Alicia Quartermain

From: Alicia Quartermain
Sent: Friday, 4 December 2020 6:45 AM
To: Kylie Rika; Emma Caunt; Angelina Keller; Josie Entwistle; Tegan Dwyer; Claire Gallagher; Deborah Nicoletti; Ingrid Moeller; Penelope Taylor
Subject: RE: TAT and lists - another follow-up email

Good morning Team and Happy Friday!

Please see below for the response I received from Cathie. I don't feel as though any of my questions/suggestions were actually addressed, but it is a response nonetheless!

[redacted]

Alicia

Hi Alicia

Thanks for your feedback on this – it's really appreciated.

If staff feel that there are issues between teams, it would be great if they could highlight this to their line manager so that each team can discuss it, and ways to be proactive about the work we undertake. Ultimately, we can't get a profile on the database without the help of all staff members in Forensic DNA Analysis to get it there. If you hear anyone discussing a possible divide or feeling that there's a divide, it would be great if you could encourage them to have a chat with their line manager or team leader about it.

I am working on some things with the QPS and had planned to provide an update to the team when I'd completed that work, but your email has made me rethink that approach. I'm not sure what I'll do yet, but thanks again for your email.

Cheers
Cathie

From: Alicia Quartermain
Sent: Thursday, 3 December 2020 2:15 PM
To: Kylie Rika [redacted]; Emma Caunt [redacted]; Angelina Keller [redacted]; Josie Entwistle [redacted]; Tegan Dwyer [redacted]; Claire Gallagher [redacted]; Deborah Nicoletti [redacted]; Ingrid Moeller [redacted]; Penelope Taylor [redacted]
Subject: RE: TAT and lists - another follow-up email

Hi RT2,

Please see below for the email I have just sent to Cathie. I will let you all know when I hear back from her.
Or not, if it's after about 3pm tomorrow!!

Alicia 😊

Hi Cathie,

I was wondering whether you might agree that it is a good idea to send an email to FDNA clarifying the actual amount of outstanding results, in light of our email discussion around results/lines within results/lists/TATs? I know there have been quite a few conversations happening around staff being concerned after the email you sent out about outstanding results and TATs. It has caused somewhat of a divide between departments as we all try to work out where the bottleneck is and where the bulk of the outstanding work actually sits. Are you able to provide some clarification around this to everyone?

Perhaps you could give the individual figures and note what lists they are on so staff can look at them?

Another thought – given the QPS TAT is based mostly on P3 samples involved in cold links, we could potentially be prioritising P3 samples with NCIDD uploads. I would expect that this would reduce the QPS TAT fairly substantially.

Thank you Cathie.

Kind regards,
Alicia

From: Alicia Quartermain
Sent: Friday, 27 November 2020 7:12 AM
To: Kylie Rika[redacted]>; Emma Caunt[redacted] Angelina Keller [redacted] Josie Entwistle[redacted] Tegan Dwyer [redacted]; Claire Gallagher[redacted]; Deborah Nicoletti [redacted]; Ingrid Moeller[redacted] Penelope Taylor [redacted]
Subject: FW: TAT and lists

Good morning everyone,

Please find below a response from Cathie. Maybe my reply to her email will bring it back to my original question....
So Christmas Eve.....??! 😊

Have a lovely Friday!

Alicia

From: Cathie Allen[redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 26 November 2020 5:39 PM
To: Alicia Quartermain[redacted]
Subject: RE: TAT and lists

Hi Alicia

The QPS measure the Receipt to Cold Link metric as this is where DNA analysis is most useful to them in solving crime. For most major crime cases, they usually have a suspect and DNA analysis results are essentially confirming the scene that they have processed. So we're most useful to them when we're able to solve crimes that they haven't been able to solve in other ways, such as fingerprints, CCTV etc. When we aren't able to rapidly solve these types of crimes, we lose our value to them, as the offender has had the opportunity to commit another crime during that period. So doubling the TAT from 10 days to 24 days means the offender has had so many more opportunities to crime further crimes, and also possibly escalate in crime class as well. So I can understand why that metric is important for them, and also for us.

Moving forward with an MOU with the QPS, it would be our expectation that the TAT would be based on all samples that have been submitted. The QPS may wish to continue monitoring the Receipt to Cold Link metric, given this is a high priority area for them. FSS may also agree that this is a metric we'd like to keep at 10 days (for example) as well, but we're still a way off getting an MOU signed with the QPS.

Thanks for letting me know about the tally counting – I can see now that you would count the 'profile review' code. The FR makes all of this so much easier for tracking your work, and not having to keep a manual count.

Justin and I have had a few discussions regarding the metrics within the FR and how we can make them better. Including ensuring that particular lists don't 'overlap' with the same profiles. Justin has previously requested an enhancement regarding some of the samples on lists, but I've put in another enhancement to try and remove samples from the outstanding that shouldn't be there (some on the list have been reported but are still on the list). Unfortunately, the FR Tender process took over 18 months to complete and this has meant that we've stagnated and haven't had some of the things that we'd like. Good metrics are essential to seeing where the bottlenecks are and for accurate assessment of how much work is there to be done (or how much we've completed) – as Statements can sometimes be underestimated, especially when the QPS forward 17 Statement requests in one day!

I've found the length of the FR Tender process very frustrating (and actually disheartening), as we previously were able to give enhancements to staff every 2 weeks. This was great as we could regularly prioritise the enhancements and each work unit had an opportunity to get something new (SSLU, FPP, For Chem and For DNA Analysis). The process taking so long has meant that we're all unhappy, as we can't move forward with streamlining processes, which helps both us and the QPS. I really want the batch functionality for Forensic Chemistry, as they don't have that and it would be a huge benefit to them. They would be able to track consumables and equipment use, have instrument data available to them in the FR for when they are interpreting and reviewing drugs found (data is manually added to each sample, rather than batch of samples) and for keeping an eye on standards that they use and when they may need to re-run them. They don't have very many metrics in the FR for them (they have less than FDA). So getting some of that for them to track bottlenecks would be great as well.

Thanks for your email, I appreciate that you've thought about this and sought some information on this to help clarify it for you. Please let me know if there's anything else I can help with.

Cheers
Cathie

Cathie Allen
Managing Scientist

Social Chair, Organising Committee for 25th International Symposium of the
Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society (ANZFSS), Brisbane, 11 – 15 Sept 2022

Police Services Stream, Forensic & Scientific Services
Health Support Queensland, Queensland Health

[redacted]

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From: Alicia Quartermain [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, 26 November 2020 3:20 PM
To: Cathie Allen [redacted]
Subject: TAT and lists

Hi Cathie,

Thanks again for your email.

The fact that QPS as basing their 'doubled' TAT on just samples that have a cold link reported back is a bit of a problem from my perspective, and somewhat of a surprise. Given there are so many samples that are either 'No DNA detected', 'DNA insufficient for further processing' or 'Single source matching to a reference sample', it seems that they are using a very small data set to set a standard TAT for us. Why wouldn't they use all available data, do you know? I wonder why they just choose such a small sample set to gauge TAT?

Also, it's my understanding that the worklist called 'Awaiting Review' contains all of the samples that already occupy the 'Pending Review – result' list. They are duplicates of one another and each currently sits at 929. This list appears to show all of the 'result lines' that need to be reviewed, rather than the number of outstanding results. For example, on page one of this list, sample [redacted] has 7 outstanding 'lines' to be reviewed, however they all form part of the one 'result'.

The way the reporters count tallies is based on how many 'Profile review' codes you order or review. One ordered counts as 1 x tally for PDA, one reviewed counts as 1 x tally for review. There may be (as in the example above) 7 result lines that are checked by the reviewer, but we only count this as one tally because only one 'Profile review' code is actually reviewed. These tallies are recorded in the FR, which is where my line manager views how many samples I have PDA'd and how many samples I have reviewed for the week. We don't manually keep track of these anymore.

As you mention, the FR enhancements that have been applied for will be of great benefit.

Kind regards,

Alicia

Hi Alicia

Thanks for your email.

The KPI that the QPS are measuring is Receipt of the Item to Cold Link received and the advice they gave was that this had almost doubled. So this metric doesn't include everything – just the ones that have Cold Links on them.

There are some stats that we're able to access in the FR that help to show where the samples are sitting. Below is the 'Current QHSS Auslab Case Status @ 20/11/2020' and this shows as at today, there are 3781 samples that have been started but not finalised. The Table has the old name against it but still captures current data that's outstanding. There could be some 'samples' on that list that we've finalised but the FR doesn't recognise that as a final result line, however I don't anticipate this to be in the hundreds, more likely to be a handful. We have put forward an enhancement to have those result lines recognised as final so that they won't be counted. I provided the list of the outstanding samples to Kylie, but I'm not sure what's become of that list (ie who's working on it etc).

Current QHSS Auslab Case Status @ 20/11/2020

Status	Crime Type	Cases	Sar
RECEIVED	MAJOR	3	3
STARTED	MAJOR	1466	31!
STARTED	VOLUME	509	63(

Also below is the Worklist Summary and it shows that there's 47 items that are with ER, 70 Refs with OO's, 243 samples progressing through Analytical, 429 samples at PDA and 1,528 samples that require a result (of some description). Also on the worklist called 'Awaiting Review' – there's 844 samples that are awaiting a result (of some description, excludes ER and Analytical results). These 3 places add up to 3,247 samples. Which is close to what's outstanding (although there's about 500 unaccounted for and I'm not sure where they are, I haven't had the time to trawl through everything to find that out I'm afraid).

Worklist Summary

Technique	P1	P2	P3	Total	KPI
Received	0	11	12	23	
Examination	0	7	1	8	
Examination (SAIK)	0	5	1	6	
Supernatant Testing	0	8	2	10	
Direct STR Amp FTA	0	0	70	70	
DNA Extraction	0	3	40	43	
DNA Extraction (Pre-Lysis)	0	48	49	97	
DNA Extraction (Diff Lysis)	0	8	0	8	
DNA Quantification	0	38	9	47	
Post-extraction	0	5	3	8	
STR Amplification	0	17	20	37	
STRMix	0	2	0	2	
Capillary Electrophoresis	0	0	1	1	
Profile Data Analysis (REF)	0	0	1	1	
Profile Data Analysis (CW)	1	348	80	429	
NCIDD	0	1	54	55	
On Hold	0	15	15	30	
	1	**516**	**358**	**875**	

Pending Review

Process	P1	P
In-tube check	0	
Item Exam	0	1
Presumptive	0	
Microscopic	0	3
Result	1	10
Result - NWQPS	0	
Profile Review	1	2
NCIDD	0	5
	2	**13**

Profile Data Analysis

Week	40	41	42	43
Profiles (CW)	597	529	722	555
Interpreted	370	329	485	649
Reviewed	465	366	530	768

The KPIs that reporters put forward to their line managers are the number of lines of results that they've completed (aren't they? They used to be so I could be wrong on this bit). So the number of lines being reported may have increased, but that doesn't necessarily correlate to the number of items being reported. We could issue 4 lines for one item (as it's complex etc). As we're doing 4 person mixtures now, the increase in number of lines reported could be due to that (or other factors).

The metrics that are captured have been set up in the FR so the QPS get their data directly from the FR and as far as I'm aware, they don't have to manually get the numbers. So the figures for the Receipt to Cold Link are mostly likely to be accurate. This is a metric that they have set up to calculate on a regular basis.

We've put in a number of enhancements regarding statistics for our teams (both Forensic DNA Analysis and Forensic Chemistry). At the moment, we haven't been able to get these enhancements done, but we're hoping that once the meetings regarding the operation of the contract for the FR have been done, we'll be able to prioritise those enhancements and move forward with this. We may look at team specific metrics or process specific metrics so that we can see where the bottlenecks are.

For me, I'm really looking forward to getting enhancements that helps both my teams to streamline their processes. I know that staff are working hard, but we don't have visibility of where we might need to put more or less effort. I've had FR enhancements on my monthly report to John Doherty since he started with FSS, so I'm pretty sure he knows how important it is to me and my teams.

Hope you have a great weekend too.

Cheers
Cathie

Cathie Allen
Managing Scientist

Social Chair, Organising Committee for 25th International Symposium of the
Australian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society (ANZFSS), Brisbane, 11 – 15 Sept 2022

Police Services Stream, Forensic & Scientific Services
Health Support Queensland, Queensland Health

[redacted]

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Alicia Quartermain BHSc MSc (forensic science)
Scientist – Forensic Reporting and Intelligence Team

Forensic DNA Analysis | Police Services Stream | Forensic & Scientific Services
Health Support Queensland, Queensland Health

[redacted]

[redacted]

Please note that I may be working from a different location during the COVID-19 pandemic. The best contact method is via email.

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