



Forensic Science Regulator

Fingerprint Quality Standards Specialist Group

Note of the meeting held on 13th January 2025

OFSR Birmingham & 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 August 2024 were reviewed agreed as a true record of the meeting.

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 updates the representative from FCN provided an update to action #1 (Aug 2024) relating to proposals around ILCs going forward and the mechanism to engage with and meet the demands of the fingerprint community.
- 3.1.3. The FCN representative has drafted a paper setting out background around the current ILC that some Bureaux participate in, and where the gaps are. Ten Bureaux currently take part in a quite comprehensive ILC that the MPS and others are part of. The next steps are to do more nationally to look at how it can be taken forward. A discussion took place and it was agreed to go through the IRM (or similar) to understand which other Bureaux may be interested.

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4. FQSSG Workplan Update

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

4.2. AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) / Searching Algorithm

4.2.1. A discussion took place regarding AFIS and the searching algorithm, representative from MPS provided an update on the Futures Group she has set up, the work is in progress and the Group will consider and review AFIS / Searching Algorithm. The group are looking at what is the optimum search method and there is a further meeting in February 2025.

4.3. Interpretation Issues

4.3.1. OFSR representative advised there was a workshop as part of the FSR Conference in Leeds to discuss interpretation issues. The FSR has advised he wants to explore approaches to the term inconclusive. Planning is progressing for another workshop in March / April. OSFR representative advised it is a challenging piece of work; some progress has been made and it is subject to a future meeting for further discussion with an anticipated phased approach to it.

4.4. Fingerprint Capability

4.4.1. The F/P Capability work remains ongoing.

4.5. Quality & Scientific Issues

4.5.1. MPS representative has shared documentation that will be used for CPD, discussion is ongoing as to how they can be shared with the community, as an interim they've been placed on the Knowledge Hub. Whilst not everyone is keen on the Knowledge Hub there isn't a better platform for sharing at the moment. A discussion followed and MPS representative confirmed the Knowledge Hub and documents will be launched at the next IRM.

5. Accreditation Schedule Update

5.1. OFSR representative advised the schedule has been agreed, there is a meeting on 28/29th this month to continue to talk about the launch and the next steps. The launch will be prior to version 2 of the FSR Code being released, with the

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schedule being amended slightly to account for where the gaps are, so a staged approach. Stage one, transferring under the current scope. The OFSR representative confirmed he will draft a couple of schedules which he'll circulate prior to the next meeting, so that the group can 'get a feel for it'. There are still questions about the transition. A discussion followed.

6. Next Steps

6.1. Implementation/transition - FCN Survey responses

- 6.1.1. The FSA Survey Response presentation was shared on screen with the group. DT gave an overview of the slides and a discussion took place, work remains ongoing.
- 6.1.2. MPS representative raised concerns around how ground truth data adjustments are being understood by the community in order to incorporate all Friction Ridge Detail (FRD). A discussion followed.

7. ESDA/FEL

- 7.1.1. The group discussed the issue of ESDA (Electrostatic Detection Apparatus) in FEL (Fingerprint Enhancement Laboratories) settings. A Power Point presentation, detailing the results of a survey conducted by TVP into ESDA use in FEL settings was circulated with the meeting papers.
- 7.1.2. Not all Forces use ESDA however some Forces do and believe it is a beneficial tool. The view was expressed that to accredit the ESDA process may be 'unnecessary' and an expense that is dis-proportionate, and it was suggested that there is a need for a framework that is controlled and proportionate. The Chair is a supporter of ESDA and gave an example where it had proved crucial in a murder case; representative from Northumbria Police advised that they did not have any data to suggest how many high-profile jobs have used ESDA to the benefit of the case, so it is not simple to say that ESDA makes a positive contribution; the representative from the MPS advised that their force had stopped using ESDA due to accreditation and the cost of validation and calibration. Following discussion the member from the OSFR advised he would go back to the contact at TVP regarding evidence and value of why ESDA is still

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beneficial in FEL and investigations, and further consideration to accreditation of the process or a framework arrangement.

7.2. **Action 1:** OFSR to liaise with TVP regarding ESDA

8. Updates

8.1. Police Digital Service (PDS) Capability

8.1.1. The Chair advised that YatH are intending to be early adopters of the PDS F/P Capability and UKAS representative visited to talk through the system etc. The Chair confirmed he anticipates it will be an extension to scope, even though the method hasn't changed, it's the way we undertake the method that has changed, so we have to go through the process. YatH intend to go live as an unaccredited process initially, with the declaration. Stakeholders have been liaised with, so basically, we are doing everything we are meant to except we have not been formally signed off by UKAS. CPS are aware and they have asked for a copy of the declaration. The Chair confirmed discussion has taken place with the OFSR and they are supportive of it, he anticipates 'go live' will be in March 2025 with accreditation around October. A discussion with the group followed.

8.2. AFIS Algorithm

8.2.1. Representative from Home Office Biometrics Programme (HOB) joined the meeting and provided an update on Strategic Matcher. Work is ongoing to deliver stage one which is the 'mark to print searching'. There have been some delays for 'go live' but it is very close, and there have been issues with data migration which is the main obstacle. An early parallel run is due to commence on the 29 January 2025, with volunteer Bureaux. There are approx. four million records to migrate over but there is more stability in the technology now which was an issue before Christmas. The aim is to undertake the main parallel run towards the end of February, which is anticipated to take four weeks, after which a full 'go live' will be considered.

8.2.2. In terms of accreditation HOB have been working closely with the MPS representative and colleagues (HOB expressed thanks to MPS rep and their team) and they've come up with a good approach and options to support

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Bureaux. HOB representative outlined a number of meetings they have scheduled over the next few weeks to discuss this further.

- 8.2.3. HOB representative confirmed they will provide a full plan and timings so that everyone knows how much time they have and it can be worked through properly.

9. AOB

- 9.1.1. The Chair advised that he will retire on 31 January 2025 and he will therefore step down as chair of FQSSG after today's meeting. The representative from Northumbria Police will take over the chair of the FQSSG with agreement from the FSR.
- 9.1.2. The incoming Chair advised that whilst they are not a fingerprint expert, and had highlighted this as a possible concern, they have been reassured that they can effectively chair the meeting attended by experienced fingerprint professionals without being an expert themselves.
- 9.1.3. A number of colleagues present expressed thanks to the outgoing Chair for the work they have done over many years, stating it has been a pleasure to work with him on a number of groups. The group wished him the very best for his retirement.

Annex A

Representatives present:

Attended in person

Chair

RSSS Yorkshire & Humber (YatH)(x2)

Metropolitan Police Service

Greater Manchester Police

UKAS (x1)

OFSR

FCN

Attended via Teams

Northumbria Police

DSTL

National Fingerprint Office

Fingerprint Associates

RSSS Yorkshire & Humber

Home Office Biometrics Programme

Apologies

UKAS (x1)

FCN

Home Office

Home Office

PDS