

Streamlined Forensic Reporting (SFR)

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Overview

Happy New Year to all of those working within the SFR world!

The attached briefing is designed to give you a quick update on progress to date and bring you up to speed with a few national issues. It's clear that many of you across the country are keen to implement SFR and the National SFR Board are pleased with the positive approach taken by areas and partners. Keep up the good work and please get in touch if you wish to discuss any issues.

Area Implementation

The National SFR Board comprises key criminal justice agencies and stakeholders supportive of implementing SFR across the country. The Board met in December 2012 to review area plans to implement SFR by the end of March 2013. It was agreed that a phased approach introducing the different evidence types is acceptable and that if areas have **implemented Fingerprint Identifications and DNA Match reports by 31st March 2013**, they would be considered as having met the initial implementation target.

Forces are encouraged to work on a regional basis where possible to ensure consistency of approach. Equally, it is important to limit initial implementation to the more simple cases while the CJS, forces and forensic providers become accustomed to the process. However, forces are encouraged to put plans in place to extend SFR to other evidence types as appropriate.

The Project Team will be in touch with area SPOCs shortly to ensure they are aware of the phased introduction and to request updates regarding progress.

If you would like any further information contact sarah.virr@lincs.pnn.police.uk



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Section 10 Criminal Justice Act 1967 Explained

The following is a reiteration of the SFR principles regarding initial admissibility from Karen Squibb-Williams, CPS Strategic Policy Advisor.

*“CPS Areas will receive clarification that the SFR1 is a vital “enabling” tool and not a statement; the SFR1 enables the prosecution to require the defence to comply with their duties under 3.2(a) – **the early identification of issues**, in a manner that complies with the obligation upon the prosecution team under 3.2(e) – **evidence to be presented in the shortest, clearest way**. There are only two alternative results from providing the defence with the SFR:*

- 1) that the defence respond by identifying the issues, thus generating production of an SFR 2 by the prosecution team, which of course is in s9 MCA format or would lead to a full evaluative approach;*
- 2) that the defence sign (or agree to sign) a s10 CJA admission to the facts contained in the SFR1.*

It is important to avoid turning the SFR1 into a s9 statement as this removes the enabling function and leaves us in the position we have

always been in which is the ‘wait and see’ game. It is vital that the Prosecution Team secure either a s10 CJA admission or identification of the issues by the defence.

Some CPS lawyers are under the impression that by adding s9 to the SFR1 they save themselves the administrative burden of drafting the s10 CJA admission. However the SFR process is dependant on securing a s10 admission to the forensic report as this prevents later “defence tactics”. This is one of the reasons the Senior Presiding Judge supports the process as it either commits the parties to a position early in the process, or the absence of such an agreement must be replaced by identification of the issues.

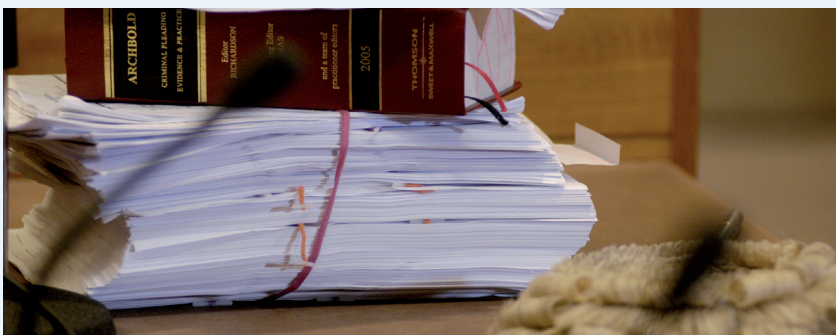
As for committals, annex B to SFR Section 1 provides the detailed legal argument as to why the SFR1 is in fact admissible as a business document and therefore does not need to be s9’d. CPS areas will be reminded that this is why annex B is provided.”

Case Studies and Process Maps

A set of case studies using the SFR forms is being developed by the National Project Team, with the assistance of Lancashire Constabulary, Staffordshire Police and police forces in the East Midlands. A workshop is taking place on 17th January 2013 in Lancashire, to work through the case studies to ensure that they meet the needs of the agencies involved.

Process maps have also been developed which work through the different stages, from items being submitted for forensic analysis to the conclusion of the case. These are currently being tested and will be considered at the event on the 17th.

Once finalised both the case studies and the process maps will be issued nationally for use or for further development to meet local needs.



SOCRATES and LOCARD Forensic Case Management Systems

The national team is working with Matt Barrett, from Injenuity, to develop crystal reports within Socrates and Locard to cover the basic SFR forms. This is the subject of a single procurement to ensure that the cost to forces is kept to a minimum. CC Neil Rhodes has written to Chief Constables to gain formal agreement from interested forces; it is anticipated that the final cost to forces should be in the region of £500 as opposed to a cost of £3,000 if procured individually.

Training Materials

Other training materials are being developed that will support the SFR Toolkit issued in November including case studies and the process maps. Work is also being undertaken to commission an e-learning package for delivery through NCALT. More information will be provided as this piece of work develops.

Timeline and Key dates:

Case studies workshop
Lancashire **17th January 2013**

National Project Boards **6th February 2013**
..... **3rd April 2013**

Target Implementation Date **1st April 2013**
(Fingerprints and DNA)

Communication and Guidance documents

The following documents are available upon request:-

- SFR Toolkit and Guidance documents (also on POLKA)
- Promotional SFR Poster
- 60 Second Briefing
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Draft National Communications Plan
- National Board Highlight Report

COMING SOON:

Legal Services Commission e-bulletin

Police Professional article

POLKA Community