

## **FORENSIC SCIENCE REGULATOR NEWSLETTER No 8**

**27 March 2008**

Welcome to the eighth in our series of newsletters designed to keep stakeholders up to date with progress in establishing the office of the Forensic Science Regulator.

Please feel free to distribute this to your colleagues.

### **The Forensic Science Regulator Business Plan 2008/09 – 2010/11**

The Business Plan agreed with the Forensic Science Advisory Council has now been approved by Home Office Ministers. A copy of the Business Plan is available on our website (see link below). The Business Plan describes the purpose and role of the Regulator, governance, structure and costs.

#### **Purpose of the Regulator**

To support and enhance the contribution made by suppliers of forensic science services to the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System.

#### **Objectives for 2008/09**

These are based on the need to establish the processes used by the Regulator and an initial assessment of risk to the CJS of forensic science processes.

- To develop a Manual of Regulation
- To undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of the forensic processes
- To establish the User Requirement for forensic science services from the perspective of courts
- To establish overarching validation standards
- To provide advice on use of forensic DNA profiling
- To create standards governing the production of digital forensics
- To establish the appropriate vehicle for achieving quality standards in forensic pathology
- To undertake ad-hoc special reviews
- To review of the operation of the regulatory function and test its effectiveness

#### **Additional Objectives**

- To establish quality standards which should apply to forensic science services delivered in-house by police forces
- To develop an up-to-date map of the forensic market
- To provide a new focus for handling complaints about the provision of forensic services

#### **Outline Objectives for 2009/10 and 2010/11**

- Set standards for forensic imaging
- Set standards for Scenes of Crime Investigation
- Together with the CPS, deliver guidance on what obligations specialist witnesses must meet
- Consider setting standards for accident investigation
- Set standards for forensic telephone analysis
- Provide guidance to the judiciary, courts and the CPS about quality standards applicable to expert witnesses.

### **Update on progress against objectives**

- A Forensic Science Advisory Council (FSAC) has been established.
- A new Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), the National DNA Database<sup>®</sup> (NDNAD) Ethics Group, has been established.
- Two specific reviews have been undertaken relating to the application of forensic DNA profiling technology. Additionally, a review of low template DNA analysis was carried out.
- Two conferences were held during the course of the year: one for police force scientific support directors and managers and one for key stakeholders.
- Three foundation projects have been commissioned with the aim of providing a sound basis for the future work of the Regulator:
- A review of the quality standards landscape, covering applicable standards, guidance and relevant law has been completed
- Research with key stakeholders, supported by the administration of a questionnaire to a wide range of those involved in the supply and use of forensic science services.
- Work has commenced on the production of a “Manual of Regulation” that will build upon the review of the quality standards landscape and provide the means by which the work programme will be delivered.

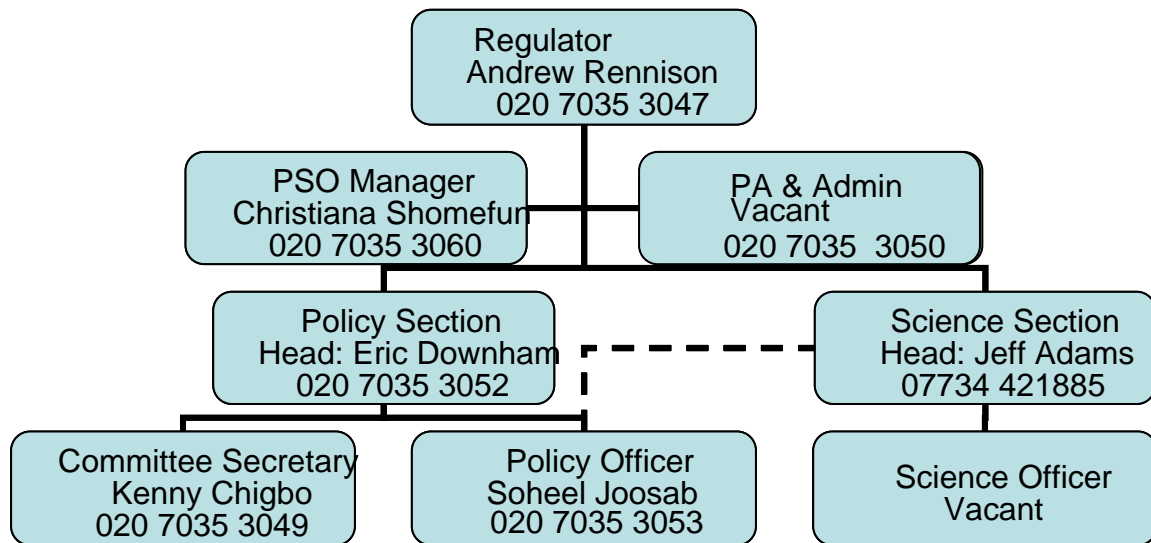
### **Resources**

The Regulator has a budget of £1.2m and 8 members of staff.

### **Risks**

There is a risk that resources available may not be enough to deliver against the expectations of stakeholders. The Regulator may also be unable to engage with the required specialists in order to deliver on objectives and undertake reviews. Ensuring such activity is undertaken by new or existing delivery partners would be a way of mitigating the risks.

## The Team



Readers will find the Forensic Science Regulation Unit's page on the Home Office website at <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/operational-policing/forensic-science-regulator/>

The page includes back copies of the Forensic Science Regulator's Newsletter and other useful information.

## Thanks

Many thanks for the feedback received on earlier Newsletters. Please feel free to contact the editor with any comments or suggestions for content. His email is [kenny.chigbo@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:kenny.chigbo@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

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