

Dr Jonathan Whitaker BSc PhD MCSFS

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PERSONAL PROFILE

- A dedicated, highly experienced and respected leading DNA expert supporting prosecution and defence partners in the Criminal Justice System both in the UK and overseas.
- Maintains the highest standard of personal integrity always acting in the best interests of justice.
- Demonstrates a logical and analytical approach to solving complex problems drawing on all available tools, expertise and novel innovation whilst accommodating the needs of quality and commercial stakeholders.
- A proven ability to meet demanding deadlines whilst maintaining the highest standards of quality.
- Articulate and proactive, combines a professional and confident approach with excellent interpersonal skills to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Committed to working collaboratively with practitioners in the field of research and development.
- Endeavours to increase the scope and efficiency of forensic service provision to meet criminal justice needs and to improve standards and quality through the use of technological advances.

EDUCATION

- BSc (Hons) in Genetics, University of Edinburgh 1982-1985.
- Doctor of Philosophy (Molecular Genetics), University of Edinburgh 1985 – 1989.

CAREER HISTORY

- 2015 Assessed and registered as a forensic expert with the Netherlands Board of Forensic Practitioners (NRGD).
- 2012 – date. Director of Jonathan Whitaker - Principal Forensics Ltd <http://www.dnaexpertopinion.com> and co-director of Principal Forensic Services Ltd: <http://www.principalforensicservices.com/jonathan-whitaker-dna-expert/>
 - Specialist in the field of DNA profile analysis, interpretation and evaluation: Addressing the source of the DNA profile through statistical evaluation and body fluid attribution. Considering how and when the DNA was deposited by addressing issues of DNA transfer and persistence within the context of the case circumstances.
 - Provides independent interpretation of DNA profiling results to ensure that any conclusions reached and presented to the Court and other parties are robust, reliable, fair, balanced and stand up to expert scrutiny.
 - DNA profiling consultant, expert witness, quality advisor, trainer, auditor, proficiency assessor.
- 2010 - 2012 Forensic Science Service - Principal Scientist for DNA Interpretation
- 1989 - 2010 Forensic Science Service:
 - Project manager of low template DNA project at the FSS Research and Development laboratory and lead DNA reporting officer within this environment (Specialist Casework Unit).
 - FSS Senior Reporting Officer (DNA/body fluids) and DNA Lead.
 - FSS Scientific Officer, body fluids, DNA analysis and court reporting roles.

EXPERIENCE

- Possesses a wealth of experience in general forensic principles. Taken the lead in the research, development, validation and reporting of all of the STR DNA profiling techniques historically used in the UK (Quad, DQ α , SGM, SGM+ / LCN, Y STR) and the implementation of these systems for use in forensic casework and the National DNA Intelligence Databases in England / Wales and New Zealand.
- Considerable involvement in sensitive, challenging and high profile cases both in the UK and overseas; including management of associated media interest.
- Wide experience in the full range of case categories and evidence types; applying best practice testing strategies to address case specific issues and maximise successful outcomes.
- Clear and concise report writing with supporting data and any limitations clearly defined.
- Extensive casework portfolio involving the interpretation of standard sensitivity and low template DNA profiles as well as complex mixed DNA profiles, Y STR profiles and results from new generation DNA multiplexes.
- Experienced in the application of Case Assessment and Interpretation (CAI) methodology.
- Casework review: strategy setting, sample selection, assessment of outcomes versus expectations, application of relevant technology to maximise success. Significant contribution to police historic case review initiatives, defence review and second opinion / pre-trial review.
- Presented DNA profiling evidence as an expert witness for the Prosecution and the Defence in the UK in the Royal Courts of Justice (Court of Appeal), Coroners Court, Crown and Magistrates Courts and Courts of Law overseas (Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Hong Kong, USA).
- Widely published on the subject of DNA profiling interpretation and provided training to other scientists and criminal justice partners in this area (UK and overseas).
- Provided consultancy overseas (New Zealand, Kuwait), has been part of collaborative projects with other law enforcement agencies (FBI – WACO siege, NIST) and provided specialist training to Police, Forensic Service Providers and other Criminal Justice Agencies to improve the quality and efficiency of forensic service provision (UK and overseas).
- Instigated many improvements adapted into DNA methodology. Part of the team which was widely credited for the concept and first use of Familial Searching to identify potential relatives of an offender from the DNA profiles held on the National DNA database.
- Responsibility for scientific governance, quality standards and competencies within the field of DNA interpretation (especially low template (LCN) DNA issues). Supported and mentored colleagues in all aspects of DNA casework. Instrumental in defining the parameters for the application of DNA profiling tests to forensic casework, championed the new techniques into the criminal justice arena and been accountable to the criminal justice system in respect of validation and interpretation issues.
- Assisted in the development of competences and standards for FSS practitioners in the area of DNA profiling; assessment of individuals against these criteria.
- Audit and troubleshooting of processes to assess compliance against recognised ISO17025 standards including quality failure investigation and implementation of corrective actions
- Represented the FSS on the UK Forensic Science Regulators DNA Advisory group (3 years) and at international meetings of European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) and the European DNA Profiling Group (EDNAP) and was a registered practitioner with the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners (CRFP) until it was disbanded.

RELEVANT RECENT ACTIVITY

- Trainer as part of team delivering worldwide training on the use of STRmix™ (probabilistic genotyping evaluation method).

- DNA assessor for the Netherlands Register for Court Experts (NRGD). Role involves independently reviewing submissions from applicants against defined standards and recommending for acceptance. Additionally, providing advice to NRGD Policy Officers and NRGD Board regarding future development of quality and competence standards.
- Assessor for the Pre-Employment Assessment of Competence (PEAC) developed by the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences; involves assessment of practical laboratory skills and behaviours of potential forensic employees.
- Commissioned, along with other Principal Forensic Services (PFS) colleagues, to help define UK standards for the Home Office Forensic Science Regulator's "Codes of Practice and Conduct". In particular have contributed to the development of standards relating to DNA laboratory anti-contamination measures and preventing cognitive bias in DNA interpretation.
- Delivering a programme of work, on behalf of the Forensic Science Regulator, to establish current status and a means of monitoring future performance of the analysis of DNA mixtures across forensic service providers. Initiated collaboration with the National Institute for Standards & Technology (NIST) in the US to enhance delivery of this work and promote international cooperation in the development of standards.
- Provision of low template DNA profile training course to a leading UK forensic provider – development of training material and course delivery with assessment of candidates
- Provision of DNA related awareness workshops to law practitioners, National Crime Agency and Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences.
- Auditor of DNA profiling laboratory, Kuwait, against ISO17025 standards (2014).
- April 2012 to date. Instruction by stakeholders within the Criminal Justice system to perform independent casework interpretation and review for court purposes.

AWARDS

- March 2012: Commendation from West Yorkshire Police for professionalism and dedication in contributing to successful outcomes in high profile and complex investigations.
- Received a financial award in August 2011 as part of the FSS UK "Top Talent" retention scheme. The award recognised behavioural leadership and operational achievements between 2008 and 2011.
- Awarded many police and judges commendations for excellence in working on specific criminal cases.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Professional Associate of the UK Government's College of Policing.
- Professional Member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (MCSFS).