

DNA Identification



**Chief Constable Peter Neyroud
CEO, National Policing Improvement Agency**

DNA Identification



**Should solving crime by DNA
identification take precedence over an
individual's right to refuse to allow his
or her DNA fingerprint to be on a
national database?**

What is held on the DNA Database?



- Samples, usually a mouth swab, are processed to produce a code number, called a profile, which represents some details of the DNA and is held on the database.
- A further two types of profile are stored on the Database:
 - crime scene profiles
 - profiles taken from volunteers.
- There are 4.2 million people on the National DNA Database from all UK forces

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The purpose of the DNA Database



- To match DNA samples taken from individuals with samples taken from a crime scene;
and
- To match samples taken from different crime scenes.

A match simply provides an indication that someone was present at a crime scene and there can be an innocent reason for this.

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The Law

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act

- DNA samples can be taken by the police from anyone arrested and detained in police custody in connection with a recordable offence
- DNA samples and profiles can only be used for the purposes laid down in PACE:
 - assisting the police with the prevention and detection of crime
 - the investigation of any offence
 - the conduct of a prosecution
 - to assist with the identification of a deceased individual.

They cannot be used in e.g. civil paternity litigation, or for investigation of health issues.

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DNA Matching

- Police are now being provided with **almost 3,500 matches a month** – there were 41,717 crimes with DNA matches in 2006/07
- The number of matches **more than doubled** between 1998/99 and 2006/07 and there were over **330,000** crime scene to person matches in this period

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DNA & Crime Detection



- We also collect information on the number of detections – i.e. matches where the crime is ‘cleared up’ by the police.
- There were **20,000** detections in 2006/07 plus a **further 21,000** indirect detections, that is crimes detected as a result of further investigation linked to the original offence
- So there were **more than 41,000** direct and indirect detections in 2006/07 which included:
 - **452 homicides**
 - **644 rapes**
 - **222 other sex offences**
 - **1,872 other violent crime** and
 - **over 8,500 domestic burglary offences.**

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Benefits of DNA



- The benefits of the NDNAD lie not only in detecting the guilty but in **eliminating the innocent** from inquiries,
- Focuses the direction of inquiries, resulting in **savings in police time** and in **building public confidence** that elusive offenders may be detected and brought to justice
- It is interesting to compare these figures with the results achieved using fingerprints:
 - 41,000 detections and indirect detections achieved with DNA
 - 53,687 detections and indirect detections achieved with fingerprint matches (in the previous year).

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The Ethical Debate

- DNA analysis is an incredibly powerful investigative tool.
- The public seem to support its use to convict those who commit the most serious crimes...
- ... but at the same time the public fear the implications of so much genetic information being stored & used by the police.

Maintaining Public Confidence

- Transparency
- Integrity
- Effectiveness
- Redress

Transparency



- Governance by Board representing ACPO, Association of Police Authorities, Home Office and NPIA
- Published Annual Report
- Over 200 Parliamentary Questions answered around all aspects of the DNAD
- Independent Ethics Committee advising Ministers and Board
- DNAD governed by Law (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) and published guidelines on retention

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Integrity



- Management of the Database by NPIA Custodian accredited by UKAS
 - routine and random inspection of the the quality of DNA labs
- Data Quality and Integrity team and data entry safeguards designed to ensure that DNA data on the system is of high quality

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Effectiveness



- NPJA and ACPO gather regular data on DNA hits and resultant detections
- DNAD critical to serious crime detections
- DNAD playing central role in cold case reviews

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Redress



- Retention guidelines set published rules for retention
- NPJA is producing a new 'Bio-information – your rights' card which will accompany every swab kit and provide every arrestee or volunteer with clear description of their rights, police powers and their options for redress

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Conclusions

- UK has been in the lead on the use of DNA and fingerprints in crime detection
- the expansion of the DNAD has led to over 400,000 detections, many of them in serious crime cases that have put dangerous people in prison
- The Government has moved to strengthen regulation in this area with the creation of the Forensic Regulator
- The Government is committed to ensuring that DNA is used to the maximum benefit to protect the public, detect crime and bring offenders to justice.