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| Event History

Policy owned by Investigations**Forensics****1. Policy Purpose and key drivers**

The Forensics Department primary objective is to ensure the objective and effective delivery of forensic strategy throughout the investigative and justice process for the communities of Staffordshire and beyond. The purpose being to deliver these forensics services in a timely, proportionate, reliable and cost efficient manner.

This policy, and associated procedures, provides an over-arching set of principles and guidance for users and practitioners of the forensics services utilised in policing.

Those principles include:

- detecting and reducing priority crime
- rapidly dealing with offending risk, i.e. identification and early evidence to support early guilty plea and offender management
- being visible to our communities
- ensuring the service provided is local and efficient
- developing our team, ensuring competence and ongoing continuous professional development
- seeking continuous improvement in practice
- supporting specialist investigations and delivering enhanced services when required
- preventing quality failures and ensuring evidence is robust and fair
- delivering early justice and efficiencies
- ensuring value for money

Aims

To keep our communities safe and reassured by delivering the highest level of personal service to members of the public and our colleagues by :-

- Dealing with what matters to the communities, by providing a locally delivered service to investigate crime and disorder each day, whilst ensuring forensic strategy is appropriate and cost effective in each case.
- Prevent crime and disorder by providing rapid and specialised forensics investigations, early and robust justice and victim focused outcomes.
- Providing an outstanding service by upholding a culture of continuous improvement both in professional development and practice, whilst maintaining quality standards and accreditation to international and regulatory quality standards.

Scope

The Forensics Department provides investigators and colleagues within Staffordshire Police, and also from other forces with:

- specialist advice to set forensic strategy, maximise evidential opportunities

- and achieve better value in cases
- strategies to search for, identify, recover and analyse physical and digital evidence
- development, classification, comparison and identification of digital evidence, marks, traces and impressions
- early and effective case management through use of criminal procedure rules
- expert interpretation of findings and guidance to investigators and other members of the Prosecution team
- evidential and court reporting
- photographic and electronic image recording, processing and court presentation
- good practice guidance, training and development to ensure best evidence is realised in cases

Statement

Forensics in Staffordshire Police is a key strand in the delivery of our Communities First Strategy. We aim to keep our communities safe and reassured by delivering the highest level of personal service to members of the public and our colleagues at every interaction.

To guarantee compliance the Forensics Department, under the direction of the Head of Forensics, is committed to providing a quality service for the effective examination of scenes of incidents, cases and exhibits to support timely and quality investigations.

To achieve this we will ensure that Forensics Managers:

- work face to face with investigators, colleagues and staff to promote excellent working relationships, forensic practice and problem solving techniques
- ensure people and practice are not unduly influenced by prosecution bias or other issues that may impact on the robustness or integrity of Forensic intelligence and evidence
- regularly review and seek continuous improvement of Forensics staff, capability, techniques and procedures to enhance the service we provide to customers and our community
- support staff in the design, documentation and delivery of effective forensic strategies for each and every case that we are involved in
- ensure when within Staffordshire Police Forensics:
 - all forensic examinations are delivered using recognised, validated and robust techniques
 - All cases and exhibits are handled securely and with integrity
 - examinations, exhibit handling and retention are conducted in line with both policy and legislation
 - examinations are conducted in safe working environments or under safe working conditions, with appropriate risk assessments and measures in place to mitigate risks to acceptable levels.
 - procedures reflect the best and any locally validated practice to maximise the agreed forensic and examination strategy
 - staff are competent and qualified to deliver those techniques to the

ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 9001:2008 and other relevant quality standards and procedures e.g. Forensic Regulator's Codes of Practice

- all Forensic staff and service users embrace and comply with the ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 9001:2008 standards.

Application

This policy and its supporting procedures are immediately effective and apply to all police officers, police staff and those within the wider police family including those working voluntarily or under any employment contract to the Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Related Documents

Links to related documents:

[Forensics - Digital Unit \(Service Provision\) \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Digital Unit \(Submission through to dispatch\) \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - DNA \(Service provision\) \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Examination of Motor Vehicles - Burnt Out Vehicles \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Exhibit Packaging & Preservation \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Footwear Submission \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Footwear Unit \(Service provision\) \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Forensic Investigation, Retention and Disposal of Exhibits and Documentation \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensic Investigator - Out of Hours Call Out \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Quality Manual \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Recovery Unit \(Service provision\) \(Procedure\)](#)
[Forensics - Submissions \(Policy\)](#)

Gatekeeper - the Author suggested the following Procedure document(s) to link to.

Relevant Dates and Review Period

Effective Date:	14/02/2019
Review Date:	14/02/2020
Review Frequency:	Annually

Policy Basis and Implications

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| 2. Legal Basis: | Health & Safety, PACE, RIPA, MIRSAP, CPIA, Disclosure, POFA, ACPO Guidance e.g. Digital, Justice Legislation, Criminal Procedure Rules, Criminal Practice Direction, Sentencing Guidelines & Case Law |
| 3. Management of Police Information (MoPI): | <p>MoPI Policing Purpose:
Bringing offenders to justice</p> <p>MoPI Review, Retention and Disposal addressed as follows:
The RRD of exhibits and paperwork is categorised in relation to crime time and evidence type,</p> |
| 4. Associated Benefits: | <p>Policy sets out the strategic direction and the intent to deliver the forensics' contribution towards keeping our communities safe and re-assured. Benefits of this will be realised at both case and county level. They will be measured and findings utilised to seek continuous improvement.</p> <p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · maintained or improved victim / community satisfaction in a cost reduction environment · improved quality of investigations · earlier offender identification and detections · crime reduction · safeguarding victims · improved success rates, i.e. more for less |

- improved forensic impact in both the custody and prosecution phases
- reduced case discontinuance and cracked trials
- better utilisation of staff
- improved staff satisfaction

Measures include:

- customer satisfaction, community, investigators and judicial
- contribution to primary and total detections
- timeliness of cases and examinations
- success rates e.g. DNA or digital tools
- proportionality factors e.g. cost per examination or case, the number of cases handled effectively using Stage 1 SFR versus those where disputes require further expert evidence i.e. Stage 2 SFR
- cross skilling and flexible utilisation of staff
- Forensics staff CPD rates
- staff satisfaction surveys

5. Consultation:

Following consultation with the Forensics Senior Management Team, there will be a full and meaningful consultation with the Police Federation and Unison. Both Trade Unions have been successfully consulted.

6. Financial Implications:

Existing funding at this stage. It is anticipated that the continued implementation of quality standards across Forensics will require investment in both staff, accommodation, equipment, processes and accreditation. The cost of this will be subject to continuous review by the Quality Services, Performance and Training Supervisor (Referred to as Quality Manager throughout relevant policy, procedures and guidance)

7. Human Resources / Training:

All staff will complete the relevant initial & refresher training for their role to ensure they remain competent in their technical skills. The full details of essential and mandatory training for each role is maintained by the Quality Manager.

8. Associated Policy:

N/A

FOI, Human Rights and Equality Impact Assessment Indicators

FOIA:	Release to Public		
ECHR:	Compliant		
EIA:	Compliant	Compliant with Code of Ethics:	Yes

Indexing

Categories: Forensics

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