



Helping the fight against crime

A look at our recent work in the fascinating field of forensic science services in the UK and overseas

Common forensic standards could play a key role in helping to combat crime in Europe – much of which is carried out by criminals operating cross-border in several countries. A CEN (European Committee for Standardization) project committee – *Forensic science services* was formed in May 2012 to develop a standard for scene of crime and forensic evidence management. This is likely to be the first of three European standards covering forensic processes; the other two will relate to forensic science laboratories and forensic databases.

In late 2012 we worked with the Home Office and the Forensic Science Regulator, Andrew Rennison, to gather and present the UK's views on proposed European standardization initiatives. We worked with experts from the Home Office Quality Standards Specialist Group. Feedback will help to shape European standardization in the important area of forensic science.

The resulting standard will concern the collection of crime scene evidence, recording and documentation, packaging, labelling, transportation and storage to secure its integrity for law enforcement

and judicial purposes. It will also provide specifications for products used to collect and package evidence for forensic purposes and ensure traceability, and will extend to competence of personnel, equipment and consumables, collection, analysis, interpretation, recording procedures, protocols and validation.

Approval has been given for the formation of an ISO project committee – *Minimizing the risk of contamination in products used to collect and analyse biological material for forensic DNA purposes*. Standards Australia submitted the proposal and the committee will meet in 2013. The UK strongly believes that forensic science standards should be international. A relationship between the European and International committees should be established as soon as possible to ensure coherent standards development.

We have now published a specification *for consumables used in the collection, preservation and processing of material for forensic analysis – Requirements for product, manufacturing and forensic kit assembly*, PAS 377, which will help safeguard the integrity of consumables used in UK forensic science.

“In late 2012 we worked with the Home Office and the Forensic Science Regulator to provide the UK's viewpoint on proposed European standardization”

This work came after the Forensic Science Regulator identified a gap in standards concerning the quality of kits and consumables provided. He commissioned development of the PAS, which was produced in a joint project between the Forensic Science Regulator, Home Office and BSI.

PAS 377 will assist the police and forensic science community when purchasing consumables for forensic evidence used in the criminal justice system. The standard provides confidence in the purity of items used to collect and store forensic evidence, for example, that swabs used to collect DNA samples are free from other DNA traces that could provide inaccurate or unreliable results.

To find out more about PAS 377 please visit bsigroup.com/pas377

bsi.