



Forensic Science Regulator

Incident Examination Specialist Group (IESG)

Note of the meeting held on 27th January 2026 via video conference.

1. Welcome, introductions, actions, and notes of the previous meeting

1.1. This meeting is being chaired by the FCN Representative member of the group as the usual chair is currently on leave. The chair led on introductions to the ninth meeting of the Incident Examination Specialist Group (IESG). A list of attendees by organisation is available in Annex [A].

1.2. The chair welcomed the new Incident Examination Scientific Lead from the Office of the Forensic Science Regulator (OFSR) to their first meeting. The chair also noted that this will be the final IESG meeting attended by the Marks, Traces and Patterns Scientific Lead, who has been supporting the group and incident examination portfolio.

1.3. All outstanding actions were reviewed on the action log:

Action 1 (June 2025) – Compliance Assurance Working Group (CAWG) chair to engage with non-accredited organisations by socialising the competency framework document. The CAWG chair confirmed they have spoken directly with some of the non-accredited forces who confirmed they have something in place and are progressing towards compliance with the Code. Action closed.

Action 2 (June 2025) - IESG to create a task and finish group to review and update FSR-GUI-0016. CSI Technical Forum Anti-contamination workstream will be submitting recommendations to update this document which will be shared with the group in the near future. Action to remain open.

Action 3 (June 2025) - FCN to explore possibility of providing training focused on risk assessment for processes and how to engage with challenges from

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UKAS constructively and confidently. FCN representative noted that there is now a risk informed decision-making group who will work through issues like this and support organisations. The work is ongoing and it was agreed this action can be closed.

Action 4 (June 2025) - OFSR to circulate Forensic Science Activity (FSA) – INC 100 minimum scope activity list draft with members. Circulated, action closed.

Action 5 (June 2025) - Chair, with support of FCN to look at circulating an organisation chart detailing the different groups and how they work together. Circulated, action closed.

Action 6 (June 2025) – Group to reflect and feedback to chair whether the April 2027 deadline for FSA – INC 100 is realistic and highlight any risks associated with this. The group noted that the deadline for full compliance has since been extended with the implementation of milestone approach. Action closed.

Action 7 (June 2025) – OFSR to circulate the Terms of Reference for the CT group. Circulated, action closed.

Action 2 (April 2025) – OFSR to ensure declaration guidance reflects transition of FSPs from ISO/IEC 17020 to ISO/IEC 17025. Action to remain open – OFSR will ensure this is covered in INC specific guidance.

Action 1 - Publication of previous meeting minutes (June 2025). No further feedback received from the group.

2. Update from the OFSR

- 2.1. The OFSR highlighted that since the previous meeting in June 2025 there is a new Forensic Science Regulator Dr Marc Bailey who came into office in July 2025.
- 2.2. The OFSR have a new Scientific Lead and Scientific Support Officer for the incident examination portfolio. This will be the last meeting the Marks, Traces and Patterns Scientific Lead who has been standing in to support the activity of the group, will be attending. They were thanked for their work during this interim period.

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- 2.3. In September 2025 the Regulator communicated to Senior Accountable Individuals (SAIs) of forensic units undertaking FSA – INC 100 notifying them that he was placing the April 2027 mandatory ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation deadline under review and developing a milestone pathway to compliance for this FSA. This will be covered in more detail later on in the meeting.
- 2.4. The scope activity list for FSA - INC 100 which has been developed through the IESG has been signed off and approved by the Regulator. The OFSR noted that there have been some minor amendments to the document so it aligns with the new milestone approach to Code compliance. The latest draft of the document has been shared with the group prior to the meeting.
- 2.5. Publication of version 3 of the FSR-GUI-0001 declaration guidance is imminent with the OFSR noting that this has been a challenging piece of work to try and make workable for multiple sectors. Initially, there was a specific section of guidance relating to FSA – INC 100 within the document but this now been removed as it will need to be revised following the implementation of the milestone approach. The guidance is for organisations to follow the overarching guidance in the meantime once the main document has been published. FSA - INC 100 specific guidance will follow as soon as possible and remains high priority for the OFSR team.
- 2.6. FSR-GUI-0004 Interpretation and Opinions Guidance has been sent for publication and should be available in the coming week. This is the overarching document. The 18 sub-working groups are continuing to work on the discipline specific guidance documents.

3. Update from IESG FSA – INC 100 Focus Group – Compliance Milestones

- 3.1. The chair provided an update on behalf of the FSA - INC 100 Focus Group which was established to focus on the development of the milestone approach to compliance and to explore options for the oversight of this approach.
- 3.2. The proposed milestone requirements is currently with the Regulator with anticipated communication to the SAIs soon.

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- 3.3. The proposed requirements for milestone one is that organisations will have a corporate competency framework which will cover all sites with no distinction between crime types.
- 3.4. The requirements are that this framework includes competency for a minimum scope of sub-activities which are listed in the scope activity list document. These sub-activities are all aspects of forensic scene management, the recovery of DNA, friction ridge detail and footwear marks.
- 3.5. There will be no requirement to demonstrate validation/verification of these methods in milestone one, this is expected to be required for milestone 3.
- 3.6. The chair highlighted that the focus when we refer to all crime types, is around forensic scene management as training and competency will need to factor in professional judgement, coordination and management of incident scenes rather than the technical methods outside of the minimum scope.
- 3.7. The proposed deadline for organisations to meet the requirements for milestone one is April 2027 but this has not been finalised by the Regulator.
- 3.8. Once the Regulator has finalised the approach and communicated to the SAIs it was proposed that the IESG may be able to support the community on the implementation of the approach, and provide further support and clarity on the requirements for milestone 1. There was suggestion that this could be in the form of a frequently asked questions document on what is or isn't in scope to meet these requirements.
- 3.9. The OFSR identified that the Regulator is aiming to deliver communication to all SAIs who undertake FSA – INC 100 by the end of the week.
Action 2: OFSR to circulate the communication from the Regulator with the IESG and CAWG once the Regulator has sent it to the SAIs.
- 3.10. The expectation is that there will be an independent assessment or review (terminology to be confirmed) carried out by UKAS in order to understand and demonstrate organisational progress towards the requirements of each milestone which will be fed back to the Regulator to provide understanding on the level of progress and risk.

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- 3.11. To explore this oversight mechanism, UKAS have undertaken a dry run assessment with a volunteer force which took place on the 26th of January. Representatives from the OFSR and FCN also attended.
- 3.12. The chair acknowledged that the dry run assessment went positively and it highlighted that the volunteer force had already put in a lot of work towards transitioning to compliance with version 2 of the Code. Some gaps were identified where the force are trying to fill in terms of decision making for all crime types i.e. Crime Scene Managers and Crime Scene Coordinators. It was acknowledged that a lot of organisations would be in a similar position at present.
- 3.13. In terms of next steps, UKAS and OFSR will be determining how the information is recorded and then shared with the Regulator to provide that assurance.
- 3.14. UKAS agreed that a lot of learning came from the day and highlighted that this approach is different to an assessment to ISO/IEC standards.
- 3.15. UKAS acknowledged that there is some work to do in ensuring the report captures the correct information for the Regulator, allows easy extrapolation of the data and is also helpful for UKAS and the organisations to identify any gaps and areas for further work towards compliance.
- 3.16. From a UKAS perspective it was interesting to trial sending out a table to be filled out in advance by the organisation. Their preparation included sending a gap analysis through which had a number of embedded documents in it. UKAS agreed that it would be beneficial for them to provide some guidance to organisations around the expectation of what information would be needed in advance in effort to approach this as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- 3.17. It was agreed that the day identified some areas for further discussion but it is the hope that this will come out in the next few weeks.
- 3.18. The chair noted that in order for the Regulator to understand that organisations are actively progressing towards the deadline, the Regulator will be sending out a survey in the early summer to benchmark organisational progress which will require organisations to provide details on how they plan to progress and meet

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the requirements of milestone one by the April 2027 deadline. The format of this survey is to be determined.

- 3.19. The group noted feedback from the CAWG members during a previous meeting that organisations would welcome a more conversational approach to the survey or data gathering if possible but appreciate this may be resource intensive for the OFSR. From a community perspective a telephone call or similar to discuss where organisations are and their plans to meet the deadline would likely ensure a more robust, consistent and better quality response. OFSR noted this feedback.
- 3.20. The group asked if the information from the survey would be shared with CAWG members to identify gaps and address them. OFSR noted that some information provided by organisations may not be for sharing but some information could certainly be used to feed in those gaps to the CAWG. This will be determined in due course.
- 3.21. The chair referred to the process map document for the FSA - INC 100 milestone pathway to compliance, which was shared as a paper with the group prior to the meeting and opened up for questions.
- 3.22. The group discussed central validation for those core sub-activities such as fingerprint and footwear mark recovery and noted that organisations with existing ISO 17020 accreditation or Code compliance will likely already have competency assessments for these activities which now need to be shared consistently across all staff and locations. Assessments will need to cover all crime types, as methods may differ for major or serious crime.
- 3.23. The Code version 2 emphasises the use of desktop verification and adopted validation, and organisations are encouraged to share competency materials to support efficiency; FCN noted that they can host these on Knowledge Hub and that the NPCC validation group is developing guidance and templates to support organisations in carrying out central validation more effectively.
- 3.24. Questions were raised about the format of declarations with the implementation of this new approach, with OFSR confirming that this will be addressed in forthcoming INC specific declaration guidance. OFSR also confirmed that

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further detail on the oversight approach will follow once the dry run findings have been fully reviewed.

- 3.25. UKAS representatives noted that they expect to complete its report by the end of the week, after which administrative work will determine how best to provide the information to the Regulator. The dry run reinforced the need for onsite visits and provided valuable insight into the level of effort required.

Action 3: Members to feedback on FSA – INC 100 Process Map for Milestone Approach to Compliance

4. Update from Compliance Assurance Working Group (CAWG)

- 4.1. Chair of the CAWG noted the latest meeting took place on the 19th January and members have fed back that it was an informative session. This was the first communication from the Regulators office detailing the milestone approach for FSA - INC 100.
- 4.2. Members enquired about declarations with the OFSR noting this is still work in progress.
- 4.3. No feedback was received around FSR-GUI-0006 following its publication in June 2025.
- 4.4. A number of topics were brought through from FCN for discussion however the meeting was more of an update session therefore in the interest of time, the topics were taken for further discussion offline.
- 4.5. One area for discussion was around adopting validation where the community feel they can use other organisations validation providing it is sound however there is still nervousness amongst the community as to whether this will be accepted by the accreditation body.
- 4.6. There was some important discussions around the expectations, with UKAS noting that there still needs to be some work in force, organisations cannot simply just adopt it.

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- 4.7. Further discussions between FCN and UKAS have been arranged to take place offline following the meeting to explore if there is conflict between the Code and ISO/IEC 17020 standards or whether this is down to misunderstanding the requirements which may need to be escalated to the Regulator to determine what would be accepted in line with the changes which came in with version 2 of the Code.
- 4.8. Similar conversations were had around environmental monitoring with some organisations hoping to use FCN guidance as justification to significantly reduce their environmental monitoring. However there was reports that this wouldn't be accepted by the accreditation body.
- 4.9. UKAS noted that organisations still need to manage the risks in their organisation rather than simply using the research and cease doing their environmental monitoring. Further conversations around this will be had offline with more discussions at the next meeting.
- 4.10. The chair suggested communication from Regulator would be useful to say what is he expecting from organisations. How do we demonstrate we are more pragmatic and risk-based towards undertaking this FSA.
- 4.11. UKAS noted they have a representative on the national validation group and will be working closely on this. Similar conversations have been had in that group. There will be a toolkit which will be produced to enable forces to adopt validation and UKAS will be part of those discussions that define what it is that forces need to demonstrate to adopt validations.
- 4.12. The aim is to schedule more in depth CAWG meeting soon.

5. Counter Terrorism Policing: Proposed Minimum Scope for FSA – INC 100

- 5.1. The chair of the Counter Terrorism group raised that it had previously been agreed that Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) would need an alternative minimum scope for FSA – INC 100 to that that has been agreed because the CSI activities which have been added to the agreed scope are not relevant to

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CTP as they do not ordinarily look for biometrics at scenes. The focus of their investigations are primarily to identify evidence of the offence.

- 5.2. The CT representative noted that the proposed alternative scope for CTP was previously agreed with the accreditation body for compliance with version 1 of the Code.
- 5.3. During the CAWG meeting it was mentioned that if an organisation undertakes the sub-activities listed as minimum scope then they could not declare them as infrequent. The representative noted that CTP do have capability to do those activities as some practitioners within the network are previous CSIs however they infrequently use those techniques. They noted that if the Regulator requires that such activities cannot be treated as infrequent, it would not be appropriate for CTP to include them on their schedule, as this would not represent good use of public funds. They stressed the need for a more efficient approach.
- 5.4. The CT representative outlined the proposed scope which includes recovery of evidence for subsequent examination in a laboratory. If they conducted any CSI activities at the scene they would declare non-compliance with the Code.
- 5.5. The representative raised that there needs to be consistency across the CTP network as they often work together on larger scale investigations. An alternative scope would give a baseline and consistency across the board so that the customer can be confident that the evidence they are providing is robust.
- 5.6. OFSR clarified that it has been agreed by the Regulator that if an organisation does not undertake any of the sub-activities outlined in the minimum scope then organisations do not need to have those on schedule. However these core sub-activities cannot be declared infrequently used.
- 5.7. The group noted UKAS also requires clarity on the agreed baseline for assessment and it was agreed that the issue would be taken forward in an offline discussion between the IESG Chair, OFSR, FSR and the CTP Chair.
- 5.8. The National Crime Agency (NCA) representative noted that they face similar challenges regarding footwear recovery, which is currently classed as

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infrequently used but will now be undertaking validation in line with the new approach.

Action 4: OFSR to arrange meeting between CTP rep, IESG chair, OFSR and the Regulator to discuss proposed alternative minimum scope for CTP for FSA - INC 100.

6. Subgroup Updates

Fire Investigation Subgroup

- 6.1. The chair of the FI Subgroup provided an update, noting that the group last met on 18 September 2025. Prior to the meeting, the Regulator issued a readiness survey to all fire and police chiefs aligned to the drafted milestone approach for Fire Investigation (FI) and Collision Investigation, intended to prompt consideration of SAI requirements and compliance planning.
- 6.2. A total of 68 organisations responded to the survey, comprising 36 fire and rescue services, 29 police forces, and 3 FSPs. All organisations indicating that they undertake FSA – INC 102 completed the survey. Non-responders were followed up, and this has since prompted additional returns.
- 6.3. While many respondents indicated they were progressing well against milestones 1 and 2 (competency, audit, and reporting), further analysis identified some misunderstanding regarding what the requirements entail.
- 6.4. It was agreed that additional guidance for the FI community is required, particularly on the interpretation of requirements, validation expectations, and clarifying Code expectations for organisations outsourcing services that form all or part of an FSA. It was noted that obtaining chief officer buy-in remains a challenge.
- 6.5. Common concerns across the community include the need for support with collaborative validation and establishing training and competency frameworks. Some of the national work underway through FSA – INC 100 in the CSI Technical Forum may therefore assist.
- 6.6. The chair noted that efforts are underway to re-establish a FI national technical forum, which had lapsed following changes in FCN provision.

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- 6.7. The interpretations and opinions workstream for FI has progressed in developing a probability-based reporting scale, with the intention of incorporating this into the FI-specific Interpretations and Opinions document.
- 6.8. The subgroup’s current focus remains on finalising the milestone document, ensuring the ordering reflects both relative risk and implementation complexity. Next steps include reviewing an early draft of the FI-specific requirements, with the group hopeful that FSA – INC 102 will be included in version 3 of the Code and preparing accordingly.
- 6.9. The group raised two areas for clarification by the Regulator:
- whether any mechanisms exist for enforcing compliance prior to FSA being included in the Code; and
 - whether FSA – INC 102 will be included in version 3, and the associated timescales.
- 6.10. The subgroup noted UKAS’s ability to support the Regulator through assurance visits linked to milestones without triggering accreditation, as agreed for FSA – INC 100, which may assist in establishing oversight mechanisms.
- 6.11. The group acknowledged ongoing challenges with funding and organisational responsibility, particularly the lack of clarity between police and fire services in some regions, and concerns about fragility in the FSP market should forces seek to outsource more FI work.
- 6.12. The subgroup will next meet on 23 February 2026.

Action 5: OFSR to circulate milestone approach document drafted for FSA - INC 101 and FSA - INC 102.

Covert Subgroup Update

- 6.13. The group received an update from the covert policing representative. Work is being aligned with the milestone approach, which is progressing well with the new approach considered broadly suitable for the area. Although covert policing remains out of scope at present, all techniques are being developed in a way that follows the milestone structure, enabling a straightforward transition should it be brought into scope in future.

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- 6.14. It was noted that the recovery of footwear will also be incorporated into this approach as it is deemed minimum scope for FSA – INC 100. No additional issues or updates were raised.

Collision Investigation Subgroup Update

- 6.15. The group chair provided an update noting that the Collision Investigation Subgroup met twice, in July and October 2025, working to progress development of the milestone approach. Feedback from the wider community and interoperability groups indicated that the original definition of FSA – INC 101 was too broad, which was affecting their ability to progress related work.
- 6.16. In response, the subgroup is considering a revised structure separating the FSA into scene/site activities, post scene activities, and analytical work. A questionnaire has been developed intended for consultation across both policing and non-policing practitioners. This has been shared internally, with further refinement before circulation with the community.
- 6.17. The consultation will be disseminated through police representatives to policing stakeholders and through non-policing representatives to the broader community, estimated at 300 - 400 practitioners who contribute to collision investigation work outside policing.
- 6.18. The subgroup remains focused on clarifying the FSA and FSA specific requirements, seeking to understand the community's preferred direction of travel before progressing further work.
- 6.19. Feedback regarding subgroup membership was noted, with the chair confirming that membership has been reviewed previously and remains balanced at present, though this will continue to be monitored as work progresses.
- 6.20. The chair noted an upcoming briefing session with OFSR early next month to support continued progress. A date for the next group meeting is to be confirmed.

Association of Forensic Science Providers (AFSP) Update

- 6.21. Work continues on moving scene going activities from ISO/IEC 17020 to ISO/IEC 17025, although the assessment route remains unclear. Providers are assuming this will take the form of an extension to scope under existing

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ISO/IEC17025 accreditation but there is still uncertainty. All AFSP providers are continuing work with UKAS to understand how migration to ISO/IEC 17025 will be managed in practice.

- 6.22. Representative from the AFSP Quality Group noted a similar position, describing the current situation as one of limbo. Providers have submitted the necessary AC4 and supporting documentation to UKAS to progress towards 17025 accreditation for scene services, but decisions remain pending while UKAS develops a consistent assessment approach. Providers are awaiting clarification on whether this is dependent on internal UKAS decision making or external guidance.
- 6.23. Most FSPs are maintaining ISO 17020 accreditation in the interim. Dave noted that their organisation had completed substantial internal work to demonstrate that service quality would not be adversely affected by moving to 17025, including a full gap analysis and formal explanation to UKAS of how scene services would continue to be managed. Their previous surveillance discussions indicated support from the lead assessor for the proposed approach, though the wider UKAS position is still being finalised.
- 6.24. UKAS representatives confirmed that assessment management teams are considering a united approach to extending scope from 17020 to 17025 and will provide updates following internal meetings. UKAS acknowledged the need for consistency and agreed to follow up with individual providers.
- 6.25. The group has produced a guidance document on body bag/packaging processing, which has undergone review by CSIs through the FCN, generating varied but constructive feedback. Pathology input has also been received with no major concerns identified. The document is considered ready for sign-off and has been shared with the IESG chair and the specialist AFSP groups, with final approval expected at the March AFSP meeting, after which the FCN will support wider distribution of version 1.
- 6.26. It was noted that a collaborative exercise was recently conducted for scene work which mimicked an ENFSI one that was based on a virtual crime scene and an item for examination. AFSP confirmed that such exercises may be shared more widely, with no intention to charge for participation; logistical

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arrangements for distribution and collation are under consideration. The ENFSI Scenes of Crime Group have also issued a note of interest for their collaborative exercise this year, involving a scene component and BPA element.

- 6.27. The AFSP have been invited to participate in the review of the SceneSafe booklet, which is now undergoing revision. The group is also developing a guidance document on presumptive testing used at scenes, intended to outline the pros and cons of available tests and potentially extend to semen and saliva testing. Collaboration with the BIO 201 group may be appropriate as this work progresses.

Action 6: OFSR to explore issues around transition from ISO/IEC 17020 to ISO/IEC 17025 for scene activities by FSPs.

Counter Terrorism Subgroup Update

- 6.28. The chair provided a brief update on activity within the Counter Terrorism (CT) subgroup. Although the CT network currently comprises five separate legal entities, the group is working collectively towards a shared approach in anticipation of potential future structural changes.
- 6.29. Work is underway to develop a corporate competence framework applicable across all CT organisations, reflecting the similarity of functions and the need for consistent standards. The subgroup will also be applying a risk based approach to contamination management and considering any validation requirements, with a commitment to sharing validation work across all five entities to avoid duplication and ensure efficiency. No further updates.

UKAS Update

- 6.30. The group received a written update from UKAS on staffing, assessment activity, and ongoing engagement with the community. UKAS reported recent and upcoming changes within the Assessment Manager team, with one manager leaving and two new managers joining during early 2026.
- 6.31. Assessments continue as normal, including extensions to scope, surveillance assessments and full reassessments of inspection activities. UKAS has

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scheduled the first assessment against the requirements of FSR Code of Practice version 2 and the FSA - INC 100 Specific Requirements.

- 6.32. UKAS continues to support the forensic community through participation in IESG, the IESG Focus Group, CAWG and other sector forums. UKAS is also undertaking a readiness “dry run” against the requirements of milestone 1 for FSA – INC 100, with outcomes and learning to be shared with IESG, CAWG and the OFSR to support the wider implementation of milestone reviews.
- 6.33. Training and development of Technical Assessors is ongoing and will be further shaped by lessons from the first version 2 assessment. Technical Assessors continue to receive updates on areas relevant to incident scene examination, including validation, verification and anti-contamination. UKAS also held a forensic technical assessor workshop in December 2025.
- 6.34. UKAS reminded members that updates on publications, including those out for consultation, are available via the UKAS subscription service.

7. Decisions and next steps

- 7.1. The group noted the process map outlining the next steps for milestone 1 for FSA - INC 100 and members were asked to provide any outstanding feedback on the milestone approach as soon as possible. If no further feedback is received within the next few days, it will be assumed that there are no additional comments for the Regulator to consider. The Regulator intends to issue the SAI communication document shortly, and members will be notified when this is published so it can be widely shared.
- 7.2. Members confirmed there were no further next step decisions required at this stage. Key work ahead includes progressing actions already noted and supporting the OFSR as needed.

8. AOB

- 8.1. An update was provided regarding the recently published Interpretations and Opinions Guidance FSR-GUI-0004. The group discussed the development of FSA - INC 100 specific guidance, which will now be progressed following publication of the main document. The draft FSA - INC 100 document will be

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reviewed against the final guidance and then submitted to the Regulator. The OFSR confirmed that discipline specific interpretation documents will be published separately and at various stages depending on progress within each working group.

- 8.2. An update was also provided regarding staffing within the OFSR. An organogram is being finalised and may be shared to clarify roles and points of contact for the community.

Action 7: OFSR to share organogram for OFSR with members.

- 8.3. The group reiterated the need for guidance on declarations for FSA - INC 100. Members were asked to flag any areas requiring further support or clarification once version 3 of the overarching guidance is published, to assist the Regulator's Office with developing INC specific guidance.

- 8.4. Chair thanked members and closed the meeting. The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

Action 8: OFSR to schedule next meeting.

Annex A

Representatives present:

Chair - Apologies sent. The Forensic Capability Network (FCN) representative attended as deputy for this meeting.

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)