

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	3 February 2021
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Update on HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services
Presented By	Vicki Morton, Scientific Head of Function
Recommendation to Members	For Information
Appendix Attached	Yes

PURPOSE

To provide the Forensic Services Committee with an update on work to implement the improvements set out in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 HMICS Published its *Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services* in June 2017. The review made 23 recommendations. Authority members noted the publication of the review and its recommendations at the Public Board meeting on 22 June 2017. The Forensic Services Committee has a clear remit as per the terms of reference:

“Oversee the implementation of improvement recommendations made in relation to the Forensic Service by scrutiny/inspection bodies or the SPA”

1.2 Forensic Services developed an Improvement Plan to address the recommendations in the review and this was approved by the SPA Board in September 2017.

1.3 In addition to the above the Audit Committee has a remit to:

“Assess the Authority’s and Police Scotland’s response to any recommendations and seek assurance that there is a process in place to implement these recommendations which is being managed appropriately and monitor progress of discharge of related actions.”

As such the effectiveness of the process and controls is also reported to the Audit Committee.

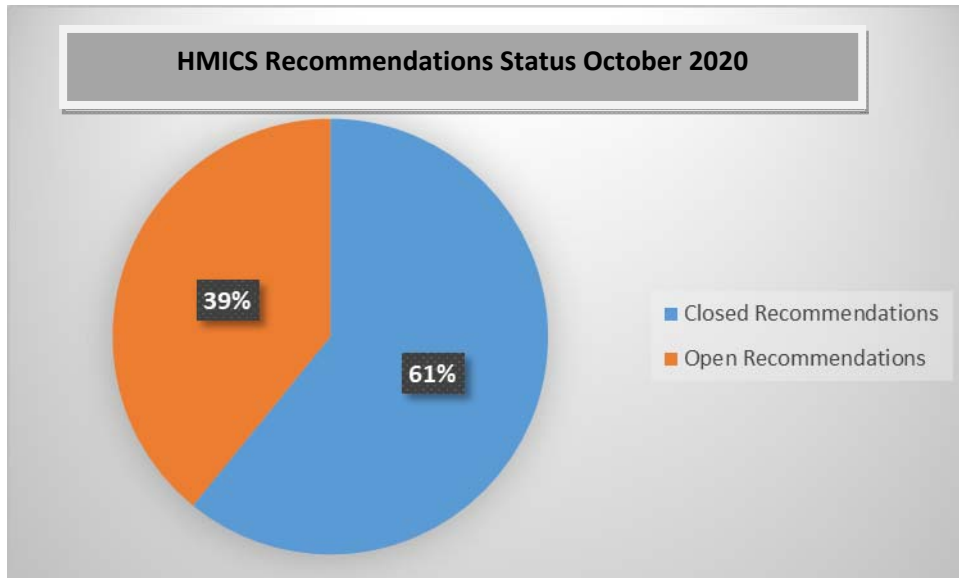
2. ENGAGEMENT / REPORTING

2.1 The majority of outstanding recommendations align with the Forensic Services 2026 change programme and are discussed at the FS2026 Strategy Programme Board. Engagement with Police Scotland and COPFS has continued as appropriate through specific engagement meetings.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 Of the **23 recommendations**, Forensic Services has had confirmation from HMICS that **14 are now complete**. The remaining 9 recommendations are largely aligned to FS 2026 Change Programme Timescales further detail is documented in the FS 2026 change update, see separate paper. There has been no significant movement since the last report as feedback is awaited from HMICS on recommendations 11, 12, 14 and 16.

A summary of current position is shown below: -



3.3 The full list of closed and ongoing recommendations are included at Appendix A and Appendix B respectively. The RAG status reflects the priorities that are either within or out with management control.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications within this report.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are personnel implications associated with this paper.

5.2 The work to deliver the improvements detailed within the HMICS report and the cross-over with the Forensic Services 2026 Change Programme will have an impact on the resources within Forensic Services and Police Scotland. There is ongoing discussion on how best to resource this activity.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper should there be a failure to deliver the HMICS recommendations in collaboration with Police Scotland and COPFS.

8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct social implications associated with this paper.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 There are no direct community implications associated with this paper.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct equality implications associated with this paper.

11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the content of the paper and supporting appendix.

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Appendix A – Recommendations closed by HMICS

HMICS No.	Recommendation	Date closed by HMICS
Leadership and Governance		
1	The SPA and SG should engage in the implementation of the Home Office Forensic Science Strategy to inform the approach in Scotland, explore common standards and support future interoperability (<i>mention of provision of services on commercial basis in future by FS</i>)	25/06/2018
2	The SPA should deliver a forensic strategy, aligned with those of Police Scotland and COPFS and their strategic planning cycles, with a supportive investment plan	04/07/2018
3	The SPA should institute a formal Forensic Committee as a matter of urgency (<i>to support and publicly scrutinise the delivery of forensic services; senior representation from PS and COPFS as observers</i>)	25/06/2018
6	The SPA should develop capability and capacity within FS to deliver change and improvement. This should complement the creation of a specialist Programme Management Office (PMO) within PS and provide dedicated programme and project management expertise to FS	04/02/2020
Outcomes		
7	The SPA should work with PS and COPFS to design and implement a new performance management framework for the demand and delivery of Forensic Services	04/02/2020
8	The SPA should implement a systematic approach to the gathering and reporting of feedback and complaints on FS delivery	24/06/2019
9	PS should consider quality accreditation for digital forensics in line with FSR recommendations, UK Forensic Strategy and wider good practice in order to support effective public performance reporting and assurance. Police Scotland	05/07/2018
Planning and Performance		
13	The SPA and PS should review and implement the new Crime Scene Attendance policy to support a national approach with a focus on maintaining quality of service to the public and assuring operational competence of officers undertaking scene examination	06/11/2017
17	The SPA and PS should implement an improvement planning process aligned within its strategic planning cycle and develop capability and capacity in applying the best practice tools and techniques for continuous improvement	06/07/2018
People		
19	The SPA should develop an enhanced staff and Union engagement approach within FS which includes the introduction of PDCs across all FS staff groups with immediate effect	06/07/2018

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Resources		
20	The SPA should develop a forensic services costing model with appropriate support and expertise to support demand management and future income generation	06/07/2018
21	The SPA should commission a review of EMS functionality and investment profile against business requirements and link process efficiency work into future EMS development and refinement	04/02/2020
22	PS should further consider the impact of i6 cancellation on FS and ensure that interfaces and provision of other business support systems are included in the development of their future ICT investment plans.	06/07/2018
23	PS should develop formal SLA for the delivery of corporate support services to FS, reflecting agreed service levels, performance measures, regular monitoring and Customer Relationship arrangements	04/02/2020

Appendix B – Recommendations in Progress




HMICS No	Recommendation	Timescales for Delivery	RAG/Date	October 2020 (FS Committee Update)
Leadership and Governance				
4	The SPA should review its partnership governance structures for FS and undertake a fundamental review of the MoU ensuring the process is thereafter undertaken on a regular basis with appropriate consultation with PS, COPFS and PIRC	End of March 2020 May 2020 October 2020 April 2021		This work is now incorporated into the FS 2026 Change Programme . This work is ongoing. Further engagement between FS/PS/COPFS took place in January 2021 with further review of draft MOU required. There is a separate paper being presented to the FS Committee for discussion on 3 February.
5	The SPA should review the senior management structure for FS	June 2021		Work on-going.
Management of Demand				
10	PS should review the role and capacity of Portal Gateway Managers to improve local liaison around investigative priorities and ensure greater involvement in tasking and co-ordination processes linked to national processes <i>Police Scotland</i>	Aug 2019 April 2020 TBC		Evidence submitted to HMICS- Further Evidence Required. No further update, this recommendation has significant inter dependencies with Recs 4 and 15, both of which are still ongoing.
11	The SPA and PS should implement a new decision making framework and appropriate guidance to support the prioritisation of forensic examinations. The implementation of this should be formally evaluated.	Full implementation 2020		Awaiting feedback on the evidence that was provided to HMICS in October 2020.
12	The SPA should work with PS and COPFS to develop capability and capacity within FS to systematically			Evidence submitted to HMICS (October 2020)



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	address failure demand	<p>March 2020</p> <p>Q3 20/21</p>		<p>A significant amount of evidence across various areas of Forensic Services has been submitted for consideration by HMICS. It has been proposed that this recommendation can be closed with the evidence that has been submitted.</p> <p>Continuous improvement is an ongoing activity within Forensic Services and is a key element of the Quality Management system – UKAS Accreditation.</p> <p>Awaiting feedback on the evidence that was provided to HMICS in October 2020.</p>
Planning and Process				
14	PS should work with the SPA to develop a national approach to productions management, storage and transportation of items seized for forensic examination	Full implementation 2020		<p>Evidence submitted to HMICS (October 2020)</p> <p>Further rollout of the Police Scotland Unifi system went live early October 2020 providing full visibility of production movement across Police Scotland/Forensic Services.</p> <p>It has been proposed that this recommendation can be closed with the evidence that has been submitted.</p> <p>Awaiting feedback on the evidence that was provided to HMICS in October 2020.</p>
15	The SPA and PS should implement the recommendations of the previous PS led Lean Six Sigma review	Dec 2019		The build / implementation of a developed standardised National ERF Submission Platform now sits within the Police Scotland Digitally Enabled Policing Programme, Core

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	Police Scotland	March 2020 June 2020 TBC		Operational Solutions (DEPP-COS) – National Productions Management Module. Increased challenges brought on by the pandemic has slowed the progress of this piece of work.
16	PS and the SPA should introduce processes to dynamically monitor and report on the caseload including backlogs within FS at both a national and local level	End August 2019 February 2020		Evidence Submitted to HMICS (October 2020) It has been proposed that this recommendation can be closed with the evidence that has been submitted. Awaiting feedback on the evidence that was provided to HMICS in October 2020.
18	The SPA should develop a transparent workforce and demand planning model for Forensic Services.	Q1 21/22		This work is now incorporated into the FS 2026 Change Programme . This is part of the operating model development. Aspects of this have been incorporated into the FS people plan 21/22. Time recording – Alternative time recording is currently on track for implementation.

Summary

Assuming HMICS close the recommendations which have been identified as proposed to close 79% of recommendations would be complete.

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HMICS recommendations now aligned to FS 2026 Change Programme
Business as Usual Activity

Complete
On Target and Under Management Control
At Risk or Late – But under management control
At Risk or Late – Not under management Control