



# Forensic Science Regulator

## **Fingerprint Quality Standards Specialist Group meeting.**

**Note of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 in OSFR,  
Birmingham, and Online via Teams**

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

- 1.1.1. The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending / joining via Teams. Attendees of the meeting are available at Annex A.

### **2. Review of Minutes**

- 2.1.1. The minutes of the previous meeting in April were reviewed and a minor amendment was noted which OFSR representative will action.
- 2.1.2. The OFSR representative noted some inaccurate wording around the proposed 'guide to the assessment process' at paragraph 3.3. That is beyond this group's remit. OFSR representative to revisit this wording. Minutes to be published following that revision."

### **3. Action Review**

- 3.1.1. The action schedule was reviewed, for updates please refer to the action schedule.
- 3.1.2. During the action review a new action was noted for the FCN representative. ILCs are difficult to extend, the FCN representative is trying to put something together. A new action was noted to provide an update at the next FQSSG

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meeting, proposals around ILCs going forward and the mechanism to engage with and meet the needs of the fingerprint community.

**Action 1:** The FCN representative to provide an update at the next FQSSG meeting, proposals around ILCs going forward and the mechanism to engage with and meet the needs of the fingerprint community

#### **4. FQSSG Workplan Update**

4.1.1. The OFSR representative shared the FQSSG Workplan on screen. Each area of the plan was reviewed and discussed.

4.1.2. Interpretation issues were discussed. The OFSR representative noted some inaccurate wording around the proposed 'guide to the assessment process' at paragraph 3.3. That is beyond this group's remit. The OFSR representative advised it will be covered in the Regulator Conference on 09/10, and outlined the plan.

4.1.3. The OFSR representative suggested the FQSSG pull together a list of questions for the sub-group to come back and present. The OFSR representative will give this consideration; it was noted as an action at this meeting.

#### **4.2. Standards**

4.2.1. The OFSR representative advised that work has been ongoing on the schedule to review the FSA specific requirements and it's at a good stage to talk about later in the meeting, the intention is that it is included v2 of the code, the code has not yet been laid out to parliament. The terminology document will support the work, but it needs a lot of re-working at the current time.

#### **4.3. AFIS / Searching Algorithm**

4.3.1. A lengthy discussion took place around AFIS / searching algorithm. This work is in progress, there are complexities around the algorithm and work is ongoing to look at how we can make it work to solve the issues. The Chair expressed it is important for UKAS to be involved in these discussions, the UKAS representative suggested this may require further discussion outside of the meeting being conscious of the amount of time spent discussing it today.

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**4.4. PDS Fingerprint Capability**

4.4.1. The PDS Fingerprint capability was discussed, and the MPS representative advised that central validation of PDS has been completed, the review of release 6 software has been updated and is due to be shared. It will be down to the individual organisations to decide how they wish to approach it.

**4.5. Quality and Scientific Issues**

4.5.1. The Chair expressed the view that this area appears to be 'researching and science research'. A discussion followed. The group agreed there are various collaborative workstreams ongoing e.g. with universities, the MPS representative advises she supervises research students and has just got a contract to look at AI.

4.5.2. The group agreed AI is going to impact on forensics, however in the context of FQSSG it was suggested that the group only becomes involved when there are regulatory issues associated with it.

4.5.3. At the moment the schedule work and FSA specific requirements is the main focus. It was agreed that any development or update under Quality and Scientific Issues should be brought to the group and that AI will need to be discussed more going forward.

**5. Accreditation Update Schedule**

**5.1. FQSSG-20240807-04**

5.1.1. The group reviewed the Schedule of Accreditation, and a lengthy discussion took place. The Chair asked if we need the document to be as prescriptive as it is at the moment and do we need to make it more obvious that it is guidance, in 2-years-time the picklist will be different. It was agreed that once it is signed off it will ideally need to be reviewed annually and the UKAS representative advised it will be included in the master schedule so it will be reviewed.

5.1.2. The OFSR representative advised there was an issue of granularity in the UK schedule and a disconnect between what was on the schedule and what people

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were actually thinking they were doing. Therefore, the Regulator set a task to see if we could reduce the level of granularity if not remove it entirely.

5.1.3. A discussion took place around friction ridge detail and what forces need to do, and the required communication strategy as they will want to know what it means to them and what they are going to have to do, the MPS representative expressed the view that whilst it is not specifically for FQSSG to undertake, there is an onus on us to help the community to understand what the changes are. The OFSR representative advised he has something drafted and it's one to run past the Regulator.

5.1.4. The Schedule of Accreditation is a UKAS owned document; it is not a document that will be consulted on per-se the Regulator cannot request a consultation.

**5.2. Documents FQSSG-20240807-05 & FQSSG-20240807-06**

5.2.1. The group discussed reviewed both documents and several changes were agreed which The OFSR representative made during the meeting.

5.2.2. (Due to the detail being discussed and the meeting over-running, it was agreed for a number of colleagues to leave the meeting after the lunch break.)

**5.3. FQSSG-20240807-07**

5.3.1. This document was reviewed and discussed The OFSR representative advised there isn't much that can be done with it at the moment, he has started to do some work on the document and he intends to reformat it. During the discussion it was agreed that FEL or any other business area processes that are not directly relevant to fingerprints should be removed. Additionally, the group agreed that there needs to be clear definition of what the document is intended to do.

**6. Next Steps – Consultation**

**6.1. FQSSG-20240807-08**

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- 6.1.1. The OFSR representative advised that previously Regulator consultation has included free text sections, which has resulted in excess of 1200 comments to view and trying to extract appropriate information has been problematic and he would like to try to group responses into relevant themes.
- 6.1.2. The group discussed meaningful consultation and it was suggested that a webinar or series of webinars be run, this will give an opportunity to explain what the consultation is for and why it is important, the document could be circulated, the webinar takes place and then a period of time is allowed for people to consider the content and come back with any questions or feedback, to try and capture it all in a written format will take too long and we need to elicit the right responses. This would be a new format and would be more dynamic than what has been done previously with the added benefit of being recorded. The OFSR representative expressed his view that this was a good suggestion but that consideration of timeframes would need to be given as it will be a challenge. The OFSR representative will need to discuss this with the Regulator. the UKAS representative suggested the Chair is also present at the discussion with the Regulator.

**Action 2:** The OFSR representative and Chair discuss consultation and the suggestion of webinars with the Regulator.

- 6.1.3. Implementation was discussed and the UKAS representative confirmed UKAS are happy to work with the group but she would need to understand the timeframes etc. GB advised transition is always a worry for all forces, about what they need to do in the interim and how quickly they need to get it done. The UKAS representative advised UKAS will read across what bureaux already have but they would need time to do it once consultation is published, nothing can be actioned until it is published. The group discussed 'read across' or extension to scope, and the UKAS representative outlined the differences and that there may be associated charges, she will discuss this with colleagues and update the group.

**Action 3:** UKAS representative to discuss 'read across' and extension to scope plus associated charges with colleagues and update the FQSSG.

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**7. Interpretation Group – Conference**

7.1.1. An update in respect of the work of the interpretation group was given, the group agreed that this would present a significant change and subsequent challenge for the fingerprint community.

**8. AOB**

8.1.1. No matters were raised under AOB. The Chair closed the meeting.

## **Annex A**

### **Attended in person**

Chair

Fingerprint Associates

UKAS

MPS

FCN

### **Attended via Teams**

OFSR

RSSS Yorkshire & Humber (x2)

Northumbria Police

National Fingerprint Office

Home Office Biometrics (HOB) (x2)

### **Apologies**

FCN

DSTL

GMP

Home Office

UKAS

PDS