

THE FORENSIC VOICE CENTRE

FORENSIC VOICE CENTRE - FSR CODES COMPLIANCE: INFORMATION & MITIGATIONS

Work undertaken by the Forensic Voice Centre is generally covered by the following types of Forensic Science Activity or 'FSAs' as defined by the UK's Statutory Forensic Science Regulator in their Code of Practice ('the Code') version 2 which came into effect on 2 October 2025:

FSAs - DIG 400 - AUDIO ACQUISITION, CONVERSION & PROCESSING

The following technical audio operations are recognised Forensic Science Activities under the Code (v2; October 2025):

Processing of digital audio: *audio enhancement, application of filters, voice disguise, speed and/or level control.*

From 2 October 2025, the Code applies to audio processing but any requirement for ISO accreditation does not.

- a. Acquisition of analogue or digital audio from a source item.
- b. Digital audio file format conversion.
- c. Editing and redaction.

These sub-activities are subject to the Code and require accreditation when applied in isolation. When these processes are carried out for the purposes of DIG-401 - Speech and Audio Analysis activities, they may be performed entirely under FSA - DIG-401 - i.e. without accreditation and compliance with the Code - provided certain conditions are met: 1) compliance with Part A of the Code, and 2) notification to the Regulator that an organisation intends to carry out DIG-400 activities as part of DIG-401 activities. These conditions are met by the Forensic Voice Centre.

FSAs - DIG 401 - SPEECH AND AUDIO ANALYSIS

The following types of **speech and audio analysis** are recognised Forensic Science Activities under the Code (v2; October 2025):

Speaker Comparison (Forensic Voice Comparison): *comparison of recorded voices to assist the court in deciding whether they are the same or different speakers.*

Questioned Content Analysis (Expert Transcription): *both analysis of questioned speech and specialist forensic transcription for the purposes of providing expert evidence*

Speech and audio analysis activities are not subject to the Code of Practice (v2; 2025) published by the UK's statutory Forensic Science Regulator - therefore, accreditation to ISO 17025 or FSR standards is not a requirement for these types of analysis.

Although the Code (v2; October 2025) does not apply to these activities, the Forensic Voice Centre operates with a Quality Management System with components in place that meet many of the requirements of the Code of Practice and ISO17025 (further information overleaf). All experts at the Forensic Voice Centre act in accordance with the code of practice or conduct for experts of their discipline, namely the Code of Practice of the International Association for Forensic Phonetics and Acoustics (IAFPA), and with the Code of Conduct published by the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) in all aspects that relate to their personal conduct.

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Further information / mitigations

The table below sets out further compliance information for the forensic science activities (FSAs) undertaken, and the mitigations in place in the Forensic Voice Centre (FVC) quality management system:

Forensic Science Activities	FSA - DIG 400 - Audio Acquisition, Conversion & Processing FSA - DIG 401 - Speech & Audio Analysis
Compliance required for FSA	Compliance with FSR Code/ISO17025 accreditation is not required for these FSAs
Accredited ISO 17025 and/or accreditation to the Code?	Forensic Voice Centre [FVC] is not accredited against ISO 17025 or FSR Codes (the Code does not apply)
Mandatory information fields	[FSR Statutory Code v2 §31.3.3 - Codes sections labelled]
22. Competence of the practitioners involved in work	Yes - staff are qualified, experienced, have structured training and are assessed as competent; recorded in formalised training record
23. The work is undertaken in a suitable environment	Yes - environment assessed for suitable working conditions with low or no noise contamination
24. Method employed documented	Yes - each method is operated according to a standard operating procedure, with case management, checking and reporting SOPs
24. Method employed validated	Yes - DIG-400: audio file format conversion is validated; & No - method validation for other FSAs is in progress/planning
28. Equipment / software used tested / is fit for purpose	Yes - high-quality, closed-back studio headphones and specialist sound analysis software used, asset-managed and tested
Further information fields	[FSR Statutory Code v2 sections labelled]
6. 11. SAI / Management requirements	Yes - FVC operates with an SAI and a formal QMS compliant with FSR Codes and ISO 17025 and good practice in our field
7. 8. Quality issues	Yes - FVC operates with formal, recorded procedure when risks, improvements, non-conformances are discovered
8.2. Feedback / Complaints	Yes - FVC operates with procedures for complaints & investigations
12. Business Continuity	Yes - FVC operates with a formal BCDR procedure in place
13. Independence/Impartiality 34.1.2b Standards of conduct	Yes - Staff aware and impartiality is key in FVC Code of Conduct. FVC operates with a bias mitigation/information management policy
14. Confidentiality	Yes - FVC has confidentiality requirements in QMS and all Ts & Cs
15. Document control 19. Control of records	Yes - FVC has defined control, storage, and retention of key QMS documents and casework records for req. MOPI retention periods
20. Checking & review	Yes - FVC operates according to formal procedure and all work is checked by another competent practitioner
20.5. Internal audits	Yes - FVC operates with audit procedure and uses internal and external audits
21. Personnel requirements 22. Competence	Yes - FVC staff have security checks, follow Code of Conduct, and have been through formalised competence training/assessment
26. Control of Data	Yes - FVC operates with IT security policy; all IT systems are controlled and in scope of <i>Cyber Essentials</i> certification
29. Handling of items/exhibits	Yes - FVC operates mainly digital-only, with item-handling policy
30. Assuring the quality of results	Yes - FVC engage in PTs & ILCs; these have been completed for some FSAs and for others they are in progress/planning stages
31. Reporting results	Yes - FVC reports/statements are designed to meet these requirements and those in CrimPR, and declare compliance
31.4. Evaluative opinions	Yes - FVC reports on evaluative opinions in framework recommended in FSR guidance and good practice in our field
33. Retention, recording, revelation & disclosure	Yes - FVC complies with legal obligations concerning recording, disclosure and retention of evidence according to QMS policy