

News story: Government publishes new action plan to improve police forensics

These commitments are designed to improve public confidence, support the criminal justice system, and ensure the quality and stability of forensics provision.

The plan is published alongside the findings of a Home Office commissioned review into the provision of forensic services in policing, such as DNA and fingerprint evidence. It finds that urgent action is required to make the current system sustainable.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd, said:

Forensic science is an invaluable tool for bringing criminals to justice.

We must ensure it's sustainable, works at a high standard, and has the confidence of the public.

This is why I commissioned this review and we are now taking action to strengthen the market.

The [review](#) makes a series of recommendations, including making providers adhere to the quality standards set by the Forensic Science Regulator and ensuring the market's commercial models are sustainable and open to investment.

The government is committed to meeting these aims with a 13-point implementation plan. This includes:

- stabilising the market through a new, long-term commercial strategy delivered by the Forensics Capability Network to better co-ordinate police forces' approach to forensics
- continuing to support Chris Green MP's Private Member's Bill to give the regulator statutory powers of enforcement, as well as supporting the regulator's accreditation timetable
- working with national bodies, such as UK Research and Innovation, alongside the Ministry of Justice to establish a new oversight mechanism for research and development

The Home Office carried out the review jointly with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

APCC Forensics Lead Martyn Underhill PCC and Deputy Lead Mark Burns-

Williamson PCC said:

The effectiveness of our criminal justice system is often dependent on the evidence obtained by high quality dedicated forensic experts that help keep our communities safe.

We are world leaders in the provision of forensic science, but we have recently seen significant issues that need urgently addressing. This review highlights those issues and provides recommendations and actions to ensure we continue to provide excellent forensic provision into the future.

The APCC will continue to work with police chiefs and the government to ensure investment in forensic science is increased and that this is reflected in the forthcoming spending review.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Forensic Science, Chief Constable James Vaughan QPM said:

We welcome the findings of the forensic review which was undertaken jointly by the NPCC, APCC and Home Office and are now working to implement the recommendations which will assist us to stabilise the market while making further improvements around quality standards and accreditation.

The Transforming Forensics Programme, which secured police transformation funding is already delivering capability in line with the findings of the review. It provides a long-term opportunity to ensure this vital area of policing and criminal justice is sustainable and will enable forces to achieve and maintain high quality, efficient and standardised processes while acting as a single voice on behalf of policing with key stakeholders.