

A GUIDE FOR NON-FORENSIC TEAMS

THE FORENSIC SCIENCE REGULATOR'S (FSR) STATUTORY CODE

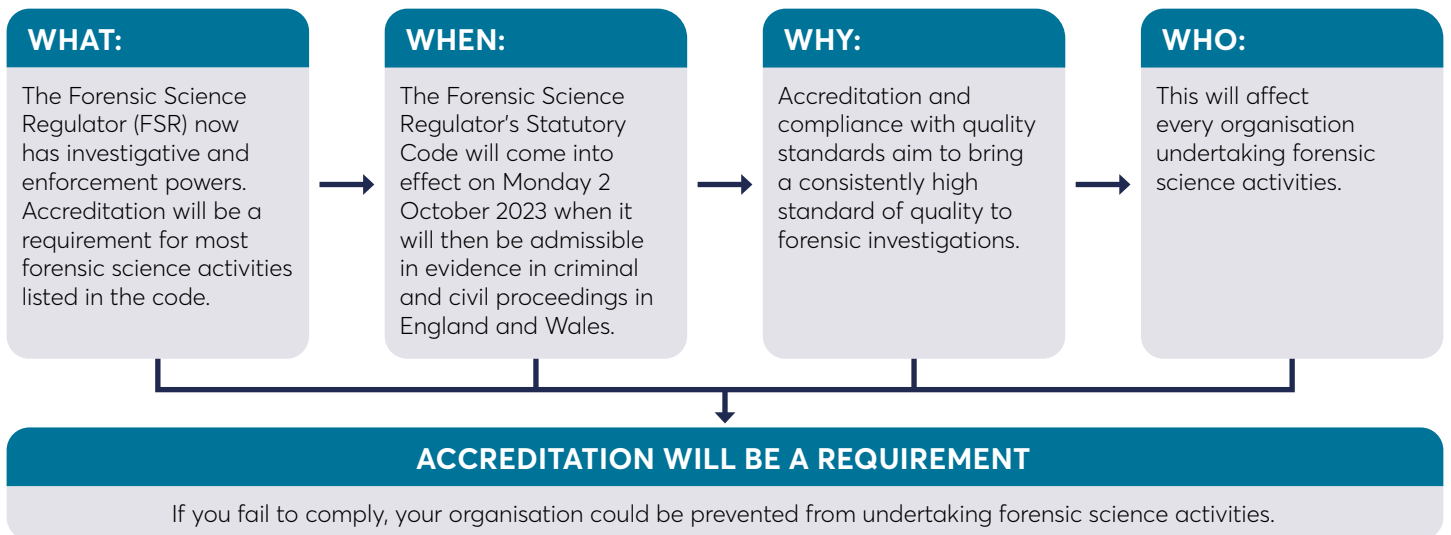
Forensics is a key part of the criminal justice system in England and Wales so it's vital that the forensic science activities we provide are suitable. The best way for us to achieve this is through accreditation and compliance with quality standards, and through meeting the requirements of the FSR Code.

Due to a recent act of parliament, the **Forensic Science Regulator Act 2021**, the FSR now has investigative and enforcement powers. The act also required a **Statutory Code** to be produced, which will come into effect on Monday 2 October 2023. Ultimately, this means that accreditation will be a requirement for most forensic science activities listed in the code.

For accreditation to be successful, everyone within your organisation needs to work together. These videos and supporting guide aim to explain the changes to the code and to show how you can play your part in achieving accreditation for your organisation.



WHAT'S CHANGING?



WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is provided by UKAS, the national accreditation body for the United Kingdom. UKAS is appointed by the government to assess and accredit organisations.

UKAS will visit your organisation to gather evidence of your compliance which your organisation is responsible for demonstrating. It's important to remember that building an open and transparent relationship with UKAS will help to maximise your chance of success.

Read more about UKAS:
www.ukas.com

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation and compliance with quality standards aim to bring a consistently high standard of quality to forensic investigations. Complying with the code may require changes to your organisation's working practices, but there are a multitude of benefits:

-  **Helping the public and victims of crime trust in what we do**
-  **Giving forensic professionals confidence in processes and results**
-  **Increasing confidence when presenting evidence in court**
-  **Promoting training to support compliance**
-  **Driving innovation through continuous improvement**

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

Whether you work in procurement, HR, information security, IT or estates management, it may seem like these changes are not relevant to the work you are involved in. However, these changes will impact your whole organisation, not just the forensic units. The code requires measures to be put in place that may fall under your responsibility, and failure to comply may result in your organisation failing to achieve and/or maintain accreditation and comply with quality standards. Your support is vital.

IF YOU FAIL TO ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION...



This could impact on the admissibility of the evidence provided by your organisation.



Your organisation will be at greater risk of investigation and enforcement by the FSR.



Enforcement powers could be used if forensic science activities are presenting a substantial risk of adversely affecting an investigation or the course of justice.

REMEMBER...

In many crimes, forensics provides a critical link to support the investigation of crime and administration of justice.

Home Office Statistics show that in 15 to 20% of all cases, forensics is the only method used to identify a person of interest, to generate a line of enquiry or to secure a guilty plea.

WHAT TO DO NEXT...

1.

Engage with your Quality Team to understand where your support is needed.

2.

Work with your forensic unit to make sure that you understand the priorities and timelines for requests.

3.

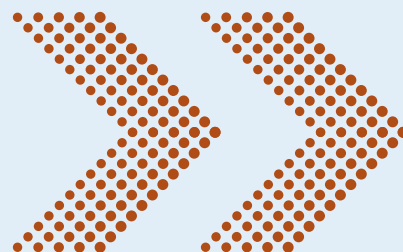
Understand when UKAS assessments will take place. There will be specific timelines for visits and your forensic unit will need to be prepared.

4.

Get ready to present for UKAS assessments in case you are required to answer questions in relation to your area of responsibility.

5.

Familiarise yourself with the **FSR code** – there may be elements which include additional requirements on top of those that you currently have in place.



Together, we all need to play our part in the vital work of keeping communities safe. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as forensics undergoes its biggest change in decades.

ABOUT US: FORENSIC CAPABILITY NETWORK

The Forensic Capability Network (FCN) is a membership organisation for the forensic science community. Following investment by the Home Office, FCN is operated by the policing community on behalf of police forces and law enforcement organisations in England and Wales. Amongst other things, the FCN provides a knowledge base, development programmes and support to forensics practitioners.

www.fcn.police.uk | www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forensic-science-regulator | To find out more, just visit the FCN and FSR websites.