

SARC Network News

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SARC DNA Elimination Database Guidance

The Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) Code compliance deadline for SARCs is fast approaching

SARCs meeting the FSR requirements to ensure DNA contamination is detected and identified had been raised as a national risk. In response the FCN initiated a working group including the Office of the FSR, Fingerprint Information Database Services (FINDS), Forensic Service Providers (FSP)s and representative of the community to work through the challenges.



The guidance was created in a collaborative effort to assist SARCs to implement elimination databases within their organisations

The role of the working group was to identify the current process, any gaps, any risks and work together to resolve the challenges.

The group defined the 'end to end' process of the elimination database for both Contamination Elimination Database (CED) and for Staff Elimination Database (SED), considered the practicalities of matches across the complex landscape and listened to the apprehensions and feedback that SARC managers had received from their staff.

A pragmatic approach was established which aimed to minimise the number of databases that SARC staff biometric data would be stored on whilst not losing sight of the long-term goal of being one database for all elimination identification.

The main approach recommended from Office of the Forensic Science Regulator is by using:

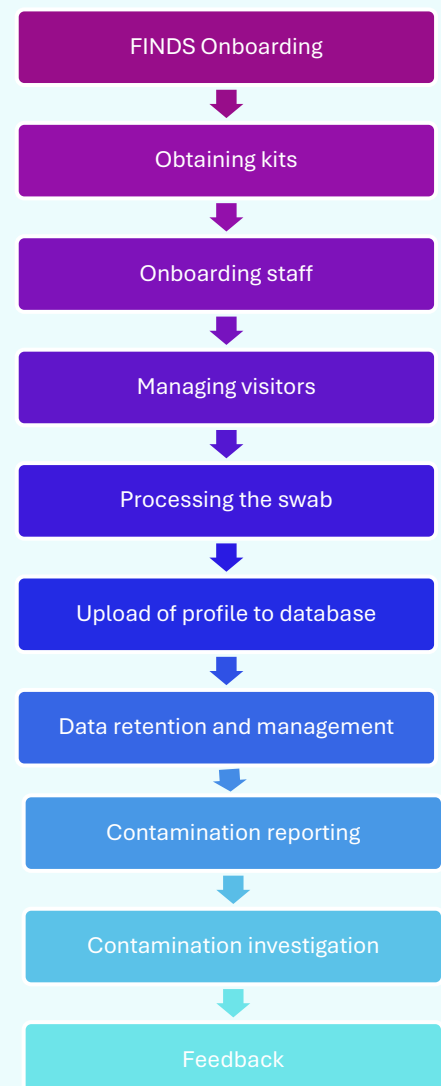
Staff Elimination Database (SED) using FSPs

For local or organisational identification of contamination from environmental monitoring samples

And

Contamination Elimination Database (CED) using FINDS

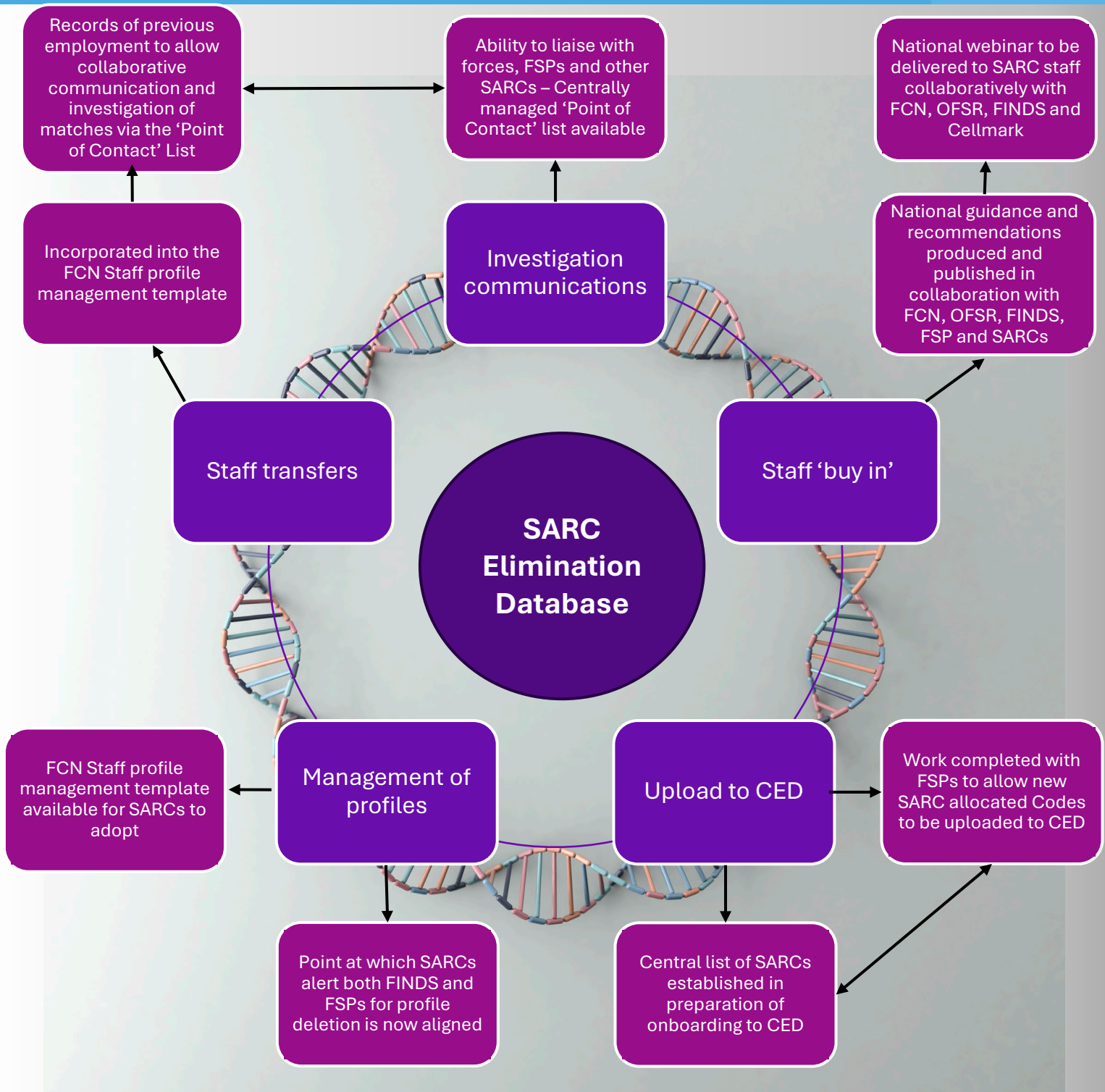
For national identification of potential contamination in casework. This will allow DNA results from evidence submitted to be compared to staff profiles - no matter which force submits the casework and no matter which Forensic Service Provider analyses it.



CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

There were multiple challenges identified throughout the end-to-end DNA elimination process. These were each worked through, reviewing what currently happens in policing, establishing whether this would work for SARC staff and implementing new steps if and when required.

Below gives a summary of the discussion points and resolution:



The highest risk to the SARC Service in the process of establishing an elimination database: LOSS OF STAFF AND EXPERIENCE

It was quickly established that the use of elimination databases for the purposes of identifying contamination is a completely new concept to most within the SARC service and if incorrectly pitched then there is a high risk of losing staff numbers and experience in this niche and important discipline.

The impacts of this loss would be felt within forensics and the criminal justice system but the biggest impact would be to those who have been subjected to rape and sexual assault.

In order to mitigate this risk, the decision was made to create the published guidance and to deliver a webinar, open to all staff who work within forensic medicine. The hope is to empower staff with the knowledge of what is being asked of them and give reassurance of the process, especially with how their biometric sample and data is handled and protected.

It will also give staff an opportunity to ask any additional questions to

representatives from the Office of the Forensic Science Regulator (OFSR), the Home Office department Forensic Information Databases (FINDS) who manage the CED, Cellmark, a forensic service provider (FSP) and the Forensic Capability Network.

The webinar will be recorded and available to staff who are not able to attend live. This can also be used as part of the SARC staff induction for new employees (if appropriate).



WEBINAR


Understanding Elimination Databases: Recommendations for SARCs



A national webinar is planned for:

Thursday 13th February
10:00 – 12:00



Register here 



The webinar will be recorded and available to anyone who cannot attend and for information for future staff

ADDITIONAL TOOLS WITHIN THE GUIDANCE

As well as the recommendations, the FCN SARC Elimination Database Guidance includes a template to assist with the management of staff details regarding the elimination databases. A robust process is required to ensure that staff data is only retained for the

minimum length of time.

There is also a risk assessment for the implementation of the databases within a SARC and this includes an 'implementation action plan' to mitigate the associated risks in the end-to-end

process.

The guidance includes a collation of FAQs posed by staff throughout the compliance journey directly linked to elimination databases and additional external supporting documents.

THE FCN SARC ELIMINATION DATABASE GUIDANCE AVAILABLE NOW VIA THE FCN WEBSITE

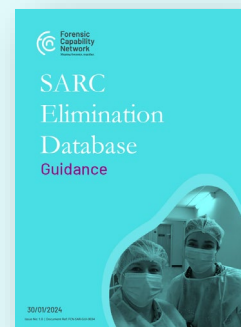
Any questions or to be added to our distribution lists please email us



Guylaine Hanford – FCN Quality Officer

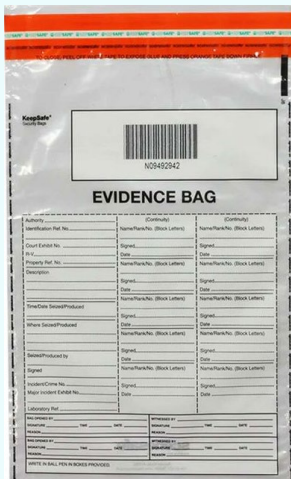


Michelle Gaskell – FCN Quality Specialist



Click the image to access the guidance

Tamper Evident Bag (TEB) – Warranty and Expiry Explained



Please find available on [FCN Knowledge Hub Library](#) guidance provided by SceneSafe™ around the lifespan of adhesive seals on TEBs. The guidance also includes information on:

- How TEBs should be stored prior to use to prevent deterioration
- How TEBs should be stored after sealing to prevent deterioration, including storage in extreme temperature such as freezers
- Factors that can accelerate deterioration
- How deterioration and tampering can be identified
- TEB warranty periods

Please consider circulating the PowerPoint presentation to your colleagues that use TEBs, whilst storing a copy within your QMS as a training resource and Keepsafe evidence bag specification reference.

SceneSafe's specification sheets for all TEB distributed can be found by following the link to the [FCN Knowledge Hub Library](#). These specification sheets provide information around the bag strength (including weight limits) and recommended storage conditions (including the recommended ranges for temperature and humidity).

Additionally, please find a link to a short video SceneSafe™ have produced, to demonstrate how to correctly open TEBs to prevent perforating the edges: [Post | LinkedIn](#)