

1) Over the past five years how many times has forensic information/material been lost by your force?

Our Forensic Services Department have searched their systems from 2019 onwards and this has returned 0 lost items.

Please be advised that information prior to 2019 is not centrally collated and would therefore exceed the appropriate limit (FOIA, s.12). Please see covering letter for further details.

2) Over the past five years how many times has forensic material/information been contaminated by your force?

Please be advised that we do not specifically record this. Contamination can mean different things, for example, if a police officer attends a burglary and touches an item handed to them by an IP, and we subsequently have to fingerprint it, then that would technically be contamination, but we would also eliminate them as we would already be aware of the contamination. However, all staff and officers have elimination samples taken and placed on file to ensure that, should they accidentally contaminate forensic material, this will be picked up during the processing of that material.

The forensic department works to the Forensic Science Regulator Codes of Conduct linked below (see 20.2). This is done in order to minimise contamination risks.

[Forensic science providers: codes of practice and conduct, 2021, issue 7 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3) On average, how long does your force retain forensic material/information linked to serious crime?

Please be advised there is no specific recorded information held as we do not record averages. However to assist, please see the below link which outlines the different retention periods.

[Requirements Guidance Regarding The Storage Retention And Destruction Of Records And Materials Version 2.1 Dec 2017.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

4) How and where is forensic material stored?

Forensic material would be stored in detained property or major incident stores and digital information (e.g. images) would be stored on secure servers. In relation to how forensic material is stored, this is set out by the following guidance: [New forensic retention guidance published for forces and private providers | FCN](#)