



**Forensic
Capability
Network**
Shaping forensics, together.

Annual Report

2023/24



Credit: North Yorkshire Police



ONE

Introductions

Introductions

It gives me great pleasure to present the second FCN annual report, looking back on the successes of 2023/24 and ahead to the opportunities and challenges that 2024/25 will bring.

I'm pleased to say, this has been a much more settled year for the FCN in terms of structure, staffing, resources and delivery.

Our delivery plan-and how we developed it in close consultation with the forensic community, Home Office and NPCC-proved to be a positive and successful approach. It helped clearly set out what the FCN should focus on and how we can help meet the priority challenges and mitigate the risks in the forensic landscape.

We followed that approach again in developing the 2024/25 delivery plan, which also focusses on the key priorities of: quality, compliance and accreditation, marketplace stability and reform, digital forensics, workforce and performance. The highlights of this year's delivery plan can be found in section 4.

As I said in last year's report, I have a simple message: we're here to help. I am committed to ensuring that what the FCN and our staff do is wholly focussed on that. We have a national view, so if we can do something once for everyone's benefit then we will. Where that isn't the best approach, we won't interfere but be there if needed. If this is not what you are seeing or experiencing from our activities, then please let me know as we should be acting as a single point of contact for forensics in policing.

“I'm pleased to say, this has been a much more settled year for the FCN in terms of structure, staffing, resources and delivery.”

What we do is often in partnership with others from the community, be that police, academia, private providers, government or other organisations. Our role is often to bring people together, whether on creating a Forensic Marketplace Strategic Plan or our project to validate forensic activity at Sexual Assault Referral Centres - plus many other examples you'll find in this report. Thank you to everyone who has partnered with us for your help, support and knowledge, as this benefits us all.

The work of the staff in the FCN has again been outstanding during 2023/24 and I am continually impressed by their professionalism, commitment and hard work. It is a pleasure for me and the wider leadership

team to support them in what they do each day. I'm proud to say that the FCN delivers on what we say we're going to do and when.

All of these factors are important to us, and as a team the FCN has reflected recently on how we can communicate ourselves better to the forensic community. You may see our new strapline - 'Shaping forensics, together' - which is all about the networked way the FCN operates. We think by coming together we can help shape a better future for forensics. Of course, it's not really about a strapline, it's about ensuring this is how we actually operate.

The rest of this report explains in detail some of the main activities and what the FCN has delivered in the year and how this has benefited policing and the wider community. On our calculations, a cautious estimate for the benefits, savings or cost-avoidance achieved is circa £14m.

There are changes to our funding for 2024/25, as the FCN moves away from being funded by an annual Home Office grant and into a more sustainable position funded from the NPCC operating budget. This is good news as it allows us to plan further ahead beyond the current year, fill the key vacancies previously being held and look for more innovative ways to bolster our finances.

Our 2024/25 funding is less than in previous years and, as with all other organisations, we need to find efficiencies to continue to deliver at a high level. The FCN isn't immune from

such pressures, nor should it be. Details of our finances and resourcing are in section 3, but the headlines are £2.808m in funds for the year and a headcount of 35 people. FCN continues to be hosted by Dorset Police on policing's behalf. We are really grateful for that and for all the corporate support provided to enable us to operate for you all.

I hope you find this report interesting, helpful and enjoyable to read.

John Armstrong
FCN Managing Director

“The work of the staff in the FCN has again been outstanding during 2023/24 and I am continually impressed by their professionalism, commitment and hard work.”



Introductions

This has been a year of exceptionally busy work across the NPCC Forensic Portfolio, which the FCN closely supports and reports into. Four areas spring to mind as particular priorities in policing and beyond.

The first is the private-sector forensic marketplace, an absolutely vital and yet often problematic part of what forensics provides to policing and criminal justice. It has been reassuring to see work being done at a national level to prepare for reform in this area, coordinated by the FCN. As the work continues this coming year, we see this within NPCC as a critical moment for the market.

Secondly, the topic of accreditation continues to hold influence. The Forensic Science Regulator's first statutory code came into effect in October 2023 and police forces have been working hard to transition into the new standard, ably supported by guidance, visits and national exercises by the FCN. There is still work to be done, but I've been impressed with the way policing has embraced this change. Where appropriate, I would strongly urge forces to contact the FCN for any help in this vital matter.

Thirdly, digital forensics. The challenges here are vast, both in terms of complexity and volume, but great work is being done across the policing community, from digitising parts of crime scene investigation, to research

projects on AI to combat online harms. We need to keep up the momentum. I'm delighted to see that Jayne Meir, Deputy Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, has very recently stepped into the role of NPCC Digital Forensic Lead, taking over from CC Gibson - my thanks to the latter for his years of effort and dedication in this area. CC Gibson will continue to oversee the forensic marketplace portfolio.

And finally, you will no doubt have seen recent reports on serious acquisitive crime such as burglary and theft. It's clear to those of us in the NPCC that, as the police explores all reasonable lines of enquiry,

forensics is a key part of those enquiries and touches upon nearly every type of investigation in some way.

Much of the above has the attention of Ministers at the highest level of government, and it also generates significant interest in the media and online. And it is of course of the utmost important to the public and to victims of crime.

I was pleased to see the FCN make its successful bid to be funded directly by the NPCC's operating budget. I have been something of a stuck record for the past two years thanking FCN for its contribution to this area of policing, but the reason I keep mentioning it is that I don't take it for granted, and people across police, suppliers and the wider community shouldn't either.

I'm also pleased to see that APCC Forensic Lead, Darryl Preston, remains in place following the recent elections - he has always had a keen interest in forensics and the FCN, and the discipline will benefit from his support for another term.

I expect the following year will be incredibly busy as well, but I'm confident the portfolio and the wider community are in the best position for years to tackle the challenges ahead. The FCN's 2024/25 delivery plan detailed in this report, has my full support and I'm sure that it will continue to contribute greatly with these challenges.

Chief Constable Nick Dean
NPCC Forensic Lead

“I'm confident the portfolio and the wider community are in the best position for years to tackle the challenges ahead.”



TWO
Delivery



Digital Forensics

DIGITAL FORENSIC VALIDATION WORKING GROUP

Since summer 2023 FCN has facilitated a new validation working group for digital forensics. The group's aim is to give DF technical managers, practitioners and quality managers a platform to openly discuss activities, exchange knowledge and working practices.

We were delighted - if not surprised - by the considerable interest in this group, with 262 attendees registered representing 54 organisations.

The initial scope was for mobile devices, computers and peripherals. FCN kicked-off the first workshop with a demo of the recently published validation templates (mentioned below) and an overview of the ground truth data (GTD) for computers delivered earlier in the year.

Later meetings covered topics from GTD automation to kiosk assessments (with thanks to Staffordshire Police for contributing the latter). The working group continues to meet throughout 2024/25.

DF VALIDATION DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

FCN published a suite of six validation document templates for police forces in April 2023. These templates guide the user through the process of undertaking validation which complies with the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice.



They're locally configurable but come pre-populated with common end-user requirements and specification, significantly reducing the time for an organisation to produce a validation plan which works for their end-users.

If this doesn't initially sound like a lot - bear in mind that we estimate the templates have saved 135 hours of DFU staff time per force.

A straw-poll five months later showed at least 45 respondents were either currently using the documents or planned to use them soon. The documents were used by the NPCC Digital Forensics Programme for

validation of the RRRP2 project, and continue to be used for its central validation service.

DF managers said they were "hugely beneficial and so comprehensive" and that they "like the modular format and detail".

Simon Cullen, FCN Lead Scientist for Digital Forensics, explained: "The validation of digital forensic methods can be a complex and onerous task, but having quickly configurable validation plans can help reduce the burden."

The templates continue to be updated and more disciplines are in scope for 2024/25.

135 hours of DFU staff time saved per force.

"Hugely beneficial and so comprehensive"

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CELL-SITE ANALYSIS COLLABORATIVE LEARNING EXERCISE



From November 2023 FCN organised a national collaborative learning exercise for police forces which conduct cell site analysis for geolocation. More than 25 law enforcement organisations across England, Wales and Scotland have taken part.

Cell site analysis is a forensic technique used to determine the approximate location of a device like a mobile phone during telecommunication activity such as calls and texts. Specifically, FCN's project brought together organisations which use Radio Frequency Propagation Surveys (RFPS) for this analysis.

The collaborative learning exercise - which ran from January to March 2024 - started with FCN's DF experts making test calls and sending messages from a mobile phone, then sharing the call data with participants along with a crime scenario. All participants reviewed the scenario and conducted an analysis using their

usual policies and procedures, which was then centrally reviewed by FCN with cell site community support.

The project will conclude in May 2024 with a workshop covering the reports and community learning, after which a report will be circulated.

Thank you in particular to Hampshire Constabulary, the wider community and the Radio Frequency Development User Group (RFDUG) for assisting with the project.

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DF APPRENTICESHIP

During the year FCN's long-held plans to introduce the UK's first digital forensic apprenticeship came to fruition. The apprenticeship provides a way into a career in digital forensics for people of all ages, with a tailored course of training to give employees the skills they need.



Police forces using the national qualification have training costs for new recruits covered by the Government's apprenticeship levy.

The apprenticeship was approved by the Chartered Institute for IT, the Institute of Cyber Digital Investigation Professionals (ICDIP), and the Chartered Institute for Information Security. The learning provider Blue Lights Digital provides training alongside forces.

FCN has been creating the apprenticeship since 2021, leading a 'trailblazer' group of forces, private providers and academics to create a high-quality product linked to operational demand.

The very first DF apprentice was 19-year-old apprentice Sam Roe who joined Nottinghamshire Police in December 2023.

Detective Inspector Mark Booth, of Nottinghamshire Police's Digital and Cyber team, commented:

"I am really excited to be working with Sam in an aspect of policing in which recruitment and retention is particularly challenging."

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Swab Out Crime



FCN launched a major project early in 2023 which aims to create a new anonymous UK-wide DNA database. The new Swab Out Crime campaign will produce a Y-STR reference database using samples from 10,000 men in the UK.

Having the database will enhance policing's ability to convict criminals and eliminate innocent suspects in rape and other sexual offences. Investigators use Y-STR profiling to support prosecutions, particularly in cases of rape or sexual offences where tiny amounts of male DNA are present among a sample which is mostly female. Y chromosomes are a type of DNA found in people born male.

Currently UK scientists use global databases from other countries to conduct their Y-STR comparisons, but using a database representative of the UK male population will make the data statistically stronger.

A reference database is not used for matching with criminals. Instead, it allows scientists, courts, and juries to better understand the relevance of a certain DNA profile by providing a statistical estimate of how often that profile has been seen.

We are over a third of the way to our target of 10,000 samples

Participants can take part by giving a simple mouth swab at any Swab Out Crime event, or by ordering a kit by post. Samples are processed at a secure facility and turned into a large set of numbers, then the individual samples are destroyed.

We are working in partnership with the Home Office's Forensic Information Databases Service (FINDS) and forensic service provider Eurofins.

We are over a third of the way to our target of 10,000 samples - with 3,400 samples so far - and the project continues during 2024/25.

Order your free home sampling kit here. Or visit www.fcn.police.uk/swab-out-crime

Credit: EMSOU



Streamlined Forensic Reporting (SFR)

FCN continues to manage and oversee the Streamlined Forensic Reporting process, including guidance and templates, on behalf of policing and the criminal justice system.

SFR is a set of guidance and templates which enable investigators, scientists and prosecutors to comply with criminal procedure rules. SFR templates focus on key conclusions from forensic evidence that are simple for juries to understand, rather than providing lengthy reports. They also allow defence to swiftly accept or challenge evidence, speeding up cases and enabling faster justice.

All SFR documents are hosted on FCN's website. It was viewed more than 2,750 times during the year. In 2024 we have

been working on a series of training videos for people who use SFR as part of their day-job, and the videos are due to be released in Q1 2024/25.

There is a wide breadth of SFR now in everyday use - from simple ID such as drugs and DNA match reports, through to complex evaluative evidence. To give a sense of scale, there are 100,000s of SFR1s reported each year.

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Quality

The year of 2023 saw significant changes in forensic science regulation.

With the Forensic Science Regulator on a statutory footing, the first ever Statutory Code came into effect in October 2023, meaning many police forces and other organisations having to transition areas of work to meet the new rules.

FCN supported police forces throughout the year with this transition in the form of seminars, FAQs, declarations guidance and other one-to-one advice.

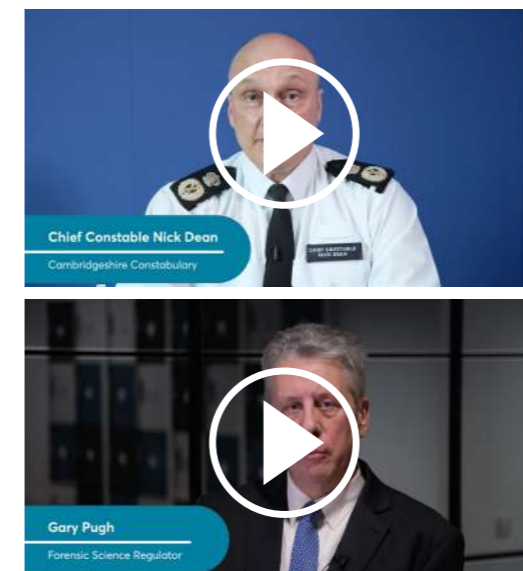
COMPLIANCE AND ACCREDITATION SUPPORT

FCN's quality experts continue to travel the country providing forces with a range of services including method witness assessments, document and procedural reviews and other advice.

During 2023/24 we supported more than 20 forces on their compliance and accreditation readiness journey.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Quality Matters - our frequent newsletter on quality-related topics in forensics - has now been running for three years. The newsletter reaches more than 300 people every fortnight.



In April 2023 we also launched a series of training videos to help increase people's understanding and awareness of quality - with thanks to NPCC Forensic Lead Nick Dean and FSR Gary Pugh for taking part in these videos. With a focus on 'understanding the accreditation journey' the videos have received more than 1000 views so far, with information specifically for:

- Senior Accountable Individuals
- forensic practitioners
- quality personnel
- non-forensic teams

VALIDATION

Validation can be a complex part of forensic science activity and is often both time consuming and challenging to demonstrate effectively. FCN has continued raising awareness of the value of validation and the opportunities that working collaboratively can bring.

Launching with our own Validation Week in mid-January, we published a new validation hub on FCN's website, alongside a new validation video and drop-in surgeries for police forces.



[VIEW WEBSITE ▶](#)

Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)

The FCN SARC Network now has around 180 members with representatives from all organisations providing SARC services nationally, police forces, forensic service providers (FSPs), the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM), United Kingdom Association of Forensic

Nurses (UKAFN) and the Office of the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR).

Together we continue to support SARCs nationally in achieving compliance to the FSR Code and ISO:15189 Medical laboratories Standard.



SARC FORENSIC CLEANING

This year the SARC Forensic Cleaning Validation report was published (available on the Knowledge Hub), providing forensic cleaning best practice recommendations, and the validation of six cleaning products on four different service types commonly used within the SARCs.

A SARC forensic cleaning verification plan has also been developed in collaboration with South Wales Police's Forensic Alliance Programme team. This plan involves the use of Environmental Monitoring (EM) sampling to demonstrate that the FCN Forensic Cleaning Validation is fit for purpose when conducted within their facilities by their staff (available on the Knowledge Hub).

SARC PROFICIENCY TESTING (PT)

The FCN has worked with FINDS to develop a SARC PT - the only PT available to SARCs at this time.

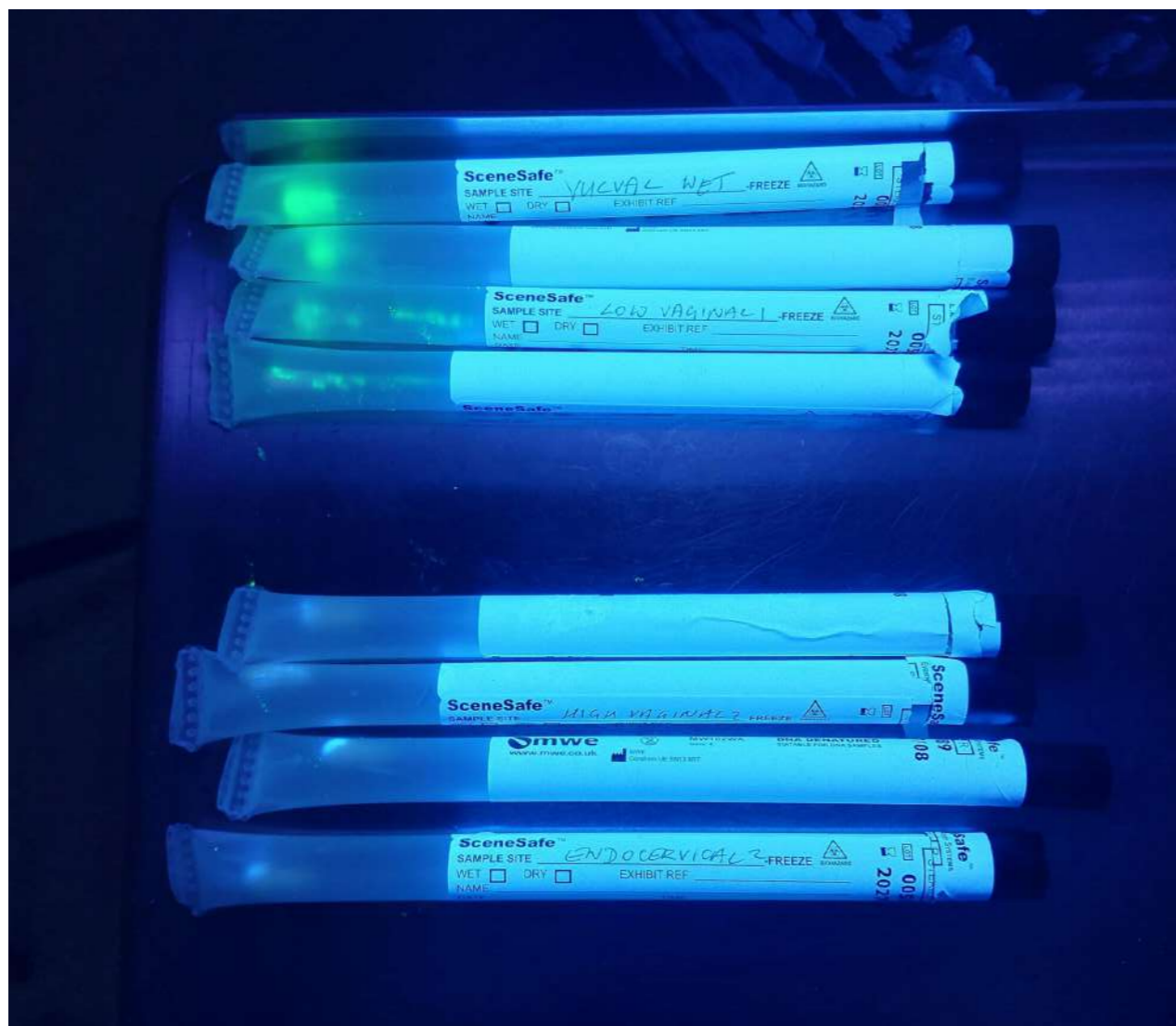


The PT consisted of a piece of vinyl seeded with a body fluid and a negative control; the test expectation was for the participants to sample and produce a DNA profile with no contamination from the body fluid and swab the negative control to show no profile and no contamination.

This PT was piloted at 11 SARCs. In 10 of these the participants met the test expectation with one participant producing a profile for the negative sample matching that of the donor.

This is the first of a series of PT that the FCN will develop with FINDS with the aim of providing a full suite of PT to cover the full scope of DNA recovery in the SARC accreditation.

SARC COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

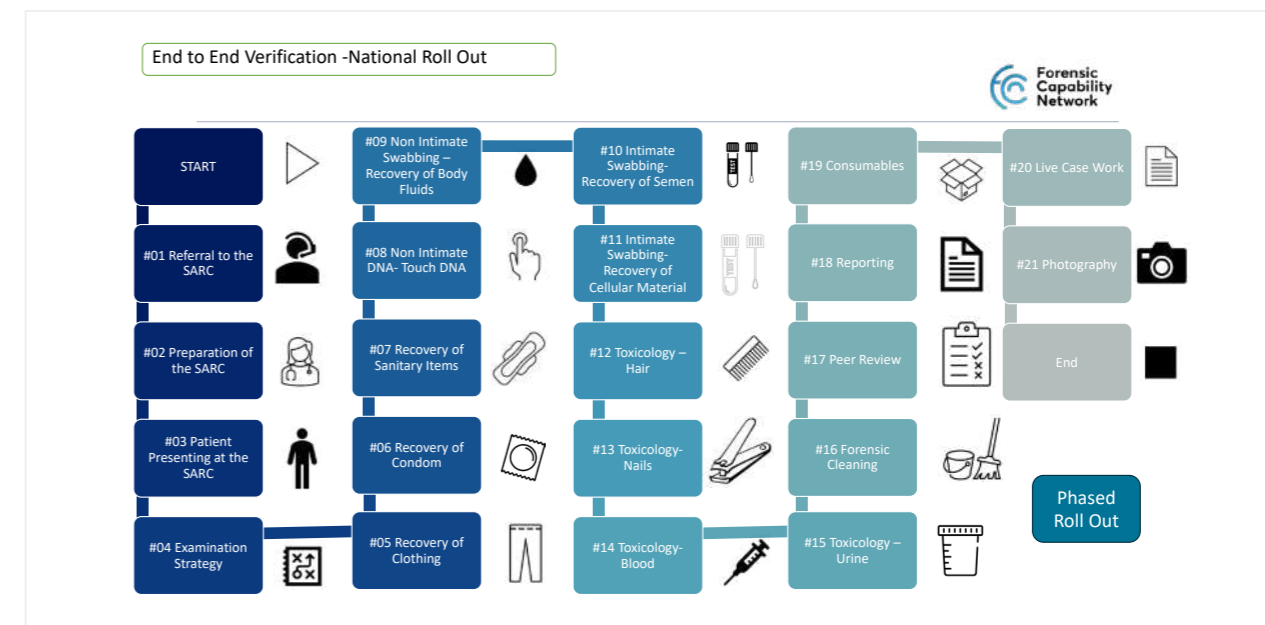


The FCN, working with June Guinness (OFSR), Dr Amy Hamm (Clinical Director) & Abi Marshall (Quality Manager), have developed an initial training and ongoing competency assessment for Forensic Healthcare Practitioners (FHPs).

The assessment involves the use of different colour UV dyes dosed on intimate areas of an anatomical dummy. The dyes are invisible without the use of a UV light. The FHP is provided a case scenario and takes intimate samples from the anatomical dummy, these swabs are then assessed with the use of UV lamp to determine if the correct dye has been recovered from areas dosed.

This approach has proven to provide a challenging assessment to evidence the FHPs are appropriately training in intimate swabbing and to be used as an ongoing competency assessment. The FCN will be holding a national event to roll out this process to SARCs across England and Wales.

SARC END TO END VERIFICATION



Working with the SARC community the FCN have developed a verification plan for the SARC forensic processes to demonstrate that every step in the end-to-end process, in line with the FFLM recommendations, is fit for purpose.

The FCN have successfully piloted this verification in five SARCs. This end-to-end verification will be available for roll-out nationally to all of the SARCs.

SARC NEWS ARTICLES

Nine SARC Network news articles have been published over the last year, sent out to the FCN SARC Accreditation Support Network and available on Knowledge Hub.

The articles provide the SARC community with updates and outcomes from the FCN SARC projects as well as the publication of UKAS findings from a SARC pre assessment along with recommendations made by the FCN on how to meet the non-compliances raised.



Wellbeing

STAR FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT IN LEICESTERSHIRE USING WEARABLES



During the year, FCN facilitated a ground breaking study with Leicestershire Police to measure the “physical and mental toll of the job” on its forensic teams. Around 50 CSIs and digital forensic staff volunteered to take part in the four-month study.

The anonymous data they provided will enable researchers to study the impact of visiting traumatic crime scenes, viewing distressing images and other challenges in police work. Researchers hope staff receiving regular feedback regarding their wellbeing could help build their resilience and self-awareness, and encourage them to seek help earlier.

Nick Loxley, Operations Manager for CSIs at the East Midlands Special Operations Unit’s Forensic Services, explained:

“Our staff’s wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do, so we are proud to be embracing this technology to help us identify ways we can improve that.”

The research was STAR funded. The study is now complete and findings will be shared in early 2024/25.

[READ MORE ►](#)

FORENSIC WELLBEING TOOLKIT

Following the publication of a Workforce Strategic Plan for forensics in autumn 2023, FCN also published a wellbeing toolkit for forensic investigators in March 2024.

Developed in consultation with academic institutions, the National Police Wellbeing Service and the wider community, the toolkit aims to raise awareness of existing wellbeing interventions. It will help practitioners get access to the support, resources and tools for their long-term health and wellbeing, as well as equipping line managers to support their teams.

Kay Hannam, Head of Forensic Services for Thames Valley Police and lead of the wellbeing workstream, said:

“Those working within forensic disciplines are operating in an extremely challenging environment and are frequently exposed to challenging and traumatic events which is why it is so important that we work together to provide the support they deserve.”

[READ MORE ►](#)



Credit: South West Forensics

Marketplace

PHYSICAL FORENSIC MARKETPLACE



Forensic marketplace strategic plan

On the request of the NPCC, in September 2023 FCN revived the Forensic Marketplace Strategic Plan which had been on pause since 2021. The plan aims to reform the marketplace to improve the provision of forensic services, make the market more sustainable for private suppliers, and reduce the risks of future issues.

Beginning with a two-day workshop of police forensic leaders, FCN facilitated the development of detailed plans across eight areas of work: crime stains, drugs, firearms, niche services, retention and archiving, standardisation and efficiencies, and toxicology (both casework and roads traffic).

Within six months, by March 2024, the collaborative team had produced the suite of recommendations for submission to NPCC. If accepted by the NPCC, the recommendations may begin to be implemented during 2024/25.

Thank you to everyone from the forensic community who provided their time and expertise.

Operational management and knowledge sharing

FCN's marketplace experts continue to provide national support to police forces and forensic service providers, through a range of monthly meetings, and an ongoing roadshow with seven forces visited on-request.

To help share information with FCN's criminal justice partners, in January 2024 we launched a new monthly newsletter on forensic services for criminal justice organisations. Specifically, the updates cover operational delivery within private-sector forensic service providers. The simple newsletter enables those in the criminal justice system to make informed decisions, which is important as their decisions have a knock-on impact on delivery of forensic service providers. The newsletter continues during 2024/25.

DIGITAL FORENSIC MARKETPLACE

Marketplace planning and management

FCN has completed a full review of the digital forensics outsourcing marketplace, for the first time in three years. This provides clear information about the market share against various criteria, such as DF service providers, forensic disciplines and services, and police forces. The information is being provided to policing upon request and will significantly help with planning and managing of the DF marketplace, focusing on areas of risk.

Digital forensic supplier forum

In January 2024, FCN brought together more than 60 professionals from police, government, and the private sector for the second in-person Digital Forensic Supplier Forum.

The forum featured presentations from the newly-formed Association of Digital Forensic Services Providers (ADFSP), Home Office, Thames Valley Police, BlueLight Commercial, NPCC, and the Forensic Science Regulator's office. The ADFSP's collaborative efforts mark a significant development in the digital forensic space, with providers organising between themselves to channel their efforts in a more coordinated manner.

Paul Greaves, FCN's Senior Marketplace Manager for Digital Forensics, commented on the day:

“It's great bringing everyone together, I think it really emphasised that the digital forensic community shares the same challenges.”

Ongoing support

As part of business-as-usual, FCN continues to provide national DF support to the NPCC by collating data on service provision and liaising with suppliers. FCN has also been asked by the NPCC to take-on responsibility for the Digital Forensics Vendor Group from June 2024.

FCN's DF team has focused heavily on force visits and support since 2023 to ensure our work aligns with policing priorities and to identify a clear national DF landscape. To date, eight forces have been visited, with plans to visit a further four in the coming month.

Additionally, FCN is working to enhance our reporting of backlogs, outsourcing, marketplace capacity and market share utilising Power BI reporting software. This will ensure policing have the most up-to-date information to hand.



Research

R&I STRATEGY

In August 2023, FCN published a national Research and Innovation Strategy for forensics in policing. Bringing together a range of existing and new activities, and shaped by the forensic community, the strategy aims to help policing drive innovation in forensics.

Its core areas are coordination, collaboration, communication, and evaluation. Together, these are creating a national networked

approach to research, ensuring knowledge is shared, and that organisations across forensics are collaborating.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT

From autumn 2023, we supported various organisations to apply for police research funding with a series of webinars and blogs.

FCN's research projects during the year included a wellbeing study with Leicestershire Police (see page 22) as well as an AI project with the University of Warwick and a fingerprint visualisation project with Sheffield Hallam University and the Yorkshire and Humberside Police region.

AI models to detect abusive language online

This innovative project was led by the FCN in conjunction with the University of Warwick and funded by Police Chief Scientific Adviser's STAR programme. We developed a Natural Language Processing (NLP) model to identify and analyse communications that are violent, threatening, abusive, or coercive, specifically in the context of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The use of NLP to review large quantities of text-based communications could be a transformational change to the

current processes used within digital forensics by reducing the manual review of large quantities of messages through keyword searching and filtering.

This project developed an NLP model which analysed messages based on content, context, and sentiment, similar to an investigator but consistently at a much greater speed.

The model has three main elements:

- 1** • An interactive interface that facilitates rapid analysis of potentially thousands of conversations
- 2** • An AI/NLP pipeline that:
 - Classifies conversation messages 15x to 20x faster than humans with high accuracy
 - Summarises thousands of conversations to provide persona profiling
 - Generates simple explanations for the classification
 - Traces back evidence supporting the results to build a chain of evidence
- 3** • The first realistic synthetic dataset of VAWG-related conversations

Forensic uses of 'MALDI' to support police investigations

The FCN has recently presented to the Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) office a STAR-funded report that worked with a partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and the Yorkshire and Humberside Police forces.

This research project focused on progressing the forensic use and application of 'MALDI' to support police investigations. Sheffield Hallam University has pioneered the development of Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption Ionisation Mass Spectrometry Imaging (MALDI MSI) to detect and map molecules contained in fingerprints which are latent (not visible to the naked eye) and patent (visible to the naked eye) directly onto the ridge pattern. This capability generates multiple images of the same fingerprint (as well as generating molecular information about the owner of the mark that could further help the investigations).

MALDI MSI has been shown to separate overlapping fingerprints and to "fill in the gaps" for fingerprints showing unenhanced areas or interrupted ridge pattern. It can do so with and without prior enhancement of the fingerprints working after a single visualisation process and some sequential processing. It has been used in police casework (major crimes) in the UK and internationally to provide both chemical intelligence and biometric information. Recovery and identification of fingerprints remain key in supporting policing criminal justice outcomes. Given the demonstrated capabilities of MALDI MSI in molecular fingerprinting, the maturity of the technology and the operational need, this project was a good opportunity to test MALDI MSI on a wider number of casework fingerprints. This project has further developed our understanding of best practice and how the technology can further support police investigations.



Professor Simona Francese, Sheffield Hallam University



THREE

Finance and resourcing

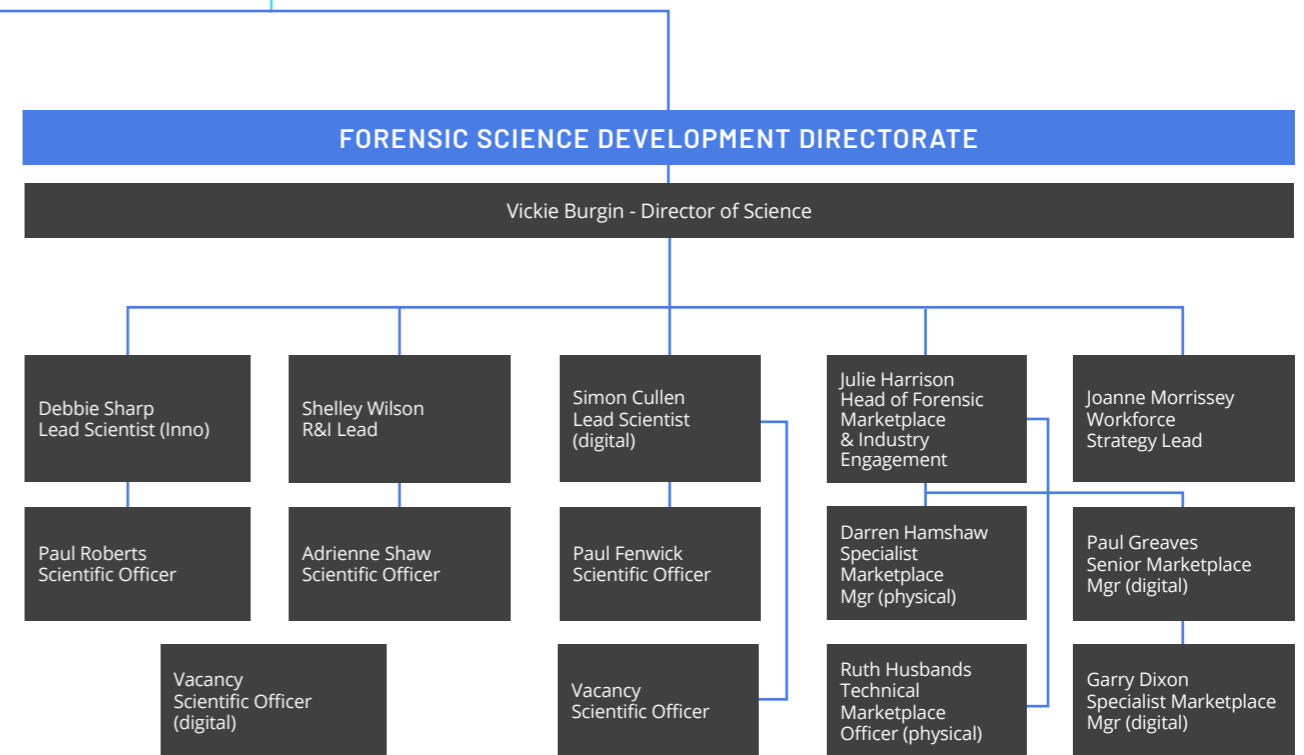
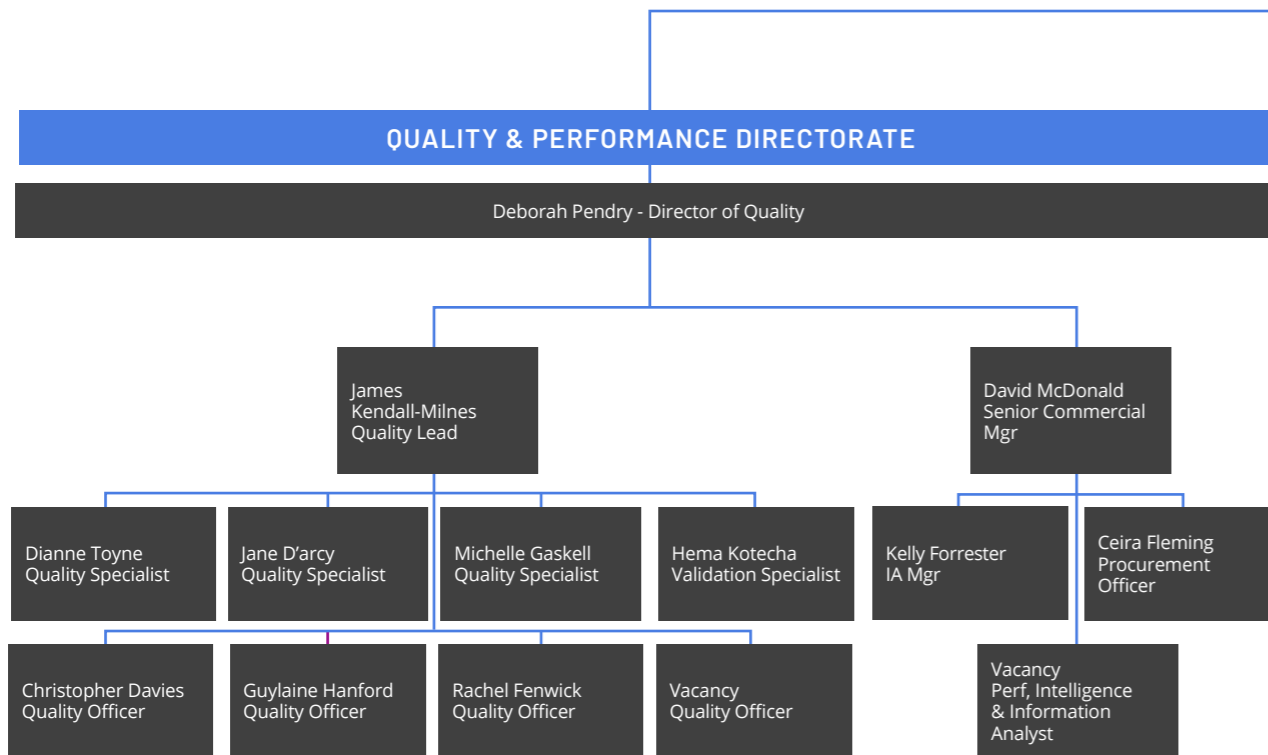
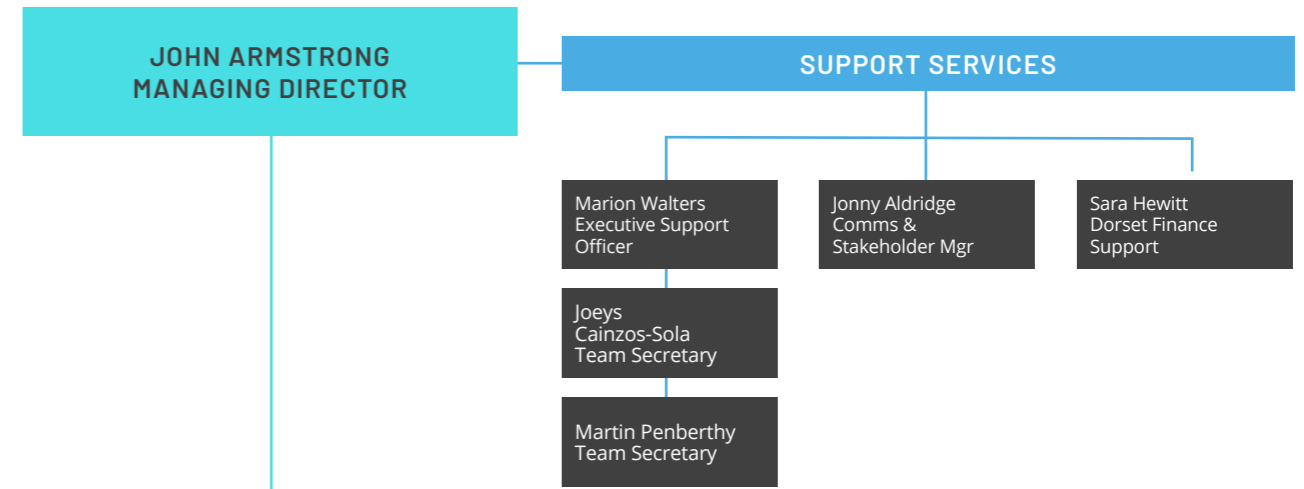
Finances

The financial position at the end of the 2023/24 year is shown below:

2023/24 FCN BUDGET GROUPINGS	FUNDING	SPEND
HO Grant	3,300,000	
2022/23 Underspend carry forward	250,000	
Staffing Costs		2,422,000
Ancillary costs (staff training, travel, expenses, legal, licenses, website, events etc)		234,000
FCN-SARC Accreditation project costs		222,000
FCN-Fire Investigation project costs		167,000
NPCC FMSP project		245,000
TOTAL	3,550,000	3,290,000

Resources

At the commencement of the 2023/24 year, the FCN has 35 full-time equivalents in its establishment, plus an additional finance support post that Dorset Police provides and FCN funds. The latest organisational chart is shown below.



FOUR

Future Delivery



Priorities

The NPCC priorities for forensics for the year include:

- Digital forensics
- Marketplace stability and reform
- Quality, accreditation and compliance with the FSR Code
- Performance and workforce

NPCC PRIORITY AREAS	STRATEGIC INTENT	TACTICAL DELIVERY INTENT
Quality of Forensic Science & Accreditation Compliance and Performance Mgt (approx 25%)	Provision of compliance and accreditation support & guidance to policing and NPCC	Increase the knowledge, understanding and awareness of quality and accreditation matters across policing and wider stakeholders Improving standardisation, reducing duplication and increasing efficiency.
	Performance Framework for forensics, including both physical and digital disciplines.	Management & Oversight of demand, supply and capacity.
Digital Forensics (approx 25%)	Supporting NPCC, Forces & Home Office on Digital Forensics	Support delivery of future developments, accreditation requirements and the response to the HMICFRS Inspection
Whole Supply Chain and Marketplace Engagement & Reform (approx 25%)	Forensic Market Management and Industry Engagement activity in Support of NPCC Market Strategy Board & Forces.	Provision of support across the whole of the sector in relation to the forensic marketplace, specifications, standardisation, regulatory and legal requirements
	Optimisation of the forensic workforce	Supporting staff recruitment, training & career development, Wellbeing and retention.
Overarching NPCC Forensic Portfolio Support (approx 15%)	Greater visibility and understanding of key strategic threats, risks and opportunities in Forensics	Capture, Collation and Reporting of key strategic threats, risks and opportunities in Forensics
	Supporting the NPCC Forensic Portfolio and its NPCC Leaders	Operational and Tactical support to Portfolio and sub-portfolio Leads
FCN Internal Operations (approx 10%)	Maintaining the FCN as a sustainable national capability in support of policing	Running the internal FCN Business operations, Management, Comms, Commissioning, Assurance reporting and income generation business

Finances

Finances for the 2024/25 year are expected to be as follows:

2024/25 FCN BUDGET GROUPINGS	FUNDING	BUDGET/SPEND
NPCC Operating Budget Allocation	2,808,273	
Home Office 2023/24 Carry-forward	260,000	
Staff Costs		2,575,273
Vacancies/in-year temp staff/contractor roles		200,000
Ancillary costs (staff training, travel, expenses, legal, licenses, website, events etc)		213,000
Projects such as SARC		80,000
TOTAL	3,068,273	3,068,273



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