The Strategic Framework for Forensic Science (SF4FS)

The Future for Forensics
The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has been tasked to adopt and implement the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Forensic Science Strategy, known as the Strategic Framework for Forensic Science (SF4FS). This significant ACPO led investment, under the sponsorship of Chief Constable Tony Lake, has been developed in partnership with the NPIA with the aim of ensuring the effective future use of forensic science by the Police Service.

The NPIA is working closely with the Police Service and other agencies to develop a structured programme of work to deliver a number of individual projects in a coherent and co-ordinated manner.

**SF4FS Objective:** To produce a coherent and integrated set of forensic services, capabilities and skills within the Police Service and partner agencies, which deliver continuous improvements in policing outcomes to quality assured standards, and provide demonstrable and increasing value for money.
The Framework

The framework itself consists of five core elements which when combined provide a platform for the development and improvement of forensic science within policing:

Process Management and Improvement
This overarching element provides the backbone of the strategic framework to which the four other elements relate. The identification of optimum standard operating procedures for key business processes, and opportunities for development and improvement.

Organisation and Structure
The examination of organisational roles and structures that deliver forensic and identification services within policing, and the development of models for realignment of resources where appropriate, to deliver the most effective and timely services.

Professional standards and skills
The identification of all individual roles related to the end to end forensic and identification processes, and the provision of focused competence and development frameworks, to include both forensic practitioners and general police roles.

Innovation and Technology
To ensure that new and existing technologies are exploited and integrated into business processes to continually advance the contribution of forensic science to policing.

Market Development and Procurement
To produce sustained improvement in value for money forensic provision, and promote a more contested marketplace which stimulates continued improvement in supplier performance and promotes innovation.
The Programme

The initial programme of work is intended to run over three to five years and consists of eight individual projects, each of which directly relates to delivery within the objectives of a particular framework element:

The Programme diagram

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Forensic Process Management and Improvement

To provide forces with a platform for forensic process improvement through the development and implementation of

- optimum standard operating procedures for key business processes;
- a ‘data-driven’ performance management approach;

that will increase forensic interventions, reduce attrition, and target forensics on the high impact activities.

The initial focus will be on DNA, fingerprints and footwear and will include processes from crime, report, and custody through to disposal.

SRO - DCC Adrian Lee, Staffordshire Police

Optimisation of Prisoner Sample Processing and Optimisation of Forensic Investigation Services

To develop options for reorganising and sharing resources to provide the most effective delivery of prisoner sample processing and in-house forensic investigation services.

Options for consideration will include local, regional or national delivery of services.

SRO - CC Jon Stoddart, Durham Constabulary
Forensic Science Competence Development
To ensure that all roles that have the greatest impact on the end-to-end forensic process have and maintain the necessary competence and/or awareness to support and deliver the most effective business processes.
SRO - DCC Clive Wolfendale, North Wales Police

Digital Forensic Standards
To develop and implement standards for data recovery from computers, mobile phones and other personal electronic equipment.
SRO - Acting CC Stephen Long, Wiltshire Police

National Forensic Procurement
To produce sustained improvement in value-for-money and a more contested marketplace which stimulates continued improvement in supplier performance and increases innovation.
SRO - ACC Chris Eyre, Leicestershire Constabulary

Information Management
The development, enhancement and integration of information management technologies to support other projects within the programme and to significantly influence closer to the moment decision making in police processes.
SRO - ACC Peter Goodman, Derbyshire Constabulary

DNA Sampling and Storage Research
To research and implement approaches to reducing the cost of administering, processing and storing DNA PACE samples to all police forces.
SRO - ACC David Shaw, West Midlands Police
Governance

The governance structure ensures that the SF4FS programme is police owned and police led, and that all benefits are delivered and owned by the police service.

The Governance diagram

A number of strategic benefits will be delivered by the SF4FS programme:

- A fully embedded culture of performance management along the forensic science supply chain
- Increased number of detections and convictions
- Reduction in crime and attrition
- Increased cost effectiveness of forensic science interventions
- Increased productivity
- Assured skills, capabilities, and processes
- Improved quality
- Increased contribution to level 2 and 3 crime
- Increased contribution to CT activities
- Operational policing improvements
- Higher quality and supported decision making
- Shorter time to charge
- Increased linkages to other criminal offences
- A fully contested market for forensic services and products

Delivery

The programme will deliver a portfolio of projects designed to make a direct contribution to the foundation and structure of the SF4FS. The NPIA will provide a fully resourced and managed structure to scope, mobilise and control new initiatives and existing projects which will deliver the essential change enablers that progressively build on the rich history of forensic science.
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