

FORENSIC SCIENCE REGULATOR NEWSLETTER No 3

12 September 2007

Welcome to the third of our newsletters intended to keep stakeholders informed of our progress in establishing the office of the Forensic Science Regulator.

Please feel free to distribute this to your colleagues.

Our objectives

Our objectives remain as set out in Newsletter number 1:

- ❖ To establish the office of the Forensic Science Regulator.
- ❖ To establish a Forensic Science Advisory Council.
- ❖ To draw up a plan for the work of the Regulator and FSAC in 2008-09, approved by Ministers.
- ❖ Subject to agreement by Ministers, to establish a reconstituted Forensic Pathology Council to oversee the provision of forensic pathology services throughout the UK.
- ❖ To manage such priority work, relevant to the Regulator function in 2007-08, as can be achieved within available resources.

Update on progress against specific deliverables

Recruit a suitably qualified and experienced Regulator, in post by 31 March 2008.

As many of you will have already seen, the advertisement for the Forensic Science Regulator appeared in The Sunday Times on 9 September and in The Times and the Guardian a few days later. It has also appeared in some of the ethnic media and in media targeting disabled persons. It can also be accessed on the websites for the Appointments Commission (see http://www.appointments.org.uk/view_vac.asp?ID=1694) and the Cabinet Office and via this Newsletter on the Home Office site. Peter Ablett has also very kindly inserted it on the CRFP web site. We hope that we have ensured that the advertisement will be read by as wide a group as possible in order to attract a good selection of suitably qualified applicants.

As reported earlier, the Interviewing Panel will comprise Paul Wiles (Home Office Chief Scientific Advisor), Peter Neyroud (Chief Executive of the National Policing Improvement Agency), Jane Beaumont, Director of Accreditation at UKAS and an Independent Assessor. We intend that the recruitment process will be completed by the end of October. We hope, subject to any period of notice, to have the Regulator in place by January 2008.

Establish a FSAC, operating to advise the Interim Regulator, by 15 November 2007, with any expert groups required to address the initial work programme in operation by 15 December.

Proposals for establishing the Forensic Science Advisory Council will shortly be presented for approval to Ministers with a view to having a Council up and running by mid November as planned. This follows a very useful round of consultation with the Stakeholder Forum, as a result of which the proposals have been amended: for example to include a lay member. We hope to publish the plans in the next Newsletter.

Establish a Stakeholder Forum to advise the Interim Regulator, by 16 July 2007.

Achieved. The Stakeholder Forum is up and running and providing a very useful source of advice for the interim Regulator in setting up the new operation.

An Ethics Group for the National DNA Database (NDNAD), functioning by 3 September.

The newly established NDNAD ethics group met for the first time on 3rd September. Following a morning of induction briefings from the Interim Regulator, National DNA custodian and Custodian Management Unit and the Police and Crime Standards Unit, the group discussed its approach to its remit and determined the priorities for its work programme. We hope to include a piece on the Ethics Group in the next newsletter.

Subject to Ministerial approval, establish a reconstituted Forensic Pathology Council, by 31 October.

The interim Regulator is in discussion with the National Policing Improvement Agency and stakeholders about the proposals for a Forensic Pathology Council.

Review arrangements for oversight of the NDNAD, particularly those relating to managing standard setting and monitoring by 31 August

Outline proposals have been approved by the Project Board. Discussion on the details will now take place with the NDNAD Custodian and an implementation plan will be presented to the NDNAD Steering Board meeting in early November.

Carry out a landscape survey of existing standards and draw up a prioritised list of areas requiring standards, by 15 October 2007.

This is now a workstrand of the contract reported below under "Define standards methodology"

Define standards methodology, proposal by 2 October 2007

We shall shortly be selecting consulting firms to bid for a contract to produce a comprehensive manual of procedures and guidance setting out how the Regulator will identify the need for standards; arrange for them to be drawn up; implement them and monitor them, using existing channels as far as possible. This work will include:

- i) Undertaking a landscape survey of the relevant existing quality standards*
- ii) Identifying priorities for regulation*

iii) Producing a manual of standards development and regulation

Authorised analysts, determine implementation plan by 20 December 2007

A new approach to authorisation has been proposed by the FRSU in agreement with other Home Office Units. This proposal has been sent to a number of interested parties as part of a consultation exercise.

Please contact FSRU if you would like a copy of the proposal.

Studies, proposals and standards completed for a number of high priority areas (details to be determined).

This work is ongoing.

A business plan for 2008 – 09, approved by the Minister, by 31 March 2008.

We shall be starting this work later in the year.

Produce proposals for future funding arrangements, by 1 December 2007.

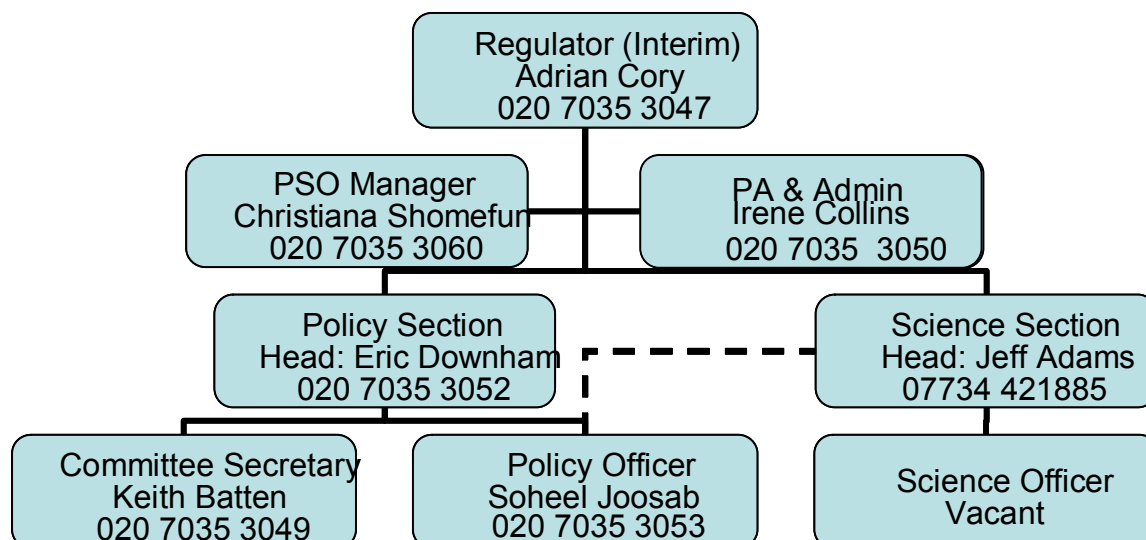
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Connections

On 7 September the Interim Regulator addressed a gathering of German Federal and State Police Officers and Criminal Justice Officials organised by LGC to mark the opening of a New Forensic Science Laboratory in Cologne. Adrian Cory described the role of the Regulator in the context of the UK's successful record in harnessing DNA profiling in the detection and prosecution of crime, and the value of the NDNAD to policing.

Changes in the Team

The new organisation chart is printed below. Irene Collins (the Regulator's PA and Team support officer) started on Thursday 23 August.



Readers may find the Forensic Science Regulation Unit's page on the Home Office website of interest. The address is <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/organisation/directorate-search/crcsg/ppod/fspu/>

Thanks

Many thanks for the feedback received on our first Newsletter. Please feel free to contact the editor with any comments or suggestions for content. His email is keith.batten2@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

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Forthcoming publication dates

We plan to continue to publish the Newsletter on a regular basis.

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