

# RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE FORUM

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Last Updated December 12th 2023

# PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Forum will enable Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (including Forensic Services) to jointly engage with key stakeholders on the value, benefits and impact of research and evidence on policing policy and practice.

The Forum will promote the contribution that policing data can make to strategic improvement activity and the delivery of the [Vision for Justice in Scotland](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2022/02/vision-justice-scotland/documents/vision-justice-scotland-2022/vision-justice-scotland-2022/govscot%3Adocument/vision-justice-scotland-2022.pdf?forceDownload=true), and will promote the commissioning of activities that help to shape future policy on Scottish policing.

# OUTCOME-BASED AIMS

The Joint Forum has agreed the following **four outcomes** for the Policing System:

1. The commissioning of future research benefits from enhanced governance, improved coordination and specialist, technical advice regarding methodologies and data availability and access.
2. Commissioned research is reviewed, its impact understood, and evidence of effective, evidence-based policing in Scotland is being championed and communicated to a wider audience.
3. Knowledge exchange activities (seminars, webinars, RoundTables etc.) are used to enhance engagement on an agreed programme of work and set of strategic research priorities for the Forum, with reach across networks expanded.
4. External research funding opportunities are identified, influenced and utilised, aligned to the agreed strategic research priorities of the Forum.

The Forum will review its progress on an annual basis through a self-evaluation exercise by the Membership.

The Forum will:

* Discuss and agree strategic research and evidence priorities for the policing system in Scotland, seeking to add value to existing activities in individual organisations.
* Respond to insights arising from the analysis and assessment of horizon scanning findings that cover: the policing system as a whole, new and emerging legislation and its impact for policing; and strategic change across the wider public sector.
* Consider and advise on the strategic guidance for the use of policing data for research purposes, noting individual projects will be subject to the relevant governance within Police Scotland, SPA and Forensic Services.
* To agree the sponsorship of system wide discussions, workshops and other activities including key stakeholders to discuss and influence future policy on policing.
* Consider the outcomes and recommendations of research projects and programmes from across the policing system.
* Discuss and provide feedback on emergent potential research projects and advise on strategic fit and to identify ethical human rights, privacy and other issues of public interest.

**MEMBERSHIP**

The Forum be Co-Chaired by a member of the SPA Board and a member of the Police Scotland Executive Leadership Board; with members drawn from relevant public, third, academic and private sectors partners. Attendees will include research portfolio holders from Police Scotland, SPA Corporate and SPA Forensic Services. The Forum may also include co-opted members selected for their expertise in areas as directed by the Chairs.

**Appendix A** outlines the current members of the Forum as of October 2022.

The Chair of the Scottish Police Authority and the Chief Constable have standing invitations to attend meetings.

# SECRETARIAT

SPA Corporate will provide appropriate support to the Forum, through the Strategy and Performance Team. The Secretariat will be responsible for all arrangements associated with forum meetings and agreed events of the Forum.

# FORUM PROCEDURES AND STANDING ORDERS

The procedures for the Forum are as follows:

1. The Forum will hold at least **4** pre-scheduled meetings per year on an approximate quarterly cycle (e.g. October, January, April and June). This will be supplemented with additional ad-hoc meetings dependent upon the nature and extent of the Forum’s business.

1. Meetings will be held virtually by default.
2. The quorum for the Forum will be two Members including one of the Co-Chairs.
3. **21 calendar days** prior to each meeting the Chairs will determine, in consultation with others as necessary, the items that are to be included on the agenda for that meeting. Any items received after this date will be accepted at the Chairs discretion. Final papers for each meeting must be submitted to the secretariat no later than **7 working days** prior to the meeting. Papers received after this date will be accepted at the Chairs discretion.
4. Papers for meetings will be issued **at least 3 working days** prior to a meeting of the Forum. Papers will require to be submitted on an agreed template.
5. There will be **standing items** (in the form of a written update) from core Forum members at each meeting, updating on: ongoing knowledge exchange and commissioning activities, research and evidence priorities, and emerging issues, including horizon scanning findings.
6. A draft rolling action, decision log and minutes will be provided to co-Chairs for approval no later than **5 working days** after each meeting.  Co-Chairs will be given **10 working days** to approve Minutes, Actions and Decisions prior to being circulated to all Forum Members, noting that Minutes they are still subject to formal approval at the next Forum meeting.
7. Following each meeting, the agenda, approved minutes, and action/decision logs will be published on the SPA website. This Terms of Reference will also be published on the SPA website.
8. The SPA will summarise key highlights from the Forum’s work programme in quarterly newsletters, publishing this on its website and disseminating to interested parties via a mailing list.

# APPENDIX A

As of December 2023, organisational/role membership of the Forum is as follows:

**The Scottish Police Authority**

* Authority Member (as Co-Chair)
* Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)

**Forensic Services**

* Director of Forensic Services

**Police Scotland**

* DCC Professionalism, Digital and Transformation (as Co-Chair)
* Director of Strategy and Analysis

**External**

* Scottish Institute for Policing Research (Director)
* Scottish Government (Head of Justice Analytical Services)
* Scottish Government Police Division
* College of Policing (Knowledge Exchange Manager)

Consideration to be given to inviting as contributors on an *ad hoc* basis:

* Police Foundation
* Home Office
* NPCC
* APCC
* PSNI
* NIPB
* COPFS
* HMICS
* Policing Authority (Ireland)
* MOPAC
* COSLA

The Forum is supported by a Secretariat provided by the SPA Head of Strategy and Performance (members of this team will be in attendance at meetings).