

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE**First defence-based forensic science company awarded ISO 17025 quality standard***2 June 2010, Oxfordshire*

Forensic Access, an independent provider of forensic science services to the Criminal Defence Service, police, industry and private individuals has been accredited to ISO/IEC 17025:2005, by UKAS (the United Kingdom Accreditation Service). Forensic Access is the **first of the smaller providers**, whose primary business has been working for the defence, to be awarded this much sought-after quality standard.

Accreditation to ISO 17025 has been a requirement of forensic science providers contracted by the police for some years now. However, so far, providers contracted by solicitors or barristers, for the Criminal Defence Service, have not been obliged “prove” their systems to the rigorous ISO 17025 standard. The Forensic Science Regulator, Mr Andrew Rennison, is currently developing a quality standards framework that will require **all** individuals and organisations, providing forensic science services to the Courts, to be accredited to ISO 17025. Forensic Access is proud to be well ahead of the requirement.

Mr Roger Robson, Managing Director said *“We have worked hard to meet the stringent requirements of ISO 17025 and are very pleased that the quality of our work has been recognised in this way. This accreditation is a further commitment to our aim of helping to provide ‘**safe and sustainable evidence to the courts**’, and we hope this new badge of quality will give our customers even more confidence in the quality of our services”.*

Kathy Clarke, Forensic Access Quality Manager who has led the development of the company’s quality system and steered it through pre-assessment and assessment, was also delighted with the result. *“Forensic Access is the third forensic science company I have taken through ISO 17025 assessment and I am overjoyed with UKAS accrediting our work. This is the first time I have led the assessment in a defence-based company; I had full confidence in the knowledge, expertise, competence, professionalism and dedication of all the staff, but I am still thrilled with the result.”*

Editors' Notes

Forensic Access Limited

Formed in 1986, Forensic Access is an independent provider of forensic science services to the legal profession and has built a solid reputation for the quality of its services. The company is privately owned and will work for the defence and prosecution, as well as other, larger providers when they need the skills that we have in-house. We have just been accepted as a supplier to the National Policing Improvement Agency's (NPIA's), National Framework procurement initiative. Our independence, quality and skills have been recognised, not only by The Ministry Of Justice and the Legal Services Commission, but by other organisations, with whom we continue to work, for example: Forensic Science Regulator, the Crown Prosecution Service, Criminal Cases Review Commission and the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

ISO/IEC 17025:2005 “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories”

Commonly known as ISO 17205, this is the internationally recognised quality standard for organisations performing tests and/or calibrations and specifies the general requirements for the competence to carry out tests and/or calibrations, including sampling. The Standard has been accepted by the forensic science industry as most appropriate for its work. Over the last few years police contracts have stipulated that forensic science providers should be accredited for ISO 17025 for all of the “tests” that they undertake. Providers working for the defence are not, as yet, required to be accredited. The sole accreditation body in the UK for ISO 17025 is the United Kingdom Accreditation Service, UKAS (www.ukas.com).

The Forensic Science Regulator

Mr Andrew Rennison, Forensic Science Regulator, is developing a quality standards framework that will contain a requirement for all providers of forensic science to the Courts to be accredited to ISO 17025, whether they are contracted by the police or defence, and whether they are an individual or organisation. For more information see:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/forensic-science-regulator>

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