2025

DNA Database System Oversight Committee

Annual Report 2025

Table of Contents

- Section 1: Chairperson's Foreword 2
- Section 2: Members of the Committee 6
- Section 3: Functions of the Committee 7
- Section 4: Governance 9
- Section 5: Overview of Forensic Science Ireland 11
- Section 6: Work of the Oversight Committee 13
- Section 7: Findings of the Committee 17
- Section 8: Developments of the Committee Outside of the Act of 2014 20
- Appendix A: Section 71-74 Inclusive of the Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014 22
- Appendix B: Section 84 Defence Forces Evidence Act 2022 26
- Appendix C: Section 66-72 inclusive of the Institutional Burials Act 2022 28

Section 1: Chairperson's Foreword

1.1. I am pleased to present to the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration the Annual Report of the DNA Database System Oversight Committee (the Committee) (the Report) for the year ended 31st December 2025.

1.2. The Committee was established by the Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014 (the Act of 2014). The functions of the Committee are set out in Section 72 of this Act. Details of the functions of the Committee as prescribed in the Act of 2014 are to be found in Section 3 of the Report.

1.3. The Committee oversees the management and operation of the DNA Database System in order to ensure that the security and integrity of the system is maintained to the highest degree. The Committee is kept informed of the operations and developments in respect of the DNA Database System through regular detailed briefings from relevant Criminal Justice agencies to whom the Act of 2014 applies, including Forensic Science Ireland (FSI), An Garda Siochana, (AGS), the National Forensic Coordination Office, (NFCO) and the Irish Prison Service (IPS).

1.4. The Committee is made up of six Committee members, one Chairperson and five ordinary members. The Director General of FSI is an ex officio member of the Committee. The Committee held six meetings over the course of 2025. A record of the dates of these meetings can be found at Section 4 of the Report.

1.5. The DNA Database System was established in 2015 and it is anticipated that a ceremony to mark the ten years anniversary of the DNA Database and its impact will take place in early 2026.

1.6. Throughout 2025, the DNA Database System continued to grow. As at 31st December 2025, there were 94,092 DNA profiles on the National DNA Database (the total at the end of 2024 was 83,489). This represents an increase of approximately 12.7%. As at 31st December 2025 there were 68,941 DNA profiles on the Reference Index (The total at the end of 2024 was 61,354). This represents an increase of approximately 12.4%. As at 31st December 2025 there were 15,298 crime stains on the DNA Database System (the total at end 2024 was 13,706). This represents an increase of approximately 11.6%.

1.7. The DNA Database System is a vital tool in the investigation of crime both at a national and European level. In total 998 investigations in Ireland were assisted by the Database System in 2025. At a European level, on 31st December 2025, Ireland

was exchanging DNA information with 20 countries under the Prüm Treaty. Four countries were added during 2025, namely, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Chezia.

1.8. Mr Chris Enright resigned from the position of Director General of FSI in late January 2025, having made a significant contribution to the organisation during his tenure as Director General over a period of seven years, including overseeing the construction of the new FSI facility at Backweston and the transition to the new facility of FSI from Garda Headquarters in the Phoenix Park. Dr Geraldine O'Donnell was appointed Acting Director General on Mr Enright's resignation, in January 2025, a position which she filled with commitment and competence, pending the appointment of a new Director General. Dr O'Donnell retired from FSI in September 2025. The Committee would like to thank Mr Enright and Dr O'Donnell for their commitment and contributions both to FSI and to the work of this Committee throughout their respective tenures in FSI.

1.9. Dr Ciarán Seoighe was appointed to the position of Director General in September 2025. The Committee wishes to thank him for his contribution during Q4 2025 and look forward to working with him in 2026.

1.10. The Committee is of the view that the operations of the DNA Database System continue to be successful due in large part to the hard work and professionalism of the management and staff of FSI. The Committee is briefed in advance of each meeting with statistical information and analysis in relation to the Database System and also regarding the operations of the Prüm Treaty. On behalf of the Committee, I shall like to thank the staff, in particular, Dr Dorothy Ramsbottom, the Director of the DNA and Biological Analysis Unit at FSI and the staff of the DNA and Biological Analysis Unit for her and their continued assistance and support throughout the year. The work of the Committee would not have been possible without her and their cooperation and commitment.

1.11. I have expressed the view in previous reports but would like in the Report to reiterate my belief that to an ever increasing extent, the development and success of our Criminal Justice System is dependant on the effectiveness and integrity of the DNA Database System and on the ability of the appropriate staff members to be in a position to respond in a timely and professional manner to the requirements of Criminal Justice investigations. This continues to the case despite the ever present challenges in recruiting and retaining suitable qualified and experienced staff members.

1.12. The Committee met with the former Commissioner of AGS, Commissioner Drew Harris and with Assistant Commissioner Angela Willis and with Detective Chief Superintendent Barry Walshe on 22nd January 2025. The meeting was a very positive one in the course of which issues of mutual concern and interest were considered and discussed. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the significant support of the Commissioner and AGS in assisting in the work of the Committee.

1.13. The Committee met with members of NFCO on 9th December 2025. This meeting was once more, a very positive one providing the opportunity to clarify issues of ongoing concern. NFCO provides valuable reports to the Committee in advance of each meeting which are of immense assistance to the work of the Committee.

1.14. The Committee will continue to engage with the Commissioner, AGS and NFCO throughout 2026 and wishes to extend its appreciation of their continued support.

1.15. Throughout 2025, the Committee continued to review the practical application of the Act of 2014 as it applied to the taking of samples from relevant offenders in the custody of the Irish Prison Service. The Committee is of the view that the taking of samples from relevant offenders in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Act is key in ensuring the effectiveness of the DNA Database System. In the context of such considerations, IPS continues to furnish to the Committee regular reports providing statistical information and analysis of the taking of samples from all relevant offenders in compliance with the provisions of the Act. The Committee would like to extend its thanks to the Director General of IPS and her staff for her and their continued engagement with the Committee. The Committee also acknowledges the challenges currently facing IPS which continues to experience unprecedent numbers of prisoners entering its service.

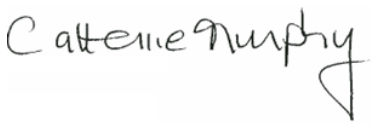
1.16. Matters pertaining to GDPR continue to be considered by the Committee at each of their meetings.

1.17. Section 6 and Section 7 of the Report respectively outline the work and findings of the Committee. Matters which were considered and reviewed by the Committee in the course of 2025 and which will continue to be kept under review by the Committee in 2026 include;

- The robustness and security of FSI's Security System which are central to the successful and safe functioning of the DNA Database System and its essential role in the overall Criminal Justice System.

- Appropriate staffing levels within FSI and NFCO required to meet the ever-increasing demand.
- Ongoing levels of non-submission of samples within specific Garda regional divisions.
- The current operations of Section 31 of the Act of 2014 which relates to the taking of samples from certain Convicted Offenders who are serving prison sentences.
- The current operations of Sections 41 and 42 of the Act of 2014 which relate to the taking of samples from AGS personnel for Elimination (Garda Síochána and Crime Scene Investigation) Indices
- Development in relation to the provisions of the Institutional Burials Act 2022.

1.18. I should like to extend my thanks to my fellow Committee members, and also Ms. Maeve O'Flynn, our former secretariat, and Ms. Rachel Tierney, our current secretariat, for their continued commitment and hard work in relation to the oversight and maintenance of the integrity and security of the DNA Database System.



Judge Catherine A. Murphy

Chairperson of the DNA Database System Oversight Committee

June 2026

Section 2: Members of the Committee

Her Honour Judge Catherine Murphy, Chairperson

Mr. Chris Enright, Director General, FSI (Resigned at the end January 2025)

Dr. Geraldine O'Donnell, former Acting Director General, FSI (January 2025 – Retired September 2025)

Dr. Ciarán Seoighe, Director General, FSI (Appointed October 2025)

Ms. Sunniva McDonagh, S.C.

James McGowan, Former Detective Chief Superintendent Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau

Mr. John O'Dwyer, Former Deputy Data Protection Commissioner

Dr. Maureen Smyth, Former Director of DNA in FSI

Section 3: Functions of the Committee

3.1 Section 71 of the Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014 provides for the establishment of the DNA Database System Oversight Committee.

3.2 Section 72(1) of the Act provides that the Committee shall oversee the management and operation of the DNA Database System for the purposes of maintaining the integrity and security of the System and shall for those purposes, satisfy itself that the provisions of the Act of 2014, in relation to the System are being complied with.

3.3 Section 72(2) subsection (a)-(g) inclusive provide that, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), the Committee shall oversee-

a) the arrangements employed by the Director of FSI in relation to the receipt, handling, transmission and storage of samples taken under this Act for the purpose of generating DNA profiles for entry into the DNA Database System,
b) the procedures employed by the Director of FSI in relation to the generation of DNA profiles from the samples taken under this Act, and the quality control and quality assurance of those procedures, to ensure that they comply with international best practice,
c) the measures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that the DNA Database System is not improperly accessed by any person, that the DNA profiles and information entered into the System are used only for the purposes permitted by this Act and that they are not improperly disclosed to any person,
d) the means by which the results of searches of the DNA Database System are reported by the Director of FSI to An Garda Síochána, the Ombudsman Commission or a coroner, as may be appropriate,
e) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that samples taken under this Act for the purpose of generating DNA profiles for entry into the DNA Database System are destroyed, and the DNA profiles generated from those samples are removed from that System, in accordance with Part 10 of the Act.
f) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI in the operation of Chapters 2 and 7 of Part 12 of the Act, and

g) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI in the operation of section 4 of the Act.

Section 4: Governance

4.1 The DNA Database System Oversight Committee is independent in the performance of its functions and in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Act of 2014 and in this regard regulates its own procedures. The Committee acts at all times in accordance with the best interests of and for the integrity of the DNA Database System.

4.2 The terms of membership of the Committee are set out within Schedule 1 of the Act of 2014. The Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration is responsible for the selection process of members to the Committee and thus appointments to the Committee are in line with Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration practices, having regard to promotion of gender balance, diversity and inclusion.

4.3 In accordance with Schedule 1 of the Act of 2014, the Committee holds as many meetings as are necessary for the performance of its functions and makes such arrangements as are appropriate for the conduct of its meetings. The Committee held six meetings in 2025. A record of the dates of the meetings and a record of the Committee's attendance at the meetings can be found in the below table:

	22/01/2025	25/03/2025	20/05/2025	26/08/2025	23/10/2025	09/12/2025
CM	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CE	Y	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
GOD	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/A	N/A
CS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Y	Y
SM	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
JM	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
JOD	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
MS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table 2 Each Committee member is represented by their initials. Y indicates attendance at the meeting. N indicates absence from the meeting. N/A indicates Not Applicable i.e where the Committee member was no longer serving or had yet to begin serving on the Committee and therefore was not eligible to attend the meeting.

4.4 The Committee met with the Garda Commissioner during the January 2025 meeting. The Committee met with members of the National Forensic Coordination Office (NFCO) during the December meeting. The Committee did not meet with members of the IPS during 2025, however the Chairperson maintained regular contact with the Director of Operations of IPS throughout 2025.

Section 5: Overview of Forensic Science Ireland

5.1 Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) is an associated office of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. FSI works to deliver, to best international standards, comprehensive scientific analysis and independent expert opinion, advice and training to support the Irish Criminal Justice system. Originally known as the Forensic Science Laboratory, FSI was established in 1975 to provide a scientific service to the Criminal Justice System by analysing samples submitted from crime scenes and providing expert evidence in criminal trials. In June 2014, the scope of FSI was extended under the Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014. Under the Act of 2014, FSI is named as the custodian of the DNA Database and was renamed from Forensic Science Laboratory to Forensic Science Ireland to recognise this broader remit.

5.2 In December 2019, the responsibility for the Fingerprints and Documents and Handwriting services transferred from the Garda National Technical Bureau to FSI. This consolidates most laboratory-based forensic work under FSI. FSI currently has 203 staff, including seconded Garda members, scientists and analysts trained in forensic testing and reporting techniques, supported by administration professionals.

5.3 Applying DNA technology, FSI contributes to the investigation of a range of crime types including crimes of violence and sexual assault. This technology, along with other forms of trace evidence e.g. paint, glass, textile fibres, is also utilised in cases such as burglaries, armed robberies, firearms and supply of illegal drugs. There were 25,068 total case submissions into FSI in 2025 – this is in line with 2024 submissions of 25,170 . This does not include biometric reference samples such as DNA FTA samples and Fingerprint PC65 samples.

5.4 FSI issued 23,126 forensic reports in 2025 – an increase on the 17,980 reports issued in 2024. The increase reflects the Backweston campus now operating and attaining accreditation for all forensic facilities.

5.5 The Prüm Treaty was established in 2005 to step up cross-border cooperation between EU Member States, particularly in combatting terrorism, cross-border crime and illegal migration. Under Prüm, Member States have an obligation to grant one another automated access rights to suspect and crime stain DNA profiles within their national DNA Databases. The Prüm Treaty also applies to the exchange of fingerprint and vehicle registration data. Details for Prüm sharing are outlined in EU Treaty Council Decision 2008/615/JHA of the 23rd June 2008 and Council Decision 2008/616/JHA of the 23rd June 2008. Each nation involved in sharing of DNA information has a single, centralised National Contact Point (NCP), which in Ireland is FSI. As at end 2025 FSI were exchanging information with 20 countries; Austria, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom, Latvia, Slovakia, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Malta, Germany, France, Finland, Belgium, Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Slovenia, Lithuania and Czechia.

5.6 FSI is a founding member of the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI), as well as the Association of Forensic Service Providers (AFSP). These organisations are focused on developing and sharing best international forensic practices and research amongst their members. Staff of FSI are active on all the relevant ENFSI and AFSP working groups. This international engagement is important in ensuring that expert evidence presented is grounded in the most recent scientific research and best international practice.

5.7 FSI is accredited according to ISO 17025: 2017 and holds a Platinum 'Excellence Through People' certification.

5.8 FSI's DNA laboratory is the first forensic laboratory globally to obtain Green certification from My Green Labs.

5.9 FSI developed its new Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030 through an extensive consultation process that took place in 2024/2025. The strategy was published and launched in 2026. The key pillars of the strategy are:

- Service Effectiveness
- Investing in our People
- Science, Technology, Research & Innovation
- Partnership and Cross-Sectoral Influence
- Quality Systems
- Environment, Social and Governance

The strategy will be delivered in two broad phases. In the first phase the objective is increased recruitment and process optimisation with a view to reducing backlogs. The second phase will place increased emphasis on research, innovation, development and adoption of new technologies and techniques.

In 2025/2026, there has been an increased focus on staffing and organisational design. There has been some realignment of leadership responsibilities and organisational structure changes. In parallel, FSI, supported by colleagues in the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, has invested significant time, effort and resources to attract talented individuals to the organisation. FSI's objective is to fill existing vacancies, establish a new Corporate Services spine and develop a pipeline of future talent that will enable the organisation to keep pace with demand and new technologies.

Section 6: Work of the Oversight Committee

The Committee held six meetings over the course of 2025. The work of the Committee is summarised under the following headings:

1. **FSI Compliance with and Application of the Act of 2014**

I. National Statistics of the DNA Database System

II. Updates on the Prüm Treaty

III. Security and IT Security of the DNA Database System

2. **An Garda Síochána Compliance with and Application of the Act of 2014**

I. Statistics from the National Forensic Coordination Office related to submission of DNA samples to FSI.

II. Application of Section 41 & 42 – the taking of DNA Samples from Garda personnel for elimination purposes.

3. **Irish Prison Service Compliance with and Application of the Act of 2014**

- Statistics from the Irish Prison Service

4. **Data Protection**

6.1 I. Statistics from FSI

Throughout 2025, quarterly reports containing detailed statistical information were provided to the Committee by the Director and staff of FSI with regard to the operation of the DNA Database, including the number of samples taken, the Sections of the Act of 2014 under which the samples were taken, the number of samples and DNA profiles which were destroyed/removed, together with a breakdown of the number and category of cases to which the assistance of DNA matches contributed. Such reports require careful and detailed analysis on the part of the staff of FSI and to them, the Committee extends its thanks and appreciation.

As at 31st December 2025, there were 94,092 DNA profiles on the National DNA Database (the total at the end of 2024 was 83,489). This represents an increase of approximately 12.7%%. As at 31st December 2024 there were 68,941 DNA profiles on the Reference Index (The total at the end of 2024 was 61,354). This represents an increase of approximately 12.4%%. As at 31st December 2024 there were 15,298 crime stains on the DNA Database System (the total at end 2024 was 13,706). This represents an increase of approximately 11.6%.

6.1 II. Update on the Prüm Treaty

The background to the Prüm Treaty has been set out in Section 5 of this report. Statistics in relation to the Prüm Treaty and the work undertaken to exchange information with countries under the Prüm Treaty were also shared with the Committee throughout the year in advance of each meeting. As at 31st December 2025 FSI was sharing DNA Data with 20 countries under the Prüm data exchange agreement, with 4 new connections having been made in 2025. DNA information exchanges began with the following 4 countries in 2025:

- Romania information exchange formalised on 20th January 2025
- Slovenia information exchange formalised on 17th February 2025
- Lithuania information exchange formalised on 18th March 2025
- Czechia information exchange formalised on 02nd April 2025

	Irish Crime Stain to Prüm Person	Prüm Crime Stain to Person on Irish Database	Prüm Crime Stain to Irish Crime Stain
Austria	26	45	5
Belgium	4	16	2
Croatia	0	1	0
Czechia	11	4	3
Estonia	1	3	0
Finland	1	14	0
France	74	175	33
Germany	34	239	23
Latvia	9	2	0
Lithuania	12	16	0
Malta	0	0	0
Netherlands	25	30	11
Poland	10	19	1
Portugal	2	2	2
Romania	13	1	0
Slovakia	7	3	1
Slovenia	1	6	0
Spain	7	21	2
Sweden	5	27	3
UK	870	614	56
Total	1112	1238	142

The results from the sharing of DNA Data have been mutually positive for all participants. In particular the sharing of Data with the United Kingdom has yielded significant results.

The United Kingdom has negotiated ongoing access to the existing Prüm Decisions as part of the EU UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). Ireland opted-in to the Council Decision and this Decision was adopted on 17 June 2022 by the Council of the EU.

6.1 III. Security and IT Security

The issues of security in general and in particular relating to FSI's Information Technology infrastructure and systems remained a priority item for the Committee throughout 2025. The Committee is currently satisfied with arrangements with regard to security in FSI. Security and IT security is an ever evolving space with methods of cyber hacking becoming more sophisticated each year. The Committee notes that constant vigilance and investment are required in order to maintain the appropriate levels of security. Security and IT Security will remain an issue for active review by the Committee in 2026.

The question of whether an assessment of the effectiveness of the DNA Database System within the Criminal Justice System should be undertaken was considered and will be raised with AGS during the course of 2026.

6.2 I. Statistics from the NFCO

Throughout 2025, NFCO continued to provide the Committee in advance of each meeting with statistical updates, reports and analyses in relation to DNA samples and records (with particular reference to non-submitted samples) which have been of significant value to the work of the Committee. The Committee also corresponds with the office of the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána. The Committee is pleased to note that significant progress has been made in addressing the issues of non-submission of DNA samples to FSI.

There remains a small number of Divisions where the level non-submission of samples is above that of the national average. The Committee raised this matter through its correspondence with the Garda Commissioner in 2025. The Committee also raised the issue with the National Forensic Co-ordination Unit of An Garda Síochána in its December meeting. This matter will remain under review by the Committee in 2026.

The reports from NFCO also inform the Committee of developments and progress in relation to work practices and the various protocols which relate to the work of the Committee.

The Committee would like to commend NFCO for their work in this area and to thank NFCO in particular for their valuable update reports and support.

6.2 II. Compliance with Sections 41 and 42 of the Act of 2014

It was noted that as at 31st December 2025, the HQ Directive with accompanying policy and procedure documents regarding the taking of DNA samples from members of AGS under Sections 41 and 42 of the Act 2014 is still under review. It is hoped that this matter can be brought to a conclusion at the earliest opportunity given the importance of Sections 41 and 42 of the Act of 2014 to the work of the Committee.

The Committee should like to extend its thanks to the Garda Commissioner and NFCO who regularly provided information to the Committee.

6.3 Compliance with Section 31 of the Act of 2014

The Chairperson was in regular contact with the Director of Operations within Irish Prison Service and the Committee received quarterly briefing from IPS with specific reference to the application of Section 31 of the Act of 2014 which provides for the taking of DNA samples from relevant convicted offenders who are serving prison sentences and to whom the provisions of Part 4 of the Act of 2014 apply.

The Committee wishes to extend its thanks to the Director General of IPS and to her staff for their work in this area particularly having regard to the challenges currently faced by IPS, given the unprecedented numbers of prisoners entering its service.

6.4 Data Protection and GDPR

At each meeting of the Committee Data Protection and GDPR implications were discussed and no significant concerns were noted.

The Data Protection Officer of the Department of Justice acts as the Data Protection Officer for the Committee.

Section 7: Findings of the Committee

7.1 It is the view of each member of the Committee that the importance of the DNA Database System cannot be overstated, that it is an essential part of the Criminal Justice System and that the maintenance of its integrity and efficiency must be upheld to the highest standards. The Committee is cognisant of its responsibilities under the Act of 2014 and is committed to carrying out its statutory obligations to the best of its ability.

7.2 The emphasis placed on the use of DNA in Criminal Justice cases is ever increasing. FSI issued 23,126 forensic reports in 2025. The contribution of the DNA Database System to the Criminal Justice system is evident. In total 998 investigations were assisted by the Database in 2025. 997 investigations were assisted by the Database in 2024. The Committee notes, however, that increased demand for services may result in a strain on staff resources available and this matter should be carefully managed. This is a matter which the Committee shall keep under review in 2026. The Committee is aware of current significant difficulties in recruiting staff in FSI and in particular staff for the ever increasing demand in the DNA and Biological Analysis Unit.

7.3 The Committee is satisfied with the management and operation of the DNA Database System with regard to Section 72(2)(a), namely the arrangements employed by the Director General of FSI in relation to the receipt, handling, transmission and storage of samples taken under the Act of 2014 for the generating of DNA profiles for entry into the DNA Database System and to Section 72(2)(b), the quality control and quality assurance of the procedures.

7.4 The Committee is satisfied with regard to Section 72(2)(c), namely the measures employed by the Director General of FSI to ensure that the DNA Database System is not improperly accessed by any person, that the DNA profiles and information entered in the System are used only for the purposes permitted by the Act of 2014 and that they are not improperly disclosed to any person. The Committee continues to emphasise the importance of the security system as an integral part of the FSI IT programme.

7.5 The Committee is satisfied with regard to Section 72(2)(d), namely the means by which the results of the DNA Database System are reported by the Director of FSI to An Garda Síochána, the Ombudsman Commissioner or a Coroner, as may be appropriate.

7.6 The Committee is satisfied with regard to Section 72(2)(e) namely the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that samples taken under the Act of

2014 for the purposes of generating DNA profiles for entry in the DNA Database System are destroyed and that the DNA profiles generated from those samples are removed from that System in accordance with Part 10 of the Act of 2014. Statistics in relation to this matter were furnished regularly to the Committee in advance of meetings, during 2024.

7.7 The Committee is satisfied with regard to Section 72(2)(f) and (g), namely, the responsibilities around automated searching for and automated comparison of DNA profiles.

7.8 A summary of the automated matches arising in 2025 from exchanges with the 20 countries who are parties under the Prüm data exchange agreement has been set out at paragraph 6.4 of this report.

7.9 Regarding the issue of non-submitted samples, highlighted in the Annual Report of 2019 and referenced also in the Annual Reports of 2020-2024 while the Committee is satisfied that relevant recommendations which have been implemented have brought about very positive improvements in relation to this issue, it continues to have concerns that in a relatively small number of specific Garda Regional Divisions, the numbers of non-submitted samples continue to be noticeably higher than the national average. The concerns have been brought to the attention AGS and were raised with the Commissioner at the Committee's meeting with him in January 2025.

7.10 Regarding Section 31 of the Act of 2014, the taking of DNA samples from relevant convicted offenders who are serving prison sentences and to whom the provisions of Part 4 of the Act of 2014 applies, the Committee continued to engage with IPS regarding this issue in 2025. The Committee is satisfied that significant progress has been made by IPS on the taking of DNA samples from prisoners eligible to be sampled under the Act of 2014. This matter will remain under active review by the Committee in 2026.

7.11 Regarding Sections 41 and 42 of the Act of 2014 (the taking of samples from AGS personnel for the Elimination Index, both AGS and Crime Scene Investigators), it was noted that a draft Protocol/HQ Directive with accompanying policy and procedure documents in regards to the taking of DNA samples under Sections 41 and 42 is in final stages of completion in relation to this issue as at 31st December 2025. The matter will remain under active review by the Committee in 2026.

7.12 As a result of its meeting with members of NFCO in December 2025 the Committee is satisfied with the current staffing levels at NFCO and that appropriate efforts are being

made to maintain the staffing numbers at the appropriate level. This matter will be kept under review in 2026.

Section 8: Developments of the Committee Outside of the Act of 2014

8.1 Institutional Burials Act 2022

The Institutional Burials Act 2022 (the Act of 2022) was signed into law on 13th July 2022. The purpose of the Act, inter alia, was to establish an Office of Director of Authorised Intervention (the Director) to engage in cases where precise burial places cannot be identified but where inappropriate burials are likely to have taken place in an institutional setting, as provided for under the provisions of the Act of 2022 and to provide for the establishment by FSI of two specific DNA databases to be known as the DNA (Historic Remains) Database and a related database, the Personal Information (Historic Remains) Database (the Databases).

Subject to the provisions of the Act of 2022, Section 66 provides that the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, with the prior consent of the Minister for Justice and after the Minister for Justice shall have consulted with the DNA Database Committee (this Committee), shall direct the Committee in writing to oversee the management and operation of the Databases for the purposes of maintaining the integrity and security of the Databases and the Committee shall for these purposes satisfy itself that the provisions of the Act of 2022 in relation to the Databases are being complied with.

For the purposes of the Act of 2022, the Committee shall meet and be known as the Historic Remains Databases Oversight Committee (the Oversight Committee) and the Committee and the Oversight Committee shall fulfil two separate and distinct and independent roles under the Act of 2014 and the Act 2022, respectively.

The Director of Authorised Intervention was appointed in May 2023.

The work of the Oversight Committee under the Act of 2022 has not commenced as at 31st December 2025. The Committee will continue to review its responsibilities in relation to the legislation and will meet in the relevant format when it is appropriate to do so.

8.2 Defence Forces Evidence Act 2022

Section 84 of the Defence Forces Evidence Act 2022 provides that the Committee shall oversee the management and operations of the DNA (Military Police) Database System. The Defence Forces Evidence Act had not yet commenced as at 31st December 2025. The Committee will continue to keep this matter under review in 2026.

Appendix A: Section 71-74 Inclusive of the Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014

DNA Database System Oversight Committee

71. (1) Upon the commencement of this section, a committee which shall be known as An Coiste Formhaoirsithe um an gCóras Bunachair Sonraí DNA or, in the English language, as the DNA Database System Oversight Committee (in this Act referred to as "the Committee") shall stand established to perform the functions assigned to it by this Act.

(2) Subject to this Part, the Committee shall be independent in the performance of its functions.

(3) Schedule 1 shall have effect in relation to the Committee.

Functions of Committee

72. (1) The Committee shall oversee the management and operation of the DNA Database System for the purposes of maintaining the integrity and security of the System and shall, for those purposes, satisfy itself that the provisions of this Act in relation to the System are being complied with.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (1)*, the Committee shall oversee—

(a) the arrangements employed by the Director of FSI in relation to the receipt, handling, transmission and storage of samples taken under this Act for the purpose of generating DNA profiles for entry in the DNA Database System,

(b) the procedures employed by the Director of FSI in relation to the generation of DNA profiles from the samples taken under this Act, and the quality control and quality assurance of those procedures, to ensure that they comply with international best practice,

(c) the measures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that the DNA Database System is not improperly accessed by any person, that the DNA profiles and information entered in

the System are used only for the purposes permitted by this Act and that they are not improperly disclosed to any person,

(d) the means by which the results of searches of the DNA Database System are reported by the Director of FSI to the Garda Síochána, the Ombudsman Commission or a coroner, as may be appropriate,

(e) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that samples taken under this Act for the purpose of generating DNA profiles for entry in the DNA Database System are destroyed, and the DNA profiles generated from those samples are removed from that System, in accordance with *Part 10*,

(f) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI in the operation of *Chapters 2* and *7* of *Part 12*, and

(g) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI in the operation of section 4 .

(3) The Committee shall, in the performance of its functions under *subsections (1)* and *(2)*, make such recommendations as it considers appropriate in relation to the management and operation of the DNA Database System to the Minister and the Director of FSI, as may be appropriate.

(4) The Committee may, and if so requested by the Minister shall, review any matter relating to the management and operation of the DNA Database System and shall submit a report in writing of any such review to the Minister.

(5) Subject to *subsections (6)* and *(7)*, the Minister shall, as soon as practicable after receiving a report under *subsection (4)*, cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and to be published in such manner as the Minister considers appropriate.

(6) The Minister may, when laying a copy of a report received by him or her under *subsection (4)* before each House of the Oireachtas or publishing the report, omit any matter from the copy of the report that is so laid or published if he or she is of opinion that the disclosure of the matter—

(a) would be prejudicial to the security of the DNA Database System, the security of the State or the investigation of criminal offences, or

(b) may infringe the constitutional rights of any person.

(7) If a matter is omitted in accordance with *subsection (6)* from a report received by the Minister under *subsection (4)*, a statement to that effect shall be attached to the copy of the report when it is laid before each House of the Oireachtas or is published.

Cooperation with Committee

73. (1) The Director and the other members of the staff of FSI shall cooperate with the Committee in relation to the performance by the Committee of its functions under this Act.

(2) The Director and the other members of the staff of FSI shall, for the purposes of subsection (1*)* furnish the Committee with such information as it may request and which, in the opinion of the Committee, is required for the performance of its functions.

(3) The Committee may, whenever it considers it appropriate to do so, request the Garda Síochána and the Ombudsman Commission to furnish information to it that is required for the performance of its functions under this Act.

(4) The Garda Síochána and the Ombudsman Commission shall comply with a request under *subsection (3)*.

(5) Nothing in any other enactment shall prohibit the disclosure of relevant factual information either to or by the Committee.

Annual report of Committee

74. (1) The Committee shall as soon as may be, but not later than 6 months, after the end of each year make a report in writing to the Minister regarding the performance by the Committee of the functions assigned to it by this Act during that year.

(2) A report under subsection (1) shall include information in such form and regarding such matters as the Minister may direct.

(3) Subject to subsection (4), the Minister shall, as soon as practicable after receiving a report under this section, cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and to be published in such manner as the Minister considers appropriate.

(4) Subsections (6) and (7) of section 72 shall, with any necessary modifications, apply to a report received by the Minister under this section as they apply to a report received by him or her under subsection (4) of that section.

(5) Notwithstanding subsection (1), if, but for this subsection, the first report under this section would relate to a period of less than 6 months, the report shall relate to that period and to the year immediately following that period and shall be made as soon as may be, but not later than 6 months, after the end of that year.

Appendix B: Section 84 Defence Forces Evidence Act 2022

84. Section 72 of the Act of 2014 (Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014) is amended—

(a) in subsection (1), by—

(i) the substitution of "the DNA Database System and the DNA (Military Police) Database System" for "the DNA Database System",

(ii) the substitution of "those Systems" for "the System" in each place where it occurs, and

(iii) the substitution of "this Act and the Act of 2022" for "this Act",

(b) in subsection (2) —

(i) in paragraph (a), by—

(I) the substitution of "this Act and the Act of 2022" for "this Act", and

(II) the substitution of "the DNA Database System or the DNA (Military Police) Database System, as the case may be," for "the DNA Database System,",

(ii) in paragraph (b), by the substitution of

"this Act and the Act of 2022" for "this Act",

(iii) in paragraph (c), by—

(I) the substitution of "the DNA Database System and the DNA (Military Police) Database System are" for "the DNA Database System is",

(II) the substitution of "those Systems" for "the System", and

(III) the substitution of "this Act or the Act of 2022, as the case may be," for "this Act",

(iv) in paragraph (d), by—

(I) the substitution of "the DNA Database System and the DNA (Military Police) Database System" for "the DNA Database System", and

(II) the substitution of "the Ombudsman Commission, the Military Police Corps" for "the Ombudsman Commission",

and

(v) by the substitution of the following paragraph for paragraph (e):

"(e) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that samples taken under this Act or the Act of 2022 for the purpose of generating DNA profiles for entry in the DNA Database System or the DNA (Military Police) Database

System, as the case may be, are destroyed, and the DNA profiles generated from those samples are removed from the system concerned, in accordance with Part 10 or the Act of 2022, as the case may be,",

(c) in subsection (3) by—

(i) the substitution of "the DNA Database System and the DNA (Military Police) Database System" for "the DNA Database System", and

(ii) the substitution of "the Minister, the Minister for Defence and the Director of FSI" for "the Minister and the Director of FSI",

(d) by the substitution of the following subsection for subsection (4):

"(4) The Committee may, and if so requested by the Minister (in respect of the DNA Database System) or the Minister for Defence (in respect of the DNA (Military Police) Database System) shall, review any matter relating to the management and operation of the DNA Database System or the DNA (Military Police) Database System and shall submit a report in writing of any such review to the Minister (where the report relates to the DNA Database System) or the Minister for Defence (where the report relates to the DNA (Military Police) Database System).",

(e) by the substitution of the following subsection for subsection (5):

"(5) Subject to subsections (6) and (7), a Minister of the Government to whom a report was submitted under subsection (4) shall, as soon as practicable after receiving the report, cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and to be published in such manner as the Minister of the Government concerned considers appropriate.",

(f) by the substitution of the following subsection for subsection (6):

"(6) A Minister of the Government to whom a report was submitted under subsection (4) may, when laying a copy of the report before each House of the Oireachtas or publishing the report, omit any matter from the copy of the report that is so laid or published if he or she is of the opinion that the disclosure of the matter—

(a) would be prejudicial to the security of the DNA Database System, the security of the DNA (Military Police) Database System, the security of the State or the investigation of criminal offences, or

(b) may infringe the constitutional rights of any person.",

and

(g) in subsection (7), by the substitution of "a Minister of the Government" for "the Minister".

Appendix C: Section 66-72 inclusive of the Institutional Burials Act 2022

Request that DNA Database System Oversight Committee perform functions under Act

66. (1) Where the functions of a Director specified in an order under section 7 include carrying out an Identification Programme and the relevant Minister has received a notification under section 46 (7) that the Programme is continuing, the relevant Minister shall, with the prior consent of the Minister for Justice, and after the Minister for Justice has consulted with the DNA Database System Oversight Committee (in this Act referred to as the "Oversight Committee"), direct the Oversight Committee in writing to oversee the management and operation of the Databases for the purposes of maintaining the integrity and security of the Databases and the Oversight Committee shall, for those purposes, satisfy itself that the provisions of this Act in relation to the Databases are being complied with.

(2) Where the Oversight Committee is, pursuant to a direction under subsection (1), overseeing the management and operation of the Databases it shall meet and be known as the Historic Remains Databases Oversight Committee.

(3) Subject to this Chapter (Chapter 7), the Oversight Committee shall be independent in the performance of its functions under this Act.

(4) In performing functions under this Act—

> (a) the chairperson of the Oversight Committee other than a serving judge, and the ordinary members of the Committee other than the Director of FSI and the person nominated for appointment by the Data Protection Commission, shall be paid such remuneration (if any) as the relevant Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine, and
>
> (b) the chairperson and ordinary members of the Oversight Committee shall be paid such allowances for expenses as the relevant Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, from time to time determine.

Functions of Oversight Committee

67. (1) Where directed to do so under section 66 , the Oversight Committee shall oversee the management and operation of the Databases referred to in the direction for the purposes of maintaining the integrity and security of the Databases, and shall, for those purposes, satisfy itself that the provisions of this Act in relation to the Databases are being complied with.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1), the Oversight Committee shall oversee—

(a) the arrangements employed by the Director of FSI in relation to the receipt, handling, transmission and storage of samples taken under this Act for the purpose of generating DNA profiles for entry in the DNA (Historic Remains) Database,

(b) the procedures employed by the Director of FSI in relation to the generation of DNA profiles from the samples taken under this Act,

(c) the quality control and quality assurance of procedures referred to in paragraph (b) to ensure that the procedures comply with international best practice,

(d) the measures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that the Databases are not improperly accessed by any person, that the DNA profiles entered in the DNA (Historic Remains) Database and information entered in the Personal Information (Historic Remains) Database are used only for the purposes permitted by this Act and that the profiles and information are not improperly disclosed to any person,

(e) the means by which the results of searches of the DNA (Historic Remains) Database are reported by the Director of FSI to the Director, and

(f) the practices and procedures employed by the Director of FSI to ensure that, in accordance with the requirements of this Act, samples taken under this Act for the purpose of generating DNA profiles are destroyed and the DNA profiles generated from those samples and related information are deleted.

(3) The Oversight Committee may, in the performance of its functions under this Act, make such recommendations as it considers appropriate in relation to the management and operation of the Databases to the relevant Minister, the Minister for Justice and the Director.

Meetings and Procedures

68. (1) The Oversight Committee shall, while performing functions under this Act, hold such and so many meetings as may be necessary for the performance of those functions and may make such arrangements for the conduct of its meetings and business (including the establishment of subcommittees and fixing of a quorum for meetings) as it considers appropriate.

(2) The Oversight Committee shall regulate its own procedure by rules or otherwise.

(3) At a meeting of the Committee—

(a) the chairperson of the Committee shall, if present, be the chairperson of the meeting, or

(b) if and for so long as the chairperson of the Committee is not present or if that office is vacant, the members of the Committee who are present shall choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.

Administrative support and engagement of consultants or advisers

69. (1) The relevant Minister shall, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, provide the Oversight Committee with such funds, facilities and services (including secretarial services) as the relevant Minister, following consultation with the chairperson of the Committee, considers appropriate for the performance by the Committee of its functions under this Act.

(2) The Oversight Committee may, with the approval of the relevant Minister, engage such consultants or advisers with scientific or technical expertise as the Committee considers necessary for the performance of its functions under this Act.

Cooperation with Oversight Committee

70. (1) The Director of FSI and the other members of the staff of FSI shall cooperate with the Oversight Committee in relation to the performance of its functions under this Act and shall, for that purpose, furnish to the Committee such information as the Committee may request and which, in the opinion of the Committee, is required for the performance of its functions.

(2) The Oversight Committee may, whenever it considers it necessary for the performance of its functions under this Act, request a Director to meet with the Committee or to furnish information to the Committee.

(3) A Director shall comply with a request made to him or her under subsection(2).

Review and report by Oversight Committee

71. (1) Subject to subsection (2), the Oversight Committee may, and if so requested by the relevant Minister where he or she has consulted with the Minister for Justice, shall, review any matter relating to the management and operation of the Databases, prepare a report in writing on the review and, as soon as practicable after the report is prepared, furnish a copy of the report to the relevant Minister, the Minister for Justice and the Director.

(2) A report under subsection (1) shall not contain confidential information (within the meaning of section 30 (5)).

(3) Subject to subsections (4) and (5), the relevant Minister concerned shall, as soon as practicable after receiving a report under subsection (1), cause a copy of the report —

(a) to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas, and

(b) to be published in such manner as the relevant Minister considers appropriate.

(4) The relevant Minister concerned may, when laying the report before each House of the Oireachtas and publishing the report under subsection (2), omit any matter from the report where he or she is of opinion that the disclosure of that matter would be prejudicial to the security of the Databases.

(5) If a matter is, in accordance with subsection (4), omitted from a report laid and published under subsection (3), a statement to that effect shall be attached to the report when it is so laid and published.

Final report of Oversight Committee

72. (1) The Oversight Committee shall prepare a final report on the performance of its functions pursuant to a direction under section 66 (2) within 6 months of the conclusion of the Identification Programme to which the direction relates and shall, as soon as practicable after the report is prepared, furnish a copy of the report to the relevant Minister, the Minister for Justice and the Director.

(2) A final report prepared under s ubsection (1) shall not contain confidential information (within the meaning of section 30 (5)).

(3) The relevant Minister concerned shall, as soon as practicable after receiving a report under subsection (1), cause a copy of it to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and published in such manner as the Minister considers appropriate.