

**SCRO (FINGERPRINT BUREAU)**  
**PRIMARY INSPECTION 2000**  
**HMIC RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1**

HMIC recommends that the SCRO oversight management structure be reformed as part of repositioning SCRO within a new Common Police Services arrangement. (paragraph 2.7.5)

**Recommendation 2**

HMIC recommends that the post and role of quality assurance officer and training officer be separated. (paragraph 2.12.1)

**Recommendation 3**

HMIC recommends that a centralised model for a national fingerprint service be considered. (paragraph 2.15.11)

**Recommendation 4**

HMIC recommends that the APRT scope the demands now and into the near future to determine the staff levels required. This exercise should include maximising the value that fingerprint evidence has for the prevention and detection of crime and taking full account of available and emerging technological advances. (paragraph 3.1.8)

**Recommendation 5**

HMIC supports the move towards a competency-based standard for expert qualification, and recommends early progress towards this goal. (paragraph 3.5.3)

**Recommendation 6**

HMIC recommends that the concept of "authorisation" needs further consideration. (paragraph 3.5.5)

**Recommendation 7**

HMIC recommends that a protocol is agreed between SCRO and forces to ensure that due consideration is given during the planning stages of operations and initiatives, to managing the impact these can have on SCRO. (paragraph 3.10.1)

**Recommendation 8**

HMIC recommends a review of current locations of AFR terminals in Scotland with a view to securing improved access. (paragraph 3.12.2)

**Recommendation 9**

HMIC recommends that action is taken to secure data which informs management of sickness absence levels in a manner which can be used to monitor trends, set targets and manage sickness absence. (paragraph 4.7.8)

**Recommendation 10**

HMIC recommends that a strategy is introduced for staff within all fingerprint bureaux and identification branches to offer staff support and to assist in the detection and prevention of stress related illness resulting in absence from work. (paragraph 4.8.2)

**Recommendation 11**

HMIC repeats the recommendation made by consultants in June 1999, that an improved automated system of case tracking should be introduced as part of a new office management system at SCRO. (paragraph 5.8.11)

**Recommendation 12**

HMIC recommends the production of a national Guidance Manual on Fingerprint Standards and Procedures to be issued to all fingerprint staff. (paragraph 5.11.3)

**Recommendation 13**

HMIC recommends the establishment of a national policy which encapsulates an independent review process to deal with all erroneous and disputed fingerprint identifications. (paragraph 5.20.4)

**Recommendation 14**

HMIC recommends that the external provision and management of competency testing for experts is an aspect that the APRT needs to pursue with vigour to seek an early, sustainable and defensible programme. (paragraph 6.5.3)

**Recommendation 15**

HMIC recommends that managing the change to a non-numeric standard should be addressed at a very early point by the APRT. (paragraph 6.8.9)

**Recommendation 16**

HMIC recommends that the important area of court presentation skills be given a new impetus. (paragraph 6.9.3)

**Recommendation 17**

HMIC recommends that regular refresher training should be incorporated into a national training standard for fingerprint experts to ensure that expertise is maintained at the highest level taking account of developments in theory and technology. (paragraph 7.5.4)

**Recommendation 18**

HMIC recommends that a specific effort be made to bring the weeding up to date. (paragraph 8.4.2)

**Recommendation 19**

HMIC recommends that all fingerprint experts within the SCRO Fingerprint Bureau should undergo competency testing provided and managed by an external provider as soon as possible. (paragraph 8.8.3)

**Recommendation 20**

HMIC recommends that a common procedure, subject to validation by an external body, be put in place in all fingerprint bureaux to deal with failure in the course of competency testing. (paragraph 8.9.1)

**Recommendation 21**

HMIC recommends that a review is undertaken of the current authorisation process with a view to establishing a competency based qualification for expert status. (paragraph 8.11.5)

**Recommendation 22**

HMIC recommends that the APRT give early attention to establishing a corporate identity for SCRO. (paragraph 8.12.4)

**Recommendation 23**

HMIC recommends that practices be reviewed with a view to introducing a system which increases the independence within the identification/verification process. (paragraph 8.15.2)

**Recommendation 24**

HMIC recommends that the SCRO fingerprint bureau liaises with the ACPOS working group on ECHR, particularly in relation to its development of a manual on standards and procedures. (paragraph 8.17.2)

**Recommendation 25**

HMIC recommends that the APRT look closely at the development of the National Council for Registration of Forensic Practitioners and give consideration as to how Scotland can capitalise on this new Council. (paragraph 8.19.5)

## **SUGGESTIONS**

### **Suggestion 1**

HMIC recognises that the recommendations and suggestions in this report go beyond the remit of SCRO Executive Committee and, if accepted, impact on all Police Forces, The Scottish Executive and other areas of the criminal justice system. It would be helpful if a single reference point had the responsibility to consider the issues in the first instance and as the APRT has been established HMIC, mindful of the responsibility of other stakeholders, suggests that this group is uniquely placed to undertake that role. (paragraph xvi)

### **Suggestion 2**

In essence the job description (Director, SCRO) does not reflect the legal position and requires emendation and HMIC suggests this be done. (paragraph 2.5.7)

### **Suggestion 3**

HMIC suggests that new service level agreements between SCRO and the eight Scottish forces are progressed by the APRT. (paragraph 2.6.6)

### **Suggestion 4**

HMIC suggests that the number of training staff required be addressed by the APRT, taking account of the structures and functionality put in place. (paragraph 2.12.1)

### **Suggestion 5**

There is a need to debate the appropriateness of the dual role of some fingerprint experts. HMIC suggests this issue should be part of the APRT review. As part of that review the issue of whether police officers, into the future, should be trained as fingerprint experts or the whole cadre of experts be comprised wholly from support staff should be addressed. (paragraph 2.15.6)

### **Suggestion 6**

HMIC suggests that a resource audit is undertaken to determine the appropriate number of AFR terminals for Scotland. (paragraph 3.12.2)

**Suggestion 7**

HMIC suggests that the Crown Office guidance on who can take fingerprints receives renewed attention by all Forces. (paragraph 3.14.4)

**Suggestion 8**

HMIC suggests that mark to mark searching on AFR is an issue that the APRT needs to consider in scoping the resources and equipment needed to provide an efficient and effective service. (paragraph 5.3.12)

**Suggestion 9**

HMIC suggests that the policy of taking fingerprints from all persons where the law allows be pursued with vigour as this offers a singular opportunity to prevent and detect crime. (paragraph 5.4.7)

**Suggestion 10**

HMIC would support SCRO in highlighting the importance of submitting elimination prints as a matter of routine and suggests that the setting of targets in this respect may assist. (paragraph 5.15.3)

**Suggestion 11**

HMIC suggests that all staff involved in fingerprinting in Scotland require greater awareness of Section 19 to eliminate the confusion which currently exists in this area. (paragraph 5.18.6)

**Suggestion12**

HMIC suggests that the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners may provide a suitable reference point for benchmarking the policy and the independent review process to deal with disputed and erroneous fingerprint identifications. (paragraph 5.20.5)

**Suggestion13**

HMIC suggests that bureaux agree common Quality Assurance processes using the co-ordinating influence of the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners (paragraph 6.3.4)

**Suggestion14**

HMIC suggests that “blind trials” are another tool that is worthy of consideration. (paragraph 6.6.1)

**Suggestion15**

HMIC suggests that the APRT give the issue of gathering common statistical performance information early attention. (paragraph 6.7.5)

**Suggestion 16**

HMIC suggests a strategic re-assessment of how training is delivered is necessary and should be undertaken by the APRT. (paragraph 7.2.8)

**Suggestion 17**

HMIC suggests that where the exigencies of workloads permit, liaison and networking with staff from other bureaux should be encouraged among all fingerprint staff. (paragraph 8.13.4)

**Suggestion 18**

HMIC suggests that SCRO, in the development of its corporate identity, address the need for a more open and transparent culture within the organisation as a whole. (paragraph 8.14.2)

**Suggestion 19**

HMIC suggests that the adoption of a code of ethics should be an integral part of the change proposed for SCRO. (paragraph 8.18.1)

**Suggestion 20**

HMIC suggests that SCRO develops a general media policy and appoints a media liaison officer as part of the corporate identity project recommended in paragraph 8.12.4. (paragraph 8.20.1)