

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	19 April 2021
Location	Via MS Teams
Title of Paper	Management Response to Internal Audit Report on Forensic Services Case Management
Presented By	Jennifer Muir
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To provide members with an update on the management response to the Internal Audit on Forensic Services Case Management.

1. BACKGROUND

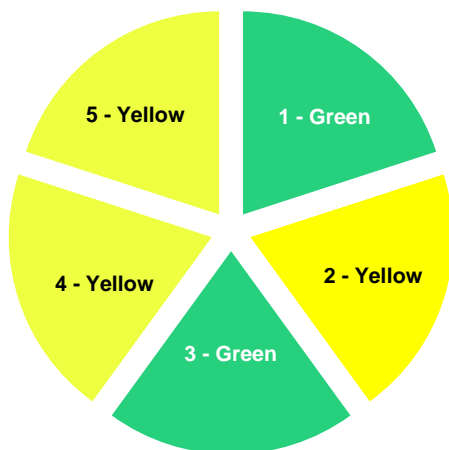
1.1 In October 2020, Azets undertook an audit of Forensic Services Case Management in line with their Internal Audit Annual Plan 2020/21 that is reported to the SPA Audit Assurance and Risk Committee (AARC).

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

2.1 The review focussed on the controls of forensic productions, including the communication and interaction Forensic Services have with Police Scotland and COPFS.

2.2 The following illustrates the areas of Forensic Services controls assessed by Azets and the RAG status;

Control Assessment



- 1. Appropriate and up-to-date evidence management policies and procedures are in place
- 2. Appropriate records are maintained of the receipt, storage and transport of evidence, including access for analysis purposes
- 3. Analysis requirements are clearly captured, with cases prioritised and allocated to an appropriate service and laboratory on a timely basis
- 4. There are robust arrangements for analysis, reporting and communication with Police Scotland, COPFS and the Lord Advocate that are adhered to
- 5. There is adequate Governance reporting on adherence to service level agreements and management of caseloads

2.3 The Green RAG status highlights there were no weaknesses identified and Azets reported that '*Control objective achieved - controls are adequate, effective and efficient.*'

2.4 The Azets report highlighted areas of good practice, including;

- That there is a suite of comprehensive Forensic Services SOPs for management of Productions
- The Evidence Management Systems (EMS) functionality to assign unique identification to productions that link to EMS case reference numbers and that also record Police incident or crime numbers
- The procedure and processes for the routing and prioritisation of forensic requests submitted by Police Scotland and COPFS
- Assurance and performance reporting to the Forensic Services Committee

2.5 The Yellow RAG status identified the areas requiring improvements and management action, with Azets reporting; '*Control objective achieved – no major weakness but scope for improvement*'.

2.6 The table below details the Azets recommendations, FS management response and status at time of reporting;

Area of Improvement	Recommendation	FS Management Response to Azets (Dec 2020)	Status (April 2021)
2.1 EMS Data Security Audits	<p>Forensic Services should carry out the audit process in line with the SOP.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the resources needed to complete these audits consistently.</p> <p>Including the results of these audits within management reporting would provide greater assurance that they are completed as required.</p>	<p>With the establishment of the Forensic System Support Team, Forensic Services will develop an audit plan for 2021/22 that will detail the audit scope, schedule, resource and assurance reporting requirements (Forensic Services Management System).</p>	<p style="background-color: #92D050;">Complete.</p> <p>Audit Plan 2021/22 published on Q Pulse and compliance to schedule will be monitored via FS Management System.</p> <p>In addition Auditor Training completed for Forensic System Support Staff to undertake audits</p>
4.1 Prioritisation and agreed timescales for casework	<p>Forensic Service should ensure that the setting of service standards and expected timescales are addressed in the revised MoU.</p> <p>The MoU should specify the service standards required in enough detail that these can be seen to be consistent with the business rules applied by the Forensic Service and effectively monitored.</p> <p>If greater flexibility is required, the MoU could specify a process</p>	<p>The collaborative development of the new MOU continues and will be presented to the Forensic Services Committee in May 2021.</p> <p>The MOU will set out services that are provided by Forensic Services to Police Scotland, COPFS and PIRC and will include standards in relation to timeliness for each service; capacity of FS aligned to the services provided;</p>	<p style="background-color: #FFD700;">Ongoing.</p> <p>Recommendation noted for FS Committee and updates to SPA AARC will follow on approval of the MOU by FS Committee</p>

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Area of Improvement	Recommendation	FS Management Response to Azets (Dec 2020)	Status (April 2021)
	by which service standards are agreed and reviewed, to allow for these to be revisited without revising the MoU as a whole.	how performance will be reported to partners via relevant governance groups; roles and mutual responsibilities of all partners; communication and processes for escalation, The MOU Review process and arrangements for changes to SLA including new developments or variations to agreements and Business Continuity arrangements.	
5.1 Action and Decision Logs	<p>Proceedings of Governance groups should, at minimum, clearly record decisions taken and actions agreed.</p> <p>We recommend that the FPOG and FPIG retain minutes of discussion at least to a level of detail which records the result of all agenda items and papers presented (for example, whether they are noted, approved, if a follow up action is agreed upon, etc).</p> <p>Action and decisions log should be maintained and reflect the most up-to-date meetings</p>	The recommendation will be highlighted to Chairs of FPIG and FPOG meetings.	Complete. Recommendation raised as items of note to Chairs and Secretariats at FPIG (April 2021) and FPOG (March 2021)

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this paper.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are potential reputational implications for Forensic Services assurance activity if the management actions are not completed.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no direct community impact implications associated with this paper.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper

RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee Members are requested to note the paper.