



Meeting	People Committee
Date	27 November 2024
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Forensic Services H&S Update
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Forensic Services Director
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update Members on concern raised with the Health & Safety Executive about Forensic Services.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 7th August 2024 the Health & Safety Executive wrote to SPA Forensic Services after a concern was raised directly with them about the use of Fast Blue B.
- 1.2 Fast Blue B is a salt in a powder which is diluted to make up Acid Phosphatase reagent, in a solution form which is used in the Forensic Services laboratories and at crime scenes by Forensic Services staff.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 On 16th August 2024, SPA Forensic Services sent a detailed response to the Health & Safety Executive. The response explained that Forensic Services had not been made aware of the concerns raised prior to the email from the Health & Safety Executive. However, there had been a notification of a related matter around fume hoods in June 2024.
- 2.2 The response also detailed the Forensic Services approach to:
 - Health & Safety meetings and structures
 - Health & Safety processes & governance
 - Advice, guidance and support from Police Scotland Health & Safety
 - Engagement with Trade Unions
 - Meetings chaired by the Chief Operating Officer with inputs from senior managers, technical forensic experts and H&S advisors
 - Accreditation to ISO 17025 for laboratory processes
 - Accident reporting
 - Staff training and future training plans
 - Current action plan
 - The availability of extensive H&S communications and documentation for all staff on the Forensic Services Intranet including meeting reports
 - Use of PPE and safety equipment
- 2.3 On 19th September 2024, the Health & Safety Executive responded to Forensic Services saying: "Thank you for the comprehensive and detailed responses and evidence you have provided to HSE regarding the concern we received. We have reviewed all of the information and evidence you have kindly provided and concluded

that they are fully satisfactory.

"I can now confirm that HSE has closed down this concern from our end. Your co-operation in this matter has been very much appreciated."

- 2.4 Forensic Services welcome the endorsement by the Health & Safety Executive of the approach we have taken over these concerns - which allows us to move ahead with confidence.
- 2.5 Forensic Services have a robust detailed structure to ensure the Health & Safety of our staff in the workplace. This is supported by electronic systems for reporting accidents and near misses. Our electronic Quality Management System (QMS) is used to raise process issues, log improvements, and track resolutions - to ensure they are robust and auditable.
- 2.6 One of the strategic objectives of our [Forensic Strategy](#) is a "*Focus on wellbeing so that our people are safe, supported and empowered.*" Our values include Integrity – where we highlight our expectations for staff *Acting with honesty at all times. Raising concerns.*"

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONSs

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no social implications in this report.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no community implications in this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to discuss the information contained in this report.