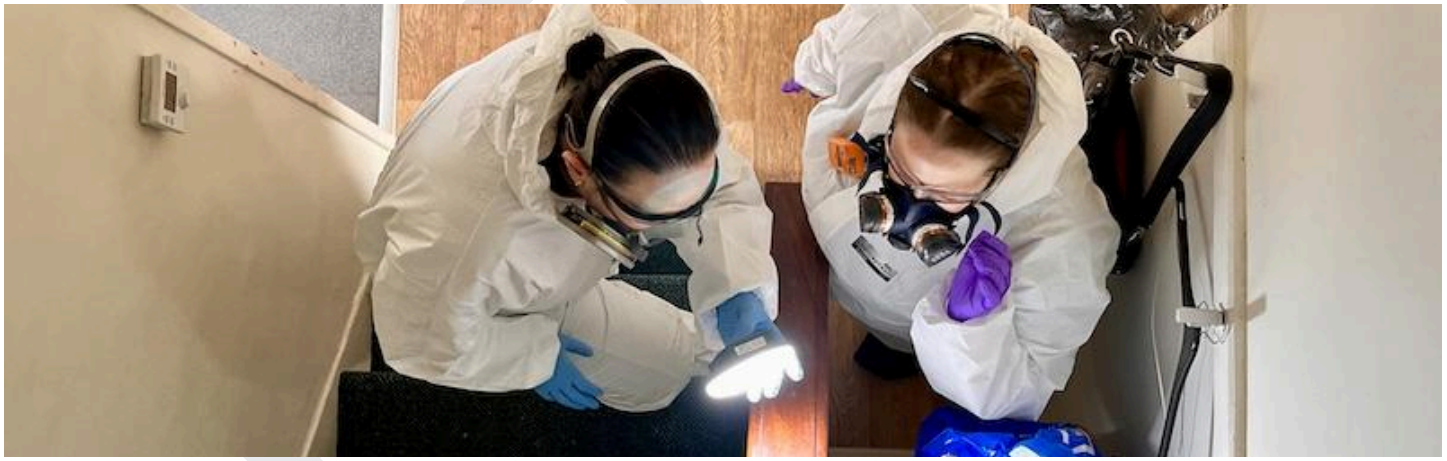
FORENSIC
Training Partnership

Train-Inspire-Support the next generation of investigators

White Paper

FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2:

What CSI Leaders Must Do to Assure Incident Scene Examination Compliance



This white paper has been prepared by The Forensic Training Partnership CIC to support forensic leaders in understanding the practical implications of FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 and preparing their organisations for the requirements of the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice.

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The landscape of forensic science in the United Kingdom is undergoing a significant regulatory shift. With FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2, *Incident Scene Examination*, published in August 2026, the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) has issued guidance to support implementation of the statutory Code of Practice for Incident Scene Examination (FSA – INC 100). For senior forensic leaders, the central question is not simply whether staff have attended training, but whether the forensic unit can demonstrate a controlled and effective system for competence, decision-making, technical records, contamination management and quality assurance.

The regulatory position

FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 is guidance issued under section 9 of the Forensic Science Regulator Act 2021; it does not form part of the statutory Code. Forensic units may adopt a different approach to that set out in the guidance, but must be able to show how they meet the Code's requirements.

For INC 100, the guidance confirms that the Regulator has **suspended the requirement for ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation** as the immediate means of demonstrating Code compliance and has implemented a **milestone-based pathway**. Organisations must meet:



- **Milestone 1 by 6 April 2027:** a corporate competency framework covering all crime types and sites within the defined minimum scope, including forensic scene management; and
- **Milestone 2 by 2 October 2027:** a risk-based approach to anti-contamination and proportionate note-taking.

A further milestone requires organisations to demonstrate that the applicable minimum-scope sub-activities are valid or fit for purpose across all crime types undertaken.

These milestones should be treated as staged preparation requirements, not as a substitute for full compliance. Until all applicable requirements of the Code have been met, organisations should continue to declare non-compliance, while recording milestone status where appropriate.

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What leaders must assure

FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 places particular emphasis on competence, professional judgement, scene management, contamination control and complete technical records. Senior forensic leaders should focus on the following actions.

1. Confirm the scope of activity

Define which INC 100 sub-activities, incident types, sites, personnel and scene-management functions fall within the forensic unit's operational scope. The guidance applies across all incident types relevant to the forensic unit; it does not distinguish compliance for volume versus major incidents.

Map the unit's current activity against the minimum scope in Annex B. Core sub-activities undertaken by the organisation will not be treated as infrequently used, although particular methods within those activities may qualify as infrequently used if they meet the Code's criteria. In that situation, appropriate controls, risk-based assurance and method-specific competency arrangements are still required.

2. Own the competency framework

Ensure the competency framework defines:

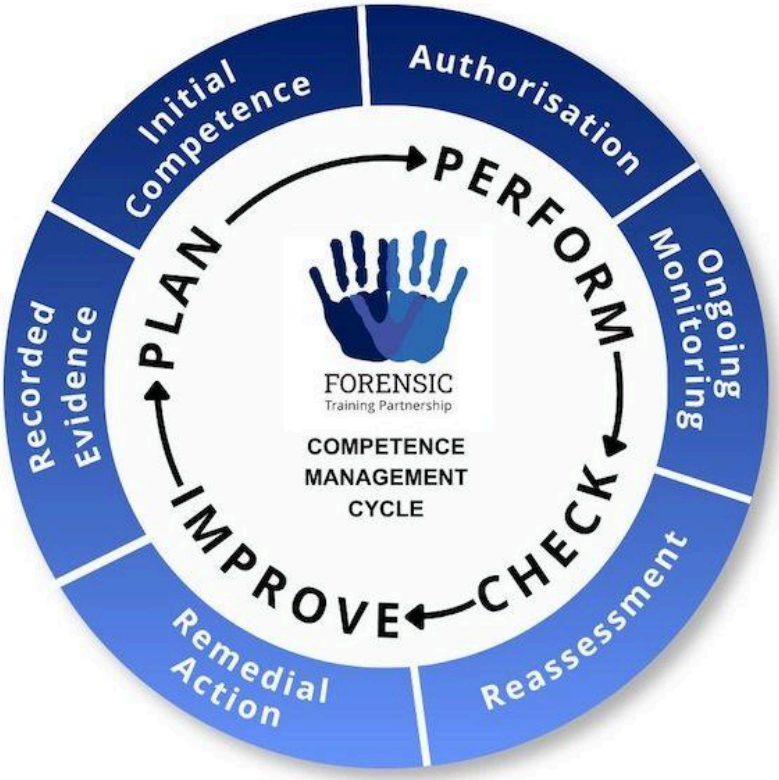
- initial competence and authorisation;
- ongoing competence, reassessment and remedial action;
- the methods of assessment and monitoring; and
- competence records retained in line with case-file retention policy.

Attendance at courses alone is not sufficient evidence of competence.

Competence includes more than technical methods. Depending on the role, assessments should test the practitioner's ability to:

- seek and interpret information relevant to the incident;
- make an initial assessment of the scene, including recognising different evidence types;
- set and manage an examination strategy;
- locate, protect and recover exhibits appropriately;
- document activities;
- manage contamination risk effectively;
- collaborate with, consult or commission other practitioners and experts when required; and
- report activities, including investigative opinions.

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3. Assure real-world performance

Ongoing competence should include some risk-based monitoring each year, although the full range of competence does not need to be assessed annually. It must also include periodic witnessing in a live operating environment, with on-scene witnessing undertaken at least every four years.

Risks to ongoing competence may be higher for practitioners who are new to a role, returning to a role, attending certain incident types infrequently, or whose scope has increased. Where such risks are identified, the frequency of competency assessment should be reviewed.

4. Prepare an accreditation and assurance evidence base

Identify the policies, procedures, technical records, internal audits, case reviews, risk assessments and competence records that will support future accreditation and current compliance. This includes:

- governance and Senior Accountable Individual arrangements;
- contamination risk management and scene controls;
- method validation and verification;
- checking and review of critical findings; and
- completeness and traceability of technical records.

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5. Retain accountability when outsourcing

FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 permits competency assessments to be delivered internally or by an external provider. However, the forensic unit remains responsible for its competency framework, authorisation decisions, quality controls and overall compliance. Any external training or assessment should be treated as supporting evidence, not a substitute for internal assurance.

How FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 shapes practice

The guidance reinforces several expectations that leaders must embed in day-to-day operations.

- **Professional judgement as part of competence.** Decisions must be based on information objectively known at the time and defensibly recorded in technical records, including any strategic deviations such as recovering fragile evidence out of sequence due to adverse conditions.
- **Technical records.** Examination notes should normally be made at the incident scene and should include information received, factual observations, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions. Where notes cannot be made contemporaneously, this should be exceptional rather than routine.
- **Contamination control.** Units must identify contamination risks, define controls and ensure personnel are trained in their role in contamination risk management.
- **Applied learning.** Training should prepare investigators to apply knowledge and skills in diverse and unpredictable environments, using a mix of assessment methods such as scene-based assessment, facilitated exercises, isolated method demonstrations, knowledge checks, professional discussions and case debriefs.

These are options rather than a compulsory checklist. The assessment method must be appropriate to the competency being tested. For example, a table-top exercise may support assessment of strategy setting, but some aspects of scene approach require examination of a scene with known outcomes.

Investigative opinions and quality assurance

Most incident-examination and forensic-scene-management reporting will involve investigative opinions. Practitioners should understand the distinction between factual observations and investigative opinions, and be able to provide defensible rationales for their conclusions.

Although certain initial reports and examination notes may not require a declaration of compliance or a defined quality check before being provided, the unit should have a process for reviewing investigative opinions that could significantly affect an investigation. Peer review should be risk-based and, where relevant, should consider whether opinions are impartial, consistent with the scene findings and fully documented.

Achieving compliance with The Forensic Training Partnership

Meeting the 6 April 2027 and 2 October 2027 milestones is an operational priority. Because FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 permits competency assessments to be delivered by external providers, forces can look to specialist training partners to support the transition.

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At The Forensic Training Partnership, we design and deliver scenario-based training and assessment support to help forensic units develop and evidence the competency arrangements expected under the Code and FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2. We work with dynamic, demanding and realistic scenarios, including Hydra-style scene management courses, simulated isolated method assessments and professional discussion exercises.

Our two-week CSM course features a four-day ongoing scenario run like a major crime scene, requiring twice-daily briefings and fast-track submission decisions. In 2025 and 2026, we created and ran CPDs in all aspects of crime scene investigation to support competence, including fingerprint workshops, forensic entomology and marks photography workshops. We are currently developing a footwear mark CPD workshop.

External training can contribute to a unit's evidence base, but responsibility for the forensic unit's competency framework, authorisation decisions and assurance remains with its leadership.

Prepare your team for the 2027 milestones. Contact The Forensic Training Partnership today to discuss how we can support your CSI leadership team in aligning your competency framework and assurance arrangements with FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2 and the Code.



Disclaimer

This publication is intended to provide guidance and professional insight. It does not replace the Forensic Science Regulator's statutory Code of Practice, associated guidance, or an organisation's own assessment of its compliance obligations.

References

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incident-scene-examination-fsr-gui-0006
FSR-GUI-0006 Issue 2, published August 2026. Accessed 26 August 2026.

https://www.ukas.com/resources/technical-bulletins/fsr-code-v-2-milestone-1-for-fsa-inc-100/

This Technical Bulletin outlines the process for the completion of a readiness review for Milestone 1.

Accessed 23 October 2026

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