



Forensic Science Regulator

Incident Examination Specialist Group (IESG)

**Note of the meeting held on 17th June 2025 at 23 Stephenson Street,
Birmingham and via video conference.**

1. Welcome, actions, and note of the previous meeting

- 1.1. The chair led on introductions to the eighth meeting of the incident examination specialist group (IESG). A list of attendees by organisation is available in Annex [A]. The OFSR Incident Examination Scientific Lead identified that this will be their last meeting with the group as they are leaving OFSR. The Marks, Traces and Patterns Scientific Lead will be standing in to support the activity of the group, until OFSR recruits into the position.
- 1.2. The minutes of the previous meeting were discussed. Confirmation was provided that UKAS has ring-fenced time in August/September 2025 for assessment reviews and decision-making to support the transition to version 2 of the Code with this intended to be completed by October.
- 1.3. The outstanding actions from previous meeting (April 2025) were reviewed:
 - Action 1 (April 2025)** - OFSR to publish the November meeting minutes – closed.
 - Action 2 (April 2025)** - OFSR to ensure declaration guidance reflects transition of FSPs from 17020 to 17025 for FSAs at a crime scene – in progress.
 - Action 3 (April 2025)** - Association of Forensic Service Providers (AFSP) representatives and incoming chair to arrange a meeting to understand the scale of the transition – closed.
 - Action 4 (April 2025)** - OFSR to circulate Ministry of Justice consultation information to relevant groups – closed.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

Action 5 (April 2025) - AFSP to share body processing guidance with IESG. This has been shared to a selection of eight CS managers to flag up any major issues. This is going to be shared with IESG – ongoing.

Action 6 (April 2025) – Circulate all written stakeholder updates – closed.

Action 7 (April 2025) – Fire Investigation chair to seek input from sub-group members on risks in provision of fire investigation services – closed.

Action 8 (April 2025) – OFSR representative to circulate plan for development of FSA specific requirements and milestones – closed.

Action 9 (April 2025) - Share guidance with Compliance Assurance Working Group (CAWG) for comment – closed.

Action 10 (April 2025) - Publish guidance subject to consideration of any comments from CAWG members – closed.

Action 11 (April 2025) - Review the list of activities and send comments – this is to be discussed in this meeting

2. Update from the OFSR

- 2.1. OFSR provided a brief update. The guidance document FSR-GUI-0006 has been published.
- 2.2. Current OFSR scientific lead's portfolio is being passed across temporarily to the Marks, Patterns and Traces lead, so any questions should be addressed to them going forward after this meeting.
- 2.3. There is no announcement yet as to who the new Forensic Science Regulator will be.
- 2.4. OFSR reminded the group of the importance of completing the templates sent out by UKAS for the transition from version 1 to version 2 of the Regulator's code. If there are instances where the wordings in the code are not sufficiently clear, then members should raise this with the Regulator.

3. Update from Chair

- 3.1. The chair outlined the group's progress to date and introduced the agenda.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 3.2. They acknowledged the complexity of recent regulatory changes and the need for the group to fully understand their implications. Numerous discussions had taken place since the last meeting including regular engagement with the chair of the CAWG working group and meetings with the other subgroup chairs.
- 3.3. The chair acknowledged varying levels of engagement across forces, noting a need to bridge the gap between those actively involved and those less aware or prepared for the changes.
- 3.4. It was highlighted that the IESG's primary function is to advise the Forensic Science Regulator on best practices for the regulation of incident scene examination.
- 3.5. Additional comments from Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) representative who will be taking over the CSI technical forum shortly. They highlighted the need for a consistent operational approach across forces. The upcoming version 2 of the Code presents an opportunity to adopt a more pragmatic and accessible framework for frontline practitioners, while maintaining consistency.
- 3.6. They added that the Metropolitan Police has submitted a request to UKAS to voluntarily withdraw from version 1 ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation for crime scenes. This decision is intended to allow focus on preparing for version 2, which is expected to offer a more practical and scalable framework for accreditation across multiple sites.
- 3.7. Challenges and Evidence Base: A discussion was led on the practical challenges faced by scene examiners. The chair stressed the importance of gathering evidence to understand these barriers, particularly in relation to ISO/IEC 17020 and the Regulator's Code. A shift in focus from accreditation alone to broader regulatory compliance was encouraged.
- 3.8. Challenges impacting operational efficiencies**
- 3.9. The group discussed the practical challenges faced by scene examiners. There was consensus on the need for a clearer evidence base to understand what is genuinely hindering operational delivery.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 3.10. It was noted that much of the discourse on this has centred on accreditation (e.g., ISO/IEC 17020), but the group was encouraged to shift focus toward regulation under the Forensic Science Regulator’s Code.
- 3.11. OFSR highlighted that the Regulator would need to keep the Code requirements under review if these were demonstrated to be causing undue challenges.

4. Regulatory change 1 – Corporate Competency Framework

- 4.1. CAWG chair provided an update on the Corporate Competency Framework, originally presented at CAWG by the Forensic Capability Network (FCN), and developed by a working group from the CSI Technical Forum.
- 4.2. The framework has been revised to align with version 2 of the Regulator’s Code and the latest Section 9 guidance. Feedback was incorporated from a range of stakeholders including the Regulator’s Office and several police forces
- 4.3. The framework aims to:
- Clarify definitions and expectations.
 - Provide structured yet flexible guidance.
- 4.4. Recognise varying levels of organisational risk and maturity.
- 4.5. Offer examples of competency tools (e.g. knowledge checks, case reviews, live scene assessments).
- 4.6. The document will be published by the FCN via the Knowledge Hub and shared with the CSI Technical Forum. It is intended as a national reference for positive practice, particularly useful for less mature organisations.
- 4.7. UKAS emphasised that while the framework is a valuable resource, it is vital that forces combine this with an understanding of their own organisational risk to develop an appropriate documented competency policy.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 4.8. The framework is considered a “living document” and may be updated based on feedback and evolving needs. Feedback is encouraged via the Quality Matters channel.
- 4.9. There is a desire to add more examples to the framework document, to help organisations in building their own policy/frameworks. However, it was also emphasised that organisations cannot just have an approach mandated and they need to be thinking about how this works for their specific organisation.
- 4.10. There are remaining challenges around lack of understanding of the Code, and the standard and how this should be applied in the context of the risks that they are prepared to accept.
- 4.11. Specialist Group chair identified that this item should be kept on the CAWG agenda to keep oversight of this going forward.

ACTION 1 - CAWG chair to engage with non-accredited forces by socialising the competency framework document. The aim is to understand their current position, identify any barriers to adoption, and encourage broader participation.

- 4.12. There was a discussion around the forces that are not currently accredited as well as those that are not currently engaging in groups such as CAWG and regional meetings, and the CSI technical forum etc.
- 4.13. The OSFR noted potential challenges in delivering mock competency scenarios for complex crime scenes. A query was raised regarding whether this issue could be addressed by the group currently overseeing the competency framework. This is being looked at – there was a view that the challenges are more around the crime scene management aspect, but there are other options other than just mock scenes. There have already been some conversations around what this looks like and this could be made more visible.
- 4.14. UKAS highlighted that the emphasis on forensic scene management is one of the biggest changes, and there is a need for interpretation and professional judgement to be shown during mock assessments. UKAS have previously witnessed assessments where this aspect has been too basic, not testing skills that are evidently there within the organisation. There is a need to factor in what

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

version 2 of the Code is seeking to achieve in future mock assessments of this type.

UKAS also highlighted that while the framework document looks like it will be helpful, and should lead to greater consistency, the group and the wider community should be mindful that risks will vary for different organisations (depending on their history, size, structure etc). If one organisation was accredited using the framework based on their structure, it would not follow that another organisation would be accredited if they took the same approach – as they would have to develop an approach appropriate for their own organisational risks and structures.

- 4.15. The group discussed that there was a role for the CAWG in encouraging dialogue and that it may be beneficial for the group to set up sessions to enhance the understanding of those forces that are not accredited – this could be through the FCN.

5. Regulatory change 2 – Contamination Controls

FCN anti-contamination project

- 5.1. The CAWG chair gave an update on the Anti-Contamination Project that was recently presented at CAWG by FCN. This project aims to develop a justified risk based national approach to contamination control in incident scene examination.
- 5.2. The project:
- looked at over 260 documents from police forces including SOPs, validation, verification reports, risk assessments, databases, environmental monitoring schedules, results nonconformance reports.
 - Mapped out a national CSI end-to-end process and developed a comprehensive risk assessment.
- 5.3. Undertook a survey that was distributed to CSIs to understand the frequency of some of the high-risk contamination scenarios.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 5.4. Based on their findings, they made eleven key recommendations. There was consideration in terms of the Section 9 guidance: emphasising proportionality risk based decision-making; reducing prescriptive language that leads to unnecessary procedures; highlighting the importance of understanding critical control measures; clarifying environmental monitoring requirements for FSA INC 100 (there are caveats around this that UKAS may wish to add to); and promoting a holistic contamination strategy that considers the entire process.
- 5.5. The next steps were to finalise and publish the report following feedback from the CAWG working group; and support forces with adopting it and implementing the findings.
- 5.6. It was noted that the project is not something that all forces can simply adopt – but rather a body of evidence that assists them in understanding the risks and control measures they should be considering.
- 5.7. OFSR noted that the guidance document discussed in the FCN project outcomes was the Crime scene DNA: anti-contamination guidance (FSR-GUI-0016) published in October 2023. This document is due a review and a refresh.

ACTION 2 – for IESG to create a task and finish group to review and update FSR-GUI-0016.

- This group should link in with the OSFR Scientific Lead for Biology as there are parallel guidance documents for laboratories and SARCs (FSR-GUI-0017, and FSR-GUI-0018) which are very similar.
- 5.8. It may make sense for all three to be reviewed at the same time and it may be that these could be combined.
- 5.9. OSFR are already planning on reviewing the SARC document (FSR-GUI-0017)
- UKAS flagged that there has been work already undertaken with the OSFR in relation to definitions of terms (such as environmental monitoring, control acceptance testing, certification) which included the SARC representatives as well.
- 5.10. UKAS asked whether there was an intention for the FCN project work to be published in a journal. It was noted that while recent work relating to Sexual

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) had been published in an external journal – this was to provide visibility to bodies such as charities and the NHS – who would not otherwise have had visibility. This is less the case for the project in question, as incident scene examiners can access this through the Knowledge Hub.

- 5.11. FCN highlighted that there would be cost implications with journal publication but while there was no commitment to take this approach at present it was something that could be considered.
- 5.12. UKAS noted that while the FCN project was a compelling presentation, there is a need to understand a bit more, especially in terms of how it would be put into practice in different forces and the risks involved. For example, in relation to possible changes to environmental monitoring, there would need to be an understanding of this in the context of the given organisation, their workflow, their critical control points and the background data that they have to support any change.
- 5.13. FCN are looking to create guidance in the form of a risk assessment template that forces can adopt using their own information, to give that detailed risk assessment of the approach they are going to take, and why, to ensure they can demonstrate that they have fully understood the risks involved and the mitigations they are going to take.
- 5.14. FCN also noted that while it was correct that each force would need to undertake a robust risk assessment based on their own circumstances it is also important that the national data, such as that generated through the anti-contamination project, can be used for this purpose without a large amount of additional local work – as every force has already supplied their local data into that national project.
- 5.15. UKAS noted that they have recently run CSI technical assessor workshops and one of the main focuses was on environmental monitoring. The presentation from FCN was shared with the technical assessors and there has been consideration of what expectations the assessors as a group would have. It was reiterated that individual, isolated aberrations that are not reflective of an

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

organisation's risk structure should not be raised as findings unless there is a justified extenuating circumstances to do so.

- 5.16. UKAS reemphasised that there is a push for assessors to look at the risk mitigations that organisations are putting in place, how they are managing, reviewing and understanding those risks and mitigations.
- 5.17. There was discussion of the important role that communication will play when working through this – both with UKAS and via CAWG.
- 5.18. FCN highlighted that one of the issues relates to forces having the confidence and understanding to explain and respond to legitimate questions raised by UKAS. There is a role for the group in supporting the community in having the confidence to explain their approaches and welcome challenging questions from UKAS.

ACTION 3 – FCN to look at the possibility of providing training around risk assessment for processes and how to engage with challenges from UKAS constructively and confidently.

6. Regulatory change 3 – Validation

- 6.1. FCN set out the work they are doing around validation and alignment.
- 6.2. There is a national validation group looking at the challenges around validation, particularly the adoption of validation from elsewhere, which can be challenging for technical reasons.
- 6.3. There are six workstreams who are involved in creating a toolkit to enable organisations to have the confidence and understanding and skills to undertake validation robustly, including doing this collectively and collaboratively with other forces, and to adopt validations that might be published elsewhere.
- 6.4. Many of the representatives currently in these workstreams are from forces which have not previously undertaken much validation and there is an aim to add forces with greater experience and understanding to support the group in future.
- 6.5. FCN have also developed a tracker (available via SharePoint) recording where forces have undertaken or commenced validation work. The aim is that forces

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

keep this updated and that it will facilitate sharing of knowledge and collaboration between forces.

6.6. Discussion - Clarification of minimum scope.

- 6.7. UKAS highlighted that there is a lot of moving parts in the environment and the group needs to think through how we reflect that for all stakeholders.
- 6.8. Chair set out that, in terms of scope of accreditation, and compliance, the direction from Regulator is that forces cannot be compliant with version 1 of the Code after 2nd October (as this will have been withdrawn).
- 6.9. There was a wide-ranging discussion about the challenges with the transition for version 2 and the need for a minimum scope of accreditation.
- 6.10. The OFSR highlighted that FSA INC 100 is currently quite generic – this was intentional given that many activities can be undertaken at crime scenes.
- 6.11. The reason a minimum scope is needed is to avoid situations where an organisation submits a scope of accreditation which is too narrow. An organisation would not be compliant with version 2 of the Code if they have not, as a minimum, included all the activities detailed in the minimum scope.
- 6.12. Some forces will only undertake a small number of activities at scenes – so this will need to be considered when setting the minimum scope. Conversely there would be a risk to the CJS if organisations felt they only had to achieve a very narrow minimum to achieve accreditation.
- 6.13. The chair outlined that the group have to focus on protecting the integrity of incidence scene examination. The group should ask itself what they would want to know was going into the CJS, as a minimum scope, to provide the confidence that the integrity of incident scene examination is protected.
- 6.14. There was discussion that some areas (e.g. Covert and CT work) would have slightly different needs in terms of minimum scope. The group agreed that, in the first instance the focus should be on what would be expected for police forces undertaking conventional scene examinations but would then adapt the scope for other organisations as needed.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

6.15. Minimum Scope Document

- 6.16. The group worked through the 'INC 100 draft activity list minimum scope' document to identify the minimum scope.
- 6.17. Areas of discussion included:
- 6.18. Forensic Scene Management – discussion regarding the different levels of scene management and whether these needed to be separated out however the groups view was that this was a continuum.
- 6.19. Recovery of materials for DNA Analysis – discussion around whether minimum scope should require both swabbing and mini-taping. Lots of organisations don't use mini-taping – agreement in principle that the minimum scope should only require swabbing (not both). In terms of validation this would need to cover all of the types of biological material – but this could be in the proportions which these would be expected to be encountered.
- 6.20. Imaging for subsequent comparison & powdering of marks (FRD and footwear) – there was a wide ranging discussion as to whether these two aspects should be part of the minimum scope. These were reconfigured into two sections 'Recovery of Friction ridge detail' and 'Recovery of footwear marks'.
- 6.21. Discussion around whether minimum scope should define the powders used. Group agreed in principle that this should specify 'all powder available for use' to ensure that all powders regularly used by a given force would be validated and in scope
- 6.22. Recovery of marks (FRD and Footwear) via Gel Lift – this will be split/added to the separate entries for Friction Ridge Detail and Footwear marks (as discussed above). There was discussion around how validation and scope should approach different types of Gels. As per discussions of powders, it was agreed in principle that the scope should include all gel types a force uses (and these would have to be validated).
- 6.23. There was a wide-ranging discussion around whether there should be consolidation of validation outcomes for consumables (e.g. gel-lifts) to identify where some products or techniques are validated as being more effective.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 6.24. Recovery of trace material – taping/gel lifting. The group agreed in principle that this should not form part of the minimum scope. It was added to the ‘extras’ list of other activities that may be undertaken at scenes but are not minimum scope requirements.
- 6.25. Recovery of trace material - forceps/scalpel/to pot. Discussion about whether this requires validation. Group agreed in principle that this would not require validation and would not be part of the minimum scope, but would be part of the extras list.
- 6.26. Presumptive testing of biological material. The group agreed in principle that this was not on the minimum scope list. There was discussion as to whether this needed to be included as an option for accreditation scope more generally – the point was made that this provides clarity that this can be done under FSA INC 100.
- 6.27. The group discussed whether GSR recovery using sampling kit should or should not be on the minimum scope.

Discussions around Minimum Scope and Declarations

- 6.28. UKAS set out the difference between minimum-scope and what would happen if other activities (non-minimum-scope) were included in a report:
- 6.29. The minimum scope is the minimum that would be expected in an application for accreditation to version 2 of the Code.
- 6.30. However, if a report includes a different technique, not part of the minimum scope, that is not on the organisations schedule of accreditation, then everything within that report (including those aspects that are in scope) would have to be declared as non-compliant.
- 6.31. The group had wide ranging discussions about how declarations would have to be approached.
- 6.32. One example explored: if an organisation has not yet achieved accreditation on all aspects of Forensic Scene Management, and a competent volume crime scene examiner attends a volume crime scene, they would have to declare non-

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

compliance, as their organisation had not achieved compliance with the full spectrum of the Forensic Scene Management for this component.

- 6.33. The group highlighted the planned v3 declaration guidance from the OFSR which will help ensure clarity around these requirements by October. The OFSR confirmed that the aim is for this to be published in August. They are also looking at providing some scenarios to guide people as to how to make their declarations.
- 6.34. There was also discussion around the tension between declarations being personal for the examiner while the regulatory compliance is at the level of their organisations. There was a view within the group that the declaration approach was complex, and not always clear to examiners or the CJS.
- 6.35. OFSR are intending to look at simplifying the declaration approach and guidance, due to the reasons discussed as well as expected changes in the criminal procedure rules. There is an acknowledgement that the declarations approach needs to be easier, both for the individual to make, but also for the court to understand.
- 6.36. AFSP provided further comments on the difference between personal competence and organisational competence. An organisation should have a clear competency framework - defined roles, training plans, and a process for achieving competence. Individuals then work within that framework, progressing through training and mentoring to become competent. So, while the organisation provides the structure, individuals may still be in training and not yet fully competent. An individual declaring competence is essentially saying that they've worked under the framework of that organisation.
- 6.37. The group agreed the minimum scope list in principle, subject to the list being circulated and any further comments provided by the group.

ACTION 4 - OFSR to share minimum–scope draft.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

7. Regulatory change 4 – Note Taking

- 7.1. Version 2 of the code requires Forensic Units to have a policy on the information required to be recorded in examination notes and other records and that this policy shall be based on an assessment of the value of recording information and the risk of not recording the information.
- 7.2. Representative from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire Police (BCH) provided an overview of the work on note taking which they were taking to the CSI Technical Forum the following day.
- 7.3. The example was provided that a simple burglary at a high street shop might only need basic notes – just the point of entry and any obvious activity whereas a complex case, like the Hatton Garden burglary, would require much more detailed documentation, including trace evidence and investigative decisions.
- 7.4. The key point made was that note-taking should be proportionate to the complexity of the scene. It is not about recording everything the same way every time, but about using professional judgment to document what's relevant and why.
- 7.5. There was agreement in the group with the planned comments for the CSI Technical Forum.
- 7.6. Through discussion in the group it was agreed that there was a need for greater understanding of what is and is not okay/appropriate for note taking, and that notes need to demonstrate professional judgement.
- 7.7. It was suggested that for some forces there is a need for greater clarity of what should be included in note taking. Until this is understood there will be a reluctance from forces to scaling down their note taking towards a more proportionate approach.
- 7.8. Representative from BCH set out that the CSI Technical Forum will be able to collect data about factors that are slowing delivery and identify issues, and this information can then be escalated to the CAWG, where UKAS are present. This can then inform changes to guidance.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

7.9. Chair raised the possibility that, as a technical group, the CSI Technical Forum could arrange an event to workshop some of these issues, where forces could come with examples of their notes and SOPs and peer review them with one another. This could possibly be with UKAS involvement.

7.10. Crime Scene management:

7.11. BCH representative then set out some of the points being picked up at the CSI Technical Forum in relation to crime scene management:

- The incident scene is assessed in the context of the available information.
- The strategy is completed and kept under review.

7.12. Aspects of the scene are preserved as reasonably practicable

- Scene is recorded and examined

7.13. Communication is maintained with the commissioning party as agreed.

- responsibilities effectively handed over to another responsible person if needed.

7.14. UKAS discussed the need to bust any myths or fears around UKAS visits. There is a message to get across that UKAS is looking to make changes to their approach to make things more streamlined for organisations undergoing accreditation activities. There was a positive response from the group and agreement that was welcome, and that there was also a need to change the behaviours of organisations and practitioners to be more receptive to the things that UKAS are trying to achieve.

7.15. It was highlighted that while it is very helpful to discuss these aspects at the level of the specialist group, it is important that this is also fed back to ensure that the same approach is being reflected within all organisations (UKAS, Forensic Service Providers and Police forces) on the front line.

7.16. Communication strategy

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

7.17. Discussion around whether the group needs a communication strategy, whether the Terms of Reference from the group had been communicated more widely, and whether this would be beneficial. There was an agreement that the way the different groups (CSI Technical Forum, CAWG, IESG) work together is complicated, and it may not always be clear how people can access and feed into the work that they do.

ACTION 5 – for chair with help from FCN to look at communicating an organisation chart detailing the different groups and how these work together.

7.18. Note – for Regulatory change 5 - Volume/Major – the group felt that these changes had already been covered by the earlier discussions around changes 1-4, and therefore no further points were picked up.

8. Regulatory change 6 – Organisational Accreditation

8.1. While most sites have an organisational competence framework in place, this does not necessarily mean that all parts of the organisation are currently operating in line with it. In some forces, accredited sites demonstrate organisational competence, whereas non-accredited sites do not - and this is where change is needed.

8.2. Agreement from some forces that this is looking challenging – Yorkshire and The Humber (YaTH) state that they think it will be genuinely challenging to meet the April 2027 deadline.

8.3. There is a risk that many organisations may seek UKAS accreditation close to the deadline, potentially overwhelming the process. UKAS indicated they are exploring more tactical approaches to manage this anticipated demand.

8.4. The FCN noted that there are existing drivers encouraging forces to progress with the required changes. The group agreed that while momentum exists, some forces may still struggle to meet the deadline.

8.5. The OFSR is keen to understand the group's perspective. They emphasised the importance of maintaining progress while also identifying organisations that may

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

not be fully engaged or on track. A gap analysis could help highlight these cases, and FCN may be able to support this with a survey to gather more detailed insights.

- 8.6. There was discussion regarding how the new Director of Forensic Services role might fit into the landscape. The consensus was that while the Director would likely be interested in developments, they are not expected to be directly involved in the IESG's activities.
- 8.7. The CAWG chair asked about the status of organisations that currently have no accreditation. FCN confirmed they have had some contact with these organisations. The group discussed ongoing engagement and reporting mechanisms related to these cases.

ACTION 6 - The chair asked the group to reflect as to whether the April 2027 deadline is realistic and if there are risks around this. Group (including UKAS) to send thoughts through to the chair.

9. Stakeholder updates

CSI Technical Forum

- 9.1. CSI Technical Forum taking place on 18th June.
- 9.2. Already picked up (see earlier comments) no further updates.

Forensic Capability Network (FCN)

- 9.3. NQMM (National Quality Management Meeting) is on Thursday 19th June in Derbyshire. There have been several concerns in relation to FSA INC 100 ahead of the meeting. FCN have been asked to capture concerns.
- 9.4. FCN are using the NQMM meeting and other meetings to monitor transition and are asking organisations which date they expect to submit to UKAS.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 9.5. Discussion around forces that may be choosing not to transition to code version 2 for this standard.
- 9.6. UKAS set out what they see as the risks of surrendering accreditation and restarting, and how this might make it harder for the initial assessment when they go to version 2 (as there would be a period of non-accreditation which would need to be considered as a risk when they go back into accreditation). The benefits and risks of resigning accreditation and restarting may differ between organisations.

UKAS

- 9.7. UKAS provided an example of one of the pragmatic approaches they have taken for an upcoming visit, and how they are taking steps to streamline these processes where possible.
- 9.8. FCN asked for further information on how UKAS are approaching transition. UKAS – transition currently based on a desktop review and if there were specific areas of risk identified then this might be fed into or result in a visit. However, there are many variations that feed into how visits are approached.
- 9.9. Resignation visits discussed. The expectation remains that there would be a resignation assessment where organisations resign their version 1 accreditation.
- 9.10. International peer review of UKAS successful from the European accreditation Multilateral Agreement.
- 9.11. Transition templates have been sent out with a return date of the 21st of July. This is being supported by a number of assessors and decision makers who have time put aside between August and September
- 9.12. The current Accreditation Specialist for Forensics will be leaving UKAS.
- 9.13. UKAS Assessments are continuing. Meetings have been held with eleven out of the 22 accredited forces and consortiums. Where there are queries relating to transition, meetings can be arranged to address these.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 9.14. UKAS re-emphasised that they are looking at changing their approach to assessments, and how they are received and interact with forces and FSPs, however they need to be robust as an accreditation body.
- 9.15. There is a pause to a lot of extensions over the transition period, but there is tranche of new assessors that will be going through sign-off shortly, and who will help with transition.
- 9.16. The new version of ISO/IEC 17020 will be coming out soon, it is through to the approval stage, and UKAS will update people once more is known about when this is coming out.

AFSP

- 9.17. There have been meetings with pathologists regarding the Body Processing document.
- 9.18. Collaborative Proficiency Testing trial due to go out this week, it features a 3D scene capture involving virtual images coupled with a piece of laminate flooring for body fluids.
- 9.19. There have been discussions about the Sydney declaration at the European scene group. It sets out 7 principles of forensic science emphasizing the importance of interpretation and professional judgment at crime scenes - rather than simply collecting evidence blindly. This relates to the approach being taken with the collaborative exercise.
- 9.20. The biggest ongoing exercise for forensic providers is the transition from ISO/IEC17020 to 17025, and how and when that will happen. Still ongoing discussion about whether to continue accreditation of ISO/IEC 17020 before transition or to stop this.

10. Sub-group updates

Written updates have been received and will be shared.

Fire Investigation

- 10.1. Risks and challenges have been included in the written update.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

- 10.2. Main focus of the subgroup is now reviewing the milestone approach, making sure that it's fit for purpose.
- 10.3. One of the biggest issues is the requirements around an oversight mechanism. The question has been raised that if the police are going to be commissioning the fire service to provide fire investigation, is it down to them as the commissioning party to ensure they are compliant with the Code – i.e. become the auditors and the oversight mechanism for fire investigation for the Fire Rescue Services and possibly the FSPs.

Collison Investigation

- 10.4. Discussion of challenges – there are lots of individuals in policing, mainly officers, who are undertaking activity related to FSA INC 101, and this creates another layer of complexity. There is a statutory requirement for officers to fill in the statistics form for the Department for Transport, and this includes aspects of professional judgement. The subgroup is considering going down the route of an MPCC protocol approach.

Counter Terrorism

- 10.5. The Terms of Reference for the CT group will be circulated.

ACTION 7 – OFSR to circulate the TOR from CT group

Covert

- 10.6. There was a recent catch up with representatives from the NCA. For their work, Covert is exempt from requiring ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation or compliance to the Code - however there was discussion that many elements of the standard and Code would be quite beneficial for them anyway. They are looking at how they might follow some of the methodology, and get some of the assurances, without going through full accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020.

Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes – Minutes

Compliance assurance working group (CAWG)

10.7. See earlier comments

11. Decisions and next steps

11.1. The key action from the meeting: the chair has requested reflections on April 2027 deadline (see earlier **Action 6**).

11.2. There is a need to work on embedding some of the documents discussed.

12. AOB

12.1. The chair thanked members and closed the meeting. The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

Annex [A]

Representatives present:

Chair

Association of Forensic Service Providers (AFSP)

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Police (BCH)

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP)

Forensic Capability Network (FCN)

Forensic Collision Investigation Network (FCIN)

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

Thames Valley Police (TVP)

United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

East Midlands Specialist Operations Unit (EMSOU)

Yorkshire and Humber (YaTH)

Office of the Forensic Science Regulator (OFSR)

Apologies

The Forensic Science Regulator