

A GUIDE FOR SENIOR ACCOUNTABLE INDIVIDUALS

THE FORENSIC SCIENCE REGULATOR'S (FSR) STATUTORY CODE

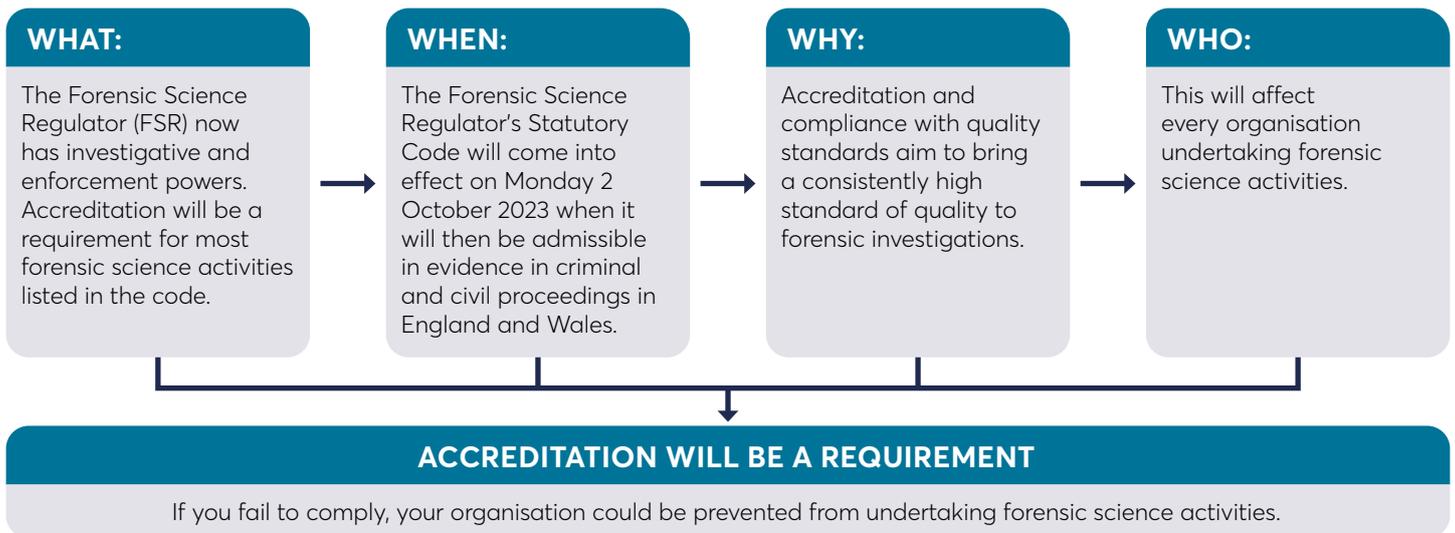
Forensics is a key part of the criminal justice system in England and Wales so it's vital that the forensic science activities we provide are suitable. The best way for us to achieve this is through accreditation and compliance with quality standards, and through meeting the requirements of the FSR Code.

Due to a recent act of parliament, the **Forensic Science Regulator Act 2021**, the FSR now has investigative and enforcement powers. The act also required a **Statutory Code** to be produced, which will come into effect on Monday 2 October 2023. Ultimately, this means that accreditation will be a requirement for most forensic science activities listed in the code.

For accreditation to be successful, everyone within your organisation needs to work together. These videos and supporting guide aim to explain the changes to the code and to show how you can play your part in achieving accreditation for your organisation.



WHAT'S CHANGING?



WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is provided by UKAS, the national accreditation body for the United Kingdom. UKAS is appointed by the government to assess and accredit organisations.

UKAS will visit your organisation to gather evidence of your compliance which your organisation is responsible for demonstrating. It's important to remember that building an open and transparent relationship with UKAS will help to maximise your chance of success.

Read more about UKAS: www.ukas.com

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation and compliance with quality standards aim to bring a consistently high standard of quality to forensic investigations. Complying with the code may require changes to your organisation's working practices, but there are a multitude of benefits:



Helping the public and victims of crime trust in what we do



Giving forensic professionals confidence in processes and results



Increasing confidence when presenting evidence in court



Promoting training to support compliance



Driving innovation through continuous improvement

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

As a Senior Accountable Individual (SAI) you are accountable for the strategic leadership of the forensic unit's compliance with the code. You will also be accountable for risks related to any forensic science activity undertaken by, or under the control of, the forensic unit from the date the code comes into force. There should be a particular focus on monitoring and mitigating the risk of quality failures which could adversely affect an investigation or impede or prejudice the course of justice in any proceedings.

As SAI, you will also be accountable, on behalf of the forensic unit, for any investigation or compliance action by the Regulator.

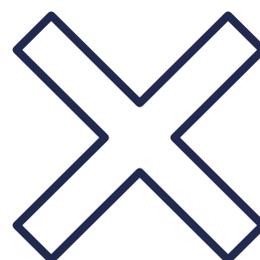
IF YOU FAIL TO ACHIEVE ACCREDITATION...



This could impact on the admissibility of the evidence provided by your organisation.



Your organisation will be at greater risk of investigation and enforcement by the FSR.



Enforcement powers could be used if forensic science activities are presenting a risk of adversely affecting an investigation or the course of justice.

REMEMBER...

In many crimes, forensics provides a critical link to support the investigation of crime and administration of justice.

Home Office Statistics show that in 15 to 20% of all cases, forensics is the only method used to identify a person of interest, to generate a line of enquiry or to secure a guilty plea.

WHAT TO DO NEXT...

1.

Familiarise yourself with the SAI's role and responsibilities within the code.

2.

Try to be available for UKAS opening and closing meetings.

3.

Be an advocate for forensics and compliance with quality standards.

4.

Lead your organisation through this period of change.

Together, we all need to play our part in the vital work of keeping communities safe. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as forensics undergoes its biggest change in decades.

ABOUT US: FORENSIC CAPABILITY NETWORK

The Forensic Capability Network (FCN) is a membership organisation for the forensic science community. Following investment by the Home Office, FCN is operated by the policing community on behalf of police forces and law enforcement organisations in England and Wales. Amongst other things, the FCN provides a knowledge base, development programmes and support to forensics practitioners.