



JOB DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE (J.D.Q.)

HMI CATEGORY CODE:

DIRECTORATE:

Intelligence

AREA/DEPT:

FIB – Forensic Services Department

FAU:

SECTION:

FEU-Firearms Examination Unit

JOB TITLE:

FORENSIC FIREARMS EXAMINER

REPORTS TO:

Forensic Operations Support Manager

CURRENT RANK/GRADE:

E

DATE:

June 2022

1. **JOB PURPOSE:** (Briefly state your job's overall objectives. To.....")

To maximise the effectiveness of forensic evidence through the examination and classification of firearms, ammunition and ballistics related material with technical lead responsibility for ensuring the adherence to and maintenance of accreditation requirements.

To provide the same firearms examination expertise to the North West Region.

All activity will be conducted in compliance with the Quality Standards Framework (ISO 17020, ISO 17025, ILAC-G19 and the Forensic Science Regulators Codes of Practice and Conduct).

2. **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

(Describe the important end results you are expected to achieve).

- a) Examine firearms, ammunition and ballistics related material, including the kinetic energy assessment of air weapons, to determine legal classification and functionality, applying decision rules for uncertainty of measurement calculations. Ensure all weapons are handled and transported in accordance with the make safe procedures and legal requirements. Where DNA recovery is required, ensure this is carried out in accordance with anti-contamination measures in order to maximise forensic opportunities.
- b) Ensure continuity and the forensic integrity of all exhibits, utilise bespoke hardware and software, record exhibits appropriately on relevant systems and ensuring an audit trail can be readily established

- c) Provide both a lab based and a scene response to Firearms investigations, from case strategy through to investigations and prosecution. Provide advice to investigating officers at all levels to ensure investigations and operations are exploring all forensic firearms opportunities. When appropriate perform triage of firearms at scene, to maximise efficiency of investigations.
- d) Arrange submission of appropriate ballistics material to the National Ballistics Intelligence Service Hub (NaBIS) for further examination, ensuring that the NaBIS and force systems are updated accordingly to maintain continuity and integrity of exhibits.
- e) Destroy weapons and ammunition no longer required for police purposes in accordance with legal requirements, current policies and protocols.
- f) Produce Witness Statements and Reports (both streamlined and / or complex evidential) which require evidence of expert opinion and interpretation. Ensure that they are in an understandable format for individuals with limited firearms knowledge. Engage with investigators and prosecution agencies to ensure that evidence is disclosed properly. If required attend pre-trial conferences and court to provide expert witness testimony, recognising your overriding duty is to the court and the administration of justice.
- g) Supervise and provide guidance, training and mentoring to the Forensic Firearms Technician and new members of staff, assess their initial and ongoing competence and document progress to facilitate their development within their role. Provide expert advice, guidance, awareness and mentoring in relation to your area of Forensic activity to internal and external personnel, to ensure they have a full understanding of forensic process and procedures. This will include conducting formal presentations to various groups and agencies both internally and externally including the Crown Prosecution Service
- h) Act as Technical Lead for Kinetic Energy and Validation, Firearms and Ballistic material and supervisor for the Forensic Firearms technician. Technical leads will be responsible for the maintenance of UKAS accreditation including planning method validation, documenting and reviewing technical procedures, investigating non-conformance, reviewing proficiency testing/inter-laboratory comparison results, and ensuring a schedule of equipment calibration is completed. Make recommendations of remedial action and advise on resumption of operational activity.
- i) Coordinate and conduct peer review to ensure that results are valid and safe. Participate fully in all other quality assurance processes such as audits and proficiency/inter-laboratory tests.
- j) Develop and improve innovative processes and techniques in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness within the unit, to anticipate demands and

opportunities to lead by new technology and improve the capability and effectiveness of the Force with respect to Firearm investigations.

- k) Be accountable for all Health and Safety issues, including risk assessment, pertaining to the post holder's area of responsibility in order to fulfil the statutory obligations of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- l) Undertake all responsibilities relating to information management, data quality and information sharing, intelligence and information security to ensure accordance with the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on Information Management, issued by the College of Policing.

3(a) KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:

(What kind of knowledge, skills and experience are necessary to enable satisfactory performance in the job and why are they necessary?).

A degree in a scientific subject or equivalent Level 6 qualification and / or substantial relevant experience is essential.

The post holder will be required to attend the below training courses if not previously attended and certified.

- Advanced air weapon examination and chronograph
- Advanced Ammunition Examination
- Expert Witness
- Small Arms Inspection and Maintenance
- Advanced Shotgun Examination

Experience of working in an UKAS Accreditation, ISO 17025 or ISO 17020 quality management environment is required to understand the impact should accreditation not be achieved and maintained.

A sound knowledge and extensive experience of forensic processes is essential to the role.

A thorough knowledge and expertise of the Firearms Act and associated legislation is essential in order to provide opinion based evidence to the courts.

Understanding of criminal investigations and the rules of evidence. Awareness of criminal law and procedures relevant to the role, including but not limited to, Firearms Act 1968, Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Offensive Weapons Act 2019, Home Office Guidance and The Firearms (Dangerous Air Weapons) (Amendment) Rules 1993.

Knowledge of working with Laboratory rules and protocols, including Health and Safety awareness and compliance such as COSHH.

Take ownership for Continued Professional Development through the maintenance of an active training file which documents all training received and evidence of on-going competence. It is expected that the post holder will keep

abreast of technological developments, legislative changes and any changes to quality standards requirements pertinent to the role.

The post holder should be an effective communicator, both orally and written, with the ability to prepare clear and concise reports to a standard appropriate for the presentation of expert evidence used in criminal courts and for the preparation, in various forms, of exhibit material to accompany such reports.

Must have the ability to present complex technical information to non-experts in the form of expert witness testimony to explain the evidential investigation processes to answer questions from Legal Counsel as well as formal presentations to various groups and agencies both internal and external.

Must have ability to utilise Cameras both still and video to produce evidence for use in court.

Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to develop strong working relationships and work effectively with people across different levels of the organisation and the NW Region.

Good information handling skills with sound analytical and problem solving skills in order to manage varied and intense workloads whilst prioritising accreditation activities.

Ability to work under pressure to strict deadlines, whilst maintaining a good level of performance, high levels of accuracy and attention to detail.

Postholder must have the ability to perform the role and make expert decisions with no direct supervision.

Ability to effectively plan and coordinate multiple activities.

Possess excellent IT skills. Postholders must have the ability to make full use of the standard Force computer software packages.

3(b) (Does your post require any Police Powers, and if so what are they, and why are they necessary?)

Where required police powers will be designated by the Chief Constable, to enable entry, search, seizure and recovery of exhibits.

4. RELATIONSHIPS:

(a) *Supervisory responsibilities:*

Supervise, direct and develop the training and day to day management of the Forensic Firearms Technician.

(b) *Supervision Received:*

The post holder will directly report to the Forensic Ops Support Manager for annual leave and welfare issues but as an expert in their field will make decisions on their own.

(c) *Other Contacts:*

In all contact with internal and external customers, a one team, customer focused approach must be maintained

(i) *Within Merseyside Police:*

Regular contact with the Quality Standards team, other forensic units, Officers that submit work for examination, Evidence Management Unit staff.

As required, contact with ICT department, facilities management with respect to the accommodation and environment, procurement with respect of equipment and consumables.

Regular contact with Senior Investigating Officers, FIB intelligence unit regarding providing expert advice.

(ii) *Outside Merseyside Police:*

Other police forces and law enforcement agencies (in particular the NW Region) as required and through regional and national Forensic Expert Networks.

UKAS during assessments

External forensic service providers, as required, but regular contact with NaBIS

External training providers

Contact with service providers and suppliers, as required.

Crown Prosecution Service

Courts regarding expert witness

5. CONTEXT:

(a) ***Operating Environment:*** (Services provided, work patterns, who are the customers).

The Firearms Examination unit provides a service capability for the examination and classification of firearms, ammunition and ballistic material, submitted by police officers and Crime Scene Investigators.

The service provided is in support of the Force wide criminal investigations and the North West region. The work is complex and diverse particularly in relation to forensic examination and analysis of firearms and ballistic material for the purpose of gathering and interpreting evidence and intelligence.

There is a requirement for such a service to be accredited which means staff are involved in a continuous cycle of internal and external assessment to ensure a high quality service is delivered. Processes must be reviewed to ensure continuous improvement and the incorporation of new scientific advancements and techniques.

Role holder will be responsible for supporting all levels of investigations working Monday to Friday on a flexi time basis (07:00 – 19:00), although working for a 24/7 emergency service may require additional duties to meet the exigencies of the service.

The role holder will be expected to attend the TERF, scenes and meetings held away from their main location of work. This may be within or external to the force area.

The role holder will be expected to attend appropriate training courses nationally.

Duties may require travel outside the force area requiring overnight stays.

(b) ***Framework and Boundaries:*** (Policies and procedures which affect you and how these can be changed).

All Merseyside Police and Staff policies are applicable to the role.

Criminal Law

Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).

Criminal Procedure and Investigation Act (CPIA)

Protection of Freedoms Act (POFA)

Firearms legislation

Acts of Parliament (Official Secrets Act, Data Protection Act etc.).

National Standards (Evidence, Training).

Resources (Budget, Establishment).

Health & Safety including COSHH.

Force Policies.

Management Priorities (Can influence).

New Technology (Can influence).

International Standards and relevant guidance material: ISO 17025.

ISO 17020, ILAC-G19 and the Forensic Regulators Code of Practice and Conduct and relevant appendices

The post holder will be guided and at all times comply with the principles within our UKAS accreditation plus they will need to keep up to date with current case law, procedural rulings and developments across the field.

The post holder will be required to act as a professional witness in both internal and external investigations.

(c) **Organisation:** (For each type of post that reports directly to you, outline below the posts overall responsibilities).

Forensic Firearms Technician – To support Firearms Examination Unit in maximising the effectiveness of forensic evidence through the examination and classification of firearms, ammunition and ballistics related material as a service to the North West Region

6. DIMENSIONS: (Indicate in quantitative terms, key areas on which your job has an impact).

Financial: N/A

Staff: 1

Other: Geographical area: Merseyside Police Force Area and North West Region

7. JOB CHALLENGES: (Describe the most challenging or complex parts of your job).

To provide expertise in the examinations and classification of firearms for the North West region and provide expert testimony in all courts of law as required.

Postholder also has to act as technical lead for UKAS accreditation to this force for this area of forensics.

The Forensic Science regulator requires all forensic disciplines to be accredited as without continuation of this, forensic units would not be able to function which would be at a cost to the organisation as work would have to be passed to external FSP's which currently hold accreditation.

The role holder will underpin operational activity in support of crime investigation and policing operations.

Expected to provide sound, relevant and up to date advice, employing a problem solving approach toward conformity issues.

Must develop and maintain specialist technical knowledge in relation to emerging technology to assist in securing the success of future investigations.

Must maintain knowledge and expertise of the law and legislation surrounding firearms and keep abreast of any changes. Maintain knowledge of current trends in Firearm intelligence across the region and country. Take ownership for Continued Professional Development.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

(Provide any further information, not included in your previous answers, which you consider would assist others to achieve a better understanding of your job).

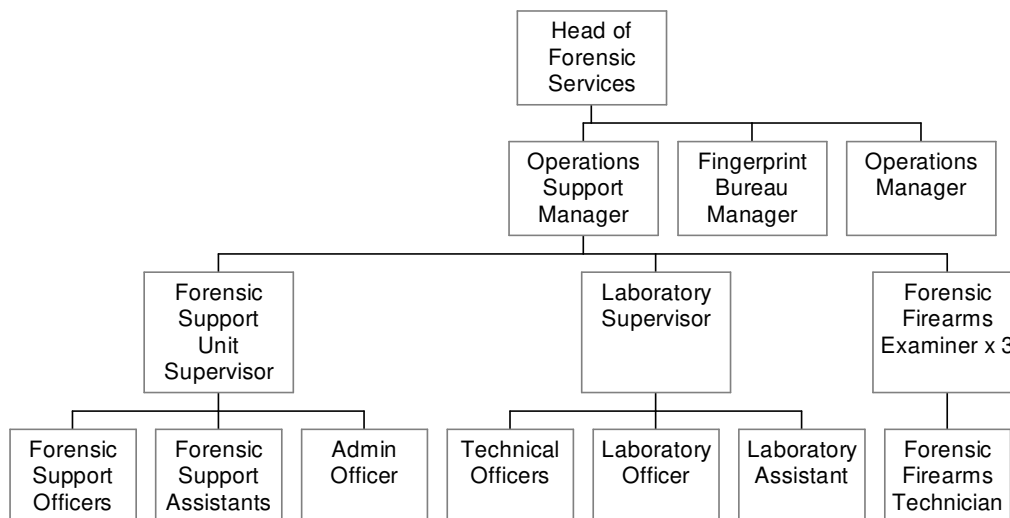
The role holder is required to undertake biometric vetting which includes the provision of a DNA sample and collection of fingerprints for crime scene elimination purposes only.

Recruitment Vetting is required for the role.

The post holder will be expected to comply with health and safety requirements.

9. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

(Draw an organisational chart of your Department / Section, indicating the position of your post within it).



10. AGREEMENT OF QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT:

(Please sign when completed)

POSTHOLDER'S NAME:
(Please print in block capitals)

POSTHOLDER'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

Extn

MANAGER'S NAME:
(Please print in block capitals)

MANAGER'S SIGNATURE:

Date:

Extn