



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

Improving service delivery: the Forensic Science Service

**Fourth Report of
Session 2003–04**

*Report, together with formal minutes,
oral and written evidence*

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The Committee of Public Accounts

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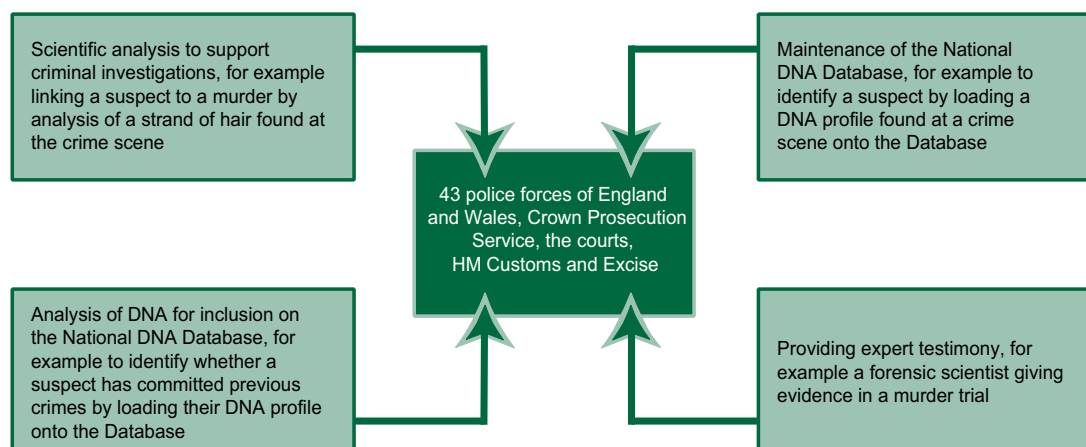
Summary

Introduction

The Forensic Science Service is an executive agency of the Home Office. Working from seven laboratories with over 2,500 staff, the Agency provides forensic science services to the 43 police forces in England and Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service and HM Customs and Excise (**Figure 1**). In 2001–02, the Agency analysed forensic evidence in some 135,000 cases, as well as 555,000 samples of DNA, contributing to the two million profiles held on the National DNA Database by December 2002.¹ On 17 July 2003, the Home Secretary announced plans for the Agency to become a public-private partnership.²

On the basis of a Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General,³ we took evidence from the Forensic Science Service on three main issues: the time taken to examine forensic evidence, communication with customers, and the implications of the Agency's transition to public-private partnership status.

Figure 1: How the Forensic Science Service supports the criminal justice system



In addition the Agency carries out research and development, performs advisory functions to Home Office Ministers, and undertakes some private sector and international work.

Source: C&AG's Report

1 C&AG's Report, *Improving Service Delivery: The Forensic Science Service* (HC 523, Session 2002–03) preface
 2 Home Office press statement, *Radical overhaul of forensic science delivery* (207/2003, 17 July 2003)
 3 C&AG's Report, *Improving Service Delivery: The Forensic Science Service* (HC 523, Session 2002–03)

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1. In the four years since we last reported on the Agency, its timeliness performance has been disappointing, with the target for turnaround times missed in each successive year.** The Agency should optimise the use and efficiency of its seven laboratories, exploiting its new operational management system and the removal of the Metropolitan Police Service's requirement that all its evidence should be dealt with at the London laboratory.
- 2. Currently DNA samples found at crime scenes wait 14 days for analysis, yet the analysis itself takes just 36 hours or less.** The Agency intends to fully automate this process in the next three years. The analysis of DNA from suspects has been automated and the current turnaround time for such samples is just 3.5 days. The Agency should be in a position to demonstrate similar results through the automation of crime scene sample analysis.
- 3. A customer satisfaction survey by the Agency in 2002 indicated that one of the three top areas for concern was its failure to notify the police of delays in completing forensic analysis.** The Agency must inform the police and the courts if an agreed delivery date is going to be missed to avoid, for example, the re-scheduling of court cases.
- 4. The Agency does not receive regular feedback on the outcome of the cases in which it has been involved.** The Agency should work with its partners in the criminal justice system—in particular the police and the courts—to learn the outcome of specific investigations and prosecutions. It should use this information to focus its resources on identifying any areas of weakness on meeting the needs of its customers case by case.
- 5. The Agency should develop a better understanding of the training needs of its customers and tailor its training more accurately to meet their requirements.** As well as surveying course delegates, the Agency should for example analyse over time the evidence handling performance of those police forces which have and have not received training. With more relevant training in place, the Agency should encourage greater take up by police forces. It should, in particular, encourage all police Scene of Crime Officers to attend.
- 6. The Agency should publicise the impact of partnership projects with individual police forces across all forces and explore the feasibility of further initiatives.** Projects such as the *Burglary Reduction Initiative in Leeds* and *Safer Homes* in the West Midlands have resulted in significant increases in criminal prosecutions and guilty verdicts, and reduced crime across the regions.
- 7. In considering plans for the future status of the Agency, the Home Office should obtain clear and robust analysis of the merits of different options, including the financial costs and benefits.** In the event of public-private partnership status, the Home Office should specify how it will manage risks emanating from the separation of the forensic science service from the rest of the criminal justice system.

- 8. There will need to be adequate safeguards to protect the security and integrity of the National DNA Database, whatever form the Agency's future status takes.** Access to and use of this sensitive information on over two million individuals needs to be carefully controlled. As the Home Office develops its plans for the Agency, it should identify and manage risks to the database including improper use of the data, for example for commercial purposes.
- 9. The Agency's timeliness targets have changed significantly between 2001–02 and 2002–03, and again between 2002–03 and 2003–04.** These changes make it difficult for the on-going performance of the Agency to be assessed with any degree of certainty. The Agency should agree targets with the Home Office which are measurable and consistent over time.
- 10. The Agency presented the Committee with performance data which differed from that shown in the C&AG's Report.** Departments must ensure that, where they wish to present new evidence to the Committee, they have provided this information to the C&AG in advance of the hearing, with sufficient time to assess its significance and validity. The C&AG can then advise the Committee in good time for the hearing.

1 The time taken to examine forensic evidence

Timeliness performance

1. If forensic analysis is delayed or not available when required, suspects may have to be bailed or re-bailed; the police may not pursue other lines of enquiry while waiting for forensic analysis eliminating a suspect; in extreme circumstances, charges may be dropped; court cases may have to be re-scheduled or prosecutions may go ahead without important forensic evidence.⁴

2. When we last reported on the Agency in 1999, we concluded that it needed to improve the timeliness of its services.⁵ Two of the top three priority areas for improvement identified by a survey of over 2,000 police officers in January 2000 related to timeliness. One quarter of complaints received by the Agency in 2001–02 also concerned this issue. In that year, the average number of days taken by the Agency to complete forensic analysis rose to 35 (from 26 the previous year), significantly above the target of 24 days. The target to achieve 93% of delivery dates agreed with customers was also missed, with 89% met. A backlog of cases had built up, with non-urgent forensic evidence routinely being placed in queues before analysis was carried out. The Agency attributed the delays to the length of time taken to recruit and train new staff, its increasing workload and the difficulties in forecasting demand for its services.⁶

3. Twenty-six additional scientists had been trained in 2002–03, with a further ninety to follow in 2003–04. The Agency was also working closely with customers to reduce the queues caused by evidence being delivered and collected in batches. The increased staff numbers and improved management of incoming cases had resulted in the number of outstanding jobs falling. In 2002–03, the Agency fell slightly short of its target to deliver 90% of violent and volume crime jobs within 70 days. This has been replaced by a new target to deliver 95% of all jobs within 42 days by March 2004, which the Agency was confident it would meet (**Figure 2**).⁷

4 C&AG's Report, highlighted box above para 2.3

5 7th Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, *The Forensic Science Service* (HC 321, Session 1998–99)

6 C&AG's Report, paras 2.7, 2.12, 2.17–2.18

7 Qq 3–10, 48–49, 96–111; *The Forensic Science Service Annual Report and Accounts 2002–03*, p18

Figure 2: The Agency's 2003–04 timeliness targets

I. Develop capability and capacity to deliver fast-track processing of DNA samples within 48 hours
II. Average time to analyse and inform customers of DNA crime scene stain results (non-fast-track) of 14 days
III. 95% of DNA crime scene stain results to achieve a turnaround time of 20 days (or less)
IV. Average time to analyse and inform customers of DNA suspect sample results on the National DNA Database (non-fast-track) of 6 days
V. 95% of DNA suspect sample results to achieve a turnaround time of 10 days (or less)
VI. Average turnaround time of 42 days for 95% of jobs by year end

Source: *The Forensic Science Service*

Consistency across laboratories and police forces

4. In 2001–02, three laboratories (London, Chorley and Priory House in Birmingham) processed 73% of the Agency's cases. Only one of the Agency's seven laboratories (Wetherby) achieved the target to meet 93% of agreed delivery dates. The worst performance was at London and Trident Court in Birmingham, with only 86 and 79% respectively met. Analysed by reference to the Agency's main customers, the 93% target was missed for some 32 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. Performance varied from at best 96% for one force to 85% for the lowest.⁸

5. The Agency reported progress since 2001–02, with six of its seven laboratories achieving the 93% target in September 2003. New figures⁹ provided by the Agency at the hearing indicated that, in 2003–04, over 90% of agreed delivery dates were being met for all police forces. The Metropolitan Police Service's previous requirement that all its evidence must be dealt with at the Agency's London laboratory, had restricted the Agency's ability to match demand to capacity across sites. The removal of this restriction had led to greater flexibility in distributing the workload and the proportion of work dealt with by the three biggest laboratories had dropped to 49%.¹⁰

6. Progress had been made at Trident Court, with 83% of agreed delivery dates being met by September 2003. This laboratory deals only with very specialist forensic analysis, which often involves innovative types of research, making timescales difficult to predict.¹¹

8 C&AG's Report, paras 1.15, 2.12

9 These figures have not been validated by the NAO

10 Qq 5, 8, 51–53

11 Qq 6–7, 170–171

DNA analysis

7. The Agency analysed 555,000 DNA samples in 2001–02. The number of suspect samples¹² and crime scene samples¹³ processed by the Agency for inclusion on the National DNA Database (**Figure 3**) has increased significantly since 1997–98, largely as a result of the Home Office’s DNA Expansion Programme. In September 2002, the average time for processing a suspect sample for inclusion on the database was five days, compared to 350 days in March 1997, although demand for this service had more than doubled in the same period.¹⁴

8. The Agency reported that, at September 2003, the average turnaround time for suspect samples was 3.5 days. Crime scene samples, on the other hand, typically wait 14 days for analysis, yet the work itself takes no more than 36 hours. The analysis of suspect samples had been automated and the Agency was rolling out the same process to crime scene samples. The Agency was confident that crime scene samples would be processed within three days by March 2006 and, indeed, expected to have excess capacity to process both suspect and crime scene samples by March 2004. The Agency said it was involved in research with a view to establishing capacity to analyse DNA in one hour.¹⁵

12 DNA samples taken from suspects

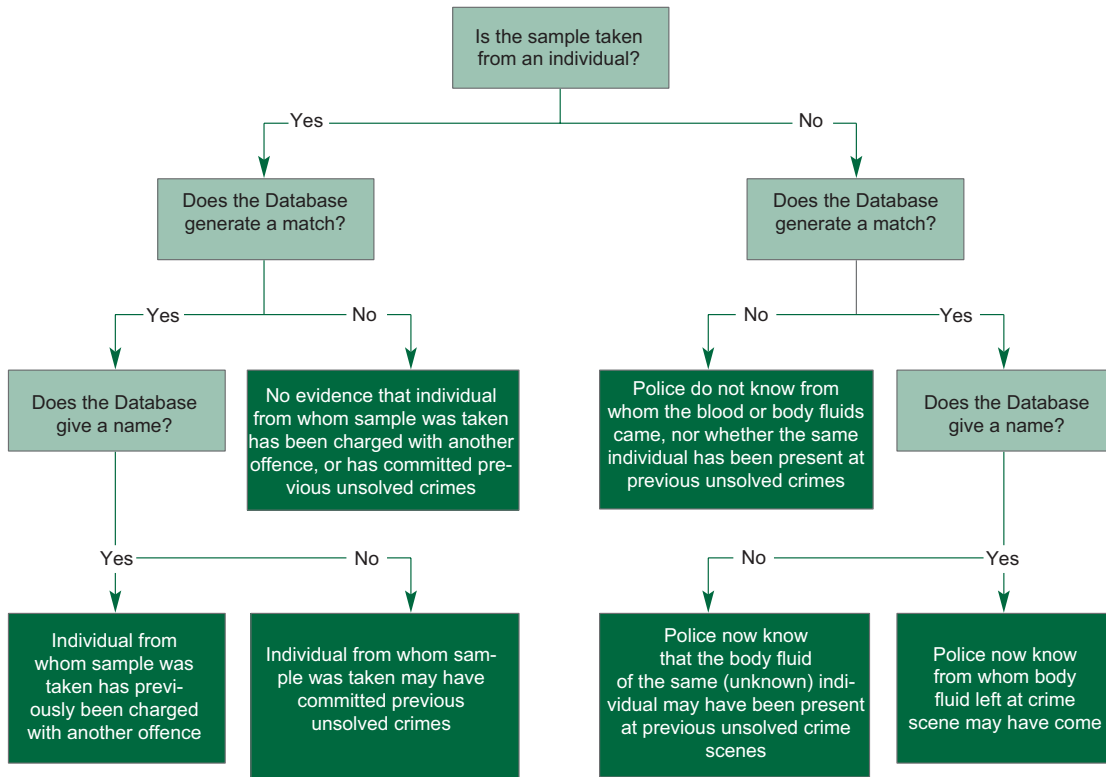
13 DNA samples taken from items found at a crime scene

14 C&AG’s Report, paras 1.10, 2.15

15 Qq 85, 97–98, 143–147

Figure 3: How the National DNA Database can be used

A DNA profile is created by analysing a mouth swab or hair roots from an individual, or body fluids left at a crime scene



Source: C&AG's Report

2 Communication with customers

Communicating delays

9. The Agency's January 2000 customer satisfaction survey of over 2,000 police officers identified the Agency's failure to notify them when an agreed delivery date was likely to be missed as one of the three top priority areas for improvement.¹⁶ When asked how many court cases have been delayed because of forensic analysis being unavailable, the Agency did not know. The Agency said that, in some cases, it had little control over deadlines, for example when the police submitted further materials close to the agreed delivery date. It was, however, now aspiring to communicate all delays to customers, although did not specify a target date. Since the C&AG's Report, it had established a new system of electronic communication with police forces to facilitate better dialogue with forces on the progress of individual cases.¹⁷

Impact on the criminal justice system

10. The Agency is not routinely informed of the outcome of cases in which it has been involved. For example, it is not informed by the police or Crown Prosecution Service when charges are not going to be brought against a suspect, nor whether a prosecution resulted in a conviction or an acquittal.¹⁸ The Agency acknowledged that, without such feedback on the outcomes of investigations and prosecutions, it could not effectively assess the value of its work.¹⁹

11. The exception is where the Agency works on specific projects with individual police forces. One such example is the *Burglary Reduction Initiative in Leeds*, a partnership project between the Agency and West Yorkshire Police which resulted in some 80 prosecutions. The Agency provided rapid analysis of DNA found at burglary scenes and seconded a forensic scientist to West Yorkshire police to follow progress of DNA matches through the investigative process.²⁰ The Agency also cited the *Safer Homes* partnership project with West Midlands Police, which had reduced burglary across the region by 17%. The Agency said that it had found such partnership projects to be highly valuable and would welcome more regular feedback from its customers.²¹

Police training

12. The Agency provides training to customers to promote their awareness of the value of forensic analysis in criminal investigations and prosecutions. It contributes to national police training courses and provides training directly to individual forces as and when they request it. Only half of police forces undertook such training in 2001–02. When surveyed

16 C&AG's Report, para 2.17

17 Qq 50, 86–91

18 C&AG's Report, para 2.30

19 Q 19

20 C&AG's Report, para 2.25

21 Qq 11–12, 134

in March 2002, forces who had undertaken Agency training considered that it had fallen short of expectations in a number of areas, for example the language used being too technical for non-scientists. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) commented in 2003 that a much greater awareness of the value of forensic analysis is required within the police and it has set up a working group to address this issue.²²

13. The Agency stated that it had taken steps to improve the quality and take-up of its training. It was planned that a forensic scientist would be seconded to the National Centre for Policing Excellence for six months to rewrite the police's forensic science manual. The Agency had also worked closely with the Police Standards Unit to better understand customer requirements. The impact of its training had not, however, been evaluated, for example by comparing the performance of those forces receiving training to those who had not. The Agency was also aware that not all police Scene of Crime Officers had received its training. Whether they did so was ultimately a decision for Chief Constables.²³

Relationship with the police

14. England and Wales differ from other countries in that the provision of forensic science is through a dedicated agency. Police forces in other countries retain a level of internal capability for forensic science work generally greater than that in England and Wales. The closest model is in the Netherlands, where the National Forensics Laboratory is moving towards agency status. In the US, there is some outsourcing of DNA analysis to the private sector.²⁴

15. The Agency has Joint Letters of Understanding with 42 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. (The exception is the Metropolitan Police Service). These are not binding on either party but are a means by which the Agency can better understand its customers' likely requirements for the coming year. The Metropolitan Police Service has chosen, after a high-level independent review, to establish a more commercial relationship with the Agency and other forensic science providers.²⁵

16. The Agency considers that one of its greatest challenges is to understand the specific requirements of individual police forces. In 2003, it had been engaged in lengthy discussions with the Metropolitan Police Service and, as a result, had developed a much better understanding of the force's requirements in the areas of armed criminality, homicide and burglary. The Agency intended to undergo a similar process with the other 42 police forces, with the intention of moving from a national price list to 43 bespoke services which would more closely meet the requirements of individual police forces. The Agency considered that it would be possible for a police force to develop a comprehensive customer service agreement with a private sector company.²⁶

22 C&AG's Report, paras 2.38–2.42

23 Qq 55, 92–94, 126–142

24 C&AG's Report, para 1.17

25 *ibid*, para 2.21

26 Qq 42–45, 59

3 The implications of public-private partnership status

Financial analysis

17. The Home Secretary's announcement on 17 July 2003 followed a Quinquennial Review of the Agency by Robert McFarland, published in July 2003, which recommended public-private partnership status.²⁷ The issue was debated in the House of Commons on 5 November 2003.²⁸ When asked about the financial analysis supporting this recommendation, the Treasury said that the merits of the various options facing the Agency had been considered, including some financial analysis. As this was a public-private partnership rather than a private finance initiative, a public sector comparator would not necessarily have been used.²⁹

Custodianship of the National DNA Database

18. The Agency operates the National DNA Database on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The Agency's Chief Scientist, as custodian of the database, is responsible for assessing and recommending authorisation of any suppliers of DNA profiles to the database. These include the Forensic Science Service itself and its two main competitors.³⁰

19. When asked how custodianship of the database would be organised following transition to public-private partnership status, the Agency said that a decision had yet to be reached. The Criminal Justice, Public Order and Data Protection Acts required information on the database to be used only for the purposes of criminal investigations and prosecutions. The Agency felt confident that this legislation offered sufficient protection to maintain standards of confidentiality.³¹

Restructuring

20. The number of staff at the Agency almost doubled between 1997–98 and 2001–02. Over 75% of the 2,700 staff employed in March 2002 were operational, with the remainder in support roles such as finance and human resources.³² The Agency was now engaged in a restructuring programme. The Metropolitan Police Service had transferred trade with a value of £7 million from the Agency to its private sector competitors and the Agency also wanted to increase the ratio of operational staff to support staff in order to provide a more responsive service. The restructuring process was not connected to its future transition to

27 Home Office, *Review of the Forensic Science Service: Executive Summary*, (July 2003)

28 HC Deb 5 November 2003 cc 259–282WH

29 Qq 33–40

30 C&AG's Report, para 1.7

31 Qq 26–29, 166–167

32 C&AG's Report, para 1.14

public-private partnership status. The main concern of staff was the implications of public-private partnership status for their pension arrangements.³³

21. A subsequent submission³⁴ showed that, at 9 October 2003, the Agency had reduced its staff by 253. Approximately half of these had been through natural wastage (for example, resignation) and the other half had taken voluntary redundancy or voluntary early retirement. The Agency anticipated a further loss of 37 staff. Of the 253 staff who had left so far, 57 were from operational roles. The submission stated the Agency's intention to avoid compulsory redundancies and that it hoped to achieve the further staff losses by other means, such as natural wastage and the reassignment of roles. The submission estimated the costs of the restructuring programme at £6.3 million.

33 Qq 60–71, 112–125

34 Q 68; Ev 17

Formal minutes

Monday 15 December 2003

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Mr Richard Allan
Mr Frank Field
Mr Brian Jenkins
Jim Sheridan

Mr Gerry Steinberg
Jon Trickett
Mr Alan Williams

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (Improving service delivery: the Forensic Science Service), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Chairman's draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 13 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 14 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 15 to 21 read and agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select Committees (Reports)) be applied to the Report.

Adjourned until Wednesday 7 January at 3.30 pm

Witnesses

Monday 15 September 2003

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Dr David Werrett, Mr Trevor Howitt, Mr Mike Loveland, Mr Rod Anthony,
and **Dr Bob Bramley**, Forensic Science Service

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The reference number of the Treasury Minute to each Report will be printed in brackets after the HC printing number

Oral evidence

Taken before the Committee of Public Accounts

on Monday 15 September 2003

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Mr Richard Bacon
Jon Cruddas
Mr Nick Gibb
Mr Brian Jenkins
Mr David Rendel

Jim Sheridan
Mr Gerry Steinberg
Jon Trickett
Mr Alan Williams

Sir John Bourn KCB, Comptroller and Auditor General, further examined

Mr Brian Glicksman, Treasury Officer of Accounts, further examined

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL:

Improving Service Delivery: The Forensic Science Service (HC 523)

Witnesses: **Dr David Werrett**, Chief Executive, **Mr Trevor Howitt**, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Business Development, **Mr Mike Loveland**, Chief Operating Officer, **Mr Rod Anthony**, Finance Director and **Dr Bob Bramley**, Chief Scientist, Forensic Science Service (FSS), examined.

Q1 Chairman: Welcome to the Committee of Public Accounts. Today we are looking at improving service delivery in the Forensic Science Service. We are delighted to be joined by Dr David Werrett, who leads the service. I should thank you very much for entertaining us so well last week and showing us around the Forensic Science Service. We found it very interesting and we are very grateful.

Dr Werrett: It was our pleasure.

Q2 Chairman: Could you please introduce your colleagues?

Dr Werrett: On my left is Mr Mike Loveland, who is my Chief Operating Officer. On my far left is Dr Bob Bramley, who is a Chief Scientist at the Forensic Science Service. On my immediate right is Mr Trevor Howitt, who is the Deputy Chief Executive of the Forensic Science Service and on my far right is Mr Anthony who is the Finance Director.

Q3 Chairman: Thank you very much for introducing your colleagues. Perhaps I might start the questioning and refer you to page 25 and Figure 14. Could you explain why you failed to meet your turnaround targets so spectacularly in 2001–02 compared with progress in earlier years?

Dr Werrett: Yes; certainly. The Figure 14 belies to some extent the true performance of the agency, because at that time, between 2001 and 2002, we moved IT systems to an operational management system based on SAP. That gives a truer reflection of turn around times when compared with previous years. In previous years the IT system took into account target times which were within the agency and not just target times which were to the customer. The target times you see there are actually not all related to target times for the customer.

Q4 Chairman: You are claiming then that you did as well in 2001–02 in reality as you did in the previous year despite what this figure says. Is that what you are telling us?

Dr Werrett: I am saying that in 2001–02 we did slightly worse, but not as bad as the picture shown here. The figures, as we have recalculated them and as will be published in our annual report, will be 25 days for 2000–01 and 30 days, not 35 days, for 2001–02.

Q5 Chairman: Could you please turn over the page to page 26 of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report and look now at Figure 18, the percentage of agreed delivery dates? Why is performance so variable across the country?

Dr Werrett: The performance at the moment is not variable at all, with the exception of Trident Court, which I will explain. May I quote some figures from last year and year to date? The Wetherby laboratory was 98% last year and 98% year to date. Chepstow was 97% last year and 99% year to date. Huntingdon was 94% last year and 94% year to date. Priory House was 95% and 97%. Chorley was 93% and 100% and London 92% and 94%. So you can see that they are all up in the 90% now and we have evened out performance. We have made great progress.

Q6 Chairman: And Trident Court?

Dr Werrett: Trident Court is 81% and 83%.

Q7 Chairman: What is the problem there?

Dr Werrett: The problem at Trident Court is that the cases which are going into Trident Court tend to be at the very forefront of science and some of them right at the edge of research. They are very difficult to predict in terms of delivery dates.

Forensic Science Service

Q8 Chairman: Turn please to the following page, page 27, Figure 19, the percentage of agreed delivery dates met for completing forensic case-work analysis. Why did you fail to meet your agreed delivery dates for 32 out of 43 police forces?

Dr Werrett: Again I would say that our improvement to date is much improved. Currently 80% of forces are at 95% and all the forces are over 90%. So we have improved that.

Q9 Chairman: I have asked you three questions where you have said you are now improving matters. What was going wrong at the time this NAO Report was being compiled then?

Dr Werrett: The crucial issue was that demand was being generated faster than we could generate the capacity to meet that demand. Now we are getting into a position where capacity and demand are in balance.

Q10 Chairman: Because you are recruiting more staff?

Dr Werrett: Because we have recruited and trained more staff. Last year we got on board about 40 more reporting officers, which are crucial to the delivery of the work and 26 have come on stream this year; we have another 90 still in training. So we are actually edging for the future as well.

Q11 Chairman: Could you now turn to page 32 and look at paragraph 2.30, where we read, "The Agency is not routinely informed of the outcome of cases in which it has been involved"? How can you judge your contribution to the criminal justice system (CJS) if you are not informed of the outcome of the cases in which you are involved?

Dr Werrett: I agree this is a continual problem for us, occupying the middle of a supply chain basically and tracing cases through. What we have been trying to do now is actually get involved in partnership projects with forces which take us right the way through to the end of a case. For example, in a partnership project we are doing with the West Midlands police, known as *Safer Homes*, we can actually tell you that 431 cases have been submitted, detection is about 412 and guilty verdicts have increased to 96.4%. The force is saying that burglary has reduced across the force by 15–17%. Those are the kinds of figures we should like to learn from our customers.

Q12 Chairman: If we are to recommend in our report that you should be involved in the outcome of these cases, you would be delighted with that recommendation.

Dr Werrett: Absolutely delighted; yes.

Q13 Chairman: If you would now turn to page 33 and look at paragraph 2.32, under the third bullet point "Failures—the cost of procedures which need to be repeated, for example failed samples in DNA testing", that is quite a serious figure, is it not? You are spending £14 million on procedures which need to be repeated.

Dr Werrett: It is a serious figure, but I am told that if you add those up as a cost of quality around 20%, that is a usual cost for organisations such as ours.

Q14 Chairman: Why can you not get it right the first time?

Dr Werrett: I will give you an example of how things may fail. We process samples in batches on plates for DNA analysis and if a control sample, or if a negative control is seen to have a peak in it, we will fail the whole batch as a matter of course. It is rigorous high quality standard to do that. That gives us quite a penalty in terms of quality, but it does ensure that quality is maintained.

Q15 Chairman: Let us now look at page 35 and Figure 25 and the two security breaches at the Forensic Science Service. I hope you will forgive me asking you about this rather embarrassing incident when your own office was burgled. Perhaps you can assure us this will not happen again?

Dr Werrett: Yes, I would assure you that it will not happen again. I must say that in that particular incident the individual scaled six floors at the back of the building up what I could describe as sewer pipes, which come out of the toilets and vent the toilets. He managed to climb up six floors and got through a little vent in the gent's toilets and then broke through a lock on my door, with security guards on site 24 hours a day, I might add. We have instigated several measures, including securing that particular area now with perimeter doors at night, as well extra deadlocks on the office doors.

Q16 Chairman: Would you please turn now to page 38 and look at paragraph 2.48? I am now going to ask you about the number of complaints which have been received about your Service. There was a 78% increase in the number of complaints received between 1999 and 2000, 2001, 2002. That does not give us a lot of confidence about the service you are delivering, does it?

Dr Werrett: No; I agree. I am, however, refreshed by 2002–03 where the number of complaints has now fallen to 144. I would particularly draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the timeliness complaints, which were at 26% have now fallen to 18%.

Q17 Chairman: Why is that? Why are you now doing better?

Dr Werrett: Because our overall delivery of the service is better than it has been in previous years.

Q18 Chairman: You have a different future in front of you. Would you just make a comment about that and how it is going to change your work as you become a company?

Dr Werrett: There is a long way to go yet and it is a project which will be run by the senior responsible owner within the Home Office. The intention is to take us through the public/private partnership (PPP) route towards the private sector and possibly a company limited by shares.

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Q19 Chairman: How do you see it affecting your work? Perhaps in answering that question, you could tell us a little. You are a prime example of joined-up government, which the government invests a lot of time in, because you deliver a service to people at the front end. Do you have anything to tell us about joined up government, how you think it could be made to work better?

Dr Werrett: I do not know about joined-up government, but I feel, as we touched on earlier, we need to understand the effect of our overall input within the total CJS, so we understand both from the customer's point of view and the outturns in the court room the value of the work we carry out. Returning to PPP, there is maybe a feeling that we have gone as far as we can go as a trading fund and we do have quite fierce competition now which is expanding quickly. In this technological world in which we live, we need to provide a rapid response to improve the services. Sometimes that is quite difficult under EC rules.

Q20 Mr Williams: Welcome. I see in our briefing that FSS is custodian of the national DNA database. That is the database of people other than proven criminals, is it?

Dr Werrett: No, the national DNA database is a combination of those who have been convicted and those who have been suspected of a crime.

Q21 Mr Williams: That is what I said: people other than . . . So the answer is yes, not no. Yes, it is. It is not only people who are proven criminals.

Dr Werrett: Yes; it is not only people who are proven criminals.

Q22 Mr Williams: You are described as custodian of it. What does "custodian" mean? What are your powers in relation to it?

Dr Werrett: The custodian is actually the Chief Scientist who is sat to my left.

Q23 Mr Williams: If you would prefer Dr Bramley to answer, that is not a problem.

Dr Werrett: May I just say that the Forensic Science Service occupies the unique position of being custodian and supplier? In other words, we analyse samples for supply to the national DNA database and Dr Bramley is the custodian of the database and we maintain Chinese walls between the two parts of the organisation. Having set the scene, I shall hand over to Dr Bramley.

Q24 Mr Williams: Why is that Chinese wall so important?

Dr Werrett: It is important because we decided at quite an early stage that we should open up the opportunity of analysis for the national DNA database to other suppliers. So the Laboratory of the Government Chemist, which is known now as LGC Limited, is in fact also a supplier and in the private sector. Cellmark, which is another private sector analyser, supplies samples to the database.

Q25 Mr Williams: I understand that point. Is there anything you would like to say initially, Dr Bramley, before I go on to my line of questioning?

Dr Bramley: When we set up the national DNA database in 1995, there was no difference between custodian and supplier, there was just one organisation which did both. Over a period of time we tried to separate out the two functions as we got more and more players joining the supplier side. The custodian's role essentially is to be accountable to the national DNA database board for setting the standards for suppliers who analyse samples, for putting profiles on the database, for ensuring that they can meet those standards and for monitoring their performance against those standards.

Q26 Mr Williams: We have had the announcement that there is going to be this change to PPP. What difference will that make to the custodianship role? Who will now be custodian and what will be the FSS role? Will it have changed at all in relation to your position?

Dr Werrett: That has yet to be decided. Mr Blunkett's press release talked about the movement of the Forensic Science Service to PPP, but was silent on the recommendation of the custodian and the national DNA database. The McFarland report itself makes comment about the custodian moving to become a company limited by guarantee (CLG). The steering group did not accept that recommendation and it has yet to be discussed.

Q27 Mr Williams: Confidentiality is a crucial matter as far as the database is concerned, is it not?

Dr Werrett: Absolutely.

Q28 Mr Williams: The roles are going to change as a result of the proposition which has been put forward. How will we be certain that the confidentiality will remain exactly as it is now?

Dr Werrett: We can be assured by the same measures that we are assured by now.

Dr Bramley: We are constrained by legislation, both the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and subsequent amendments to PACE and also by the Data Protection Act.

Q29 Mr Williams: What protection does the legislation give in terms of neutralisation other than for FSS type purposes of the database?

Dr Bramley: The data can only be used for purposes related to the prevention and detection of crime, the investigation of an offence or the prosecution of an offender. So you are very constrained over what you can do with the data, quite rightly so.

Q30 Mr Williams: Exactly. Can you explain to me why we are not just jumping from FSS as an agency to a PPP but going through an intermediate stage of a government-owned company.? Why? Why the double disruption?

Dr Werrett: I am told that is the mechanism one takes to go through a PPP and the movement to a government-owned company allows the identification of those things which are within the

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FSS and can be defined as within the FSS and for legalities such as title deeds, contracts and so forth to be vested in the FSS rather than the Secretary of State, as they are now.

Q31 Mr Williams: In the document which I believe you supplied and marked *Restricted Commercial* which is dated May, which is before the announcement by the Secretary of State, it states there that recommendations have been made about our status and then goes on to say that the uncertainty has started to lower morale. What is the state of morale now? Is it higher, lower, is the uncertainty still there?

Dr Werrett: The uncertainty is still there, but at least a decision has been made now and we, as a team, the executive board, have been able to start making presentations to staff, to discuss the matter with staff and to reassure staff. The major concern by far is what pensions will be like after the PPP and maybe the difference in terms and conditions. Most of those will be taken care of through TUPE of course. Pensions are the main concern for staff.

Q32 Mr Williams: I should know. It is in the document somewhere. What are the annual running costs of FSS?

Dr Werrett: Last year it was £141 million revenue and the running costs were about £131 million.

Q33 Mr Williams: Has a public sector comparison been done before the decision was made?

Dr Werrett: Not that I know of. The McFarland review which took place was part of a quinquennial review and he reviewed the market place and compared us with our competitors, who would be LGC and Forensic Alliance.

Q34 Mr Williams: So we have no objective accounting criterion against which to judge whether, when this eventually is resolved, we have a good deal or a bad deal, have we? Is there an intention to have a public sector comparison? Would Treasury know? Say no, if it is not your responsibility.

Mr Glicksman: A public sector comparator is a technique which is used in PFI projects in order to compare the PFI route with an alternative public sector route. In a case like this, the traditional form of public sector comparator is not something we would expect to be produced. It is really something specific to PFI projects.

Q35 Mr Williams: Really? I would expect it to be produced and I suspect most of my colleagues would—I do not know, I have not consulted them; hands up those who do not. If it is applicable in relation to PFI, surely it is applicable in the case of PPP. Why this wonderful whirl to get you round the back of one of the areas of constant criticisms from Treasury?

Mr Glicksman: The public sector comparator is a particular technique which enables you to make a comparison in a PFI project between the two alternatives. Certainly one would expect, in a case like this one, there to be an analysis of the

advantages and disadvantages of the proposed route. That analysis would not necessarily take the form of a public sector comparator as it is structured for a PFI project.

Q36 Mr Williams: What is the rationale of that. Whether it is or whether it is not, there must be a reason for it not being treated on the same basis. Why?

Mr Glicksman: I think the rationale is “horses for courses”, that what you want is the basis for a rational decision and that you need therefore to take a decision on the basis of advantages and disadvantages.

Q37 Mr Williams: But not whether it is a good financial deal.

Mr Glicksman: Which would include financial issues.

Q38 Mr Williams: It is of some relevance, is it not? It is of marginal interest around the place.

Mr Glicksman: Yes, but the public sector comparator has a specific meaning in relation to PFI projects. Certainly your point that there needs to be an analysis of whether this is a good route to go down or not is certainly a perfectly fair one and something which one would expect to happen in a case like this.

Dr Werrett: When Mr McFarland carried out the review, one of his main comparators was between us remaining as we were and the risks of staying as we are and the risks of moving to PPP. He considered that it was the least risky of the two to move to PPP.

Q39 Mr Williams: How could he decide, since you cannot add risks as you can add pounds? What comparator is that, if it does not include the accounting and the financial element? That is of great importance to this Committee.

Dr Werrett: Two points on that. He felt, the way the competition was building and the way the marketplace might unfold, that the government might be left with what you might call a dwindling asset in that we would find it more difficult to compete and therefore we would be gradually losing market share and would have to be dealing with that situation.

Q40 Mr Williams: Surely that would have been advantageous to the Treasury? If they could have shown that in fact you were a dwindling asset—and we have no evidence of that at all, it is the first we have ever heard of that, we were told everything was going well and what a good report this is—I would have thought the Treasury and you, in order to underline your case for a PPP, would want to show that it is dwindling fast.

Dr Werrett: With respect, this was a projection of what would happen if the marketplace continued to develop as it is. I am not suggesting that we are not doing well now but that he was looking to the future in the development of forensic science. The other point he seemed to major on, the value point, was that the competition was using us as a price umbrella

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and he felt that if that were no longer the case, then through competition better value would be given to the criminal justice system.

Mr Williams: My time is up but I suspect some of my colleagues will follow this up or we will make some comments on this in our report.

Chairman: We are certainly interested in your comment that you are a dwindling asset.

Q41 Mr Bacon: In the note which you wrote to the Home Secretary and the Minister which provided an update on the position of the FSS, you described the NAO as having published their Report and said that overall the Report was favourable and made five recommendations. When I looked at the report of this Committee from four years ago, 15 March 1999—I do not know whether it was a coincidence that it was the Ides of March, but that was the date—we made several recommendations then and if you compare them with the recommendations of this Report, *Improving Service Delivery*, which the National Audit Office has just published, they are remarkably similar. For example, four years ago this Committee said that the FSS and the police needed to define more specifically the forensic science services to be provided so that FSS's strategy for increasing capacity could be appropriately directed to meet demand. Four years later we find in this Report from the NAO that you are recommended to ensure that you have sufficient staff with the right skills to meet the demands for your services. It is hard to think of an organisation which would not want to make sure it had sufficient staff with the right skills to meet demands for its services. You are recommended to ensure that the police understand how forensic evidence should be submitted and also to ensure that case work is sent in the first instance to the laboratory with the best capacity to analyse it. If you look at the second recommendation from 1999, it says that you need to develop close working relationships with the police. The second recommendation here in 2003 says that a consistent concern of police forces is that the agency does not routinely notify them if a deadline for completing case-work will not be met. Another recommendation here talks about the Service itself being a target for criminals and, as you yourself alluded to, and it is referred to on page 35 of this 2003 Report, there was a spectacular burglary. Finally, in point 5, which is an extraordinary sentence, it says the agency “. . . has no awareness of its contribution to the criminal justice system”. It does not sound to me as though progress has been made which would justify the comment that overall the Report is favourable.

Dr Werrett: In actual fact in all of those areas, we have made considerable progress.

Q42 Mr Bacon: Perhaps you could start with the first one, which is defining your services more specifically and ensuring that you have the resources in place to meet the demand.

Dr Werrett: Surely. We have spent a lot of time with a customer management programme and we have letters of understanding with all the forces apart

from the Metropolitan Police themselves. I will bring Mr Howitt, my Deputy Chief Executive in on that particular one, because we have done a lot of work with them on a contractual basis to provide an understanding of the kind of service—

Q43 Mr Bacon: I notice that in the Report it says that police forces were reluctant to enter into letters of understanding originally. Can you say why?

Dr Werrett: I am not sure. I think there is a concern about commitment on their part perhaps. It is no longer the case. We have letters of understanding with all the forces and quite detailed understanding. There is a reluctance and particularly with the smaller forces who may say on average they get two murders a year and suddenly one year they get five or six or ten. We have even talked to smaller forces about getting together and coming across with a regional demand which would even it out. We have spent a lot of time on being able to translate that demand into the capacity requirements within the organisation and the skill requirements within the organisation and in the implementation of a new operational management system we can examine those skills and gaps around the service and train accordingly. May I just ask Mr Howitt to talk about what is really an exciting prospect in the Metropolitan Police?

Mr Howitt: You will notice from the Report that the Metropolitan Police were particularly scathing about our timeliness, for example. They set a very high requirement, in particular with DNA, for dealing with crime, particularly volume crime. They went through a tendering exercise last year about November time and we have spent the last four months working through exactly what their requirement is in a number of very specific service areas such as armed criminality, homicide, burglary. We now have a much clearer idea of what it is they are looking for, what makes the difference in terms of their timeliness for example, defining timeliness in a very different way. For example, in the investigative phase, before someone is arrested, we are now operating turnround times in single days, two or three days. Once someone has been arrested the communication is such that we can then plan to meet the court dates. We have gone through a process with the Metropolitan Police which we are now going to roll out across all our police forces.

Q44 Mr Bacon: I was about to say that that does leave 42 other police forces.

Mr Howitt: It does.

Q45 Mr Bacon: So presumably you are also asking those police forces whether what you found with the Met is appropriate or not.

Mr Howitt: Absolutely. We will have moved from a national price list effectively to 43 bespoke services made up of sub-services which will actually meet requirements much more closely of different county forces and metropolitan forces.

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Q46 Mr Bacon: What happened to the perpetrators of the crimes described in Figure 25 on page 35, the theft of the credit cards and the man who scaled the exterior of the building?

Dr Werrett: I am pleased to report that through forensic science the man who scaled the building was caught and the man with the credit cards was caught on the Trident Business Park site trying to do a similar thing.

Q47 Mr Bacon: Have they been convicted?

Dr Werrett: I know that the man who scaled the building has been convicted and received what I would call a reasonable sentence. I do not know about the man with the credit cards.

Q48 Mr Bacon: On page 27, paragraph 2.14, it talks about the Home Office targets “For 2002–03 the Agency has been set more challenging targets by the Home Office”. Given that you are not actually meeting your current targets, why were you agreeing to yet more challenging ones?

Dr Werrett: We do feel that the targets which have now been set are more challenging and there are 23 of them compared with the nine we had previously. However, we feel that they are more appropriate to drive the kind of customer service that we should be aiming for and more akin to what our customers will identify as targets which are worthy of us.

Q49 Mr Bacon: Are you now more confident in your ability to meet those yet more challenging targets?

Dr Werrett: We have a considerable system in process where each director is identified with each target and we are monitoring those targets very closely. The one in greatest jeopardy is the one we have least control over and that is the linking of fingerprints and the DNA database, which is one of the targets. Bringing those two things together is not really within our control, but we will act as an agent and facilitate as best we can.

Q50 Mr Bacon: Paragraph 2.46 on page 37 talks about “The gap between expectation and satisfaction” and “The discrepancy . . . was greatest in three respects”. The third one of those is “Being informed by the Agency that the agreed delivery date is likely to be missed”. It would strike one as basic customer care to let your customer know if you are going to miss a target, yet that was one of the most consistent complaints by the police. What are you going to do about that?

Dr Werrett: I would agree with that and it is one where we have reinforced the management of meeting the delivery dates and informing people where we are not going to meet the delivery dates. We have also introduced a new operational management system and we have linked ourselves into the police national network in terms of e-mails. That will really facilitate our ability to communicate with the customer and inform them of the service they are getting.

Q51 Mr Bacon: May I return to security for just a second? On page 33, in paragraph 2.36, it says that there has been some improvement, but “The main area requiring further improvement was the need for a clear desk policy to be consistently complied with. This policy was not operating at all laboratories due to a lack of storage space, which meant that a small number of exhibits and case files were not locked away out of work hours”. Presumably it is just a matter of having a locked cupboard in most cases is it not?

Dr Werrett: Yes, it is, but some of these things can be quite bulky and the laboratory which is most affected by that and the most overcrowded is the London laboratory. The issue there and the resolution of the issue will require us to move work away from the London laboratory and it was the express wish of the Metropolitan Police that we did not do that. Now they have agreed we can do that, we can reorganise to correct that permanently.

Q52 Mr Bacon: When evidence goes from the police to a laboratory, how is it transmitted? By post, or by car, or what?

Dr Werrett: We offer the police forces a collection and delivery service which we sub-contract to Reliance and the items are put in sealed boxes, bar coded and their entry and retrieval—

Q53 Mr Bacon: Is it still the case that 73% of cases are handled by only three labs, London, Chorley and Priory House, Birmingham?

Dr Werrett: I think that is true.¹

Q54 Mr Bacon: Why is that?

Dr Werrett: It is slightly misleading because two of those laboratories contain DNA units, which analyse DNA samples and they are considered to be a case. Therefore, there is movement from laboratories to those laboratories to do DNA analysis. So those cases are relatively small compared to the other cases.

Q55 Mr Bacon: I am running out of time. Page 36, Figure 26, the results of customer satisfaction survey on training. That figure explains where satisfaction falls short of expectation and where it exceeds expectation. The only areas where you exceed expectation were the content of the pre-course literature—so obviously there is a good sales job going on—and then the training brochure. But in every other respect, the flexibility of the training, the availability of staff, the approachability of staff, the suitability of the courses and the ability to provide training on appropriate dates, you fall short. What are you going to do about the apparent inadequacy of your training in nearly every respect?

Dr Werrett: We have a training group and a training team which has a specific remit to satisfy the customer requirements in this respect, but this falls to Mr Loveland, my Chief Operating Officer.

¹ *Note by witness:* Later confirmed by the FSS that 49% of cases were handled by the three named labs in September 2003.

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Mr Loveland: What we need to do much more clearly is to understand precisely the customer requirement, to make sure not only that we understand the customer requirement, but that we bear in mind that the customer may not know as much about the modern technology as we do. An important aspect is to try to make sure that we explain to the customer in a language they can understand some of the high complexities of science and technology. There is a great deal that we can offer and unless we do actually address it in a way that makes it feel as though we are addressing their problems with solutions, then there is a good chance that the customer will fail to appreciate what forensic science can do. A great deal of effort is going in to try to make sure that customers understand what technology can do for them and where necessary have the skills themselves to be able to do the work, perhaps at crime scenes, as well as understand more clearly the complexities of interpretation.

Dr Werrett: We have also joined up with the National Centre for Policing Excellence, under Sir David Phillips, where in 2002–03 we supplied training days on a national basis and we have agreed to supply to them for six months an experienced officer who will be rewriting the equivalent of the forensic science manual for police officers. We are making best endeavours.

Q56 Jon Trickett: May I refer first of all to page 26, Figure 18, which compares the delivery date achievements by laboratory. I see Wetherby—and as a Yorkshire MP you would expect me to look at Wetherby—actually achieved 94% within the agreed timescale. Can you tell me how many people are employed at Wetherby?

Dr Werrett: Approximately 300.²

Q57 Jon Trickett: On page 31 there is a blue box called “The Burglary Reduction Initiative in Leeds (BRIL)”. I come from Leeds, although I now represent a Wakefield seat and I was struck by the success here. Thirty individuals were found guilty and a further 49 had been charged. How many of those were found guilty?

Dr Werrett: I do not know that precise figure.

Mr Howitt: I have some figures with regard to BRIL overall. It is over 50% guilty plea, 84% of the matches actually result in primary detections.

Q58 Jon Trickett: So that is an excellent initiative and presumably ordinary policing might not have found these people so expeditiously. To find so many people involved in burglary in the West Yorkshire area is very well done and thanks, presumably, partly to the work of the 300-odd people from Wetherby. Why I raise this is because in paragraph 1.17 on page 19, we discover that no other criminal justice system has separated out the policing of the criminal justice system from forensic science as far as we have. We now intend to go the final step, which

is to privatise entirely. Why is it that in England and Wales we should think that such an experiment, which appears to be unique amongst comparable countries, is the right way to carry on when no one else has done that? The reason why I refer to Leeds, apart from the interest which I have in it, is that actually you embedded a member of the Forensic Science Service inside the police force. So the intimate relationship between the police force and the FSS was demonstrated in that case. In all the other cases mentioned here, we discovered the close integration of forensic science and policing. What we are now proposing to do is to reduce forensic science to an external privatised service in a company limited by shares, just an ordinary private company, a profit-making company.

Dr Werrett: With the Home Office taking a fairly large stake.

Chairman: The trouble is that Mr Blunkett has decided that as a policy objective of government. Certainly you can ask the witness to explain it, but it is difficult for him to criticise it.

Q59 Jon Trickett: I understand that it is a policy decision made by politicians, but it does seem to me to be an experiment which borders on the reckless in the sense that no one else, no other country, has gone this far in separating out the two functions. Is there any other comparable country where this has happened, where the whole of the forensic science service, including the whole DNA database, has been privatised?

Dr Werrett: I can answer that in several parts; there is a lot to that question. With regard to the privatisation of DNA testing, the United States is a complete mixture of state laboratories and private sector laboratories supplying DNA testing. In fact the whole expansion programme in which Mr Bush announced \$1 billion for DNA over the next five years, is generally founded on the fact that the private sector will take up the slack and supply the DNA analysis, because they do not believe the state laboratories can do that. With regard to the burglary initiative in Leeds, which has been extremely successful, just to reinforce the figures Mr Howitt gave, compared with the benchmark period for the year 2000 the success represents an increase of 236% in the number of suspected matches delivered to the force and a subsequent 247% increase in resultant convictions. What I would say is that is about two organisations getting together and understanding what services each needs to supply to the other. That relationship does not have to be based on the fact that they are both public sector. I am neither defending nor agreeing with the private/public sector proposition but it is perfectly possible for a private sector organisation to have a very rigorous agreement about the customer service that an organisation should supply to the police force. We would dearly love to be involved, whether public or private sector, in a negotiation with a police force which articulates completely what investigating officers and senior investigating officers want for their police force. That has been one of the great difficulties: knowing what they want and

² Note by witness: Later confirmed by the FSS to be 296 (September 2003).

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customising that service. When Mr Howitt talked about the Metropolitan Police he referred to it, because for the first time we have been engaged in very serious and lengthy discussions with the force about what they want.

The Committee suspended from 5.16 pm to 5.22 pm for a division in the House

Q60 Jon Trickett: I was questioning the witnesses about the embeddedness of the FSS inside the police force and the fact that there were no comparator countries which have gone as far as we have. The witness's answer appeared to confirm the point. I want to move on now because I am very limited for time. I notice that paragraph 1.16 talks about an increase in workload of up to 60% in the next five years. I understand that at the same time we are now making redundancies or wanting to slim down the workforce by 260 staff. Could you first of all confirm that is the case? Are we intending to shed a significant number of staff, about 10% of the workforce?

Dr Werrett: Yes. We are targeting the loss of staff to the administrative areas and support areas rather than the case-work staff, although some case-work staff will be leaving. It is really in response to the Metropolitan Police Service's decision to place £7 million of work with the competition.

Q61 Jon Trickett: Can you indicate to the Committee what the costs of these job losses will be?

Dr Werrett: We have not finished the process yet; we have not gone through the process of compulsory redundancy. At the moment we have gone through the process of early retirement and voluntary redundancy, but our latest estimate is of the order of £6 million.

Q62 Jon Trickett: Costs of £6 million.

Dr Werrett: Yes.

Q63 Jon Trickett: Presumably that is falling to the public purse rather than to the company when it is set up.

Dr Werrett: It depends. Some of those early retirement costs would stretch into a period when the company was set up.

Q64 Jon Trickett: I note what you say, but it does seem to me that what you are really doing is preparing yourself for privatisation. I put it to you that the cost of preparing for privatisation is falling on the public purse rather than on the private company, which no doubt you will be a board member of in due course.

Dr Werrett: I would respectfully have to disagree with that. The restructuring is entirely due to the fact that the Metropolitan Police have removed £7 million of business and placed it with the competition and we, as an agency, have to manage our accounts accordingly. We do not expect to receive money from the Home Office, in fact the Home Office expects us to make a small contribution each year and that is what we aim to do.

Q65 Jon Trickett: Do 260 staff then only represent £7 million a year?

Dr Werrett: We feel that the 260 staff is a response to the £7 million and also in our view the agency needs to slim down.

Q66 Jon Trickett: So your first answer was not really a full answer, was it, since when I first put it to you that you were cutting jobs, you said it was because of the Metropolitan Police's £7 million? Anybody can work out that at, say, an average cost of £30,000 a head times 260 staff it is much more than £7 million a year, is it not?

Dr Werrett: I believe that the actual cost is more than £30,000 a head.

Q67 Jon Trickett: I am sure it is. I was being conservative. How many staff do you intend to cut in Wetherby?

Dr Werrett: I do not have precise numbers for Wetherby, because we have not gone through the compulsory redundancy process.

Q68 Jon Trickett: May I put it to you that there is far more concern amongst the staff about this proposal, first of all than you said in an earlier answer, which was that there were many concerns about pension arrangements? There are significant losses of staff here, which I have brought out and, frankly, I do not think you were totally frank with the Committee when I put the questions to you. There is alarm actually amongst the staff, not only because of their own jobs, but because the quality of service they will provide will be reduced, it seems to many people, certainly to observers like myself, if you effectively become a private for profit company, which is what is going to happen, is it not?

Dr Werrett: May I start at the beginning of that question? We envisage the majority of loss of staff to be in the centre of the organisation and that will help us to reduce costs in response to the loss of revenue. At the same time I believe that will also increase the case working staff ratio to support staff. It is important for a service organisation such as ours to do that in order to provide the best possible service. The staff at Wetherby will be relatively unaffected by this compared with the staff at the centre in Trident Court. In respect of the service provided to the criminal justice system, if we move to PPP there are various advantages which the organisation will benefit from and those advantages will move on to provide a better service to the police forces of England and Wales.

Jon Trickett: That is a statement rather than a proof, by the way. May I ask for a note to indicate just where the staff will be lost, sector by sector, as well as the cost to the public purse of making all these people redundant, which is clearly going to be more than £6 million?³ I think this is a significant thing.

³ Ev 17

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Q69 Chairman: Can you provide such a note?

Dr Werrett: Yes, we can certainly provide such a note, but it will be after we have gone through the compulsory redundancy, if that is satisfactory. My Chief Operating Officer has reminded me that of the 262, 100 people have left anyway, have resigned from the organisation.

Q70 Chairman: What sort of timescale are we looking at before you can provide us with such a note? We cannot hold up the report indefinitely.

Dr Werrett: We could provide you with where we have got to so far⁴ with people who have left, voluntary redundancies and early retirements. The compulsory redundancy situation will be resolved within one month.

Q71 Chairman: You understand our concern and you will do your best.

Dr Werrett: Yes, I do and I will.

Q72 Mr Jenkins: On page 25, Figure 14, you explained to the Chairman how you read the figures and it confused me, to be honest. I should like to give you my understanding. The days up to 2001, as I read it, you said were days where the case load was within the department and for 2001 they were days when the customer triggered the inquiry to when the inquiry was delivered.

Dr Werrett: I apologise for causing that confusion. No, the days quoted up to 2000 and 2001 were under our old work management system and that work management system took into account averages for jobs delivered, regardless of whether those jobs were delivered inside the organisation or outside the organisation. So, for example, when a laboratory sent some samples for analysis to another laboratory, which is common with DNA, that receiving laboratory would record a job received and a job delivered. I felt that did not actually reflect the service to the customer, because that time was obviously shorter. What the customer sees is the case, say at the Chepstow laboratory, is from beginning to end, rather than the intermediate stage with Birmingham laboratory carrying out a DNA analysis. What we have done with the new operational management system is record the average time for jobs delivered throughout the case, as the customer sees it.

Q73 Mr Jenkins: So we are not comparing like with like.

Dr Werrett: That is right. There is an adjustment that we will provide in our annual report when it is published, which describes the true picture.

Q74 Mr Jenkins: When you saw this Report and the Report was submitted to us, you signed it off as being accurate.

Dr Werrett: I did sign it off as being accurate and indeed it is in the figures that we were able to provide at the time. We also knew that we were implementing a new operational management system and we did explain that.

Q75 Mr Jenkins: Is there anything else in this Report which you would like to elaborate on from your point of view, which, as far as you see it, might be slightly misleading to us in its present form?

Dr Werrett: No.

Q76 Mr Jenkins: The rest of the Report is accurate.

Dr Werrett: Yes, as I understand it.

Q77 Mr Jenkins: May I ask you a simple question? What is the sickness rate amongst your staff?

Dr Werrett: I do not know that figure. I am sorry, we will have to provide you with those figures.⁵

Q78 Mr Jenkins: Which is the best site, the site which gives you best value for money at present?

Dr Werrett: How would you like that measured? In terms of contribution?

Q79 Chairman: May I interrupt? I think Sir John may have a comment.

Sir John Bourn: The Accounting Officer has made reference to the fact that there have been developments in the figures in the Report. Mr Jenkins has picked this up, as other members have. I should just like to make the point that, as the Accounting Officer said, he did agree this Report. There is a procedure available to accounting officers to advise the Committee and ourselves if there are developments in the figures relevant to the Report. There would have been an opportunity between publication of our report in March and this meeting for these figures to have been brought forward so ourselves and the Committee could have had reference to them.

Q80 Chairman: When I asked my original questions, I was doing so on the basis of advice and all your answers to me were that matters had improved. It would have helped the Committee enormously if we had known this before the start of the Committee. It makes it rather difficult to do our job of interrogating you if you are now saying the goalposts have effectively moved and that whatever was in the NAO Report which looks critical, things are much better now. I think that Sir John, in his usual extremely courteous style, has made an implied criticism of you.

Dr Werrett: My apologies, if these figures do confuse. They were a true reflection at the time. We have had more time to analyse and look at things. What I would point to is the progress we have made which we have not yet highlighted, which is that we have moved from a 90% turnaround time of 126 days to 74 days in this last year. We have made various

⁴ Ev 17

⁵ Ev 17

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other improvements. We now deliver, for example, CJ samples in three and a half days compared with 140 days mentioned in the Report.

Q81 Mr Jenkins: All we can judge by is the Report in front of us. We cannot judge by figures we do not have or improvements you allege you have made unless they are in black and white figures, can we? Do you accept that criticism?

Dr Werrett: I accept the criticism. I was just trying to help the Committee understand the performance of the agency. My apologies if in trying to do that there is some confusion. I felt I was obliged, having reviewed and revisited these figures only recently to understand the way the old systems and the new systems, in terms of accounting, performed.

Q82 Mr Jenkins: I am thinking about unit cost in effect, cost per case. You must have a cost basis for each site and know which one gives you the best cost per case value. Which is the best site?

Mr Anthony: We look at our sites on the basis of contribution, the revenue they generate and those costs. Each site does deliver a different level of contribution based on the mix of work that goes through that site. The sites which perform best financially are those which do DNA analysis and the one which comes out financially best is our Huntingdon site.

Q83 Mr Jenkins: Is it possible under the new arrangements—this is just a thought—if you have work like DNA analysis, which is a fairly simple procedure, to send that out to private laboratories and create more capacity in your labs if the workload went up?

Dr Werrett: The people who carry out the DNA analysis are a different set of people from those who carry out the regular case-work. We do take people from the DNA analysis stream into the case-working stream, but they require a training programme to take them through that. Also, as you were aware when you visited the laboratories, the DNA analysis is becoming increasingly automated, so the number of staff involved in that will become smaller and smaller as time goes by.

Q84 Mr Jenkins: Will the same principles apply to any other part of your work where, although you appear to have a monopoly position with regard to the police force for this work, it would be possible under the new arrangements for you to sub-contract that work out to other private laboratories?

Dr Werrett: It would be possible to sub-contract some work out to other laboratories. My understanding though from the current position is that they do not have the capacity at the moment and they may be struggling to supply the level of service or the capacity to the police forces currently. The one area where that may become an exception fairly rapidly is in the field of DNA, where we have excess capacity to carry out DNA testing.

Q85 Mr Jenkins: You are aware of the police's dissatisfaction with your turnaround time for DNA. What are you doing about it?

Dr Werrett: We are very busily automating the analysis of stains and I believe the success we have had with the analysis of samples from suspects for the database, which has moved us down to a turnaround time of three and a half days, will be repeated with the automation of the crime scene stains and similarly for stains within case-work.

Q86 Mr Jenkins: Why do you not inform your customers when you are going to miss the agreed delivery date?

Dr Werrett: We have reinforced the procedure and it is to inform customers when we are going to miss the delivery date. Sometimes it is just the sheer mechanism of doing it has not been there and one of the processes we put in place is for us to be on a similar e-mail system to police forces so that we can contact them quickly and efficiently.

Q87 Mr Jenkins: So now you are in a position for all customers to be informed when you are going to miss the agreed date.

Dr Werrett: Yes, that is the position we are striving to achieve from a managerial point of view.

Q88 Mr Jenkins: When will you be there? When will you achieve it?

Dr Werrett: I cannot actually say. It is an aspiration to get there.

Q89 Mr Jenkins: This year, next year, the year after? When are you trying to achieve it?

Dr Werrett: We are trying to achieve it now; our goal is to achieve it. All the managerial effort is going into achieving it, to understanding why it does not happen when it does not happen and we are much better at doing it now compared with where we were before.

Mr Loveland: To try to reinforce this we have come up with what we call a set of business rules, to make it clear to the workforce who are responsible for communications with the customer that it is a requirement of the service we provide to get in touch with the customer and make sure the customer is aware of any difficulties we have. Furthermore, on many occasions on the customer's side, problems have occurred with a case: they possibly have to look at other suspects, they possibly have to submit further materials. So it is a two-way dialogue.

Q90 Mr Jenkins: How many court cases have been delayed because your evidence has failed to turn up on time?

Dr Werrett: I do not know the precise number because that is not always fed back to us. I know of isolated cases where situations like that have occurred, but sometimes when those situations are investigated there is a mixture of getting a material into us and us delivering that material and understanding the communication with the force.

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Q91 Mr Jenkins: Do you realise the implication of the costs to the court system if these situations are delayed and the costs might far outweigh what you would spend in getting enough staff in there to be able to deliver on the promised time.

Dr Werrett: I agree and over recent years it has been a struggle to increase the capacity, robbing Peter to pay Paul, because we have to use experienced forensic scientists to train more forensic scientists and those experienced forensic scientists are not there delivering the work.

Q92 Mr Jenkins: Mr Bacon asked you the question I was going to ask about the satisfaction with your training, but all police forces now have within them people called scene of crime officers. Do you work closely with these and have all forces' scene of crime officers gone through your system?

Dr Werrett: All scene of crime officers have not gone through our system. What we have done, particularly with regard to DNA, is to train all police officers and we achieved quite a high percentage of all police officers, under sponsorship from the Home Office, and we provided police officers with the CD for DNA training.

Q93 Mr Jenkins: Scene of crime officers are not necessarily police officers. They are specialists in their role employed by police forces to conduct that investigation on the scene. They are the most critical people and they have not all been through your training system.

Dr Werrett: We do take part in training with 23 police forces and we do take part in the training of scene of crime officers with the Durham training school. In that way we do get involved with scene of crime officer training.

Q94 Mr Jenkins: Do you not think they should all go through the system?

Dr Werrett: That is a decision for the chief constable. I would agree that we would be happy to train them, but it is a decision for the chief constable whether or not he uses us to train his scene of crime officers.

Q95 Chairman: Sir John, just in light of your intervention during that last session of questioning, do you think it would be worth your while to impress on organisations which we are going to interrogate that if there is any change in the figures between the publication of your report and our meeting, we should be told about it?

Sir John Bourn: I certainly will do that. Instructions to do that already exist, but I will have attention drawn to them again, working with the Treasury to do that.

Q96 Mr Gibb: May I ask you about turnaround times? You were talking about a target turnaround time of 24 days, which is not being met and it is taking 35 days. There is a table on page 25 which shows the turnaround times for various types of case. Why does it take 25 days to examine the evidence in a burglary? Is it 25 days' worth of

procedures that are happening, you have to let the chemicals dry or send away or something? Or are we talking about 25 days like the NHS waiting lists, time waiting because of excess demand?

Dr Werrett: Yes, there are queuing times within the 25 days.

Q97 Mr Gibb: What proportion of the 25 days is queue and how much is actual procedure in dealing with the work, would you say?

Dr Werrett: It is very difficult to give precise figures on that because cases will vary and what is required to be examined within them. I could give you an example. If it takes between 24 and 36 hours to do a DNA test, which may be involved in a burglary, the queuing time may be 14 days before that test goes through.

Q98 Mr Gibb: That does sound to me to be a terribly lax service. I would not tolerate that kind of service from any of the services which are provided to me by any of the private sector companies which supply me. What are you doing about reducing that time to the time it actually takes to do the test, getting rid of this 14-day queuing period?

Dr Werrett: The thrust of what we are doing to get rid of the queuing period is to automate the service. We are tackling it from start to finish in that we are providing the means to get the samples to us through a collection and delivery service and we are speeding the process through in terms of receipt of the samples and then we are devising systems to place it onto an automated system to do the analysis. At the end of the process it is examined by an expert system.

Q99 Mr Gibb: That is DNA. What about all the other stuff, examining the fibres on an old duvet or bloodstained T-shirt?

Dr Werrett: Some of those things take a long and painstaking time, for example the comparison of fibres.

Q100 Mr Gibb: Is there a queuing time for those procedures too? Is the case time for those procedures solely the procedure or is there a queuing time for that as well?

Dr Werrett: There will be queuing times in terms of starting the case, but what we have devised and are piloting in the London laboratory and moving around the country is that when cases are received designated case officers will look at the case and decide exactly what needs to be done in the case. We did have a queuing time waiting for a reporting officer to come along and decide what to do. Now we are moving into a regime where a designated officer will look and get the case in for examination into the evidence recovery unit as soon as possible. There may be a queuing time in the evidence recovery unit before the case gets started. Once the case has started it will then be smooth through to the report.

Q101 Mr Gibb: Are you talking days for that queuing time before a case gets started?

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Dr Werrett: Yes, it is days.

Q102 Mr Gibb: What are you doing to tackle that?

Dr Werrett: That is a question of balancing capacity and demand. We feel this year for the first year that we have capacity and demand in balance and we shall start to see those queuing times fall, as I believe they are.

Mr Loveland: At the end of the day, we should like to get rid of queuing times if we can. What we are moving to is a situation now where we are empowering our site managers, if they have work coming through which needs urgent attention, to bypass the set collection and delivery service because the matter is urgent. How we do this is through our new operational management system where we can look at the loadings on each of our staff, we can look at where all the blockages are in any system and we invite—in fact we demand—a partnership between ourselves and our site managers to use their initiative to move materials quickly.

Q103 Mr Gibb: Is the truth not that you need more scientists doing the work? Is that not the answer? You need to match your supply of service with demand for the service and that is what you are failing to do. Is that not it?

Mr Loveland: For the first time we have demand and capacity roughly in balance.

Q104 Mr Gibb: So there are no queues now.

Mr Loveland: Queues are beginning to fall.

Q105 Mr Gibb: Should they not have been eliminated? You are dealing with a backlog I take it?

Mr Loveland: Yes. We have done quite a lot to reduce the number of outstanding jobs.

Q106 Mr Gibb: So pretty soon you will have no queues.

Mr Loveland: That is my aim.

Q107 Mr Gibb: How soon then?

Mr Loveland: I would say by the end of the financial year we should be in a much better state to give a much more responsive service. We are looking to do work in less than 42 days.

Q108 Mr Gibb: You still have queues though. When will you get rid of the queues? My point is that there is no excuse for queues. Why do you have queues? When will you get rid of the queues?

Dr Werrett: There is some excuse for queues.

Q109 Mr Gibb: What are those reasons?

Dr Werrett: We are working closely with the customers to remove those. The way some cases come in can be in batches and if you inject batches of things into a supply chain you will cause a bulge to go through the supply chain. We are working closely with customers on collection and delivery and how we smooth the queue there. We are examining the supply chain step by step from beginning to end to eliminate all reasons for queuing.

Q110 Mr Gibb: You are seeing an increase in demand year on year, are you not? Is that not what you said earlier?

Dr Werrett: Yes, we have been seeing an increase in demand year on year.

Q111 Mr Gibb: Therefore you are training more people to try to match that demand.

Dr Werrett: Yes, we are. We have already had on stream this year . . .

Mr Loveland: We have brought another 26 up to expert witness level reporting officers. We have 90 more in training who will come on through this current financial year.

Q112 Mr Gibb: You are making some people redundant. Are they administrators, not scientists?

Mr Loveland: Really what we are doing is taking this as an opportunity to enrich the reporting officer capacity of the FSS, to try to make sure that we give customers more responsive service.

Q113 Mr Gibb: So no reporting officer grade staff are being made redundant.

Mr Loveland: A few have taken voluntary redundancy and a few seek to take early retirement.

Q114 Mr Gibb: Why do you accept voluntary redundancy from people who are needed in your organisation?

Mr Loveland: In one or two cases there are personal reasons for letting these people go.

Q115 Mr Gibb: Then they should just hand in their notice and you would not have to pay redundancy money. I do not quite understand that people can leave and get redundancy money when you are short of this grade of staff.

Mr Loveland: It is a balance.

Q116 Mr Gibb: I am sure there is an explanation for that. May I ask you about the DNA database? You said that there are private sector suppliers who have access to the DNA database. Presumably they will only put information onto the database which is from suspects and convicted criminals?

Dr Werrett: That is correct. The custodian deals with issuing the matches which are generated from the database. The suppliers provide results of analysis and details of individuals to go onto the database.

Q117 Mr Gibb: What are the safeguards regarding the usage of that database? Are they subject to all the usual safeguards?

Dr Werrett: They are not allowed access to the data or use of the data. The data is solely handled by the custodian.

Q118 Mr Steinberg: I am a little confused here. You have a backlog, you have queues, you take a long time to respond to the information requested yet you are making people redundant. Is it the tea lady or somebody?

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Dr Werrett: The list of people being made redundant is mainly centred around the administrative and support individuals who work at the centre of the organisation; that is the main focus.

Q119 Mr Steinberg: What do they do?

Dr Werrett: Some do personnel, some do finance, IT and so forth.

Q120 Mr Steinberg: I heard you say that there are going to be 100 redundancies. Is that right?

Dr Werrett: No, the idea was to downsize by 260 staff.

Q121 Mr Steinberg: So why do you have so many administrators?

Dr Werrett: It is not entirely administrators, but whilst the programme has been ongoing we have had approximately 100 people leave the organisation. We have accepted about 127 people for voluntary redundancy.

Q122 Mr Steinberg: How many of those are key workers, the people who actually do the science?

Dr Werrett: The number of case-workers would be 28.

Q123 Mr Steinberg: Out of?

Dr Werrett: Out of 127.

Q124 Mr Steinberg: Why did you let them go? Why did they get redundancy?

Dr Werrett: As explained by my Chief Operating Officer, there are personal reasons to let some of them go and there are others, frankly, whom we are happy to let go.

Q125 Mr Steinberg: Because they are not very good.

Dr Werrett: Basically.

Q126 Mr Steinberg: Can you turn to page 35, paragraph 2.39? When I read this I found it an amazing admission by the Association of Chief Police Officers “. . . while police awareness of the value of forensic analysis is increasing, there is still much scope for improvement in this area”. I find that incredible. It is obvious to anybody who watches *Morse* or *Jack Frost*, that it is vital, yet the police do not seem to think it is vital. Why is that?

Dr Werrett: It is hard for me to answer on behalf of the police obviously, but what I can say is that we have been working closely with the PSU, the police standards unit, to reinforce the work they are doing in improving performance. Their work is particularly focused on volume crime and the use of DNA matches and we have worked closely with them on joint projects. BRIL is one of those projects.

Q127 Mr Steinberg: This just gives the impression that some police forces do not believe that forensic science is very important. Every layman knows that it is, yet the police seem to think that it is not. The

Association of Chief Police Officers do not seem to think their own forces know that it is. That is incredible.

Dr Werrett: It is a statement about awareness and it reflects *Under the Microscope Revisited*, which is a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate which reinforced this view.

Q128 Mr Steinberg: Training days have been increased by 60% in something like four years. My sums are not very good, but that is what I worked it out to be. The police forces have also increased their training days. Is it not concerning that only half the police forces actually attended. What did the other half do?

Dr Werrett: It is a concern and it is something we continue to address with our partnership project in terms of education and joint working with the forces.

Q129 Mr Steinberg: Do you know what the other half does? Do they have any training whatsoever or do they just sit on their backsides and depend upon old fashioned detective work?

Dr Werrett: The scene of crime officers for police forces are all trained.

Q130 Mr Steinberg: Who trains them then?

Dr Werrett: They go through the National Training School at Durham, for example, and Hendon does some training, as I understand it.

Q131 Mr Steinberg: Is that all they do? They do not go for any refresher courses, they do not go for any expertise or anything like that, they just do a course at Durham.

Dr Werrett: This is beyond the Forensic Science Service. I cannot really answer for those people.

Q132 Mr Steinberg: What you might be able to tell us about is the success of the police forces who actually do the training with you compared with the police forces who do not do any training with you. Are you doing anything on that?

Dr Werrett: No, I do not have figures on that.

Q133 Mr Steinberg: Why not?

Dr Werrett: It is not a comparison that we have all the data to make because we do not always know the outcomes and how the forces are measured. The police standards unit is concentrated on those kinds of things.

Q134 Mr Steinberg: Basically you cannot tell us about the people who come to you. I would have thought you would have been very keen to know whether people who come to you and are well trained are hugely successful, whereas the ones who do not come to you are not successful. I would have thought you would be keen to have that information, but it seems you are not.

Dr Werrett: I am extremely keen to have that information. The kind of information I mentioned earlier was when we work in partnership with forces we can then get that kind of information and we can

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demonstrate the value of forensic science. In the West Midlands project, we showed that of 648 cases submitted 162 crimes had been detected and 84% of those offenders pleaded guilty, which is a huge saving to the criminal justice system. We have gone on with that project, which is known as *Safer Homes*, and that has now gone up to 1,431 cases and detections are now at 412 and guilty verdicts have gone to 96%. Where we can work with forces and understand the statistics from the beginning to the end we do and we have shown that it is good value.

Q135 Mr Steinberg: But only 50% of the forces come to you. Could I perhaps suggest that it is because they think your training is so poor that they do not come?

Dr Werrett: I would disagree with that. I think we actually provide good training and I think the acceptance and the use of the DNA CD-Rom is a good example of that.

Q136 Mr Steinberg: Reading the Report on the same page, paragraph 2.41 and Figure 26 over the page, we are told that some of the police who have come to the training courses cannot understand what you are talking about.

Dr Werrett: There was a question of whether or not DNA training was too technical. It is a rare gift to get across what is a very technical subject to a lay person. On that particular aspect of training there was a huge variation in acceptance on the bar and whisker plot which ranged from 10–20% right up to 90%.

Q137 Mr Steinberg: Figure 26 clearly shows us. Why I asked the question originally about them thinking the training was not very good was that Figure 26 does not make very good reading as far as you are concerned, does it? Clearly satisfaction falls short of expectation more than it exceeds expectation.

Dr Werrett: Yes, I would agree and we need to improve on that.

Q138 Mr Steinberg: Give us some examples of the language which was used and see whether we can understand it. It is known that we are not very bright and we are told quite often that we are not very bright, so give us a few examples of what you might tell the police.

Dr Werrett: An obvious example is that everybody asks what DNA stands for. There is no way of making that simple. It is deoxyribonucleic acid. That is what it stands for. The individual then can say “Oh that is being—

Q139 Mr Steinberg: They do not need to know what it stands for. It is irrelevant what it stands for. It is what it actually provides at the end of the day, that somebody is an individual and totally unique and therefore it could only be them who has done the murder or the rape. I do not need to know what it stands for.

Dr Werrett: I was going to say I totally agreed with you until you said “totally unique”. There we run into a slight problem. Identical twins, for example, have the same DNA, undeniably so.

Q140 Mr Steinberg: Not many identical twins go around raping and murdering, do they?

Dr Werrett: We have had instances of the so-called “brother’s defence”, where someone has said “It wasn’t me, it was my brother and by the way I have five or six brothers and they won’t give you a sample, so how are you going to address that one?”. So we have had to do a statistical analysis.

Q141 Mr Steinberg: That is out of the ordinary. The point I am trying to make is why on earth a policeman has to understand what the Latin or the name for it is.

Dr Werrett: I am sorry if I have misled you. I was not saying that we wanted them to understand it, but that they always ask the question. So you go into the position “What’s DNA?” “DNA is the building blocks of life and it is what makes up our chromosomes and so on.” “What does it stand for?” “It stands for deoxyribonucleic acid.” “Don’t give me all that technical stuff”. That is the way the situation can develop sometimes.

Q142 Mr Steinberg: My final question, because I had a pattern of questioning, is: is it because the police are unable to understand what it is all about that they actually waste your time by sending too much information which is not relevant?

Dr Werrett: Sometimes that may be the case and sometimes, due to the sorts of programmes you alluded to, the police get a rather over-ambitious view of what we can and cannot do. We have communicated with forces, particularly when it comes to recovering material from scenes of crimes. For example, we cannot analyse a bag of air for DNA and we cannot analyse blood on snow; by the time it gets to the laboratory you can imagine what it looks like. So education is constantly required on the capabilities and what can be done. On the other hand, you have to balance that against the fact that we now excitingly can recover a single sperm from microscope slides and by putting a few sperm together we can get a DNA profile. So there is a balance to be struck and that balance to be struck depends to some extent not only on the importance of the case, but the requirement of the investigating officer. For example, we have done some work with distraction burglaries, which are very upsetting and generally to older people. These are the sorts of burglaries where an individual will knock on a door and his accomplice will go round the back and break in while the older person generally is engaged in conversation. These people are very professional and we found that it was very difficult to get any trace evidence in those cases and our success rate was not high. When we did get a success, the police force we were working with was very excited about it and said that in terms of operational costs it was very cost effective because what they had then was a very good link with a group of professionals whom they

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had been observing and trying to catch for a long time. It is fitting it into the scenario of whether it is value for money or not.

Chairman: Thank you for giving us an insight into your very interesting line of work.

Q143 Mr Rendel: May I start off by saying that I think DNA analysis in particular and forensic science in general has made a tremendous difference to policing? However, it does seem to me that what some of my constituents get a bit uptight about is the fact that they see the good work they do in cases like murder, rape, violent crime and so on, but if they have a burglary in their home and the mowing machine is taken out of the back shed or wherever, even if they are pretty positive that some DNA is likely to be around, for some reason the police are inclined to say it is not the sort of things they can use DNA analysis for, it is just too expensive, they do not have the time to do it and so on. So people are frustrated that the methods for detecting that sort of crime appear to be available yet not used because of the cost and the time it takes. What are you doing to bring down the costs and time so that you can use these vital methods to solve more of the perhaps lesser grade crimes?

Dr Werrett: I refer you back to the answers to the previous questions where I talked about the automation procedures. I do envisage that the automation procedures that we tried and tested with the samples we have used for suspects on the DNA database, which has brought the turn around time down to three and a half days, will do the same thing for the stains recovered from scenes of crime. Equally I would expect that the cost of that analysis would fall, as we involve fewer people and more machines and expert systems to do the interpretation.

Q144 Mr Rendel: When are you going to reach the stage at which you will be able to analyse the DNA from any crime scene at which there is a potential for DNA to be found and analysed?

Dr Werrett: In terms of capacity, we will reach that stage by next April. The question is still the awareness of the officer and the willingness of the officer to collect the sample and bring the sample in.

Q145 Mr Rendel: So by next April you will have the capacity to analyse the DNA from any crimes for which there is DNA available.

Dr Werrett: Yes. May I ask Mr Howitt to tell you a little more about the research?

Q146 Mr Rendel: By all means, but let me first ask what efforts you are making to make sure that the police forces all know that. It is very good news and I hope it is going to be widely publicised, perhaps as a result of this meeting, that from next April every crime for which DNA is available can be analysed and the criminal hopefully apprehended.

Dr Werrett: I am saying that based on the estimates of what they feel they want to bring in. We should be able to match that demand. In fact we have excess capacity in the suspect sample area now and the

machinery we are building currently, if everything goes to plan, will also have excess capacity to do the sample analysis.

Mr Howitt: The other development is that we are looking at new technology which will in fact complete the testing in less than an hour when it currently takes the best part of a day. Our throughput in the next three years or so will be absolutely transformed in terms of what is possible.

Q147 Mr Rendel: Are you doing all that research?

Mr Howitt: Yes; we are doing it in collaboration with other technology organisations in North America and in this country.

Q148 Mr Rendel: I understand that something like 90% of the forensic science done in this country goes through you and about 10% through the smaller private companies. Is that correct?

Dr Werrett: Yes. There are different parts of the sector, as it were. For example, in the analysis of samples of suspects for the database we analyse about 78%.

Q149 Mr Rendel: Overall those sorts of figures are right.

Dr Werrett: Yes; we do the large majority.

Q150 Mr Rendel: How much research do the smaller companies do?

Dr Werrett: I do not know; I could not say. They will not tell us what they are doing.

Q151 Mr Rendel: How much government money goes to them for research?

Dr Werrett: We do not know that.

Q152 Mr Rendel: Who decides how research money is divided between the companies and yourselves?

Dr Werrett: We carry out our research programme through revenue that we generate mostly. One of our targets now is to generate research money from external sources.

Mr Howitt: We spend about £5.5 million on R&D.

Q153 Mr Rendel: Is that all internally generated?

Mr Howitt: We get about £1 million from external sources, for which we compete; about £600,000 from Home Office funding, about £300,000 from agencies in North America.

Q154 Mr Rendel: Therefore the Home Office funding is about one third of your total. Is that right?

Mr Howitt: Six hundred thousand from the Home Office.

Dr Werrett: Six hundred out of £5 million.

Q155 Mr Rendel: Sorry. What was the first figure? I thought you said £1 million.

Mr Howitt: We spend £5.5 million; £1 million of that is externally sourced and £600,000 of that £1 million is from the Home Office.

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Dr Werrett: So it is £600,000 from £5.5 million.

Q156 Mr Rendel: I do not understand where the rest of the money comes from then.

Dr Werrett: We generate it from revenue.

Mr Howitt: Four point five million comes from our own internal revenue resources.

Q157 Mr Rendel: So does the £600,000, which is part of your external funding which comes from the Home Office, have to be bid for?

Mr Howitt: Yes, we bid for it in competition with other agencies both in the public and private sector.⁶

Q158 Mr Rendel: That is all done in open competition.

Mr Howitt: Yes.

Q159 Mr Rendel: May I turn to a slightly different subject? I gather that the Reading street crime initiative was extremely effective in terms of the use of DNA analysis and so on. Would you agree with that?

Dr Werrett: I do not know about that.

Q160 Mr Rendel: It is not much good my asking questions about it, if you know nothing about it.

Mr Howitt: I understand that when the street crime initiative was set up a number of police forces asked for proposals. We put a proposal to Thames Valley Police, who police Reading, but we did not actually deliver any forensic science services to back up that initiative.

Q161 Mr Rendel: Do you know whether anybody else did?

Mr Howitt: Maybe they did, yes. They are supplied by another private sector supplier.

Q162 Mr Rendel: You said earlier that the private sector labs were not given any access to the database, they could only input into it.

Dr Werrett: Yes, they input into the database.

Q163 Mr Rendel: Why are they not given access to it?

Dr Werrett: As suppliers to the database, we are not given access to the database in a way in which we can go in and interrogate the data. It is handled by the custodian.

Dr Bramley: It is all to do with data protection and control of use of the data. The more that is centralised, the easier it is to maintain control and assure the public that it is not being misused in any way. We do provide the information from the database to all suppliers on a level playing field, if they want to make use of the information for an investigation or for any initiatives they wish to pursue. They do not have direct access to the database itself.

Q164 Mr Rendel: But they can apply to you.

Dr Bramley: For information from the database.

Q165 Mr Rendel: For example, could they supply you with a sample and ask whether it matches anyone you have on the database?

Dr Bramley: Yes, occasionally that does happen. Normally, they would provide a profile from a sample, we would carry out the match against the database and report the match to the police. There are times when we have to provide information direct to suppliers because they have to do some work with that in order to make use of it in the case.

Q166 Mr Rendel: Will it make any difference when we go into this new system under which effectively you are going to become a privatised company, or are you still going to keep this Chinese wall within the privatised company?

Dr Werrett: I cannot really comment on that because that has yet to be decided. That was left as a decision yet to be taken following the decision for the FSS to move to PPP.

Q167 Mr Rendel: Perhaps I might ask Dr Bramley. Do you feel that once the FSS has become a privatised company, that would make a difference to the difficulty of keeping a Chinese wall?

Dr Bramley: Everyone wants us to move to brick walls rather than Chinese walls, so that there is a complete separation of supplier and custodian. One has to recognise that the custodian has two roles. One is partly regulatory, in other words the governance of making sure that the national DNA database is used in the right sort of way and that public confidence is maintained in it and that suppliers are working to set standards to maintain the integrity of the database and its use. There is another part of the custodian's role which is to provide services from the national DNA database, which is by and large providing the match reports; loading the data onto the database and providing the match reports. There is a lot to be said for maintaining the affinity with a major supplier in that because you have the benefit of the support from larger IT systems, R&D, application development and so on. One can see the custodian role being split to an extent. The recommendation is that there should be independent oversight of the custodian's role and that is this regulatory aspect.

Q168 Mr Rendel: Has the whole inquiry report been published or just the executive summary?

Dr Werrett: I understand just the executive summary has been published on the Home Office website.

Q169 Mr Rendel: Are you going to publish the whole report?

Dr Werrett: It is not my report, it is the Home Office's report.

Q170 Mr Rendel: What proportion of your work is carried out at Trident Court as opposed to other sites?

⁶ *Note by witness:* Later confirmed by the Home Office Science Policy Unit that bids are only open to public sector agencies.

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Dr Werrett: Trident Court is not a case-working laboratory apart from the specialist work which is done. It just has 50 to 100 cases a year compared with the 150,000 carried out throughout the service.

Q171 Mr Rendel: So it is very small.

Dr Werrett: It is very small. The other things analysed at Trident Court are the suspect samples for inclusion on the national DNA database.

Mr Williams: Could we have a fuller note on the role of the Chinese wall and the problem which is presented by its future? Could you do a fuller note on that?⁷ Secondly, could you let us know the cost to the FSS, the cost to the police—I am sure we should all like to know for our own local police forces—of the Leeds exercise and what applications it could conceivably have if it were adopted more widely.⁸ I know I should like to draw the attention of the South Wales police to that.

Mr Bacon: Referring to paragraph 2.44, could you provide us with a bluffer's guide on the value added per £1 of staff costs which reflects the relationship

between that and your operating surplus?⁹ Could you also provide a detailed note of the operating surplus itself, referred to in the annual accounts, because the notes to the annual accounts do not seem to itemise all of the components of the operating surplus.¹⁰ It would be helpful to have a complete list.

Mr Jenkins: Could you tell us what measures you have taken to safeguard your security, not only from break-ins but to ensure your staff are beyond reproach and not vulnerable to influence from the criminal fraternity, especially because of the amount of drug money available at the present time?¹¹

Chairman: Thank you very much Dr Werrett. That concludes our business. May we thank you and your staff once again for the wonderful service you provide in criminal investigations but we do remain concerned about certain aspects and we shall be benchmarking your progress against our last report looking to the future and the PPP. Thank you very much and please thank your staff for all the good work they do.

⁷ Ev 18

⁸ Ev 18–20

⁹ Ev 20

¹⁰ Ev 20–21

¹¹ Ev 21–22

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Forensic Science Service

Questions 68–70 (Mr Trickett and Chairman): “May I ask for a note to indicate just where the staff will be lost, sector by sector, as well as the cost to the public purse of making all these people redundant, which is clearly going to be more than £6 million?”

The current position with the restructuring exercise is that the FSS will lose 260 staff. This figure comprises 122 through natural wastage, 131 through voluntary redundancy or voluntary early retirement and anticipated further losses of approximately 37 staff, since it is estimated that about 30 posts will need to be back-filled. Of those who have left through natural wastage, 27 were from operational roles, and of those taking voluntary redundancy or voluntary early retirement, 30 are from operational roles.

The FSS will do whatever possible to avoid compulsory redundancies and it is hope to achieve many of these further losses by other means—for example, via further natural wastage and reassignment of roles. There will be no further redundancies in operational areas.

The cost of the restructuring programme is currently estimated to be £6.3 million.

The main staff reductions are in the following areas:

Birmingham	14
Chorley	12
Wetherby	15
London	42
Chepstow	10
Huntingdon	9
DNA Analysis	46
Central support and R&D	105
Total	253

Question 77 (Mr Jenkins): “What is the sickness rate amongst your staff?”

The current sickness rates for FSS staff are around 3% per year, on certificated sickness, of which about one-third are classified as long term.

Question 171 (Mr Williams): "Could we have a fuller note on the role of the Chinese wall and the problem which is presented by its future?"

The National DNA Database was established in 1995 with the Forensic Science Service (FSS) as Custodian and sole supplier. At this time, confidentiality issues concerned compliance with Data Protection legislation but there was unrestricted exchange of information between the Custodian and the FSS and for all intents and purposes the Custodian function was an integral part of FSS operations.

In 1997, a number of other laboratories were approved as suppliers to the National DNA Database. Two of these were, and still are, competitors of the FSS. It therefore became necessary for the Custodian's interactions with the FSS to change and for it to act in an impartial and even-handed way with all suppliers. This includes the protection of commercial confidentiality including, details of suppliers' technical processes, information on their performance and their future strategic plans.

In order to achieve this level of confidentiality, a Chinese wall was erected within the FSS, between the Custodian function and the FSS. This wall ensures that the FSS gains no commercial advantage over other suppliers by holding the National DNA Database custodianship. The components of the Chinese wall are multi-faceted and include:

- the Custodian role being assigned to the FSS Chief Scientist who has no executive responsibility for the commercial activities of the FSS;
- a ring-fenced services team whose attitude and behaviour ensures even-handed treatment of all suppliers and respect for their commercially sensitive information;
- the use of dedicated, secure accommodation within FSS premises (Priory House and Oldbury), accessible only to Custodian staff;
- a security policy governing access to all Custodian information;
- a Custodian Quality Management System(QMS) separate from the FSS QMS; and
- a formal non-disclosure agreement with suppliers where requested.

The National DNA Database benefits from being part of the FSS organisation, by the support the FSS provides in areas such as the provision and maintenance of accommodation and equipment, IT development, personnel services, finance, procurement, legal advice, communication, etc. Because of this, the police and other suppliers also benefit by the Custodian having lower costs than would be possible in a free-standing state. Importantly, the Database also benefits from being in a scientific environment with strength in DNA research, operational DNA services and the development of IT software applications.

The Chinese wall currently operates well. Past perception of some suppliers, that they received a disadvantageous service compared to the FSS have been dispelled by the development of service level agreements between individual suppliers and the Custodian, and regular one-to-one dialogue.

Question 171 (Mr Williams): "Could you let us know the cost to the FSS and to each police force, of extending the 'Burglary Reduction Initiative in Leeds' (BRIL) and what applications it could conceivably have if it were adopted more widely."

COSTS TO THE POLICE

To extend the BRIL property crime service to all forces for a twelve month period would require additional funding in the region of £8.7 million.

For individual forces the funding required would be dependent on their size and the extent of their burglary problem. The cost to individual forces would range from approximately £100,000 for a small force to £400,000 for a larger force (excluding the Metropolitan force where funding requirements would be in the region of £750,000). The full breakdown by force is shown in the table on the following page.

These costs are approximate as services are tailored to meet individual force requirements however in preparing these costs the following elements have been included:

- A dedicated FSS resource working alongside the force to manage the service and provide consultancy and advice to support the force to meet its crime reduction targets.
- The provision of regular management information measured against performance during the previous three months. This information includes timeliness throughout the whole process, quality assessment of the material recovered from burglary crime scenes, the number of suspects identified and the total number of crimes detected.
- Training for investigating officers and scientific support staff to ensure that outcomes are realised and that high success rates are achieved when crime stains are analysed.
- Integration of the force and the FSS working practices to ensure that the flow of work is smoothed and queues are eliminated.
- The timely analysis of all crime stains recovered from burglary offences and the timely delivery of DNA intelligence reports to identify offenders within days of the offence being committed.
- The measurement of outcomes in terms of guilty pleas and convictions.

COSTS TO THE FSS

The main costs to the FSS of implementing a national BRIL type service would be in terms of resources required to manage and support the services. In total we estimate that this will be in the order of 68 full time equivalents.

Additional costs may also be incurred in developing automated and more extensive monitoring and the reporting systems.

OTHER APPLICATIONS FOR THE BRIL APPROACH

In terms of applying the BRIL type initiative to other crime types we have piloted this approach in vehicle crime. Although the ability to identify offenders at an early opportunity still remains we have seen that the deterrence and crime prevention aspects seen in the burglary services are not realised. Within a vehicle crime service although a high guilty plea rate is still achieved the percentage of offenders receiving custodial sentences is low, the majority of offenders receive either fines or community service orders.

<i>Force</i>	<i>Additional funding required</i>
Metropolitan	£720,563
City of London	£100,779
Avon and Somerset	£238,590
Bedfordshire	£163,356
Cambridgeshire	£173,581
Cheshire	£202,981
Cleveland	£189,640
Cumbria	£160,906
Derbyshire	£180,306
Devon and Cornwall	£184,906
Dorset	£144,131
Durham	£97,917
Dyfed-Powys	£129,179
Essex	£211,977
Gloucestershire	£154,531
Greater Manchester	£364,025
Gwent	£142,656
Hampshire	£226,365
Hertfordshire	£175,281
Humberside	£156,981
Kent	£243,815
Lancashire	£255,240
Leicestershire	£114,048
Lincolnshire	£149,656
Merseyside	£276,663
Norfolk	£173,406
Northamptonshire	£139,131
Northumbria	£213,288
North Wales	£147,048
North Yorkshire	£37,623
Nottinghamshire	£148,631
South Wales	£231,775
South Yorkshire	£178,882
Staffordshire	£189,692
Suffolk	£156,856
Surrey	£165,006
Sussex	£272,992
Thames Valley	£275,788
Warwickshire	£135,581
West Mercia	£223,348
West Midlands	£375,055
West Yorkshire	£227,216
Wiltshire	£178,056
Total	£8,627,370

ASSUMPTIONS:

Service to cover burglary offences only.

Service resource based on current daily rates for staff.

No training costs included to train FSS staff to perform service management roles.

Question 171 (Mr Bacon): "Referring to paragraph 2.44, could you provide us with a bluffer's guide on the value added per £1 of staff costs which reflects the relationship between that and your operating surplus?"

The value added per £1 staff cost is a widely used measure of productivity that allows cross-company comparisons, as well as the ability to track company productivity over time. It is a relatively straightforward calculation derived from the reported annual results and as such is transparent and more easily understood than output-based and standardised measures of efficiency. It is relevant to the FSS as a commercially focused people-based business where 65–70% of costs are staff or staff related costs.

The basis of the measure is that businesses derive value by buying in goods and services, adding value to those goods and services and then onward selling those services. It is the stakeholders who share in that value.

For FY 2002–03, the measure is calculated as follows:

Sales	£140,954k
Bought in goods and services	(£44,773k)
Depreciation	(£6,421k)
Total Value Added by the FSS	£89,760k

This is shared by the stakeholders as follows:

Employees (salaries, pensions, NI)	£77,123k
Government (Taxation/Interest)	£1,165k
Banks (Interest)	(£205k)
Shareholders (Dividend on PDC)	£1,438k
FSS (working capital and investment)	£10,239k

The value added per £1 of staff cost is calculated as follows:

Value Added/employee costs = £89,760k/£77,123k
= 1.16

This means that for every £1 spent on staff costs the staff/FSS generate £1.16 of value (ie add value of £0.16)

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Value Added</i>
1999–2000	1.02
2000–01	1.08
2001–02	1.09
2002–03	1.16

This equates to a three-year efficiency gain of 14%.

Question 171 (Mr Bacon): "Could you provide a detailed note of the operating surplus, referred to in the annual accounts, because the notes to the annual accounts do not seem to itemise all of the components of the operating surplus. It would be helpful to have a complete list."

The operating surplus in the Annual Report 2002–03 is shown as £12,637k. This is revenue of £140,954k less costs of £128,317k.

Cost are made up by the following key categories:

Staff Wages and Salaries	£68,815k
Social Security Costs	£4,544k
Pension Costs	£8,764k
External Training and Other personnel	£3,075k
Temporary and Agency staff costs	£4,087k
Depreciation	£6,421k
Accommodation costs	£7,643k
Accommodation rentals	£4,490k
Consumables	£13,065k
Equipment costs	£4,469k
Other costs	£2,944k
Total	£128,317k

Question 171 (Mr Jenkins): "Could you tell us what measures you have taken to safeguard your security, not only from break-ins but to ensure your staff are beyond reproach and not vulnerable to influence from the criminal fraternity, especially because of the amount of drug money available at the present time."

The FSS has clear, documented security policies, procedures and guidelines. These are communicated to staff during their induction into the FSS and are contained in the staff handbook. Staff are reminded of these policies and procedures and a breach of them is a disciplinary matter. In addition an anti-fraud and corruption policy is documented as part of the FSS quality management system.

Both the FSS security procedures and physical security arrangements are regularly reviewed by the Home Office Departmental Security Unit (DSU) and are subjected to regular audit, by FSS internal auditors and Home Office auditors. The FSS also consults other security experts, including local police forces, particularly with regard to physical arrangements at laboratory sites. In particular, regular counter terrorist protective security reviews are undertaken as part of a Home Office wide initiative. These reviews have led to a number of recommendations, which have in turn led to a hardening of physical security at some of the FSS sites.

All security breaches (whether major or minor) are recorded centrally and investigated. The security breaches register is reviewed annually, and often more frequently, by the FSS Senior Management team. The FSS Audit Committee provides an oversight of these arrangements.

All security audits, together with detailed audit and review plans, are reviewed by the FSS Board of Directors and the Audit Committee and all major security breaches are brought to their attention immediately. The Director of Finance (who attends the Audit Committee) takes Board level responsibility for security policies and procedures.

With regard to security clearances of staff, the FSS consults with Home Office DSU and follows their guidelines for security vetting levels. In line with this, finance and procurement staff undergo an additional credit rating check. Following a detailed review, the FSS will be adopting recent changes to security clearance levels required for Home Office staff. All non-security cleared staff on FSS premises (including visitors, temporary and agency staff) are escorted by security cleared staff at all times.

NOTE TO EXPLAIN CHANGES TO THE MEASUREMENT OF FSS TURNAROUND TIMES

A case submitted to the FSS laboratory by the police is divided into FSS "jobs" so that each part can be worked on, in parallel if possible, by a specialist scientist. However, some forensic work is only created after a separate piece of analysis is completed ie DNA profiling can only be undertaken when a search for body fluids has located a suitable sample. Often this follow-up work is sent to a service section for analysis. In order to track and measure performance of the service sections a new internal service "job" was created. Due to inadequacies of the old FSS work management IT system, different types of "jobs" could not be easily distinguished and when created, a new "job" was automatically assigned a start date of the day of input into the IT system.

During 2002–03, the FSS implemented a new work management system known as the "Operational Management System" (OMS) which went live during August 2002. The new system has greater functionality and so as part of this changeover the FSS reviewed and amended the way that "jobs" are recorded to more accurately reflect the customer's perspective.

There are two principle changes that affect the measurement of "job" timeliness. As mentioned, under the old IT system, DNA casework analysis was recorded as a separate job, rather than a component of a police "job", and intelligence DNA (ie crime scene samples) for the National DNA database were not recorded on the system at all. The old IT system provided a valid measure of turnaround time and allowing

year on year comparisons. The new system now measures “jobs” on an end to end basis, ie with no separation of internal services such as DNA “jobs’ and Intelligence DNA is now included and reported as a separate “job”.

The first of these changes will tend to lengthen reported turnaround times (since diluting effects are stripped out), the second will tend to compensate and shorten reported turnaround times (as DNA Intelligence Analysis is typically reported with 14–21 days over the period).

Figure 14 on page 25 shows the average FSS turnaround time between 1996–2002. There was an ongoing improvement in timeliness during the period to 2001, but a deterioration in 2002, to 35 days. Whilst this pattern is real, it is diluted somewhat by the inclusion of the DNA casework jobs and the exclusion of the DNA Intelligence jobs. It is impossible to restate current performance onto this basis to allow comparison of timeliness in 2002–03. However, it is possible to restate the performance in prior years onto the same basis as 2002–03. In doing this the comparable turnaround time for 2001–02 is reduced to 30 days and 2000–01 is reduced to 25 days.

The comparable figure for 2002–03 is 26 days, thus a four-day improvement, and reversal of the prior year deterioration. The year to date figure for 2003–04 is 23 days, thus demonstrating further improvements in timeliness, and recovering the position to below 2000–01 levels.

October 2003

Further supplementary memorandum submitted by the Forensic Science Service

Below is a list of the new FSS Agency Targets 2003–06. These have changed considerably from the previous targets detailed in the NAO Report Executive Summary and which can also be found in the FSS Annual Report and Accounts. Many of the targets have been aligned to the NAO Reports recommendations as follows:

Recommendation 1: For the FSS to reduce the time it takes to turn around forensic casework and achieve a more consistent performance across laboratories and police forces.

Supporting agency targets: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21.

Recommendation 2: For the FSS to keep police forces informed of case progress, particularly with high risk cases, and monitor their achievements.

Supporting agency targets: 5, 6, 7, 9.

Recommendation 3: For the FSS to assess the effectiveness of its work more consistently.

Supporting agency target: 19.

Recommendation 4: For the FSS to benchmark the costs of completing similar casework across different laboratories and to narrow the performance gap between laboratories.

Supporting agency target: 2.

FSS AGENCY TARGETS 2003–06

<i>Target/Measure</i>	<i>2003–04</i>	<i>Targets 2004–05</i>	<i>2005–06</i>
1 Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) rolling 3 year average	min 15%	min 15%	min 15%
2 Real reduction in charges (vs Average Earnings Index)	75% AEI increase	75% AEI increase	75% AEI increase
3 Increase investment in development work % turnover	11%	12%	13%
4 External funding for R&D	£1,000k	£1,250k	£1,500k
5 Establish internal FSS end to end process	Set up process		
6 New definitions of timeliness based on investigative and evidential contributions of forensic science	Process in place in 6 months—60% Forces in 12 months (25% in 6 months)	100%	N/A
7 Set up a pilot to get agreement to devise a new process of end to end case ownership	Pilot approach	Available to all Forces	N/A

<i>Target/Measure</i>	<i>2003–04</i>	<i>Targets 2004–05</i>	<i>2005–06</i>
8 Sign up customers (Police and CPS) at Force level to Service Agreements (timeliness and charging) in context of National Protocol	60% areas in 12 months	100% areas	N/A
9 % of cases with FSS Case Officer	Process in place in 6 months—60% in 12 months	100%	100%
10 Develop training packages to support new ways of working	by 31.03.04	N/A	N/A
11 Rollout/training for Police and CPS	Engage training organisations	Rollout	Support
12 Development and implementation of link between NDNAD and NAFIS (subject to working with ACPO/PITO)	Design and develop	Phase I Implementation	Phase 2 Implementation
13 Develop capacity (subject to demand) to deliver fast track processing of DNA sample (“Fast track” = within 48 hours. For “B14s”—ie cases where there’s a suspect. Time from when DNA analysis is “ordered” (ie internally) to delivery of result to customer)	Establish 48 hr capacity	48 hours	48 hours
14 % fast track processing of DNA samples (subject to demand)	Establish capacity	15%	20%
15 Average time to analyse and inform customers of DNA crime scene stain results on database (normal track cases) (For “B04s”—ie cases where there’s no suspect. Time from receipt of sample from customer to delivery of result to customer)	14 days	7 days	3 days
16 95% of cases of above	20 days	12 days	5 days
17 Average time to analyse and inform customers of DNA suspect sample results on database (normal track cases) (Time from receipt of sample from customer to delivery of result to customer)	6 days	5 days	5 days
18 95% of cases of above	10 days	8 days	6 days
19 Increase forensic effectiveness	Develop index and benchmark (with PSU)	Fully implemented	
20 95% turnaround time for jobs (Time from receipt of job from customer to delivery of result to the customer, all cases, including B04s, but not alcohols)	42 days (by Mar04)	35 days	21 days

<i>Target/Measure</i>		<i>Targets</i>		
		<i>2003-04</i>	<i>2004-05</i>	<i>2005-06</i>
21	Maintain ISO Accreditation	Accreditation maintained	Accreditation maintained	Accreditation maintained
22	IiP	Maintain Accreditation	Maintain Accreditation	Maintain Accreditation
23	Establish Diversity Programme	Implement	Maintain	Maintain

October 2003