



Forensic Science Regulator

Incident Examination Specialist Group (IESG)

Note of the meeting held on 24th March 2026 at 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham and via video conference.

1. Welcome, Introductions & Action Log

1.1. The Chair led on introductions to the tenth meeting of the Incident Examination Specialist Group (IESG). A list of attendees by organisation is available in Annex [A].

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

Action [2] (January 2026) – Office of Forensic Science Regulator (OFSR) to share letter sent from the Regulator to Senior Accountable Individuals (SAIs) of organisations who undertake Forensic Science Activity (FSA) – INC 100. This has been circulated with members. Action closed.

Action [3] (January 2026) – Members to feedback on FSA – INC 100 Process Map for Milestone Approach to Compliance. No feedback received. Action closed.

Action [4] (January 2026) – OFSR to arrange meeting to discuss proposed alternative minimum scope for Counter Terrorism Policing for FSA – INC 100. Meeting held and letter has been sent to SAI of CTP from the Regulator. Issue resolved. Action closed.

Action [5] (January 2026) – OFSR to share draft FSA – INC 101 and 102 milestone approach document with the group. This has been circulated to members. Action closed.

Action [6] (January 2026) – OFSR to explore issues raised by Association of Forensic Science Providers (AFSP) representatives around transition

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from ISO/IEC 17020 to ISO/IEC 17025 for scene activities. Meeting has been held, OFSR took away actions. Action remains open, for update at next meeting.

Action [7] (January 2026) – OFSR to share organogram for OFSR with the group. Circulated. 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 group has submitted recommendations for Issue 2 of the document. This has been shared with the Compliance Assurance Working Group (CAWG) for feedback. OFSR reviewing feedback. Action remains open.

Action [1] (April 2025) – OFSR to ensure declaration guidance reflects transition of Forensic Science Providers (FSPs) from ISO/IEC 17020 to 17025 for scene activities. OFSR representatives noted specific guidance for incident scene is being developed for inclusion in FSR-GUI-0001 with the commission of an INC 100 declarations group. Action to remain open.

Action [1] – OFSR to send previous meeting minutes (January 2026) for publication. No further feedback received from the group.

2. OFSR Update on FSA – INC 100

2.1. The OFSR provided an update covering:

- Progress on the milestone approach for FSA – INC 100
- Development of UKAS assurance visits
- The forthcoming Regulators Notification amending compliance timelines
- Future workplan for the Incident Scene portfolio and related FSAs

FSA – INC 100 Milestone Approach Updates

2.2. The OFSR noted updates to the requirements for meeting milestone 3, as outlined in the letter and associated annexes sent to SAIs by the Regulator.

2.3. The updated milestone requirements are set out in Annex [A] (Milestone Requirements), and the minimum scope activities are detailed in Part A of Annex [B] (FSA – INC 100 Scope Activity List).

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2.4. To meet milestone three:

‘Organisations must demonstrate that all sub-activities in the minimum scope (Part A of Annex B) are valid/fit for purpose across all crime types where they are undertaken. Organisations may expand their scope to include additional sub-activities (Part B of Annex B), but must ensure appropriate validation/verification processes are in place before declaring compliance for these activities.’

2.5. The OFSR provided some clarity on the interpretation of infrequently used methods. Core activities listed in Part A of Annex [B] cannot be considered ‘infrequently used’ and must be included in the minimum scope if the organisation undertakes them. However, specific methods or techniques (e.g. using wet powders for ridge detail recovery) may be classed as ‘infrequently used methods’, provided Code requirements (as outlined in section 24 of the Code) are still met.

2.6. OFSR representatives explained that the assurance model for milestone 2 may differ to that of milestone 1 which is being considered when determining potential deadlines.

2.7. It was emphasised that dates for milestones 2 and 3 remain under review by Regulator.

Development of Milestone Assurance Model

Milestone One

2.8. A dry-run assurance visit was conducted by UKAS with a volunteer force in January. Representatives from the Forensic Capability Network (FCN) and OFSR also attended.

2.9. The dry-run focussed on the training and competency requirements set out in version 2 of the Code (sections 22 and 90) and included:

- Pre-visit document submission and gap analysis

2.10. A one day on-site ‘assessment’ with additional work on either side.

- Review of documents across all sites/roles in the forensic unit
- No live witnessing.

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- 2.11. Work continues on the administrative outputs of the assessment. UKAS intends to produce a summary report for submission to the Regulator. UKAS and OFSR are meeting regularly to finalise the approach and obtain formal sign-off from the Regulator.
- 2.12. Members asked when milestone visits will begin. It was acknowledged that this is still to be determined, though the approach for milestone one visits are close to finalisation.
- 2.13. The group discussed whether milestone assessments could be combined with an organisation's ISO/IEC 17020 surveillance visit where accreditation has been already maintained.
- 2.14. UKAS noted that while additional time would still be required for activities such as the gap analysis, and that the milestone assessment remains a distinct process, efficiency will be sought where possible.

Discussion: Expectations for meeting milestone one

- 2.15. Members discussed points raised during a recent Compliance Assurance Working Group (CAWG) meeting regarding the Regulators expectations for milestone one.
- 2.16. Some members felt that expectations had now shifted and believed milestone one required only the implementation of a corporate competency framework, with staff still progressing through it.
- 2.17. Concerns were raised that if the expectation requires all practitioners to have completed baseline competency by April 2027, this may be unachievable for some organisations.
- 2.18. Larger collaborations highlighted capacity and resourcing challenges, noting that operational demand limits the ability to release staff for baseline assessments.
- 2.19. It was recognised that staff sickness or leave will always mean that not all practitioners will have been through the framework however, milestone one is fundamentally about managing the risk of practitioner competence, with an expectation of strong evidence of competency for deployed staff - not simply having documented frameworks.

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- 2.20. The group suggested opportunities for collaborative assessments across organisations to manage capacity, noting that some sharing already occurs through the CSI Technical Forum Training & Competency workstream.
- 2.21. The group was reminded that its role is to advise the Regulator on risk, not to determine operational feasibility noting that the Regulator is unlikely to support deadline extensions given the years of preparation for Code compliance and accreditation.
- 2.22. The OFSR noted an action to clarify expectations for milestone one, regarding implementation of a corporate competency framework, with CAWG. Any clarification will also be fed back to IESG.

ACTION [2] – OFSR to feedback on Regulators expectations for milestone one

Milestone Two

- 2.23. It was agreed that the requirements for milestone two differ to the other milestone requirements.
- 2.24. OFSR noted that early discussions suggest assurance of meeting milestone 2 may not require a site visit, with the idea of a table-top evidence review being explored. This would focus on:
- 2.25. Organisations approach to proportionality in terms of anti-contamination and note-taking
- Efficiency gains: Reviewing the transition from version 1 to version 2 of the Code
- 2.26. UKAS are unlikely to assess proportionality therefore it may be that Regulator – SAI dialogue will be important.
- 2.27. It was raised whether more proportionate note-taking standards must be implemented and embedded, or simply defined by the proposed deadline for milestone two.
- 2.28. OFSR clarified that this milestone is more for the organisations benefit, as proportionality drives efficiency. The expectation is an evidenced organisational change, but not necessarily 100% adoption by the milestone date.

Milestone Three

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- 2.29. The OFSR representatives noted that the assessment model for milestone 3 is in very early development.
- 2.30. Work has been commissioned to define scope, depth of assurance and evidence expectations.

Regulators Notification

- 2.31. There will be a forthcoming notification issued under section 9 of the Forensic Science Regulator Act 2021 to formally change the statutory requirement in version 2 of the Code – currently ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation by April 2027.
- 2.32. The new requirement will be meeting the requirements of milestone 1 by April 2027.
- 2.33. The notification will include an overview of the milestone approach, the updated requirements and timeframes for organisations to achieve milestones.
- 2.34. The associated annexes [A] and [B] will be incorporated into the next issue of FSR-GUI-0006 Incident Scene Examination.

Updates to FSR-GUI Documents

- 2.35. FSR-GUI-0001: Declaring compliance with the Code of practice, version 3, has been published but did not include the expected specific guidance for FSA – INC 100. The OFSR are commissioning a working group to develop this guidance which will be incorporated into the next version of this document.
- 2.36. FSR-GUI-0006 Incident Scene Examination: The OFSR have drafted some proposed amendments for Issue 2 which includes the milestone approach and associated annexes [A] and [B]. These changes are being reviewed by CAWG.
- 2.37. FSR-GUI-0016 Crime scene DNA: anti-contamination: The OFSR is reviewing all feedback from CAWG representatives on the suggested amendments made by the CSI Technical Forum Anti-contamination group.
- 2.38. Updates to these documents will come through IESG for sign off.

CAWG Framework Implementation

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- 2.39. An update was provided on the implementation of a new framework introduced through CAWG. The framework focuses on improving visibility of regional progress against agreed milestones.
- 2.40. Under the approach, each regional representative is responsible for the forces and organisations they represent. Ahead of each meeting the regional reps will contact their regions to obtain updates on progress against milestones 1, 2 and 3, taking into account each organisation's starting position. The organisations will RAG rate themselves in terms of meeting milestone deadlines and update on progress and provide any risks and blockers.
- 2.41. It was emphasised that this information is not intended for regulatory enforcement purposes. Instead, it is designed to help CAWG understand overall progress, identify where organisations may be struggling or disengaged, and enable appropriate support to be signposted via technical forums such as the OFSR, FCN, NPCC Quality Boards and other relevant routes.
- 2.42. Any information received will be shared with the OFSR, which will retain ownership and bring key themes back to CAWG. Forces can be confident that their responses will be treated confidentially, and that no identifying information will be shared with the group.
- 2.43. Feedback received during the latest CAWG meeting has informed several refinements to the framework, and it will be circulated for updates as soon as possible.

3. BCH/UKAS: Overview of ETS assessment for compliance with version 2 of the Code

Context & Scope

- 3.1. Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (BCH) have applied for extension to scope (ETS) assessment for ISO/IEC 17020 and to meet full compliance with version 2 of the Code.
- 3.2. In terms of starting position, BCH have maintained ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation for all six sites with a broad technical scope. It was also relevant to note that they had had a recent surveillance visit from UKAS.

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- 3.3. UKAS were therefore able to draw on existing knowledge and confidence in BCH's quality framework and operations.

Assessment Overview

- 3.4. A full three day assessment was undertaken which was solely case-file focused and involved no live witnessing.
- 3.5. Approximately 14-16 cases were reviewed across all six bases which covered a wide range of scenarios:
- Lone CSI attendance
 - Complex multi-scene major crime (with Crime Scene Manager (CSM) involvement)
 - Scenes from a variety of crime types including serious and major crime
- 3.6. One case was selected at random from the day of the assessment which demonstrated confidence in routine practice and proportionality

Key Learning: Importance of gap analysis

- 3.7. It was agreed that the gap analysis was critical to the success and efficiency of the assessment as it:
- Clearly mapped differences between v1 and v2 of the Code
 - Enabled assessors to focus directly on the specific requirements
- 3.8. Demonstrated the changes were documented, trained and embedded in operational practice
- 3.9. Representatives from both BCH and UKAS agreed that the gap analysis should form part of the assessment evidence bundle for forensic units.

Assessment method & reporting

- 3.10. The assessment was conducted centrally using case files with some targeted questions to operational staff when needed.
- 3.11. It was noted that UKAS reports are structured to:
- List each case reviewed
- 3.12. Show coverage across sites, activities, crime types and roles

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- 3.13. Set out prior confidence from accreditation history, evidence of implementation and specific changes required for v2 Code compliance.
- 3.14. In relation to differing roles, BCH clarified that their Crime Scene Coordinators (CSCs) do not undertake FSA under INC 100 and therefore sit outside of forensic scene management as defined in the Code. This has required a change in mindset for staff, as forensic scene management responsibility rests with the Crime Scene Managers (CSMs) and Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs). CSCs work primarily with Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) in a coordination role. It was noted that this may differ from other forensic units.

Findings & outcomes

- 3.15. BCH were given a number of findings which were all recommendations rather than mandatory actions. Outcome of the assessment is to be confirmed.
- 3.16. Case reviews demonstrated proportionate note-taking, clear deployment rationale, evidence capture and upload within realistic timescales.
- 3.17. It was agreed that review of comparable crime types and horizontal auditing was a key strength.

Areas identified for refinement

- 3.18. The assessment highlighted potential issues needing further clarity:
- Clause 90.9.2 (alternative locations) – wording not sufficiently clear.
 - Requirements around on-site monitoring timeframes for forensic scene management
- 3.19. It was agreed that these areas may benefit from further guidance or revision in a future version of the Code

Key Takeaways

- 3.20. It was agreed that internal quality management remains essential, with UKAS assessments capturing a snapshot in time. Organisations should already know their own position.
- 3.21. Collaboration significantly supported readiness and BCH representative shared willingness to share materials and learning with others.

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- 3.22. BCH representative highlighted that the milestones approach is a vehicle, not mandatory and that organisations may move directly to meeting full Code compliance if they are able to.

4. General Updates

OFSR

- 4.1. Version 3 of the FSR-GUI-0001 Declarations guidance and FSR-GUI-0004 Interpretation & Opinions guidance have now be published. A webinar on interpretation and opinions took place on the 11th March.
- 4.2. The principle scientific lead for the Biology portfolio will be leaving the OFSR next month. Whilst recruitment takes place, the scientific lead of the Digital portfolio will be overseeing Biology.

UKAS

- 4.3. There have been some changes in UKAS assessment management staffing in early 2026.
- 4.4. Assessments continue to be undertaken with extensions to scope, surveillance and reassessment of inspection activities taking place.
- 4.5. UKAS has undertaken the first assessment against the requirements of the Code version 2 and FSA specific requirements for INC 100.
- 4.6. UKAS is supporting reviews and updates to the community through interaction with IESG, IESG Focus Group, CAWG and presentations at BCH.
- 4.7. UKAS has completed a “dry run” readiness review against the requirements of the milestone 1 in January 2026 – the outcome and development of this is being developed into a formal process with the OFSR.
- 4.8. Transition for Section 5A and Friction Ridge Detail against the Code v2 is being managed and progressing.
- 4.9. Technical Assessors continue to be updated with developments that affect FSA - INC 100 (validation / verification, anti-contamination etc) and outcomes of the assessment to the Code v2 that took place recently.

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- 4.10. Reminder that it is possible to subscribe to receive updates on publications (including those that are out for consultation) via the UKAS website <https://www.ukas.com/subscribe/> (these updates tend to be monthly)
- 4.11. A new version of the ISO/IEC 17020 standard is in development but has not yet been formally released. UKAS is undertaking preparatory internal work, with timings yet to be confirmed.
- 4.12. UKAS has recently undertaken three ISO/IEC 17025 “testing at scene” laboratory assessments: two digital applications and one specialist presumptive test to be conducted at scenes. This represents a marked increase in activity (from none to three within a two-week period). UKAS will review learning from this activity and consider whether this can be cascaded more widely to the community.

FCN

- 4.13. The FCN delivery plan for 2026-27 has been developed through NPCC governance, led primarily via the forensic portfolio and is expected to be finalised in the coming weeks.
- 4.14. Input has been considered from sub-portfolios and boards including Quality, Marketplace, CSI, Fingerprints and related groups. Forces also had the opportunity to submit requests via their forensic leads.
- 4.15. The delivery plan retains flexibility to respond to emerging areas (e.g. fire investigation).
- 4.16. FCN continues to offer informal compliance support visits which can be in person or online. These are not formal UKAS assessments and aimed to support forces in assessing readiness ahead of accreditation activity.
- 4.17. There have been limited CSI visits to date though increased activity is anticipated with the implementation of the milestone approach.
- 4.18. The CSI technical forum anti-contamination working group management position paper has been circulated. Feedback from forces and UKAS have been incorporated into a more concise, focussed version. A final review is underway prior to sign off.

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- 4.19. Forces are reminded to continue submitting anti-contamination non-conformances to FCN to enable trend monitoring and inform future updates.
- 4.20. The validation tracker has been reviewed and improved. Validations continue to be held and shared via the FCN Knowledge Hub.
- 4.21. A draft milestone 1 gap analysis checklist has been circulated and feedback has been positive. Deadline for feedback is the 31 March with planned circulation thereafter to support forces. Care is being taken to avoid conflict with Regulator or UKAS documentation.
- 4.22. The National Training and Competency Guidance booklet (version 2) has been circulated for comment. Feedback requested by 31 March with reissue planned for April.
- 4.23. FCN has completed a Scenesafe assurance visit in March which focused on:
- Areas of community concern
- 4.24. Previous non-conformances
- Contingency and process improvements
- A report is expected within the next 1-2 months.
- 4.25. Supply chain resilience risks have been recognised, particularly given market concentration. FCN are engaging with supplies on contingency stock and with Blue Light Commercial to consider alternative provision.
- 4.26. FCN has been asked to take forward redevelopment of the Crime Scene Handbook under NPCC governance. Governance and approval will be managed via the CSI technical forum.
- 4.27. FCN will continue to support guidance development in coordination with the Regulator, UKAS and national groups.

Association of Forensic Science Providers (AFSP)

- 4.28. There has been no substantial change in the overall position across the AFSP community.
- 4.29. All FSPs continue to maintain ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation for scene work as an interim arrangement.

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- 4.30. Surveillance assessments are ongoing or scheduled with most providers having now completed or received surveillance dates.
- 4.31. Discussions continue at AFSP governance level with no material change in direction reported.
- 4.32. UKAS is understood to be working toward a consistent national approach, though no formal clarification has yet been issued.
- 4.33. The current holding position is beginning to have operational impacts, particularly:
- 4.34. Training of new staff, where uncertainty over future standards risks inefficiency or duplication.
- 4.35. Progression of additional accreditation areas (e.g. firearm scenes), which are paused pending clarity on the move toward ISO/IEC 17025 for scene services.
- 4.36. The anticipated transition is understood to be not a direct transition, but a separate assessment under a new standard and unlikely to result in significant change to service delivery, only to the applicable accreditation framework.
- 4.37. Clarification on this position sits currently with the Regulator and a communication is expected once alignment is confirmed. An outstanding action remains on the IESG action log, with expectations that the position will be clarified before the next meeting.
- 4.38. AFSP are hoping to sign off their guidance document for body processing at scenes therefore this should be released in the near future.

Covert Working Group

- 4.39. During the gap analysis of Code v2 exclusions, it was identified that references are made to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 Part 2, whereas a significant proportion of covert activity undertaken by forces falls under RIPA Part 3. The omission of Part 3 was noted as potentially significant, as it may not fully reflect the scope of covert forensic activity.
- 4.40. The group recognised that this issue requires further exploration and discussion, including engagement with relevant stakeholders, to confirm whether Part 3 activity should be explicitly referenced. OFSR noted that this

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would present an opportunity to consider inclusion within the next version of the Code, should it be deemed appropriate.

- 4.41. The Covert Working Group holds guidance (not a national framework) on training and competency requirements for covert activity. This guidance sets out minimum expectations while allowing forces to align to local frameworks. Developed in 2024, it was noted as being due for review alongside other covert documentation subject to annual review.
- 4.42. Progress within the group has been impacted by reduced membership of the Covert Working Group, limiting capacity to progress related work.

Counter Terrorism Working Group

- 4.43. No substantive updates were provided.
- 4.44. CT representative confirmed that scope clarification has now been resolved, with agreement reached and no further discussion required. Appreciation was expressed for the clarity achieved on scope.

5. Reframing the IESG

Version 3 of the Code

- 5.1. The Chair introduced the agenda item on reframing IESG, noting that FSA - INC 100 had been a large focus of the group previously and that, going forward, this work would need to be managed primarily through CAWG, with IESG focusing on key escalations rather than detailed decision-making.
- 5.2. The Chair noted that attention will still need to be maintained on version 3 of the Code, ensuring that emerging issues or required changes are identified and addressed as development progresses, including any implications arising from FSA - INC 100.
- 5.3. The Chair confirmed that the Regulator intends to bring all FSAs not currently enforced by the Code into version 3 of the Code which includes both collision investigation and fire investigation.
- 5.4. The Chair acknowledged that while fire investigation is expected to be relatively straightforward from a governance perspective, albeit with practical work

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required to define specific requirements for the FSA, collision investigation was acknowledged as significantly more complex. This complexity arises from overlap with existing FSAs and work already addressed within other parts of the Code, meaning further work will be required before there is clarity on the structure of FSA – INC 101 and scope.

- 5.5. It was noted that a standalone FSA for fire investigation is anticipated and is not expected to place substantial additional burden on IESG. However, collision investigation remains under discussion, including whether it may ultimately require its own specialist group outside of IESG.
- 5.6. In reframing IESG, the Chair emphasised that all substantive work would continue to be developed through specialist subgroups, with IESG acting as the formal forum for oversight and to advise the Forensic Science Regulator. It was made clear that any work from these groups should come through IESG for discussion and decision-making and should not be progressed or concluded outside this governance structure.

OFSR: Future Workplan

- 5.7. OFSR representatives presented the future workplan of the group and an update from the Regulator in respect of the Code version 3.
- 5.8. The Forensic Science Regulators Act 2021 stated the Regulator:
 - a. must keep the Code under review, and
 - b. may from time to time prepare and publish alterations to the Code or a replacement Code.
- 5.9. As per the Act, the Regulator continues to develop the Code. Work on version 3 has begun and it is anticipated that consultation on a full draft Code version 3 will be around the end of the financial year 2026-27 with laying in Parliament in 2027. There are 15 FSAs in Code version 2 to which the Code does not apply. The structural changes made in version 2 laid the foundation for all FSAs to be brought within a next version of the Code. It is anticipated that Code version 3 will include clarification of existing requirements where relevant, definitions of new FSAs and all FSAs.

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5.10. The OFSR presented an overview and status of the FSAs which currently fall under the INC portfolio.

FSA	
INC 100 Incident Scene Examination	In the Code: Need to review section 90 -Is it fit for purpose?
INC 101 Collision Investigation	Subgroups already established and working on FSA specific requirements
INC 102 Fire Investigation	
INC 103 Examination of explosion scenes	Subgroups to be established to review FSA.
INC 200 Forensic examination of witnesses/complainants/suspects	
INC 201 Forensic examination of deceased individuals	

5.11. It was also noted that the requirements for compliance for each FSA and their structure in the Code may vary. This could be the inclusion of specific requirements, the implementation of a milestone approach or just that organisations need to be compliant with certain parts of the Code. This is where the working groups will come in, review the FSA and submit their recommendations to the IESG and the Regulator.

5.12. The OFSR noted that a review will need to take place of FSA – INC 100 as standard with the introduction of a new version of the Code. This has been discussed in the latest CAWG meeting with the group tasked to review the FSA and think about any potential changes that might be needed for v3.

FSA – INC 102 Fire Investigation

5.13. Work on developing FSA – INC 102 (Fire Investigation) has already been commissioned following a meeting held two weeks prior, due to the tight timelines associated with version 3 of the Code. The working group has been tasked with reviewing the existing draft specific requirements, the current milestones, and FSA – INC 102 as a whole.

5.14. The group is expected to meet approximately every other month to progress this work.

5.15. The Regulator has written to SAs of police forces and all Fire Chiefs to notify them of this activity, and a new Chair for the working group from the fire service has been appointed.

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- 5.16. Engagement from the fire investigation community has since been positive, with further engagement planned, which includes site visits involving the OFSR, to support shared learning and alignment as version 3 develops.
- 5.17. Membership and coverage of the fire investigation workstream were discussed, with confirmation that a gap analysis is underway to ensure appropriate representation. This includes ensuring balanced input from both public and private sector providers.
- 5.18. It was suggested that FCN involvement and support within the workstream would be welcomed.
- 5.19. It was noted by members that historically, governance and funding has been a key challenge for fire investigation. While both fire and police services are strongly supportive in principle, practical issues around responsibility, funding, and accountability vary significantly across regions.
- 5.20. Fire investigation provision operates under a range of different models, including stand-alone fire service teams, collaborative arrangements with policing (such as section 22 agreements), multi-service partnerships, and outsourced provision, leading to inconsistent levels of compliance capability.
- 5.21. It was noted that larger services with dedicated investigation units and established compliance support are better positioned to meet forensic requirements, whereas smaller or rural services often rely on investigators who hold dual operational roles and may lack the resources to maintain standalone quality and compliance functions. In such cases, delivery frequently depends on close collaboration with policing, relationships that are not consistently replicated nationally.
- 5.22. The group highlighted the resulting risk that some fire services may be unable to meet compliance requirements independently, creating potential gaps in provision with implications for the Regulator and the criminal justice system. It was agreed that this governance and resourcing landscape should be clearly articulated as part of the narrative when moving toward compliance, with data from the readiness survey expected to inform this understanding and feed into wider quality governance discussions.

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- 5.23. A discussion followed on whether a structured overview of fire investigation would be beneficial for the group at the next meeting. It was suggested that an overview setting out what activities are undertaken, how they are carried out, and the techniques involved, would support informed decision-making.

ACTION [3] – Fire Investigation Sub-group Chair to provide overview of FI at next meeting.

Collision Investigation Working Group

- 5.24. Membership of the collision investigation workstreams is also being reviewed to ensure balanced representation across policing, the private sector and national bodies.
- 5.25. A dedicated sub-group focusing on training and competency has been established to aid development of a national curriculum for forensic collision investigation with the College of Policing. To ensure the outputs of the working group aligns with this group, both the Chair of this group and a representative from a training provider delivering training to both policing and non-policing practitioners will be invited to join the Regulators working group.
- 5.26. As with the fire group, meetings will now take place every other month to accelerate progress.
- 5.27. Engagement from the community remains strong and cohesive however challenges remain around defining what constitutes FSA INC 101 particularly where uniformed officers undertake activities which assist with scene interpretation. Links have been established with the NPCC Roads Policing portfolio to help address this complexity.
- 5.28. In reviewing the proposed FSA specific requirements for FSA – INC 101, the group identified gaps, particularly relating to the range of tests undertaken at collision scenes that were not fully captured. It was suggested that a restructure of FSA – INC 101 may be beneficial.
- 5.29. To address this and gather community views, a survey has been distributed nationally across both policing and commercial practitioners to gather detail on current activities, roles, methodologies and post-scene work. It is also designed to gather their views on the benefits and risks of restructuring the FSA.

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- 5.30. Initial responses are being collated and themed in preparation for the next formal meeting of the working group on 15 April.
- 5.31. It was raised that gaps remain within the current forensic science activity definitions, particularly in relation to collision investigation methods, and that mapping these activities against the FCIN science plan would ensure high-risk areas are appropriately captured.
- 5.32. Speed estimation work (FSA - DIG 301) was highlighted as a major risk area as there is misalignment between the FCIN and regulatory timelines. It was noted that organisations will not delay action where operational and evidential risk is high.
- 5.33. UKAS representatives mentioned that the situation with speed estimation has been flagged on receipt of interest coming in, noting that this is an area that has never been accredited before therefore will need to be treated as a development project.
- 5.34. UKAS noted that they are working with the OFSR on this to determine the appropriate approach given the national position on this.
- 5.35. The group recognised that collision investigation is a complex and nuanced area, with significant crossover between disciplines, including digital activity, vehicle data, telematics, reporting and expert opinion. It was agreed that further consultation will be required following the current information-gathering phase before progressing to finalising the FSA.
- 5.36. It was agreed that the output of the survey would be beneficial to share at the next meeting.

ACTION [4] – Summary of the CI survey responses to be brought to the next meeting.

FSA – INC 101 & 102 Milestone Approach

- 5.37. A milestone approach was originally developed for both FSA INC 101 and INC 102.
- 5.38. It has been agreed within the respective subgroups that a single milestone framework does not meet the needs of both disciplines, and that the document and requirements require review to make them FSA-specific.

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- 5.39. Feedback from the fire investigation group indicated that the previously determined two-year milestone intervals are too long, and shorter timescales are now being considered to drive engagement. Recent correspondence with the SAIs has increased interest and engagement from fire services.
- 5.40. Low uptake remains a key risk for the provision of fire investigation, particularly given the limited number of private providers, reinforcing the importance of involving private sector organisations in the workstream.
- 5.41. It was noted that the collision investigation landscape includes over 350 non-policing practitioners, many operating as sole providers. As a result, the existing milestones approach, which was developed largely from a law-enforcement perspective, will need to be reviewed and potentially reworked to ensure it is practical and applicable to non-policing organisations. This was recognised as a complex piece of work.

Oversight from IESG

- 5.42. The group discussed the need to clarify the purpose of the sub-groups vs specialist group and agreed that regular checkpoints should be built into IESG oversight, with an initial outline update expected at the next meeting.
- 5.43. In light of concerns around provision, it was suggested that the Fire Investigation subgroup should begin mapping provision arrangements across policing and fire services, including who provides services and where.
- 5.44. Reference was made to the readiness survey issued late summer last year to all SAIs of police forces and Fire Chief Officers, which provided useful insight into provision models and SAI appointments.
- 5.45. Survey results highlighted some lack of understanding from organisations regarding the requirements of the Code.
- 5.46. The Regulator has reviewed the survey findings and the group agreed it would be beneficial to bring the analysis to the next IESG meeting.

Action [5] - Summary of the fire readiness survey responses to be brought to the next meeting.

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

- 5.47. Discussion moved on to consider whether FSA - INC 102 should align to an international standard.
- 5.48. The discussion focused on the need for a process by which the assurance mechanism for these new FSAs will be considered. A steer from the Regulator of how he wants the group to approach this would be beneficial.
- 5.49. It was acknowledged that UKAS had previously explored whether FSA – INC 102 aligned with ISO/IEC standards and had indicated it would not be suitable due to the lack of defined testing methodologies within the discipline.
- 5.50. UKAS confirmed its willingness to provide further support on this should additional work be required.
- 5.51. The FI Chair noted that a key strength with fire investigation is that it is a well-established discipline, with robust peer-review processes and clearly defined competency requirements applied on a standardised basis.
- 5.52. It was agreed that the appropriate starting point is to finalise the specific requirements. Once these are in place, further discussion with UKAS would be beneficial to reassess alignment with international standards or consider alternative assurance mechanisms, enabling informed recommendations to be made to the Regulator.

Other FSAs within the INC Portfolio

- 5.53. The OFSR moved on to discuss the other three FSAs which fall under the INC portfolio.
- 5.54. Work is underway to scope how additional FSAs within the portfolio should be taken forward into the Code version 3.
- 5.55. No formal working groups currently exist for the three other INC areas, and initial activity has focused on identifying suitable contacts across portfolios, including engagement with subject matter experts.
- 5.56. Members were invited to suggest relevant contacts for consideration and approval by the Regulator.

ACTION [6] – Members to suggest members for new FSA task and finish groups to OFSR

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

- 5.57. The group had a discussion focused on FSA - INC 200 and INC - 201, relating to the examination of detainees and deceased individuals, with consideration being given to whether elements should remain separate, be combined, or be absorbed into other FSAs (potentially FSA - INC 100).
- 5.58. It was acknowledged that clearer definition is required around scope boundaries, particularly to avoid overlap with existing FSAs and areas outside the Code, such as pathology.
- 5.59. The need to review and possibly redefine existing Code definitions was highlighted, now that the framework is more mature.
- 5.60. Clarification was sought around what activities are captured under forensic examination of detainees and witnesses and where responsibility sits in relation to policing activity already covered elsewhere.
- 5.61. Members agreed that current definitions as set out in version 2 should be shared for comment from the group.

Action [7] – OFSR to share Code definitions of FSA – INC 103, 200 and 201 for review

6. Interpretation & Opinions Update

- 6.1. The OFSR noted the publication of FSR-GUI-0004: Forensic science activities: interpretation and communication.
- 6.2. Separate workstreams for FSA - INC 100, INC 101 and INC 102 are developing discipline-specific guidance to sit alongside the overarching document.
- 6.3. A member of the INC 100 workstream updated that completion of remaining sections for the discipline specific document is expected soon, with wider circulation planned thereafter.
- 6.4. Chairs of the fire and collision investigation working groups also noted that work is progressing in their respective workstreams.
- 6.5. The group confirmed that governance ownership for this guidance sits with the relevant subgroups, with IESG sight for awareness rather than approval.

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

7. Risks and Issues

- 7.1. OFSR have developed a Threats and Opportunities Risk register for the IESG.
- 7.2. The register is being implemented as the group start to move forward and develop other FSAs which will introduce competing priorities. It will be helpful to be able to highlight these to the Regulator.
- 7.3. It was noted that budgeting and resourcing continue to be key risks in relation to forensic units achieving and maintaining compliance.
- 7.4. OFSR highlighted that increased visibility of these issues will be provided through the newly implemented CAWG framework, with any key themes fed into the IESG.
- 7.5. It was agreed that any risks national-level risks should be collated to support regulatory and portfolio oversight,
- 7.6. Where risks are already captured elsewhere, these can be aligned or tailored to avoid unnecessary duplication.

ACTION [8] – Members to submit risks for the TOR Register back to the OFSR

8. AOB

- 8.1. OFSR noted that each sub-group have a revised terms of reference document. These will be circulated post-meeting for final comment from the IESG before being retained with the OFSR. They documents have been signed off with the retrospective working groups.

ACTION [9] - OFSR to circulate revised ToR for all sub-groups for comment.

Annex A

Representatives present:

IESG Chair

Office of the Forensic Science Regulator (OFSR)

United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)

Association of Forensic Service Providers (AFSP)

Forensic Capability Network (FCN)

Forensic Collision Investigation Network (FCIN)

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire Police (BCH)

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP)

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

Thames Valley Police (TVP)

East Midlands Specialist Operations Unit (EMSOU)

Yorkshire and Humber (YaTH)

West Midlands Fire Service

Avon and Somerset Police