

# SARC Network News

08/07/2025 | Issue 16

## REGULATOR'S NOTIFICATION

### 01-2025: FSA-BIO 100

FSA-BIO 100 covers the forensic medical examination of complainants.

The Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) notification has been issued to make the forensic science community and criminal justice system aware that the Forensic Science Activity (FSA) for forensic medical examination of complainants will proceed as planned: Subject to the statutory code from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025. A link to the notification can be accessed [here](#).



Forensic  
Science  
Regulator

## What does the regulatory notice mean for SARCs?

Some updates are being made to the SARC guidance documents FSR-GUI-0017 and FSR-GUI-0020. These updates are intended to provide more clarity on the existing guidance. The FSR Declarations of Compliance and Non-Compliance with the Code of Practice (FSR-GUI-0001) will also be updated.

These updates include a focus on managing the risk of DNA contamination with the emphasis on use of professional judgement. This should be made based on what is best for the patient and this assessment should be made based on risk.

The notice re-iterates that batch testing and point of use testing

is not required for consumables that are forensic DNA grade.

Monitoring and testing requirements for contamination will be updated based on the outcomes of the recent CSI Anticontamination Report (FCN-CSI-GUI-0003).

All of the updates will better reflect the FSR Code for the need for competency to be demonstrated not only in the recovery of forensic material but the interpretation and presentation of expert opinion in the forensic medical examination of complainants.

Additional information will be provided on the competencies required for interpretation and

provision of expert opinion taking account of the work undertaken by the FSR Interpretation Specialist Group and the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM).

The responses and feedback from the recent SARC declaration pilot will also support updates to the FSR's Declarations Guidance. This will include guidance on making declarations of compliance for the forensic medical examination of complainants which enables practitioners to understand the elements of the non-compliance that they may be declaring and the mitigating steps that reflect the level of risk associated with this non-compliance.



# SARC PROFICIENCY TESTING DEVELOPMENT

The FCN working group that developed the initial SARC proficiency testing (PT) has now closed as they have completed what they set out to do. However, there is still more development required to ensure that the PT covers all activities for the FSA-BIO 100.

The group will continue via FINDS and the FCN will continue to support. Anyone interested in joining the group should contact [Rumana Hamid](#).



# FORENSIC VALIDATION LANDSCAPE

The FCN is gathering data to understand the landscape for FSR Code compliance. This is across multiple FSAs and disciplines.

This allows us and the community a greater understanding of the progression towards Code compliance. Anonymised overviews are then able to be shared with the community. An additional tool that has been developed and linked to the landscape data is the 'Validation Tracker'. This has been developed to help forces (and now SARCs) see what is being validated or verified and which stage that work is in. The tracker will allow forces and SARCs to plan their validations without duplicating work across the community. They can approach organisations for a report or to work in collaboration with them.

To assist us with this, we are asking if you can share what stage you are at with your validation/verification of your cleaning method and your activities under FSA-BIO 100.

Please can you [contact us](#) stating the method/cleaning product and which stage you are at as defined below:

**Validated** - Validated for use.

**Tested** - initial testing performed, product not taken forward onto next phase of validation study.

**Validation in progress** - currently being tested.

**Planned** - part of work schedule but not yet started.

**Verified** - assessment of a validated method/product via paper-based review or some additional testing.

**Verification in progress -**  
Verification of a validated method/product is in progress.

**National validation** - Validated for use as part of national/centralised validation and now in use.

**National Testing** - testing as part of national/centralised validation and either not pursued, or subsequent phase of national

assessment completed by another force.

When we have received the information from you, we will be in a position to share the parts of the validation tracker relevant to SARCs with you, and you will be able to contact another SARC that has either already completed or intends to complete the validation/verification of the method or product that you are interested in pursuing.

Please note: SARC-specific data will not be shared with forces and force data will not be shared with the SARCs (unless permission has been granted by each).

We hope to promote collaborative sharing within each discipline to avoid repetition and unnecessary costs associated with validation. However, we can always check the force validation tracker and approach a force on your behalf if there is something specific you are looking to verify.

Example of the tracker is below:

[illegible]

## Recently Published Scientific Papers

### Understanding and mitigating the risks that environmental DNA contamination poses to the recovery of forensic evidence from victims and suspects of rape and sexual assault

Work completed within SARC facilities several years ago has now been published here in the [Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine](#).

The work within this study has resulted in positive improvements to the Forensic Science Regulator guidance on SARC anticontamination measures and environmental

monitoring (EM).

The outcome from this study results in significant cost savings for SARCs, Policing, charities and the NHS through more realistic targets for air flow systems and reduced DNA testing costs from more risk adverse EM target levels. This has led to anticontamination measures that are more

proportionate to the real-life risks and that, for example, no longer stipulate closure of a facility purely on the grounds of detected EM levels as other anti-contamination measure in place effectively manage the risk of contamination. Importantly allowing money and time to be better spent on more essential aspects of the critically important victim-led service.

### Verification of intimate and non-intimate recovery of DNA within Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

The results from the SARC end-to-end verification pilot have been published. A link to the published paper is available [here](#).

Five SARCs participated in the study to show that the recommended and validated best practice methods are fit for purpose.

This was conducted using experimental known outcomes for both intimate and non-intimate DNA recovery, with volunteers presenting for the scenario and gynaecological teaching models for the recovery.

Included in this paper are findings from the use of the UV

invisible body paints used in competency and training assessments which highlighted potential points of contamination during an intimate forensic examination.

The FCN has published guidance for SARCs to use to complete their own end to end verification to demonstrate that the methods remain fit for purpose when utilised in their own facilities with their own staff. This guidance and approach has been reviewed and supported by UKAS and the OFSR.

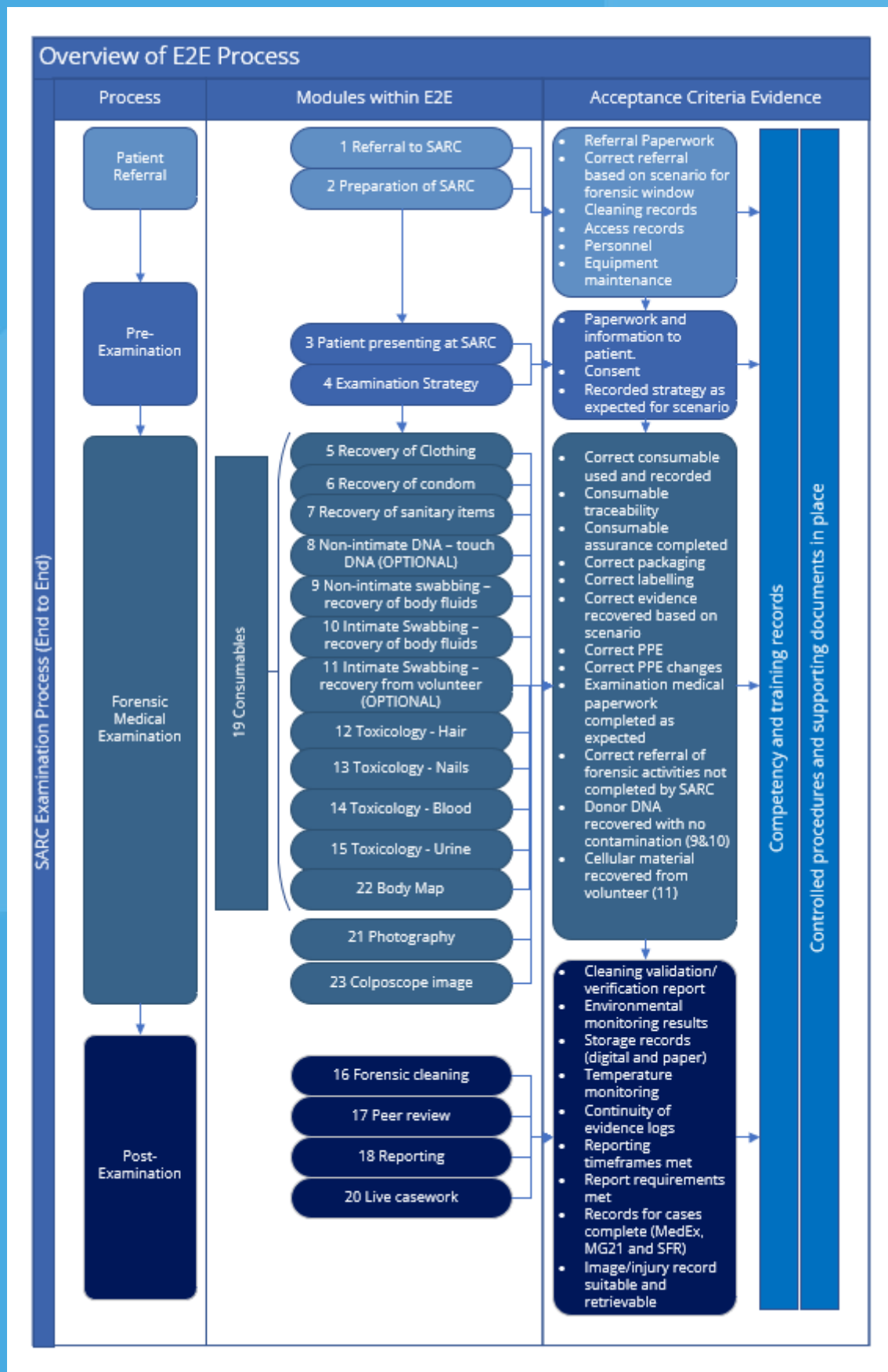
It is recommended that SARCs review the scientific paper along with the guidance published by

FCN to ensure that the approach will meet your end user requirements and to justify using this verification. Templates for the report are also available for SARCs to complete when they have performed their verification.

An overview of the process is illustrated on the next page. SARCs need to have assessed their entire process for their verification and there needs to be an element of know outcomes to show an expected result is achievable using the chosen method.

A table of all of the guidance documents are below.

Document	Link on <a href="#">Green KnowledgeHub</a>	Link on <a href="#">Purple KnowledgeHub</a>
FCN-SAR-GUI-0036	<a href="#">SARC end to end verification – National roll out guidance</a>	<a href="#">SARC end to end verification – National roll out guidance</a>
FCN-SAR-GUI-0037	<a href="#">End to end verification report template – National roll out</a>	<a href="#">End to end verification report template – National roll out</a>
FCN-SAR-GUI-0038	<a href="#">Verification acceptance criteria checklist – National roll out</a>	<a href="#">Verification acceptance criteria checklist – National roll out</a>



## Met Police use new tool to record bruising on dark skin

The tool improves colour contrast highlighting injuries that may be invisible to the naked eye and is particularly effective on those with darker skin whose bruises may show up less readily.

It uses cross-polarisation technology within a small mobile device (pictured below) and will be used in front line and custody suites and is hoped to improve conviction rates.

Anyone interested in this work, [please contact us](#) and we can try to get a direct contact for you.

[Read the BBC news article here.](#)

