

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	3 rd February 2021
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Planning
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Scientific Head of Function
Recommendation to Members	For information
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update members on progress on the development of a Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The purpose of a strategic workforce plan is to ensure the workforce of an organisation is the right size, with the right skills and competencies, organised in the right way, within a budget that is affordable, to deliver the best possible service.

1.2 The Forensic Services 2026 strategy sets out the strategic objectives of the organisation in three phases of delivery. Underpinning this strategy is a programme of work that has been developed to achieve the outcomes, and to ensure the alignment of delivery against other key stakeholders and partners involved in the delivery of justice in Scotland.

1.3 Forensic Science is delivered by professional skilled scientific staff supported by a range of operational and business support staff. The scientific support provided to Police Scotland, COPFS and PIRC can start at the scene of the crime and follow through the justice process to the Court and the provision of expert witness evidence. It is a complex process with many touchpoints and interdependencies with different organisations.

1.4 Critical to the development of a strategic workforce plan for Forensic Services is the development of a new operating model for the organisation, that reflects the changing environment in which it operates, delivering improvement in service delivery and flexibility with the health safety and wellbeing of our staff at the heart.

1.5 In addition to the new operating model three other projects in the Forensic 2026 programme, Core Operating System, Access to Laboratory Services and Deployment of Scene Examiners are critical to ensure efficient and effective services in the future. In particular the Core Operating System project has significant benefits to productivity which allow flexibility to account for future changes in demand for services.

1.6 The ability of Forensic Services to predict future demand is hampered by the availability of good quality management information and a lack of joined up demand planning across different stakeholders.

1.7 Police Scotland have adopted the Six-Step Methodology to Integrated Workforce Planning, in keeping with the recommendations of Audit Scotland in 'Scotland's Public Sector Workforce: Good practice guide'.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

2.1. There are a number of ongoing projects within Forensic Services that will add to the development of the strategic workforce plan, these include;

- The new Operating Model for Forensic Services

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- The revised Memorandum of Understanding
- Development of value measures to minimise failure demand
- The refresh of the Forensic Services strategy and alignment with the Joint Strategy for Policing in Scotland
- The Forensic Services People Plan

2.2. In addition to the projects noted, the impact of the COVID pandemic has changed the volume and type of demand for Forensic Services and also impacted on the efficiency of the organisation. These impacts are both positive and negative, it is imperative that the positive changes made in response to the pandemic are integrated into business as usual and that the negative impacts are reduced and eliminated over time.

2.3 The new Operating Model for Forensic Services is due to be fully implemented by 2023. In delivering this project there has been a requirement to develop a detailed and complex data model of current services that aligns all analytical processes and scientific competencies/roles, against the delivery of different types of forensic science. This model allows the organisation, for the first time, to understand how changes in demand for services will impact on the skills, competencies, working patterns and location of staff within the organisation. This will be the basis of the strategic workforce plan.

2.4 Whilst the Operating Model project provides the tools to understand the make up of the workforce based on a particular demand, it does not provide any detail on demand for future services. There is a requirement to undertake a strategic review of future demand, taking into account the newly published Police Scotland Strategic Workforce Plan presented to the Authority in January 21.

2.5 Availability of good quality data which can be analysed in sufficient detail will cause some challenges to the demand planning that is required. In order to facilitate this the project to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Forensic Service Provision will be utilised to look at previous data to identify trends in demand for different types of Forensic Science.

2.6 The revised MOU also includes a detailed service catalogue which allows a forensic case to be broken down into the products or services that are required to deliver it. For example a sexual assault case may have products associated with searching for bodyfluids, DNA analysis, Toxicology analysis and provision of a court report. Our workforce plan must allow a more detailed assessment of future demand, not just in numbers of cases or types of offences but also allow the distribution of products to be assessed.

2.7 Any workforce plan will mature over time as the data develops. In particular there remains an outstanding requirement to be able to undertake activity recording at task level within Forensic Services, due to the lack of

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adequate systems to capture this data. This was pursued as part of a Time Recording project however this element had to be abandoned in 2020 due to the lack of any suitable system that would meet the requirements of the organisation. This has now been captured in the Core Operating System project requirements and will be available on implementation of this new system, pending approval of the full business case.

2.8 The future structure of the organisation has been developed within the Operating Model project and this assesses the skills mix, roles, working patterns and utilisation of staff. The new proposed organisation will work differently to improve flexibility and efficiency ensuring that we have the right people in the right place at the right time.

2.9 Critically the new model strengthens the support provided to staff to ensure focus on health safety and wellbeing, flexible and modern working practices and also addresses the current issues with acute pressure due to workload. It will also develop career pathways for staff supporting their professional development in line with the requirements that will be set out within the strategic workforce plan.

2.10 The Forensic Services People Plan has now been agreed by the People Board and there are a range of tasks within this plan that are relevant to the development of the workforce plan. The planned timescales for each activity will be incorporated alongside the anticipated benefits of each.

2.11 In order for the Forensic Service Strategic Workforce Plan to be completed it is proposed that the following stages of work are undertaken;

- Full Business Case for the New Operating Model – presented to Forensic Services Committee in Feb 2021
- Future demand planning as part of the revised MOU– due to be presented to the Forensic Services Committee in April 2021
- The wider outcome of the MOU and the final agreement is also critical to understand future arrangements for proactive prioritisation of demand for services
- A full review of the new Police Scotland Strategic Workforce Plan presented in January 21 and an assessment of impact for future forensic service provision
- The strategic workforce plan can then be completed and presented to the Forensic Services Committee in July 2021

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. There are no additional financial implications associated with this paper until the workforce plan has been completed and an assessment undertaken.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Failure to implement a comprehensive plan will impact on the health safety and wellbeing of staff within Forensic Services.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There may be reputational implications of this paper if it is not possible to undertake quality demand forecasting with key partners.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1. There may be longer term community impact implications associated with this paper should the Forensic Services not be able to respond to future changes in demand due to a poor or inadequate workforce plan.

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

Members are requested to note the progress with the development of a Strategic Workforce Plan for Forensic Services.