



Agenda Item 8

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	28 September 2023
Location	Merchants House, Glasgow
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Director's report
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update members on the recent key activities across Forensic Services.

1. Updates

Budget

- 1.1. Forensic Services are on target to deliver a balanced budget in line with the funding awarded for 2023-24. Forensic Services have created an Efficiencies Plan to deliver the savings necessary to fund the investment to deliver our New Operating Model. The timing of the roll out of the New Operating Model has been reworked to ensure we will only take stages forward as and when we have the sustainable resources to do so.
- 1.2. While there has been an overspend in the current financial year - from the need to extend outsourcing for Post Mortem Toxicology - this has been mitigated by underspends, such as staff vacancies, which mean we are currently forecasting a break even budget for 2023-24.

New Operating Model

- 1.3. There has been extensive work delivered as part of the Forensic Services New Operating Model in the past few months with the new ways of working for Search and Recovery Scenes (previously Scene Examination) rolled out in July. Stage 1 of the interim staff structure was introduced from July with Stage 2 being delivered from 7th August. The new role profiles were introduced from April and implemented for the vast majority of staff in August.
- 1.4. The new Search & Recovery Capability Team Managers completed their initial training and took up their roles in July. The New Research, Development and Innovation structure is also being developed and there is ongoing Management Training throughout Forensic Services.

Performance in 2022-23 exceeded demand significantly

- 1.5. Forensic Services delivered significant performance improvements during the previous financial year 2022-23 as a result of investment and change, planned and implemented over the past few years. This year was the first in which output exceeded demand significantly in Forensic Services as was reflected in the year-end report to the SPA Forensic Services Committee last month.

Criminal Toxicology

- 1.6. An additional UKAS visit to Criminal Toxicology in Edinburgh took place on 5th July. Assessors commented on the noticeable difference and clear progression seen since their previous visit in March. They have agreed there is no longer a requirement for monthly reporting to UKAS and this can be reduced to reporting by exception only. There was also agreement that no further additional meetings or visits will be required until the annual regular visit in November.

Memorandum of Understanding

- 1.7. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the SPA, Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service has now been signed by the Police Scotland and the Director of Forensic Services. The MoU was published at the SPA Forensic Services Committee last month and is currently going through the internal governance at the COPFS before final sign off.
- 1.8. The updated MoU will ensure the effective delivery of forensic services within the Scottish criminal justice system and outlines the arrangements between Forensic Services, Police Scotland and the COPFS in respect of the provision of forensic services by the Authority to the Service Users.

Murder conviction

- 1.9. Connor Gibson, 20, was convicted of murdering his 16-year-old sister Amber Gibson on 26 July 2023 at the High Court in Glasgow. Another man, Stephen Corrigan, 45, was also found guilty of attempting to defeat the ends of justice and Breach of the Peace. These convictions followed extensive evidence led by Forensic Services scientists including marks found on the victim's clothes and analysis of DNA samples.
- 1.10. Welcoming the murder conviction, Detective Chief Superintendent Paul Livingstone, Head of Major Crime at Police Scotland said: "This was a challenging and complex investigation involving a range of specialist officers from within Police Scotland working closely with our partners in forensic services, all of whom I would pay tribute to for their professionalism and dedication whilst carrying out their work."

Fingerprint collaborative work

- 1.11. Collaborative work between Forensic Services, Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science, the University of Twente, and the Netherlands Forensic Institute was highlighted at the EU International Association for Identification Annual Conference in Lisbon in June.
- 1.12. At the conference, which was promoted internationally across media and social media, Forensic Services Senior Fingerprint Examiners co-presented a workshop on "*Computer-Assisted Consensus among Scottish Fingerprint Experts*".

Fire Investigators Research and Training

- 1.13. The Chair of the Forensic Services Committee joined colleagues and partners at the opening of the new Research and training Facility in Portlethen, Aberdeenshire, on 6th June 2023. This is significant milestone for this project which is a collaboration with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science, and the Danish Police Special Crimes Unit.
- 1.14. This innovative project uses photogrammetric recording of scenes to allow them to be reconstructed into Virtual Reality. This cutting-edge approach ensures that training opportunities are captured, recorded and can be used for many years to come - ensuring that future Fire Investigation training will be secure in Scotland.

National TV drugs special report

- 1.15. ITV News interviewed Barry James, a Forensic Services drugs Team Manager based at the Scottish Crime Campus, for an extended news special about how the strength of drugs on our streets has increased over the past decades. Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie from Police Scotland was also interviewed for the news special, which was shown on prime time evening news throughout the UK.

Refreshed SPA website

- 1.16. Forensic Services have been working closely with colleagues in SPA Corporate to update the Forensic Services website pages on the refreshed SPA website, which went live early in September. The new site includes information about: our highly-trained Forensic Services staff and the senior management team; the services we deliver; our unique crime-scene-to-court model; the DNA database;

accreditation and quality; the Biometrics Code of Practice; Defence Access Policy; and the Forensic Strategy.

Forensic Services Excellence Awards

1.17. I look forward to welcoming several members of the Authority to the Forensic Services Excellence Awards tomorrow (29th September) which celebrate and recognise the excellence and innovation colleagues deliver to justice service partners for the people of Scotland.

1.18. The awards were judged by key partners, who will also attend the ceremony, and there are seven categories of awards:

- Greatest Contribution to Forensic Science Award
- Service Improvement Award
- Team of the Year Award
- Science and Innovation Award
- Staff Member of the Year Award
- Wellbeing Award
- Director's Award

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

3. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

5. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

6. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no social implications in this report.

7. COMMUNITY IMPACT

7.1 There are no community implications in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the information contained within this report.