police National Computer (PNC) in March 2026. FINDS have been approached to provide support to the LEDS Programme by performing user acceptance testing. The new LEDS IT system will become the source for data currently received by Home Office Biometric Services NDNAD and IDENT1 from the PNC.

9.0 Approval to use the data held within FINDS for testing purposes (0425/05)

- 9.1 The Head of FINDS presented paper 0425/05. FINDS would like to have standing approval from the FIND Strategy Board to use the data held on the databases for verification or validation purposes either for in-house systems such as the NDNAD or the utilisation of third-party software. There is a policy in place that details the requirements for use of data held on databases within FINDS for research purposes, but no mechanism is in place to use the data for testing purposes.

The chair agreed to the proposal if all impact assessments are completed.

10.0 Exceptional requests for Strategy Board approval.

- 10.1 The Head of FINDS noted that FINDS have implemented an updated Strategy Board approval process to ensure clarity for more complex requests, including the decision process for consultation with key stakeholders from the FIND Strategy Board.

11.0 Review on policy for release of arrestee profiles from the NDNAD 0425/06

- 11.1 The Head of FINDS presented paper 0425/06, there are currently restrictions on the automatic release of Pre-PACE (i.e. Criminal Justice) SGMPlus and SGM arrestee DNA profiles; and PACE arrestee DNA profiles for the suspect in criminal paternity cases from the NDNAD. The paper outlined the request to remove these validation rules and to propose to update the FIND Strategy Board 'Access and Use' policy to clearly state the restriction and allowances for the release of profiles for criminal paternity cases.

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The Chair requested that the Board have 2 weeks to consider this request and feedback views and then it will be discussed again at the next Board.

Action 03/25 Board members to feedback on paper by April 11th.

12.0 Ongoing retention of PACE DNA records deleted from the NDNAD on the Missing Persons DNA Database (MPDD) 0425/07

- 12.1 The Head of FINDS presented paper 0425/07 on the allowance for the ongoing retention of PACE DNA records deleted from the NDNAD on the Missing Persons DNA database.

13.0 Y-STR project update 0425/08.

- 13.1 The FCN representative gave an update on the reference database. Collecting the samples has been a lot more challenging than expected; they have collected 2,100 samples in 2 years (against a target of 10,000). To speed this up they have now introduced a postal collection service and a voucher reward scheme.
- 13.2 The Head of FINDS gave an update on the NDNAD expansion work; it is currently in an exploratory phase with workshops held with HOB. The next step will be to go to forensic service providers to obtain their requirements.

Head of FINDS went through paper 0425/08. FINDS are requesting to introduce an additional quality check to the NDNAD matching process for Y-STR matches.

Board agreed to the proposal for an additional quality check.

14.0 International DNA and Fingerprint exchange

Prüm policy update 0425/09

- 14.1 International Policy representative presented paper 0425/09 on several policy issues and areas for improvement that the Prüm programme would like the Strategy Board's views on, these include parliamentary safeguards and the Prüm audit. It was

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requested that the Board provide a steer on whether these should be taken to ministers with a recommendation.

The chair said that it would be useful to do a benefits realisation assessment to see if the safeguards are achieving their aims, things have moved on, which may mean we need a change in policy for some of these areas.

DNA update 0425/10.

- 14.2 The MPS representative went through the Prüm update, 0425/10 and the Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) project.

Interpol DNA Exchange and Fingerprint Prüm & Interpol update 0425/11

- 14.3 The NCA representative presented the data on Interpol DNA and fingerprint exchanges and Prüm fingerprint exchanges. The data pack now includes some trend analysis and more visualisation. She also presented several case studies.

15.0 Fourth Nationwide Operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide and sex offenders.

- 15.1 The FCN representative provided an update on the fourth nationwide operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide and sex offenders. She outlined the previous operations on this and what they have covered, and she also outlined why another operation is needed, noting that for another operation to be successful it needs to have a strategic lead and have good governance.

Action 03/25 DS to draft a paper for the NPCC Portfolio Board on the proposal for a fourth nationwide operation to obtain DNA from convicted homicide and sex offenders

16.0 Biometric Vetting & Elimination Databases.

- 16.1 The FCN representative noted that although work on biometric and elimination databases is not specified on the action list there is still a lot of work on going.

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17.0 AOB.

- 17.1 The Scottish Biometric Commissioners representative said that his office had laid 2 assurance reviews before the Scottish Parliament. One on DNA where they make 7 recommendations to Police Scotland for improvement and one on retrospective facial image searches with 4 recommendations for improvement.