

Introduction

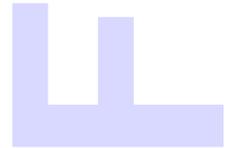
Streamlined Forensic Reporting (SFR) is a national revised case management procedure to deliver proportional forensic evidence to the court. Under SFR there will no longer be a requirement for extensive forensic reports that cover all the evidence recovered in investigations – instead short reports with the initial and key findings will be provided, meaning only the minimum forensic evidence necessary to secure a conviction will be with the initial case file. SFR seeks to obtain early agreement between the prosecution and defence on forensic issues. It goes live across the south west from 1st April 2013 and will depend heavily on engagement from all criminal justice agencies and partners.



Aims

SFR aims to:

- Ensure that prosecutors present the defence with a summary of the available forensic evidence, only requesting additional forensic tests when the case requires it
- Avoid the need for full forensic evidence to be produced when it is unlikely to be in dispute
- Encourage early guilty pleas through a targeted and appropriate file build
- Remove the “belt and braces” mentality
- Tackle delay and inefficiency through robust case management, to ensure justice is dispensed more swiftly
- Improve the service delivered to victims and witnesses
- Reduce costly trial proceedings for cases that eventually result in a guilty plea



Benefits

Effective use of SFR can lead to:

- Earlier agreement on forensic issues between prosecution and defence
- Ensuring defendant is advised on appropriate plea at first hearing due to full knowledge of forensic evidence available
- Maximising sentence discount
- Increased early guilty pleas, resulting in fewer cases coming to trial unnecessarily thereby easing pressures on court time and costs
- Fewer cases requiring additional forensic evidence, saving time and costs
- Swifter resolution of cases involving forensic evidence



Interdependencies

The success of SFR depends on engagement from the police, CPS, court and the defence community. Robust case management and early agreement between the prosecution and defence on forensic evidence will be the key to achieving the considerable benefits this change represents to the criminal justice system as a whole.



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