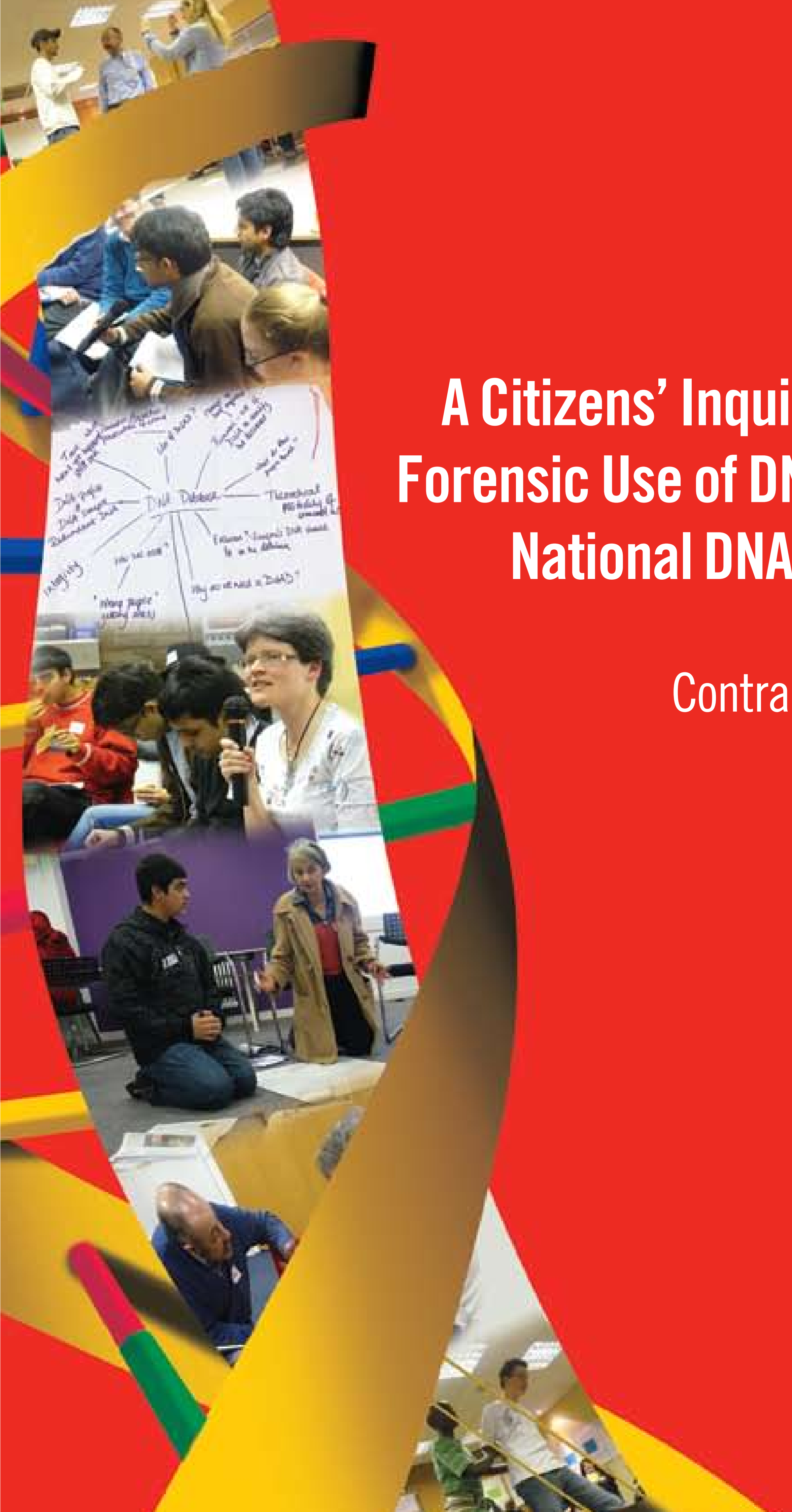

A Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database

Contractor's Report

July 2008

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A report by Vis-à-Vis RC Ltd, commissioned by the HGC Working Group to facilitate the Inquiry

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Introduction

Context of the Inquiry

One of the Human Genetic Commission's (HGC) key roles is to promote debate and engage with the public on genetics issues. The Commission has been actively interested in citizens' perceptions of the forensic use of DNA and the National DNA Database since its inception in 2000. Sir John Sulston, the HGC's acting chair, has said:

'The police in England and Wales have powers to take a DNA sample from anyone arrested or detained on suspicion of a wide variety of offences, from serious crimes like murder and rape to begging or poaching. These powers to take DNA without consent are much stronger than in any other country and it has been suggested that they might be extended even further, to include offences such as speeding and dropping litter. We want to hear the public's views on whether storing the DNA profiles of victims and suspects who are not charged or are subsequently acquitted is justified by the need to fight crime.'

There is an increasing prevalence of DNA and related technologies in everyday public life, whether in the service of crime detection, familial identification or security measures. Despite this, the public have had very little opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what this prevalence means, to air their thoughts, opinions and concerns. The Citizens' Inquiry responds to the interest of the HGC and the needs of the wider public by making space for just such a dialogue.

With this impetus in mind Vis-à-Vis RC Ltd (VaV) was commissioned to design, develop and deliver the Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database.

The aim of this Inquiry has been to 'Provide a space in which an inclusive group of UK citizens – having considered key social and ethical issues involved – can effectively communicate their informed views on the current and future use of DNA for forensic purposes to policy-makers' (HGC tender specification).

In commissioning this Inquiry, the HGC set out an unrestricted list of issues and questions it wished to be covered:

1. How and from whom, if anyone, should DNA be taken for the National DNA Database?
2. How long should samples be kept and information held on the database (including views on the different approaches in Scotland compared to England and Wales)?
3. Who should have access to information contained on the database and for what reasons?
4. How should issues of consent be dealt with?

5. Views about the involvement of the private sector.
6. Views about how the database should be controlled and governed.
7. Views about how the governing bodies should relate to the media and the wider public.
8. How should we assess value for money regarding the National DNA Database and the possibility of alternatives?
9. What are the perceived risks and benefits of the National DNA Database?

The Inquiry model: aims and design

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Inquiry, VaV designed and delivered a bespoke participatory process, drawing mainly upon the strengths of three different but complementary methodological approaches:

- the community jury
- agenda-setting dialogue
- public commissions.

The participatory strengths of these techniques were amalgamated into the project design.

Using a community-jury-style template, the Inquiry enabled a comprehensive and informed debate through a deliberative but inquisitory process. The process made space for panellists to hear from 12 experts representing multiple dimensions of the debate, as well as engaging in regional visits to an inner-city community and the Scottish Parliament.

From the outset the process was fluid and dynamic, enabling panellists to set the course and content of the Inquiry through a series of ongoing agenda-setting dialogues.

By establishing the Inquiry as the public panel engaging with the issues and concerns relating to the forensic use of DNA and the National DNA Database, the process created a sense of ownership and legitimacy among panellists.

Finally, the completely equal engagement of Scottish and English panels through the use of videoconferencing provided an innovative and truly inclusive approach to such a participatory process.

Contractor's report

This report is a means by which the Citizens' Inquiry, from the mechanics and logistics of the process to the deliberation and dialogue that took place, can be laid out, reviewed and evaluated. It is divided into three parts, entitled 'Process report', 'Analysis report' and 'Reflections on the Inquiry process'.

These distinct sections are designed to be read individually as reports in their own right or to be embedded within this wider document, forming the contractor's final report into the Citizens' Inquiry on the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database.

Process report

The process report provides a detailed breakdown of the methodology, challenges and outcomes of each stage of the Inquiry, and is structured in accordance with the first four stages of the Inquiry process:

Stage 1 – Planning, selection and recruitment
Stage 2 – Inquiry panel sessions
Stage 3 – Regional visits
Stage 4 – Residentials and reports.

Each of these stages is further divided into subcategories that provide a more detailed overview of the process. Stage 1 includes planning, preparation and promotion of the project; selection and recruitment of the advisory panel; and selection and recruitment of the Inquiry Panel (IP). Stage 2 summarises each Inquiry session to include the activities undertaken, the experts who attended and the scope of discussions that took place every week. Stage 3 details the planning and process of facilitating external visits for the IP and the core aims and outcomes of these visits. Stage 4 captures the breadth and depth of the two residential weekends and reflects the learning, the expertise and the journey of the IP in generating recommendations for the *Citizens' Report*.

Analysis report

The analysis report illustrates the depth, context and influences that enabled the IP to generate its recommendations. The *Citizens' Report* captured the views and opinions of IP members and offered a glimpse of their journey through the Citizens' Inquiry process. The analysis report adds more substantive detail to that journey and the recommendations it yielded.

From initial discussions around the meaning of DNA to the generation of broader themes around the National DNA Database, this section draws on a wealth of material accumulated throughout the Inquiry, as well as audio-visual records, to provide an insightful backdrop to the Inquiry process and its findings.

Reflections on the Inquiry process

This four-part section analyses the Inquiry with regard to facilitation and delivery, citizen participation and expert involvement.

The first part critiques VaV's performance in its handling and delivery of the process against the backdrop of the tender specifications outlined by the HGC and the aims and objectives put forward by the VaV tender submission.

The second part measures VaV's performance with regard to citizen engagement, development and outputs, drawing on direct feedback from panellists themselves alongside the aims and objectives outlined at the outset of the project. The various stages of the Inquiry presented their own unique challenges and successes from which valuable lessons can be discerned.

The third part draws on feedback from external experts. The experts played a crucial role in informing and shaping the Inquiry discussions and deliberations that ultimately gave rise to panel recommendations.

The final part highlights the success of the Citizens' Inquiry while drawing together the strengths and weaknesses of the process, as a means of summarising the lessons learnt.

Process Report

Introduction

This report provides a detailed breakdown of the Inquiry process from the perspective of the facilitation team. It charts the development of the Inquiry and details how the facilitation team met with the multiple aims, challenges and outcomes of the Citizens' Inquiry, drawing on a range of expertise and resources that ensured the success of the Inquiry process as a whole. A working group made up of representatives from each of the commissioning bodies was on hand throughout the course of the Inquiry to provide feedback and guidance, and to monitor progress.

The Citizens' Inquiry saw the delivery of a bespoke participatory model. The entire process was delivered over four-and-a-half months. A total of 30 citizens of diverse backgrounds came together initially to form two panels, based in Birmingham and Glasgow; collectively these were known as the Inquiry Panel. Inquiry sessions began in the last week of January and culminated with regional visits to an inner-city community and the Scottish Parliament.

Designed to facilitate deliberative dialogue between citizens and external experts, five Inquiry sessions were conducted simultaneously in Birmingham and Glasgow over five consecutive weeks. Inquiry sessions were attended by external experts who were linked to or had direct experience of the forensic use of DNA and/or the National DNA Database. Space was made for panellists to question external experts and engage them in detailed dialogue.

Two residential weekends brought the panels in Birmingham and Glasgow together to engage with one another's learning, experiences and perspectives, and to generate, explore and refine their findings and conclusions.

The process was facilitated throughout by Vis-à-Vis (VaV). The VaV team consisted of:

- Dr Bano Murtuja
- Komal Adris
- Peter Bryant
- Simon Donnelly
- Zubeda Limbada
- Junaid Ahmed
- Dr Sameera Ahmed

The Citizens' Inquiry was conducted in four stages. This report provides a detailed account of the process in the same four stages.

Stage 1 – Planning, selection and recruitment
Stage 2 – Inquiry panel sessions
Stage 3 – Regional visits
Stage 4 – Residentials and reports.

Stage 1 – Planning, selection and recruitment

Advisory panel selection and recruitment

One of the first stages of the Inquiry process was to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders and individuals who would act as an Advisory Panel (AP). The aims of the AP were threefold:

- to ensure that the selection and recruitment process of the Inquiry panel was fair and transparent;
- to guide and advise facilitators on the best experts, representing as many dimensions of the debate as possible; and
- to advise and, wherever possible, take forward the recommendations of the Inquiry panel.

AP members were drawn from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. They brought a range of perspectives and expertise to the Inquiry; some had a detailed understanding of the National DNA Database and others a more nuanced understanding of its direct impact at a local grass-roots level, creating a unique blend of interests and expertise.

They included:

- Aamer Anwar – Solicitor
- John Bennett – Youth Parliament Support worker
- Phil Booth – NO2ID
- Adeel Ibrahim – Youth Community Support Agency
- Baroness Helena Kennedy – Barrister
- Shahreen Khanum – Muslim Public Affairs Committee
- John McManus – Miscarriages of Justice
- Dawn Rimmer – PhD Student
- Roger Robson – Forensic Access
- Anita Shelton – Community activist
- Inspector Karpaul Singh – West Midlands Police; Chair of Black and Asian Police Association
- Liz Whitehouse – SAFE Project (ANAWIM)
- Sabah Zubair – Youth Worker

Recognising the diversity of the AP, a literature review was drafted by VaV to provide an overview of the National DNA Database for those members who needed it.

The AP met three times in total, in London, Birmingham and Glasgow. A detailed timeline of the Inquiry can be found in Appendix 1.

Each meeting was called with a specific aim in mind. The first meeting was integral to the selection of the Inquiry Panel. AP members selected panellists from among all those who had applied and in accordance to the categories of panellists specified. These categories, of age, gender, ethnicity and impairment, were designed to ensure that the panel was as inclusive and as diverse as possible. This meeting was also an opportunity for the AP members to meet one another and to begin generating a list of the external experts who could be called into the Inquiry sessions and/or the themes that could be addressed.

The second meeting was scheduled midway through the Inquiry; this enabled comprehensive feedback on the Inquiry's progress from the Inquiry sessions that had already taken place, while still allowing leeway for AP suggestions of additional experts or issues to be addressed. This meeting, held in Birmingham, took place the day after an Inquiry session where panellists had asked to speak to a police officer; members of the AP were crucial in securing this expert. This meeting gave the AP members an opportunity to advise VaV of future strategies and media engagement. All such advice was relayed to the Inquiry Panel with whom the final decision rested.

The third and final meeting of the AP took place before the Glasgow residential, and was an opportunity for the AP to comment on the first draft of the *Citizens' Report*. Although the AP's remit did not extend to the substantive content of the report, AP members discussed how the content should be refined, what gaps (if any) existed, how the report should be structured and what changes would give it the best chance of having an impact. This AP meeting was crucial in the final development of the report.

Inquiry Panel selection and recruitment

Composition of the panel

In a participatory process of this kind it is important to engage with as diverse a population as the process will allow. With no restrictions on who should be included, the Citizens' Inquiry was open to individuals from all UK communities. Given the diversity of the UK it would be impossible to suggest that any panel – however large – could be representative. As such, VaV sought to ensure that the panel was as inclusive as possible while providing the necessary support to voices that can often be considered marginalised.

Specific targets were outlined to define the composition of the Inquiry panel:

- 50% male and 50% female;
- 50% of black and minority ethnic (BME) heritage;
- at least 25% with a declared impairment;
- at least 25% under the age of 20 (minimum age 14); and
- at least 25% over the age of 50 (no maximum age).

The 50% BME composition was deliberately disproportionate to the population, but reflected the need to support voices that may feel marginalised precisely because of their 'minority' status and to provide a more equal footing. The high percentage also allowed for the inclusion of as much of the diversity offered by UK BME populations as possible.

Identifying locations

The location of Inquiry panels was decided in accordance with a number of factors, including accessibility, the facilities available, socio-economic and ethnicity-based demographics and geography.

The inclusion of Scotland within the project specification presented an interesting challenge to ensure meaningful rather than tokenistic engagement. The use of videoconferencing at each of the Inquiry sessions allowed genuine engagement from panels in both England and Scotland. The equal involvement of both panels enabled the Inquiry to take on a genuinely national focus, notwithstanding the facilitation challenges that videoconferencing presents.

The English panel was located in Birmingham and the Scottish one in Glasgow because of their locations in England and Scotland respectively; this proved critically useful for the wider participation of audience members from across the UK. Additionally, both cities have diverse and vibrant socio-economic and ethnicity demographics. In terms of facilities and accessibility, Birmingham and Glasgow were most suited to the needs and requirements of the Inquiry, particularly in relation to logistics and resource costs.

On location, the greatest challenge was identifying suitable and accessible venues that could host videoconferencing and accommodate the dates and numbers of people. Birmingham's venue, the Studio, is in the heart of the city centre. Glasgow's venue, the Audi centre, although some distance from the city centre, was selected because of its cost, availability, space and good facilities.

Promotion

Following selction of the cities in which the panels would be based, specific wards were identified as offering a diverse ethnic and socio-economic mix. Drawing on local networks in Glasgow and Birmingham, VaV undertook extensive outreach work to promote the Citizens' Inquiry and disseminate information as widely as possible. Businesses, voluntary organisations, community groups and grass-roots activists were contacted either in person or via telephone, email or post. Direct engagement was specifically used to encourage participation from vulnerable, excluded and 'hard to reach' groups.

Delays in commissioning VaV and finalising the legal documentation reduced the time allocated for preparation and promotion of the project. The contract was signed and finalised in mid-December, allowing less than six weeks to plan and prepare for the Inquiry. Preparation time was further reduced by seasonal holidays and the difficulty in promoting engagement activity during periods of leave.

The revised timeline meant much of Stage 1 (Planning, selection and recruitment) overlapped with Stage 2 (Inquiry panel sessions), requiring VaV to recruit experts and plan each Inquiry session while the Inquiry was already in progress. Ordinarily, planning alone on such a project should be allocated six to eight weeks, with an additional four to six weeks for scoping and recruitment.

The seasonal breaks of Christmas and New Year provided challenges in terms of securing access and meeting with organisations and individuals. After initial scoping visits to Birmingham and Glasgow, VaV utilised the pre-holiday period to generate a contacts database for groups and individuals in both cities, as well as tapping into wider networks that could assist in promoting the project.

A range of promotional and engagement strategies was employed, including leaflets and posters, word of mouth, emails, media coverage and direct engagement with local communities, groups and individuals. Given the onerous time commitments required from panellists, all material included the dates and times of sessions; potential candidates were asked to highlight the dates they could not attend. Some of the promotional material sent out can be found in Appendix 2.

The facilitation team contacted over 250 groups and met with the following:

Table 1 – Groups visited

Birmingham	Glasgow
ACMC	Al-Meeezan
ANAWIM	Amina, the Muslim Women's Resource Centre
Birmingham City Council	Apex Scotland
Birmingham Disability Resource Centre	Awaaz FM
Birmingham Race Action Partnership	Bridging the Gap
Birmingham Racial Attacks Monitoring Unit	Cranhill Community Project
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council	Dumbreck Council
Black and Asian Police Association	Galgael Trust
NW Birmingham refugee Support Group	Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living
Pioneers leading the way	Glasgow City Mission
Saathi House	Glasgow Council for Voluntary Service
St Basils	Pakistani Muslim Womens Forum
The Salvation Army	Polton Disability Forum
Three Faiths Forum	Positive Action Housing
Turning Point	Ruchill Church Outreach Project
Ulfah Arts	Transformation Team
Washwood Heath Youth Inclusion Project	
Young People's Parliament	

Panel selection and composition

Face-to-face engagement was essential in demonstrating the genuine value given to the voices of those who wished to participate. Groups that are commonly termed 'hard to reach' are, for the most part, not themselves difficult to access. It is in fact the inaccessibility of the infrastructures around them and the actual and perceived exclusion, resulting from a number of factors, that leaves communities with a tag of 'hard to reach'. Direct engagement, taking the invitation to participate into communities and groups and providing necessary support and answers, enabled VaV to bring together citizens with a vast range of experience and opinions, including those who might be considered 'hard to reach'.

Almost 50 responses were received from people interested in being panel members. Twenty-six were selected and this number was made up to 30 after the first meeting of the advisory panel, which recommended additional recruitment to balance the panel. During the Inquiry process, five people left at various stages. Twenty-five panellists participated in the process through to completion. Those who were not selected to be on the panel were given the opportunity to participate as audience members or nominate others to do so, in order to ensure that the dialogue remained as open and inclusive as possible.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 provide a detailed breakdown of panel composition. Categories of ethnicity are self-defined.

Figure 1 – Gender breakdown of Inquiry panellists

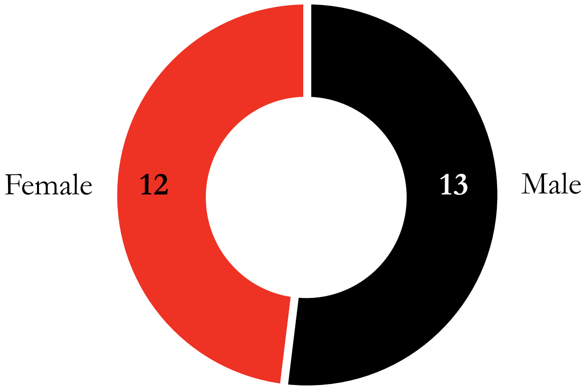


Figure 2 – Age breakdown of Inquiry panellists

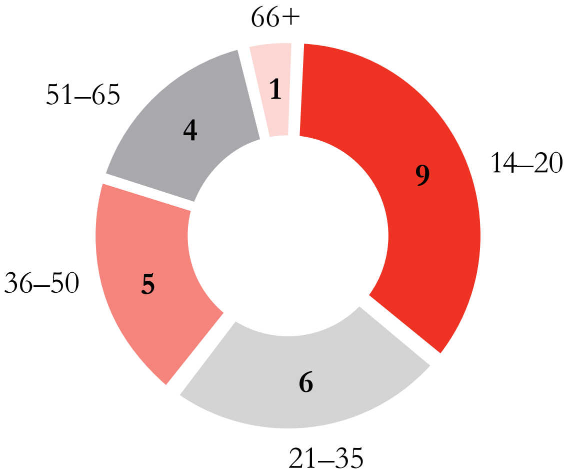
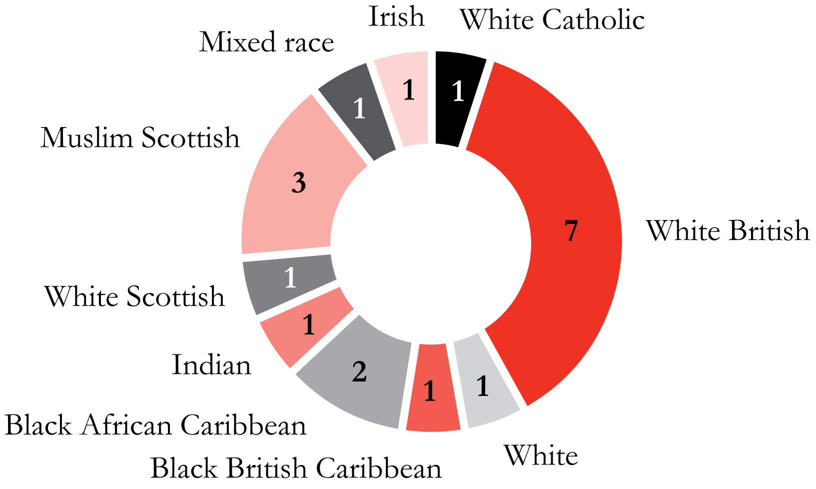


Figure 3 – Ethnicity breakdown of Inquiry panellists who declared ethnicity (19)



Stage 2 – Inquiry Panel sessions

Induction day

The Inquiry process began in late January with full-day sessions held on consecutive days in Birmingham and Glasgow respectively. These initial sessions occurred independently of any external expertise and:

- provided an opportunity for panel members to meet each other and the facilitation team in an open and safe environment;
- allowed the panel to engage in agenda-setting dialogue in order to develop a sense of ownership;
- provided space for unmediated dialogue around panellists' concerns, understandings and issues relating to DNA and its uses;
- introduced methods such as system thinking to promote and encourage the challenging of existing systems and demonstrate how various issues are connected; and
- enabled panellists to explore and generate themes of interest around the National DNA Database and come up with recommendations of the types of expert they would like to hear from.

Introductions and ice-breakers

The panellists took part in a range of activities from introductory ice-breakers to systems thinking models and role plays. Much of the morning was spent with panellists getting to know one another as well as the facilitation team. Panellists had numerous questions about the process in which they were about to engage and the involvement of VaV. The facilitation team explicitly stated their lack of expertise in relation to DNA and the National DNA Database, and made clear that their role was to facilitate and meet the needs of the panel rather than to answer questions about the subject matter, which remained the remit of the panel itself and the external experts.

This section of the day was crucial in achieving the aims and objectives of the Inquiry. It was imperative that panellists felt comfortable enough with one another to raise contradictory viewpoints without alienating themselves or other members of the panel, and feeling that they were able to admit a lack of knowledge. Panellists were comforted by the limited knowledge of the facilitators, as this enabled them to learn openly and give their own opinions without worrying about being 'wrong'.

Throughout the Inquiry process, different techniques were used to generate and improve levels of comfort. Too many activities were utilised to list them all, but they were generally of four types:

1. generating connections and getting to know one another
2. having fun with one another
3. working as a team
4. sharing knowledge.

1. Connections
One activity used to generate connections involved a ball of string. Panellists and facilitators stood or sat in a circle. One person held a ball of string and stated a fact about themselves. Another person in the circle had to state a fact that connected to the first. The person holding the ball of string kept hold of one end and passed the ball on to the person who connected with them. The circle continued to connect in this manner until the string came to an end. All connections were then laid on the floor, forming a web which demonstrated the extensive links between apparent strangers.

2. Having fun: Honey, I love you but I just can't smile
More of a game, this activity required panellists and facilitators to stand in a circle. Going round the circle, each person would turn to the person on their right and say: 'Honey, I love you but I just can't smile'.

The object of the game was not to laugh and, if possible, to make the person on the right laugh. This game lightened the mood of a room as well as relaxing panellists and facilitators, providing a safe and comfortable space for them to laugh at themselves and with one another.

3. Working as a team
Much of the Inquiry process required panellists to be able to hear other panellists' voices as well as respecting their right to have their voices heard. It was important for the process that informal activities generated a team spirit that could be carried over into the Inquiry. One such activity was 'White Sheet'. A white sheet was spread on the floor and panellists were told that everyone had to touch the sheet and not the floor. How they did this was up to them. At each round the sheet was folded in half. Panellists had to work as a team to determine how they could meet the objectives of the game – which required each panellist to hold a bit of the sheet between fore-finger and thumb and for all to jump at the same time.

4. Sharing knowledge
Throughout the course of the Inquiry process, panellists were at different stages of knowledge and understanding. It was also evident that panellist perspectives were informed to different degrees by different sources of knowledge and information. A number of informal activities allowed knowledge transfer between panellists and

generated debate. One such activity was 'Musical Questions'. Panellists were asked to walk around the room while music played. When the music stopped they were asked to talk to the person closest to them about a particular question, expert, issue or perspective. On the initial day this activity was used to generate dialogue between different panellists and to begin deliberation on the issues they were curious about, the topics they would wish to discuss, the knowledge and understanding they had and the aspects of the debate they felt good about – as well as those aspects that worried them.

Agenda setting and expertise

The Inquiry process recognised the diverse ways in which different people think through and express their ideas. To stimulate different means of expression, panellists were asked, in pairs, to put together a collage of what DNA meant to them. Panellists who began the day saying they had no knowledge at all of DNA put together pictorial representations of their understandings that demonstrated significant levels of awareness. This visual demonstration generated a significant sense of ownership and control among panellists, who felt they had come to realise the depth and scope of knowledge they all shared about a subject matter they had spent little time actually thinking about. This also re-affirmed their perception that they were experts in their own right by virtue of their lived experience of the debates, issues and impact of DNA, conscious or otherwise.

Through discussions based on the collages, the panellists were asked to begin exploring the themes they were interested in and where they felt they would like to learn or debate more by generating questions. These questions were the first step in the panel's development of an agenda for the entire Inquiry process. Having listed their own questions, panellists were given the opportunity to read and query one another's questions and to debate their own concerns. A detailed breakdown of the sorts of debates had on the initial day can be found in the analysis report (see page 31).

This approach met one of the key aims of the commissioning body, to 'make demonstrable to people, especially those from parts of the population who may be particularly affected, that the public's informed views and concerns have been heard by policy-makers, even on issues not directly connected to the use of DNA for forensic purposes' (Human Genetics Commission tender specification).

Panellists were asked to map their questions, concerns and feelings about the National DNA Database and then to group them into themes they felt might be appropriate. The categories that emerged were:

- Access
- Accuracy
- How accurate is DNA and can it be corrupted?
- Collection
- Database and the law
- Database facts
- DNA and children
- DNA database
- Destroying the DNA database
- Future laws

- Government and the law
- Medical uses of a database
- Miscellaneous
- Monitoring
- Our process
- Prosecutions
- Rights of the people
- Science
- Security of access
- Society's rights and society
- Storage
- What is DNA?

The process of generating the themes of the Inquiry, the related questions and the external experts they would like to hear from was an essential part in bringing the panellists to the realisation that they too had significant knowledge and expertise to share with one another and the experts they would be calling on.

Systems thinking

To improve the Inquiry's potential impact, it was important for its recommendations and conclusions to take into account the bigger picture surrounding the National DNA Database and the forensic use of DNA. Only by acknowledging and alluding to the context in which the database and the forensic use of DNA are set would the panel recommendations be immune to accusations of naivety. The balanced and comprehensive approach of the Inquiry process pre-empted such criticism by ensuring an informed debate.

Part of the initial day was utilised to elaborate upon systems thinking and the need for openness to the diversity of debate that would occur. The implications and interconnectedness of a system was demonstrated through a practical activity. Panellists were asked to silently pick two other panellists with whom they were going to forge imaginary connections, and to stand between them. Once panellists had all positioned themselves between their connections, two or three were moved, and all the other panellists were asked to reposition themselves between the two panellists with whom they had originally been connected. Each move generated ripples within the 'system', which took a few moments to subside as everyone found a suitable position. Each move in the system demonstrated the interconnectedness of the people within it.

This exercise was then applied, on paper, to the different experts and themes related to the debates that panellists had already generated. Panellists drew connections between different stakeholders and themes, initiating a broader contextual understanding of the issues and debates they had been discussing. Panel recognition of the systems surrounding the National DNA Database and the forensic use of DNA is evident in the implicit and explicit connections between the recommendations made. Further details of this interconnectedness are provided in the anaysis report (see page 31).

With the panellists having established a sense of ownership and expertise, the final stage of the introductory session introduced them to the videoconferencing, external experts and exchange of knowledge that would occur in upcoming sessions. This was done by facilitators through role play and discussion.

Throughout the subsequent sessions and stages, panellists were given sufficient time to continue open-ended and unrestricted dialogue, thereby enhancing the scope and discussion of the wider debate around the National DNA Database.

Weekly Inquiry sessions

Over the course of five weekly sessions every Monday evening panellists heard and engaged with competing perspectives on and around the National DNA Database and the forensic use of DNA.

Accessibility

Participatory processes such as the Citizens' Inquiry develop significant capacity among panellists and provide a means by which they are empowered by the recognition of the importance of their own voice. Participation in such a process requires considerable time, energy and motivation on the part of the panellist. Enjoyment of the experience, capacity development or the provision of a platform to have one's voice heard should not be considered sufficient compensation for such an onerous commitment.

In order to make the Inquiry process as accessible and as easy for panellist participation as possible, VaV made and paid for all logistical arrangements relating to attendance, and covered expenses such as childcare, loss of earnings and subsistence. In addition to this, a small gift of £10 was given to each panellist on a weekly basis as a small token of appreciation for their time. Depending on preference, the £10 was provided in the form of gift tokens or cash.

Although five of the panellists had a declared impairment, only three required additional support over the course of the Inquiry. One panellist, who had a learning disability and a number of mental health concerns, felt comfortable with a support worker present throughout the Inquiry. To this end, Voices and Choices was retained for the period of the Inquiry to provide necessary support. In addition, the facilitation team ensured that a designated team member was always on hand if and when needed.

The second panellist required some mobility support, which was provided by ensuring that the necessary resources such as taxis were available. All venues were checked for accessibility, and lines of communication were maintained with the panellist throughout the Inquiry. Once again, one designated facilitator was always available if the need arose.

The third panellist, one of the younger participants, experienced seizures and had been subject to bullying. Although she did not feel that she needed support, she did ask for her older sister to be present throughout the Inquiry. Her older sister was welcomed into the process and, although she did not participate as a panellist, became very much part of the Inquiry family. Once again, VaV made all the logistical and subsistence arrangements that made this support possible.

Session structure

After evaluating feedback from the induction sessions, the facilitation team felt that it would be helpful to ease panellists into the DNA discussion by inviting just one expert speaker to the first Inquiry session, to provide an introductory overview of DNA and the National DNA Database. The aim of the first session was to allow panellists to familiarise themselves with the format of the sessions as well as the videoconferencing technology.

Technical difficulties with videoconferencing caused the session to begin late and resulted in the use of audioconferencing facilities. In spite of the technical glitches, panel feedback and evaluation forms were extremely positive.

Following the first session, measures were taken to install contingency technology such as webcams and teleconferencing facilities in alternative rooms to ensure that technological mishaps did not interfere with the process further. It was also decided at this stage that each site would always host one expert so that neither panel felt they were being sidelined in the process, and so that each panel would have at least one expert to hear from in the event that none of the technology worked. None of the remaining four Inquiry sessions had any such technological hitch.

Each session was structured to allow panellists to hear expert views, have group discussions among themselves and pose questions to the experts. The panels were able to interact via live videoconferencing and thereby could engage with experts at both sites.

Each expert was given 10–15 minutes to put forward their perspective and experience to the panel. The panel was then split into small groups of two or three to discuss what they had heard and to generate questions they wished to ask the expert. During the Inquiry a 'red card' system was operated, allowing facilitators and panellists to interrupt an expert whenever something was said that was not understood. Facilitator use of the red card was an important way of ensuring that everyone understood what external experts were saying, even if panellists were too shy or uncomfortable to use the red card themselves.

After hearing the breadth of viewpoints from the experts, panellists generated lists of questions which reflected the diversity of individual interests in the subject matter. Group discussions and question-and-answer sessions steered the discussion into many different directions, allowing the panel to identify and appreciate the multiple strands of the debate.

At the start of the Inquiry process, sessions were structured to enable both external experts to put forward their perspectives before being asked questions by the panel. Following the second Inquiry session, some panellists said that this format made it difficult for them to understand what the experts were talking about, particularly if they were speaking about unrelated dimensions of the debate.

Table 2 – Breakdown of activities during the first two weekly sessions

Time	Activity
18.00	Arrive
18.20–18.35	Expert 1
18.35–18.50	Discussion
18.50–19.05	Expert 2
19.05–19.20	Discussion
19.20–19.35	Break
19.35–19.45	Q&A – Panel 1
19.45–20.05	Q&A – Panel 2
20.05–20.30	Audience questions
20.30–21.00	Panel discussion (private)

In response to panel feedback, the third session was restructured so that expert talks occurred in independent units. The restructuring affected the amount of time available for questions, answers and deliberations to the point where questions drawn up by the panel were being asked by facilitators in order to fit them all in. In order to achieve a better balance between external expert and panellist, expert time was reduced to 10 minutes.

Table 3 – Revised breakdown of activities during the final three weekly sessions

Time	Activity
18.00	Arrive
18.00–18.20	Team activity
18.20–18.30	Expert 1
18.30–18.45	Discussion
18.45–18.55	Q&A – Panel 1
18.55–19.05	Q&A – Panel 2
19.05–19.20	Break
19.20–19.30	Expert 2
19:30–19.45	Discussion
19:45–19.55	Q&A – Panel 2
19:55–20.05	Q&A – Panel 1
20.05–20.25	Audience questions
20.25–21.00	Panel discussion (private)

Although time was saved if the facilitation team asked the questions, this was considered inappropriate as it detracted from the voice and tenor of the questions. The session was further adapted and panellists were asked to prioritise two questions per expert per small group, and to nominate someone from within the group to ask them. All other questions were posed at the end of the session if time permitted, or were sent to the experts for answers via email.

Each session was audio and visually recorded for a number of reasons:

- to provide audio evidence of the sessions, as required by the tender contract;
- to allow each session to be transcribed for panellists on a weekly basis;
- for VaV records and to assist with report writing; and
- to provide panellists with the opportunity to submit a visual as well as a written report if they wished to do so.

Experts

Experts were selected on the basis of:

- Inquiry panel requirements
- advisory panel recommendations
- working group recommendations.

During the Inquiry, panellists heard from the following experts:

- Clare Stangoe – Forensic Access
- Tom Nelson – Director, Scottish Forensic Services
- Tom Ross – Police Liaison Officer, Scottish DNA Database
- Dr Helen Wallace – Director, GeneWatch
- Mike Prior – Custodian, National DNA Database
- June Guiness – Manager, National DNA Database
- Dr Mairi Levitt – Senior lecturer in Sociology, University of Lancaster
- Richard West – Community activist
- Professor Peter Hutton – Chair of the National DNA Database Ethics Group
- Satish Sekar – Journalist in the Cardiff 3 'case'
- Professor Allan Jamieson – Chair, Forensic Institute
- Derek Forest – Detective Superintendent, West Midlands Police

The videoconferencing gave rise to an interesting dynamic between panellists and experts. For the most part, each panel favoured the expert who was physically present in their location during the Inquiry. The residential sessions and the ensuing dialogues among the panel did mediate this, however, and it had no tangible effect upon the perspectives and recommendations that the panellists eventually came to make.

All measures were taken to ensure that the Inquiry sessions were accessible to the experts. Whenever requested, VaV undertook all logistical arrangements for experts. Although experts were not paid a fee for attending, all travel and subsistence costs were met. One expert required sign language support, which was arranged by VaV and provided by Sign Solutions. Venues and videoconferencing facilities were also checked to ensure that they had no adverse impact on hearing aid devices.

Session summaries

Below is an overview of each of the five weekly Inquiry sessions.

4 February
Expert: Clare Stangoe (Forensic Access)

This session provided a detailed introduction to the basics of what DNA is and how it is sampled, processed and used. Clare spoke at length about the different techniques used to generate a profile from a DNA sample as well as the independence and legitimacy of the laboratories and scientists that process samples. She also gave the panel an insight into the impact of the adversarial judicial system on the scientific community in light of her experience working for both prosecution and defence.

Panellists were joined by five audience members.

11 February
Experts: Tom Nelson (Scottish Forensic Services); Tom Ross (Scottish DNA Database) and Dr Helen Wallace (GeneWatch)

This session allowed panellists to learn about legislative differences between Scotland and England with regard to how the National DNA Database and the Scottish DNA Database are managed and utilised. Experts put forward competing views about the current and future use of both databases. Dr Wallace's ethical arguments for curtailing the breadth of the National DNA Database in the interest of civil liberties sometimes contradicted and at other times accorded with Tom Ross and Tom Nelson's arguments in favour of a Scottish database in the interests of public safety, given the parameters laid down by Scottish law. Differences between English and Scottish law meant that Dr Wallace's critique of the collection, storage and use of DNA material was more critical of the English than the Scottish system.

18 February
Experts: Mike Prior and June Guiness (National DNA Database), Richard West (community activist) and Dr Mairi Levitt (sociologist)

Hearing institutional, academic and personal perspectives on the National DNA Database provided a unique contrast of opinions for the panellists in this session.

Each of the experts put forward markedly different perspectives on the datatbase. Mike Prior and June Guiness spoke about the practicalities surrounding the management of database whereas Richard West shared his personal experience of being a deaf BME man and the impact of the database on him as an individual. Dr Levitt spoke of the views of young people aged 7 to 10 on the database, elaborating on research conducted as part of a European project on forensic databases.

Panellists were joined by 10 audience members.

25 February
Experts: Professor Peter Hutton (National DNA Database Ethics Group) and Satish Sekar (journalist)

Professor Hutton provided an overview of the role of the Ethics Group and the balance it seeks to strike between the benefits to society and the threat to human rights in relation to the use of DNA. Satish Sekar, author of *Fitted In: The Cardiff 3 and the Lynette White Inquiry*, detailed the failures to use forensic evidence resulting in miscarriages of justice.

Experts pointedly disagreed on various issues. Panellist feedback on this session showed that they enjoyed and benefited from the experts' disagreement.

Panellists were joined by seven audience members.

3 March
Experts: Professor Allan Jamieson (Forensic Institute) and Derek Forest (West Midlands Police)

Both experts brought considerable experience of working with DNA as evidence in criminal proceedings. Professor Jamieson outlined the usefulness of DNA evidence but focused on the problems associated with an over-reliance on DNA, favouring a more cautious approach to the National DNA Database which should restore emphasis on a range of evidence sources. Superintendent Derek Forest deemed the database a critical tool in policing and crime prevention, but also recognised the need for safeguards. He provided details of DNA's usefulness for purposes other than crime prevention, such as the identification of tsunami victims through familial searching.

Panellists were joined by eight audience members.

Communication and retention

VaV maintained a consistent facilitation team in each of the Glasgow and Birmingham locations as a means of developing a strong rapport with the panellists and a deeper understanding of their needs, concerns and views.

Each Inquiry session culminated in a written and, depending on panellist preference, oral evaluation which fed into the structure and development of the following week's session.

Such ongoing and fluid development further generated a sense of ownership among the panel as they continually shaped the process. A detailed breakdown of these evaluations can be found in 'Reflections on the Inquiry Process' (see page 64).

The amount of time panellists are expected to allocate to the process of a citizens' inquiry, combined with sometimes dry subject matter, can lead to a high rate of dropout. However, the Inquiry process had a very low rate of dropout, with only five panellists leaving the process at various stages and for different reasons. Only two left for reasons related to the process itself.

- Two panellists were unable to continue owing to their employment situation. The hours worked by one Glasgow panellist changed so as to clash with the Inquiry sessions, and a Birmingham panellist began a new job which meant that she was no longer able to attend on Monday evenings.
- One Birmingham panellist was diagnosed with a serious long-term illness which required immediate hospitalisation, and she was thus unable to continue with the process.

- One Birmingham panellist felt that he was unable to contribute to the Inquiry sufficiently; given his work commitments, he said would prefer to leave.
- One Glasgow panellist felt that the venue was located too far away, and was no longer willing to attend unless it was moved more centrally. As no appropriate venue could be found, this was not an option.

Of the remaining panellists, all completed the process and are keen to continue their involvement.

Audience participation

To encourage UK-wide participation in the dialogue, organisations and individuals from across the UK were invited to participate in the Inquiry as audience members. As well as widening the participatory scope of the dialogue, the inclusion of diverse audience members added certain nuances to the debate and generated wider interest among the public. The presence of audience members, and the allocation of time for audience questions, allowed alternative perspectives and views which the panellists may not have considered. Audience members also removed the onus of questioning from the panels and introduced different levels of expertise and experience. Over 700 groups, individuals and organisations were contacted as potential audience members.

Additionally, a Facebook group was set up; this has over 65 members from the UK and the world, with some members based as far afield as Canada, India and Pakistan. It is difficult to estimate how many electronic invitations went out through media such as Facebook and email networks. VaV sent over 500 invitations via direct internet-based contacts and networks.

Thirty audience members physically attended the Inquiry sessions, a total far below the anticipated 100–150. This low number is offset by the amount of interest generated nationally through new technological media and the comments and interest received from across the UK via email, telephone and local and national media.

Stage 3 – Regional visits

Upon completion of the weekly Inquiry sessions, each of the panels took part in a regional visit to explore the broader dimensions of the National DNA Database in a different context. The Birmingham panel visited some local community groups in the London Borough of Hackney and the Glasgow panel visited the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. The dates for the regional visits were timed to precede the first residential weekend in Birmingham (15–16 March) and the working group meeting in London (12 March).

Hackney

The aim of this trip was for the Birmingham panel to gain a direct insight into the real and direct impact of the National DNA Database on communities and individuals who, while being stakeholders in the debate, are not likely to participate directly in the process by attending sessions in either Birmingham or Glasgow.

The Birmingham panel was given the option to select from three potential cities/boroughs to visit:

- Hackney
- Bradford
- Salford.

The panel voted for Hackney by an overwhelming majority.

Over 100 voluntary, community and faith-based groups and individuals were contacted by email or telephone and invited (along with their service users and members) to participate in the Inquiry at the Trinity Centre, Beechwood Road, Hackney. A copy of the invitation can be found in Appendix 3.

From the outset there was a great deal of interest in the panel and the Inquiry process, particularly from within the local borough council; one particular councillor, Patrick Vernon, provided significant support and guidance.

Two weeks before the visit was to take place, VaV was informed of a violent incident between two local gangs in which one young person had been killed. VaV was asked to change the date of the Hackney visit to April, but was unable to do so; as the final residential was scheduled for the early weeks of April, a change in date would mean that the voices heard in Hackney would not be incorporated into the final report or recommendations of the Inquiry – a result that could lead to further alienation and disempowerment.

In consultation with local community police officers, it was decided that the visit would go ahead with caution. On the morning of the visit, confirmation from around eight youth workers or community groups had been received and there was the expectation that around 30 people would attend a series of round-table discussions addressing seven questions:

1. What are your feelings/views on the National DNA Database?
2. Is the National DNA Database fair?
3. What rights should an individual have over their own DNA?
4. Should everyone be on the National DNA Database?
5. How accurate do you think DNA is?
6. What rules should apply to keeping DNA?
7. Who should be able to access the National DNA Database?

Upon arrival, Councillor Patrick Vernon provided the panel with an overview of the communities in which he lived and worked. Of the expected attendance, only seven people attended the session; it was later discovered that, owing to the threat of violence, youth workers had been advised not to attend. Whether this advice had come from the police, the local authority or their superiors within youth services is unclear and unconfirmed.

Although disappointing in terms of quantitative engagement, the in-depth qualitative discussions that took place with individuals who did attend provided the panel with a range of diverse perspectives related to the National DNA Database, the forensic use of DNA and many of the infrastructures such as policing and science linked to the debate.

Half of the Birmingham panel also visited a youth group undertaking a music course in a nearby centre, and spoke to eight young people briefly about their experiences of the DNA database and the forensic use of DNA. Members of the panel found the views of the young people very useful in outlining the challenges faced and the gaps in knowledge that many within the wider community still have. The difficulties faced in generating a larger number of voices to speak to the Birmingham panel was indicative of the difficulties faced in communities where high levels of mistrust and insecurity are prevalent.

Scottish Parliament

The aim of the Scottish Parliament visit was to ensure that the differences between English and Scottish legislation were adequately considered by the panellists. Sponsorship was secured through Labour MSP Bashir Ahmad. The visit, scheduled for Tuesday 11 March, took place during the lunch hour to work around MSP committee obligations.

In order to ensure a fruitful discussion that could include any late arrivals, the structure of the meeting was kept simple and fluid. The MSPs arrived at different allocated times, and put forward their party's perspective on the National DNA Database and the Scottish DNA database and answered panellists' questions.

The success of the trip was measured in accordance with panellist satisfaction levels and the degree to which they felt the differences between the databases in England and Scotland had been clarified. The level of dialogue and questions that the panellists put to the MSPs demonstrated the deeper understanding they had acquired through the Inquiry, and reaffirmed to the panellists their own learning.

Stage 4 – Residentials and report writing

Residential 1 (Birmingham)

The aim of the two-day residential in Birmingham was to allow participants of both panels to come together, share their experiences and findings, and summarise the Inquiry into deliberations and practical recommendations. The Glasgow and Birmingham panellists were already acquainted with one another through the weekly Inquiry sessions and interaction via videoconferencing, but the residential was the first time they had met in person. A series of interactive activities was devised to gel the panels and allow them to begin sharing their experiences of the Inquiry thus far. Visually mind-mapping their DNA journeys set a comfortable tone of engagement and mutual learning among panellists.

As the panellists had accumulated a significant amount of information over the preceding weeks, the weekend consisted of a range of activities to draw out their views and recommendations.

Regional visits

Panellists were asked to share experiences from their respective regional visits in a mock speed-dating format. Birmingham and Glasgow panellists each rotated between groups from the other panel, discussing regional visits and answering questions about their own experiences and learning.

Role plays

Role plays offered a creative, light-hearted but most importantly nuanced way to express panellist learning and understanding. The panellists, in small groups of three to four, devised a series of role plays based on various themes around DNA and the National DNA Database, and then presented these to the panel as a whole.

Generating themes via dialogue

A critical stage of the Inquiry was reached as panellists began brainstorming in a large group on the themes that had been covered in the Inquiry and through their debates and role plays.

The process of generating themes organically developed into unmediated and passionate dialogue which gave the panellists an opportunity to begin grappling with the competing perspectives within the panel in a non-confrontational but honest manner. The range of issues generated predicated the recommendations and began forming the themes for the report. Some of the initial themes generated by the panellists were:

- public education and information
- ownership and governance
- differences between the Scottish and National DNA Databases
- a universal DNA database
- an international DNA database and sharing
- policing
- procedures for taking samples
- the role of scientists
- the retention of DNA
- over-reliance on the DNA database
- discrimination
- youth
- age.

Generating initial recommendations

Having generated these themes, panellists formed groups of four to five and began discussions around the themes. These discussions inevitably gave rise to panel perspectives on 'what should happen', much of which was translated into recommendations. Panellists were able to move around the room, switching to different themes once they felt they had contributed sufficiently to the one they were presently at.

The large number of themes generated meant that it was not possible to generate recommendations against each theme in one day. On the Sunday, the panellists undertook the same process with the themes that had not yet been covered.

The panel's ownership over the process, the themes and the space for unmediated dialogue created the perfect dynamic for powerful conversations. The topic of age, for example, sparked an exciting debate among younger panel members who felt very strongly about the age and circumstances at which DNA should be taken from young people. The thought and analytical process of generating recommendations is elaborated on in the anaysis report (see page 31).

The initial themes were categorised under three main headings:

- infrastructure
- implementation
- impact.

Relaxation

Central to the Inquiry process, and an integral benefit of the residential format, was the time available for informal interaction and relaxation. Sessions during the day were interspersed with ice-breaker activities, breaks and space for informal dialogue, balanced against the demands of providing sufficient space for the formal dialogue and formation of recommendations.

In order to provide a comfortable forum for panellists to socialise with one another, lunch and dinner arrangements were made by VaV. The evening dinner in particular was an opportunity for panellists to unwind and engage socially in the absence of DNA discussion.

The development of relationships between panellists aided their ability to work together as a team and to respect one another's opinion, even where it contradicted their own. Working group representatives and some of the experts also joined the panellists for dinner and got to know them in an informal capacity.

Experts and funders' Question Time

On the second day of the residential, panellists were given the chance to invite back four experts from the Inquiry and take part in a mock *Question Time* session. Panellists nominated four experts from previous sessions whom they wished to question further, and the following experts attended:

- Satish Sekar (journalist)
- Derek Forrest (West Midlands Police)
- Dr Helen Wallace (GeneWatch).

The panellists had also asked for Clare Stangoe, who was unable to make it as she was on annual leave.

A fourth expert, Marc Edwards from Young Disciples, also joined the session. Marc was able to provide an insight into the experiences and perspectives of communities in areas such as Hackney.

The aim of the *Question Time* session was to create an opportunity for panellists to ask for any clarification on outstanding concerns or questions. By asking experts to speak alongside one another rather than on an individual basis, panellists were able to gain a better perspective on supporting and competing views, and to gain multiple views on the same issue.

A second session of *Question Time* was devised with representatives from the working group. Throughout the Inquiry, panellists had raised a number of questions with regard to the initiation, management and future of the Citizens' Inquiry, and it was felt that direct access to the working group representatives would create a useful bridge of communication. The presence of funders at the residential was also the first step in achieving the aim of developing a sustainable relationship between working group and Inquiry participants.

Panellists and funders engaged in a frank and open discussion about the wider scope of the Citizens' Inquiry.

In recognition of the intensity of the debate, and the in-depth level of discussions undertaken, some time was set aside for reflection. A brief interlude from DNA analysis was welcomed by panellists, giving them time to individually absorb and reflect on their 'DNA journey'.

Concluding the weekend, panellists were asked to write a small message for each other in the form of a 'love letter'. Individual cards for each panellist and facilitator were made up. Panellists and facilitators wrote in each person's card what they most enjoyed and appreciated about knowing the individual. The love letters provided a poignant recognition of the contribution of each individual and the uniqueness that they brought to the Inquiry. The love letters also focused on how the panel had gelled over the course of the Inquiry and the quality of ties and friendships that had emerged.

Report writing

Following the weekend residential, VaV spent two weeks putting together a draft version of the *Citizens' Report*, to incorporate all the recommendations generated by the panellists. Although tasked with authoring the report, VaV aimed to construct it through the words of the panellists themselves. Mind maps, feedback and written documentation provided panellist accounts of the reasons behind recommendations. Limited time meant that it was not possible to utilise audio-visual accounts to inform this draft. In-depth one-to-one interviews with all panellists were conducted to compose an accurate account of panel experiences and their views on the process and methodology. Interviews covered:

- Application and selection
  - *how panellists heard about the Inquiry*
  - *what motivated them to apply*
- Day one induction session
  - *initial perceptions and expectations*
- Weekly Inquiry sessions
  - *what happened at the sessions*
  - *what panellists most enjoyed/disliked*
- Regional visits
  - *what panellists did*
  - *how the visit was beneficial to them*

- Birmingham Residential
  - *generating recommendations*
  - *role plays*
  - *expert and funders Question Time.*

The introduction, methodology and process chapters of the report were all written using extracts from panellist interviews. There was minimal elaboration, except where it was felt that some clarification might be needed. At the request of panellists, all quotes remained anonymous.

Panellists were sent a draft copy of the report for feedback and comments one week prior to the second residential in Glasgow, where they would have the final opportunity to make any changes to their report and recommendations.

The draft report was also sent to the Advisory Panel (AP) prior to the final meeting in Glasgow on 4 April. AP feedback centred on the need to add further context to the recommendations. It was felt that the recommendations alone lacked substance and weight, and that a more detailed understanding was required of how and why the panellists had arrived at the recommendations. Feedback also related to the number and tone of the recommendations. AP members felt that some of the recommendations were more akin to opinions, and that the total number – which at this stage was over 70 – might cause many of them to be overlooked by policy-makers and stakeholders.

Residential 2 (Glasgow)

On the weekend of 5–6 April, panellists were brought together in Glasgow to conclude the DNA Inquiry and make final comments or changes to the report. Taking on board the suggestions from the AP, panellists were asked to revise and contextualise their recommendations.

While continuing to be interspersed with ice-breaker activities, the Glasgow residential was consciously more focused in terms of achieving set objectives. Panellists were keen to ensure that their thoughts and views were accurately recorded and developed, as this was the last time they would meet during the course of the Inquiry.

In small groups, panellists went through each recommendation, identifying any recommendations that overlapped or lacked clarity and either modifying or removing them. The wording of each recommendation was refined or edited to ensure that it conveyed the meaning of the panel as accurately as possible. In these small groups, and working with the same recommendations, panellists focused on adding reasoning and context to each of the recommendations – drawing on personal experiences, examples and expert opinions to support their viewpoints.

The opportunity for panellists to critically assess their own recommendations at this stage of the process was extremely useful and insightful, allowing the group to appreciate, reflect and dissect their own work and to increase their level of ownership and understanding of the report as a whole.

Once the revised recommendations had been finalised, all of them were separately placed around the room under their respective categories. Each recommendation had attached an ‘agree or disagree’ voting sheet. Voting on recommendations was a crucial part of ensuring that the recommendations were seen to reflect the level of support they had in the Inquiry, as well as giving minority voices equal space for expression.

The panel made a commitment to ensuring that each individual's voice, viewpoint and recommendation would be treated with equal respect, and at the same time recognised the need to acknowledge the strength and support that some recommendations attracted over others. In so doing, the report is a true reflection of the sentiments of the panellists both individually and as a whole. In order to achieve this fully, the panel chose not to identify how many panellists each 'majority' or 'minority' vote reflected.

Action planning

Coming to the end of the Inquiry was both a satisfying moment and a difficult one. Having contributed such a vast amount of time and energy, the panellists were reluctant to end the Inquiry with just a report. As a means of ensuring that they saw the potential for future action, one of the final stages of the residential focused on action planning. In small groups of three or four, panellists generated lists of future actions they would like to see happen. These lists were thematically grouped together to form the basis of an action plan.

Once themed, panellists picked particular actions that they were interested in and collated or refined the actions list, identifying potential partners and specifying the level of involvement they wished to have.

The action plan was inserted into the *Citizens' Report* with the specific aim of providing a means by which policy-makers, stakeholders and other individuals could establish relationships with the panel and the actions they could take together.

DNA Oscars

A 'DNA Oscars' ceremony at the end of the residential celebrated the contribution, the journey and the commitment of each individual who had taken part in the Inquiry. The facilitation team identified the unique traits, characteristics and strengths that each panellist had brought to the Inquiry and devised award titles around these. At the awards ceremony, each panellist received a certificate against the backdrop of a PowerPoint presentation with their pictures and a vote of thanks from VaV. This proved to be an amusing but emotional farewell.

Analysis Report

Introduction

'What do the public think about the forensic use of DNA?'

'What opinions, if any, are held about the National DNA Database?'

'How do the public wish to be informed about scientific developments?'

'Faced with information about DNA, what decisions will the public come to about what it should be used for and how?'

'How would the public react to the broadening remit of the National DNA Database?'

These are just some of the initial questions that gave rise to the Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database.

Just as the stimulus for the Inquiry incorporated multiple dimensions, so too did the deliberations and questions engaged in by the citizens. Following a nine-week Inquiry process, the Citizens' Inquiry panel made a series of recommendations which were submitted to the Human Genetics Commission on 13 May 2008. *The Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database: Citizens' Report* sets out the recommendations and the reasoning behind them in the panel's own words.

Written by Vis-à-Vis (VaV), this report builds on the *Citizens' Report* by collating and analysing the panel's findings in the context of data presented to the Inquiry, and hence documenting the process by which panellists came to make the recommendations that they did. This report charts the process by which recommendations were derived, focusing particularly on the dialogues that took place and the weight given to various pieces of information or observation. In so doing, it provides a comprehensive picture of the context for and the influences on the themes and recommendations with which the panel concluded its inquiry.

Thematic analysis

Over the course of the Inquiry, panels in Glasgow and Birmingham engaged with and deliberated on the moral, social, legal and practical issues related to the forensic use of DNA and the National DNA Database. This engagement gave rise to over 64 hours of audio-visual recordings, a wealth of written documentation and 29 core recommendations.

While the recommendations form the crux of the *Citizens' Report*, it is imperative to chart the journey and process that led to their formulation: the expectations, experiences and learning curve of the panellists that provided the crucial backdrop.

This analysis has been carried out in two phases, each with its own distinct aim. The first phase focuses on the two full-day sessions that initiated the Inquiry. Analysis of the themes, questions and discussions generated in these first two days provides an insight into the experiences, perspectives and concerns of panellists before they were subject to any external influence. As well as providing a baseline of the panellists' perspectives, this analysis looks at issues raised that may or may not relate directly to the forensic use of DNA and the National DNA Database.

The second phase of analysis focuses specifically on the dialogue and debates that took place during the remainder of the Inquiry, including each residential. The audio-visual and written archive of materials has been thematically analysed in accordance with the categorisations made by the *Citizens' Report* to provide the reader with a detailed understanding of why recommendations were made and the debates that gave rise to contradictory or majority/minority divides.

Agenda setting

Panellists began the Inquiry process with different levels of knowledge as well as different perspectives on what they felt they knew. The Birmingham and Glasgow panels each took part in a full day introductory session. These first full days of the Inquiry process were undertaken without any 'external experts', and were designed and implemented in a way that drew out the panels' own explicit and implicit knowledge, as well as providing an insight into the directions they wished the discussion to take in the coming weeks.

Throughout the day, panellists were encouraged to explore their own understanding of and response to the question 'What does DNA mean to you?' The question was left deliberately vague in order to allow panellists as much leeway for interpretation as possible. The engagement with this question gave rise to over 20 themes, listed below:

- Access
- Accuracy
- How accurate is DNA and can it be corrupted?
- Collection
- Database and the law
- Database facts
- DNA and children
- DNA database
- Destroying the DNA database
- Future laws
- Government and the law
- Medical uses of a database
- Miscellaneous
- Monitoring
- Our process
- Prosecutions
- Rights of the people
- Science
- Security of access
- Society's rights and society
- Storage
- What is DNA?

In the main, dialogue and debate centred around four main topics:

1. Mechanics
2. Science
3. Crime
4. Government and politics.

Mechanics

As would be expected, much of the initial dialogue related to what DNA actually is, the role it plays in the human body, how it is extracted and how it is utilised. Panellist understanding of DNA and its uses was derived from a variety of sources, from education through to fictional TV programmes and the news. Much of the dialogue around the mechanics of DNA was pre-empted by concerns relating to a perceived lack of knowledge such as 'I don't know, but…' or 'It is not something I have ever thought of…' These caveats were made despite the fact that panellists were engaging in fairly in-depth discussions on the definition, make-up and function of DNA.

At the initial stages of a participatory process, it is inevitable that panellists will arrive open to learning and thus recognise gaps in their own knowledge. That said, the concerns expressed by the panel are indicative of power imbalances that result from a perceived lack of knowledge, and the consequent reluctance to express one's opinion.

The perception among panellists that they did not know enough to engage in detailed debate had been anticipated, and the first day of the Inquiry was designed to alleviate these concerns. Throughout the Inquiry process panellists were referred to as experts in their own right. As the depth of discussion around the other themes suggests, panellists' concerns about their level of knowledge and the value given to their voice diminished as the day progressed.

Science

A significant amount of the debate on the first day centred around potential rather than actual scientific developments. Concerns were raised about the unknown potential of science and the implications that this has for individual DNA, the storage and retention of DNA and the way in which individuals could be treated in society.

Questions were raised as to how far scientific developments could actually go and how this would affect human beings' relationships with the rest of the world. A number of panellists explored the feasibility of fictional stories and films such as *Gattaca*. The Glasgow panel in particular debated the potential for genetic information to give rise to a pre-categorised human being and the impact that this would have, particularly on the most vulnerable members of society. This debate was enlivened by the suggestion that, should such developments take place, stored DNA would provide the necessary information to begin isolating those who were genetically predisposed to have certain attributes.

This debate flowed naturally into the potential for abuse, even in the context of existing technological knowledge. Potential abuse was discussed in relation to institutions that had a vested interest in the information that can be gained from DNA, such as insurance companies and employers. The moral, social and ethical implications of DNA were discussed at length, with some panellists arguing that too much ambiguity and too little public awareness meant that scientists and other stakeholders could not be trusted with making the 'right' moral decision. Other panellists felt that institutions such as the media and watchdogs would prevent unethical work being undertaken, and that public outcry would prevent – and indeed has prevented – developments in certain fields. Some of the panellists felt that it was important to ensure that scientific development was not stifled because of a lack of knowledge, but this would require the misconceptions around science to be dispelled and the public to be aware of the current debates and developments.

Crime

A large proportion of the panel's knowledge of DNA was derived from the use of DNA material within the criminal justice system. A large proportion of the themes generated linked directly to crime.

Much of the debate around crime and policing centred on the disproportionate representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, and particularly young black and Asian men, on the database. Some of the panellists felt that the disproportionate collection of DNA from certain sections of the community was leading to further discrimination as communities were becoming criminalised through the retention of permanent records on people, whether or not they had been guilty of any offence.

Perceptions of police discrimination led to further mistrust as to how DNA samples were used and the potential for 'framing' someone once their DNA had been obtained. Other panellists felt that this was unlikely as the presence of DNA is not sufficient evidence by itself.

Some panellists raised concerns as to the security of the information held, highlighting recent losses of personal information. Others felt that this was not necessarily an issue in relation to DNA material, as very little could be done with genetic information that was lost.

Panellists raised concerns about the mechanics of DNA in relation to the criminal justice system, particularly in relation to the accuracy of data and information obtained. A number of the panellists spoke of the significant benefit that DNA brought to criminal investigations and prosecutions and the consequent impact on society. This debate engaged with the potential for the forensic use of DNA to act as a deterrent to crime.

Government and politics

All of the preceding debates around mechanics, science and crime were linked to and included discussions around political implications and motivations, and the levels of trust in government actions.

Scepticism about the Inquiry and the weight that it would be given within the debate around DNA was linked to the government's stance on identity cards and the degree of political support for them. Some panellists raised the question of whether a sense of insecurity and rising crime was being deliberately created to promote support for more government control over sensitive information such as DNA.

Linked to the debates around *Gattaca* and the potential misuse of DNA information, discussions relating to government focused on the level to which the government could be trusted to act in the best interest of the people. Some panellists felt that the government could and should be trusted, as no action on such a sensitive area would be taken without public consent. Other panellists felt that government action on issues such as the Iraq War meant that it had shown it could not be trusted to listen to the voice of the people.

Context setting

The remainder of this report provides a thematic analysis of the questions and debates that shaped the recommendations made by the panel. While not all of these discussions linked directly to a particular recommendation or theme, they formed much of the underlying dialogue that gave rise to more specific debates. Those discussions that shaped the broader understanding of the panel are provided in this section as a contextual backdrop to many of the themes. The discussions that related directly to particular themes, grouped under the heading of 'Infrastructure', 'Implementation' and 'Impact', are detailed under the relevant sections below.

Civil liberties and societal rights

The vast majority of the debates that took place during the Inquiry were tinged with considerations of civil liberties and societal rights. The balance between individual and societal rights was the subject of a substantial part of the agenda-setting dialogue on the initial days, as well as forming much of the subtext to the questions posed to experts.

Debates relating to civil liberties and societal rights were couched in considerations of how a 'successful' system was defined. Panellists felt that a successful database would give rise to five main outcomes:

1. quicker detection
2. more objective evidence
3. solving old crimes
4. preventing new crimes
5. proving innocence and exonerating suspects.

All of these aims and potential outcomes require a balance between individual civil liberties and wider societal rights. As a result, contrary perspectives arose when debating how these aims could be achieved. Panellists discussed at length the balance that ought to be struck between concerns regarding civil liberties and the potential and actual benefits to society.

During the course of panel dialogue, two broadly competing perspectives emerged. On the one hand some of the panel felt that, while the forensic use of DNA and the database may be beneficial tools for the achievement of the above aims, those wielding the tools could not or should not be trusted to utilise them effectively.

Some of those holding this view went so far as to suggest that the existence of the National DNA Database was actually contributing to discrimination by recording and thus criminalising large numbers of people. It was thought that an individual's presence on the database would be interpreted as indicating a propensity towards criminal activity, whether they had been found guilty of a crime or not. These concerns were compounded by a lack of trust of formal institutions, particularly the government and the police.

Statistics relating to BME communities and the database, the historical actions of the government and the police, the extension of their authority and doubts about their legitimacy arising from events such as the Iraq War and the murder of Stephen Lawrence gave rise to suspicion that information relating to DNA may be misused by those in authority.

Perspectives on the other side of the debate were also concerned with individual rights, but related less to the perpetrator and more to the victim of a crime. It was felt that societal rights, and by extension the rights of individuals, to live free from crime were often overlooked in favour of individual civil liberties that favoured potential or actual perpetrators of criminal activity. Among those who held this view there was concern that the lack of trust in institutions was disproportionate to the degree to which it had been breached, and that on the whole those in positions of power executed their duties with due consideration and transparency.

There was also a sense that the forensic use of DNA and the DNA database were being misconstrued and the potential impact of the information held was being elevated. This strand of thought argued that the database in itself was not discriminatory, and that profiles themselves could not be abused.

Despite the prominence of this topic in the debates, recommendations specific to police activity, trust in government or the extent to which civil liberties ought to be protected were not made. The panel felt that these were beyond the remit of the Inquiry or would require recommendations so generic as to be unworthy of the deliberations that had taken place. However, the debates did feed into a number of recommendations, and the different levels of emphasis placed upon these competing arguments gave rise to recommendations that were either explicitly contradictory or divided by majority/minority splits.

Future implications

A lot of the debate that related either to the viability of a recommendation or to the merits of existing practices centred around the use of DNA in the future, and the implications of future scientific developments for permissions granted today.

Many of the panel's debates reflected concerns about the extent to which parameters established now could be misused in the future. Discussions around the development of scientific knowledge, the identification of a 'violent' or similar gene and the use of this sort of information to 'predict' whether someone would be a criminal or predisposed to criminal activity was begun in the first expert session and continued throughout the Inquiry. Panellists spoke at length about genetic modification, scientific developments, issues of consent and the potential abuse of stored information.

With scientific developments moving at the pace they are against a backdrop of limited knowledge among the wider public, some panellists felt that stored genetic information had the potential to be misused without the consent of those to whom it belonged. Concerns around the future use of genetic information were exacerbated by the rapid expansion of the National DNA Database, which has occurred without public consultation, as well as the use of techniques such as low copy number (LCN). Some panellists felt that the use of evidence based on LCN techniques in court compromised the judicial process, particularly since there was limited public understanding of 'photocopying' processes and the implications of such techniques on the integrity of samples and thus the profiles they generated.

This gave rise to further debate around the ownership of genetic material and the degree to which that ownership was revoked as a result of criminal activity or even where DNA had been discarded – for example, on a cigarette butt. Once again competing perspectives arose, with some panellists feeling that ownership of one's genetic material was retained irrespective of where the DNA was, while others felt that once it had left the body it was no longer owned by the individual.

These debates did not give rise to recommendations in their own right, but formed the subtext against which many of the recommendations relating to public education and information, ownership and governance, access and retention of samples were made. These debates also fed directly into recommendations relating to safeguards, as a means of alleviating some of the concerns expressed by panellists.

Infrastructure

Public education and information

The theme of public education and information linked significantly to the experience of panellists within the Inquiry process itself. Weeks of questioning experts and deliberating upon what they had heard, and the development of their own opinions, raised their awareness of the relevance of such issues to daily life.

The Inquiry proved to be a steep learning curve for many panellists. At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, the process also enabled them to realise how much they, as experts on their own lived experiences, had to contribute to the knowledge and learning of 'external experts' and policy-makers. This realisation was affirmed in very different, but very stark, ways on both the regional visits.

The Glasgow panel's dialogue with MSPs brought home the degree to which the panellists were aware of the intricacies of the database, even more so than those who may be responsible for establishing policies in relation to it. A more informed public would allow a much more transparent and accountable system, and would also enable policy-makers and stakeholders to provide informed guidance on what the public actually want.

The Hackney trip provided the Birmingham panel with an insight into the diversity of knowledge among different communities in the UK, and a sense of the potential and actual impact of existing policies. The lack of knowledge among many of the people who were actually on the database revealed a huge gap in its potential deterrent capabilities, and suggested a widespread lack of awareness as to the future impact that one's presence on the database could have. This lack of knowledge, and the apparent disdain with which being on the database was treated, also pointed to a disjuncture between individuals and institutions which only compounded the lack of trust and limited a sense of security.

There was a recognition that the police as well as the general public needed better educating so that tools such as the DNA database, provided in order for the police to able to carry out their roles effectively, were not perceived by the public as being a further means of discrimination.

The diversity of opinion among the panellists themselves demonstrated diversity of voice. It was felt that the disagreements within the panel would be far more pronounced when conducted among the public nationally. It was also felt that the learning and understanding of the systems would be just as steep and beneficial to the public and policy-makers alike. The panellists were unanimous that the process in which they had shared should in some way be extended beyond the Inquiry.

The topic of public education was directly addressed by certain experts and not touched upon by others. The talks given by experts formed much of the substantive content that panellists felt should be included in the public information campaigns, and indeed indicated why the information campaigns were important. Contact with experts who were active in the collection and analysis of samples and the generation and storage of profiles, but who did not provide communication and guidance to the general public, demonstrated the importance of the information held by experts and the level to which it was taken for granted. Recommendations made around public and police education were designed to improve trust, increase transparency and accountability, improve public awareness and, in the long term, develop a more effective system of crime detection and prevention.

RECOMMENDATION 1

There needs to be a nationwide public awareness campaign for all sectors of the population.

The awareness campaign should be just the facts. There should be no bias, then more informed decisions can be made by the public. Its focus should be on six key areas:

- the wider implications of DNA;
- the fact you only have to be arrested to have your DNA taken;
- the fact that the DNA profile is held indefinitely;
- what the DNA sample and the profile are and what they are used for;
- how the system works; and
- logistics/procedures.

Unanimous

RECOMMENDATION 1A

The information campaign should be in all the following formats, to reach a wider group of people:

- website – with information about everything;
- Facebook, MySpace, TV, Bebo;
- accessible leaflets explaining rights;
- posters and leaflets at clinics, hospitals and libraries; and
- experts to speak in schools.

Unanimous

RECOMMENDATION 2

The police need educating about human rights. The police should be forced to give information when DNA is taken. People should be allowed some time to access information concerning compulsory taking of samples before the sample is taken.

Reasons

- This would give people more reassurance.
- It would be useful to give people a leaflet with information as an absolute minimum.

Unanimous

Ownership and governance

Experts such as Mike Prior, June Guiness, Tom Ross and Tom Nelson all spoke directly to the theme of ownership and governance. The emotive nature of the debates relating to the themes of ownership, governance and access can in part be explained by the fundamental nature of DNA itself, described by one expert as ‘a list of instructions that make your body work’. The understanding of what DNA meant for an individual and its potential unauthorised use took on numerous connotations.

A number of the experts contradicted one another in relation to the chain of accountability and hierarchy. One expert spoke of the Forensic Science Service as working for the police, another of it being independent but accountable to the police.

As shown above, much of the initial discussion, particularly in the Glasgow panel, related to concerns around ownership and governance. Concerns related to the role, remit and agenda of national government and the general public’s level of trust in the government to store DNA information safely and use it only for the purpose for which it was obtained. Dialogue around trust also linked to concerns about discrimination against particular communities. As detailed above, the panellists spent considerable time discussing whether issues of discrimination were related to the forensic use of DNA and the DNA database, or whether they pointed to a more endemic problem which impacted on the database but was not itself caused by it.

The idea of an independent database – first spoken of explicitly by Satish Sekar – generated a great deal of interest among the panel and was considered to provide a positive solution to the issues of discrimination, trust and misuse of DNA. Balancing concerns over misuse with the necessity to put in place a realistic and workable infrastructure gave rise to Recommendations 3, 3A and 3B.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The government should fund the National DNA Database but not own it. The database should be owned by an independent body accountable only to the general public.

Lay people should be recruited onto the independent body through equal opportunity processes.

Reasons

- We cannot predict the actions of future governments.
- We cannot rely on the behaviour of future governments not to change legislation or be influenced by new scientific developments and opportunities.
- The police need to be seen as separate for public confidence.
- Scientists should not be wholly responsible for dealing with the implications of their work and its application.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 3A

The independent body should be made up of delegates from all the bodies or groups below:

- the government;
- the police;
- scientists;
- the general public; and
- an ethics group.

Only a small number of people should have control, to make it easier to be secure.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 3B (i)

There must be a committee or a commission that publishes an annual report on the National DNA Database and other important related matters.

Reasons

- To keep the public informed and educated.
- So the public can critique the National DNA Database.

Unanimous

RECOMMENDATION 3B (ii)

Membership of the commission must be defined by law and should include people from all walks of life.

Reasons

- So there is fair representation.
- So it can include different viewpoints.

Unanimous

RECOMMENDATION 3B (iii)

This commission must be specifically for the National DNA Database. It must oversee that the database is run satisfactorily. All safeguards regarding the database should be rigorous and assessed by this independent body.

Opinion

This body should not be made up by, or controlled by, the police, who may be biased or have targets for convictions.

Unanimous

Access

Panellist questions and debates linked to access centred a great deal around the merits and demerits of public and private ownership of laboratories, the use of samples and, to a lesser extent, the use of profiles. Dr Helen Wallace spoke of a recent case discovered by GeneWatch where research was being conducted to determine whether racial background could be determined from retained samples. This, combined with what appeared to be very lax security measures, raised concerns among the panel members as to who had access to samples and profiles and for what purpose.

Panellists engaged in lengthy dialogue about the potential for future misuse of stored information and the necessity for appropriate and sufficient safeguards to be put in place. Many felt that these safeguards had to go beyond making the database independent.

Ambiguities concerning who has access led to significant concerns that the rights of individuals to have their property treated as personal, as well as to know who has access to it and for what purpose, would be breached.

The theme of access was centrally linked to trust-based concerns of role, remit and function. Expert discussion around the ethics of retention and access, the purpose of keeping samples, the procedures for collecting and retaining samples and the differences between the legal frameworks of organisations that hold the data all led to a variety of access boundaries being drawn up which did not necessarily correspond to one another.

Recommendations around access were designed to provide necessary safeguards for the storage of information as well as a more accountable and transparent infrastructure that would enable the public to monitor what was happening on a regular basis. It was considered that this monitoring capability, combined with a stronger level of knowledge, would aid the legitimacy of the database as well as ensuring that the parameters of its usage responded to the ethical, moral, social and legal concerns of the public, rather than to scientific developments and institutional requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Legislation should be passed to define who can access the database and to restrict its purpose and use to:

- Police: for crime detection only. (Access is only permitted to seek matches for a profile from a crime scene.)
- Support defence or prosecution cases.
- The commission to audit and test the robustness of security and access control.

Reasons

- So that the database is maintained properly.
- So that security and access are tight.
- Need legislation to stop governments doing what they want in the future.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 5

The National DNA Database Ethics Group should play a prominent role (have more influence) in the legislative process of the database development.

Reason

- It is important to make sure that the database's actions, usage and scope are kept ethical.

Opinion

At the moment the Ethics Group's suggestions do not have much influence.

Majority

The Scottish database and the National DNA Database

Concerns about the differences between the National DNA Database and the Scottish database, the ambiguities that this gave rise to and the apparent lack of reason for such a difference were unanimous among the panel.

The panel discussed the difficulties in implementing two different systems even though the borders upon which those differences are based are open. Questions such as 'What happens if an English young person is arrested in Scotland?' and 'How is the information shared when the rules of what is stored are different?' denote a concern around the feasibility of maintaining two different systems. It is these concerns and the debates around the merits of each system that shape the context behind Recommendation 6.

Because of the clear demarcations in relation to the differences between the two systems, the majority of the debate that took place on this theme related to the actual differences between the systems and which system was a 'better', more 'successful' one. During the Inquiry a number of the panellists expressed their preference for the Scottish system. This preference stemmed largely from the facts that profiles are removed from the database once the subjects are found innocent and that ethnicity was not recorded.

Other panellists felt that removal of a record was an unnecessary measure, as its presence on the database would aid elimination of the individual from a police investigation if necessary and its removal would simply add to the cost of having to retake a sample if required. In the debates of merit, the discussions around civil liberties and society elaborated upon earlier in the report played a central role.

Divergent views about both databases arose upon consideration of the age at which the profiles of young people are entered. The age of eight in Scotland generated a great deal of surprise and concern among a number of the panellists, particularly given that DNA can be taken by force and without parental or the young person's consent. This debate also took into account the length of time that the profile is kept on the database and the potential for such a record to criminalise a young person. Others on the panel felt that the retention of young people's samples and profiles was only fair, particularly in light of their criminal culpability at the age of eight, the offences for which those of such a young age would have been added to the database, and the propensity of young people to reoffend.

For some panellists, the police discretion available in Scotland to determine whose DNA should be taken and for which crimes alleviated the concern relating to age, as the numbers of eight-year-olds on the Scottish database at the time of the Inquiry was minimal. Preoccupation with the Scottish age of eight meant that the age of 10 for the National DNA Database was not considered in as much depth.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Legislation governing both England and Scotland should be the same. A compromise would be to adopt the Scottish system but lengthen the time limit for profiles to be kept on the database. Retention of profiles in England and Wales should be the same as in Scotland, where they take off innocent people and they do not record ethnicity.

Reasons

- More people would be caught or suspected if profiles were kept on file longer, as in England.
- Recording of ethnicity and retaining innocent profiles could lead to discrimination.

Majority

Universal DNA database

As the term 'National DNA Database' was already being utilised for the existing system, the panel used the term 'universal database' to denote a database that contained the profiles of every resident or visitor to the UK. The notion of a universal DNA database was spoken of by Satish Sekar in the main, and was considered a potential tool in the fight against discrimination and in the decriminalisation of the database, as well as being beneficial in eliminating the innocent from an investigation and/or identifying potential suspects. Discussion on the universal database was tinged with concerns relating to the ownership of the database and the use that could be made of the information, both in the present context and in terms of future developments and political leanings.

Some of the panellists felt that a universal database would be immune to being perceived as discriminatory, as no one community would be over-represented and everyone within the UK would be subject to the same checks. This line of argument also incorporated a sense that a universal database would no longer have a criminalising effect as it would not suggest that those on it had a propensity for, or had been suspected of, criminal activity.

Objections to a universal DNA database were based on a range of arguments. Some panellists felt that it would be financially and logistically impossible to gather and process samples from everybody in the UK. There were also concerns around issues of consent, with a number of the panellists arguing that too many of the public would refuse to provide DNA samples, thus undermining the purpose of the universal database. It was further argued that a universal system would require too many safeguards to ensure that forcible collection or misinformation were not utilised to obtain a sample. One of the main arguments against a universal database centred on a lack of trust as to what the information might be used for in the future. This argument was located in the sensitivity of information that DNA provides and the ownership debate elaborated upon earlier.

Despite extensive dialogue around this theme, little consensus was achieved. The positions adopted in this debate were vehemently held by each side, a fact reflected in the directly contradictory recommendations made.

RECOMMENDATION 7

There should not be a universal DNA database.

Reasons

- Creation of a universal database would cost a great deal.
- Taking DNA from those arrested, as the current system does, targets those likely to commit crimes. The number of people from the whole of the population likely to commit crimes is too low to warrant DNA being collected from the whole of the population.
- A universal database will be almost impossible to implement in terms of collection and storage.
- DNA is currently collected because by being suspected of committing a crime an individual is giving up their right to control who has their DNA; a universal database would prevent this.
- The whole ethos of the British justice system is 'innocent until proven guilty'. By putting everyone on the database you are naming them as a possible suspect for a crime in the future.
- The database is more about finding suspects than exonerating the innocent; it is unfair to consider all individuals within the population to be suspects.
- A universal database would be open to different uses by groups such as employers, insurance companies etc.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 8

There should be a universal DNA database. (This recommendation should only be implemented if there are appropriate safeguards in place.)

Reasons

- Though this may be expensive to implement – the benefits to society and policing will reduce the costs in the long term.
- Current statistics show that certain communities are over-represented on the DNA database. A universal database will prevent certain communities being discriminated against more than others.
- A universal database will also enable quick elimination of suspects in police investigations – proving people innocent.
- Collection of DNA does not mean you are suspected of committing a crime.
- A universal system would remove the stigma from being on the database.
- It would be helpful to the police in cases where they are up against a 'wall of silence' and need evidence.

Minority

International DNA database and data sharing

Some members of the panel felt that discussing an international DNA database and the sharing of data internationally was moving too quickly, particularly as there remained such high levels of contention around the National DNA Database and access to it. Much of the debate that took place among the panel around an international database was among those panellists who were open to the potential of an international database, or at least to the sharing of data.

International practices and the parameters of an international DNA database raised a number of questions about the extent of the UK database remit. Some of the panel were compelled by cases where the international sharing of DNA had resulted in convictions of criminals who would otherwise have remained at large. The persuasiveness of these arguments was set against the backdrop of an ever-shrinking world where travel to foreign countries has become commonplace, and the fact that criminal activity is not located solely in one's home country. Some panellists felt that it was illogical to prevent the police from using DNA as a tool to solve crimes simply because someone was not a UK national.

Other panellists felt that an international system of data sharing might well be used as a political bargaining tool, with information being withheld or disclosed in order to gain favour or achieve objectives unrelated to solving crime. Much of the debate became centred around levels of trust in those who had access to information and the requirement of putting sufficient safeguards in place. These safeguards became all the more important in light of the fact that information on UK nationals might well be shared with governments and countries that do not uphold the same values of civil liberties, human rights and protection of information as the UK.

Some panellists felt that international data sharing was made all the more difficult and ambiguous given the different techniques used to generate samples and the different number of components relied on in different countries – with the example of the USA's reliance on 16 components as compared to the UK's 11 components being cited on a number of occasions.

RECOMMENDATION 9

There should not be an international DNA database or sharing of DNA samples and profiles.

Reasons

- An international database will not be cost effective.
- International sharing will be too difficult to manage and regulate effectively.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 10

There should be an international DNA database. This would include both those who have been convicted and those suspected but not convicted of a crime.

Reason

- Crimes have been solved because of DNA sharing between countries. This should not be prevented.

Minority

RECOMMENDATION 10A

An independent body must control the international sharing of DNA data. Crime stains should be shared but profiles should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 10B

If there is an international DNA database, an agreement should be signed between countries which includes a shared agreement on safeguards, security and how the database and related information is used.

Majority

Implementation

Policing

The requirements and procedures of policing provided the context for many of the debates that took place among the panel. Policing was, however, also tackled in its own right, with panellists specifically asking to speak to an active police officer as one of their external experts.

Much of the debate relating to policing centred around issues of discrimination and the impact of the forensic use of DNA on police procedures.

A number of the panellists felt that the disproportionate number of black and Asian men on the database was a direct indication of police discrimination and the police's propensity to target and arrest individuals from particular communities. There was broad agreement on this among the panellists, but they differed in their views on how endemic discrimination was and the degree to which the responsibility for it was shared between police and the communities.

The expert session with Derek Forest, as well as the visit to Hackney, gave the panellists an opportunity to engage with the practices and procedures used in taking and processing DNA samples and the role that DNA plays in the investigation and conviction of a criminal. All the panellists recognised the invaluable role that DNA had to play in the prevention and detection of criminal activity, but they had varying degrees of concern as to the implications of this on policing. Some of their concerns are elaborated on further in the 'Over-reliance on the DNA database' section below.

During the initial stages of deliberation, six recommendations relating to policing were made; these were later refined to two. After lengthy dialogue the panel reflected that policing was itself beyond the remit of their discussions, and thus Recommendations 11 and 12 were made in relation to those elements of policing that had a direct impact upon the perception, legitimacy and impact of the DNA database.

There remains a sense among the majority of the panel that policing procedures need to be reviewed, particularly in relation to BME communities, in order to improve trust in the system and minimise the perception of victimisation and discrimination. It was felt that the current situation has led directly to a perceived illegitimacy of tools such as the DNA database and a suspicion of misuse of forensic information.

RECOMMENDATION 11

We recommend that all police officers, as part of initial training, should be extensively trained and educated on policies concerning the National DNA Database and should relay the information to those it affects.

Reasons

- Throughout the Inquiry process we were able to speak to a number of young people who were on the National DNA Database, but did not know why. This has led us to believe that many of the people affected by the DNA database know very little about it.
- The police need to be trained as well as they can be in dealing with the public.
- There is a large proportion of people from black and minority ethnic communities on the National DNA Database, which suggests a need for further training. That said, this recommendation should apply in relation to all ethnicities and not specifically target any particular community.
- The process of taking DNA should be explained, particularly to those subject to it.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 12

We recommend that there should be an independent agency to regulate and monitor the procedures of collecting DNA. Specially trained police officers should take the sample.

Reasons

- There can be no future influence on the use of the DNA database if it is monitored by an independent body.
- An independent body will give equal consideration to both the police and arrestees and will be in a position to give more information to the arrestees.
- There is a lot of secrecy surrounding the system at the moment. With an independent body monitoring the procedures and the database, it would be more in the general public's eye.
- The police are only accountable to government or themselves at the moment which can lead to abuse.

Majority

Procedures for taking samples

Dialogue around procedures for taking samples related to issues of policing, consent, forcible collection and trust.

Some of the panel were concerned that police reliance on forensic DNA could compromise their objectivity in taking a DNA sample. This was compounded by the discussions on discrimination and concerns about the legitimacy and fairness of police practice. This discussion was also placed in the context of the independence of the database. Some panellists felt that independent organisations or individuals, such as doctors, may be better placed to take samples, as they have little vested interest in what the sample identifies. There is also a greater level of trust in doctors. Other panellists felt, however, that doctors should not take samples; this is not their role, and their position as healers would be compromised in instances where samples need to be taken by force.

The panel discussed the merits of allowing DNA to be taken by force. Much of the discussion centred around the degree to which an individual's rights were forfeited if a crime had been committed. This debate related to ownership of genetic material and whether something that is a part of you can be taken by force, whatever actions you may have committed. Some panellists felt that the commission of a crime meant the forfeiture of the right to one's own DNA. Others felt that the current situation, which allows forcible collection based on suspicion, was unfair. The panel struggled with the reality that a DNA sample may be required in order to reach a conviction and affirm suspicion.

The panel also engaged with issues relating to the severity of the crime and the presence of sufficient evidence to support a suspicion before allowing forcible collection. It was felt that these factors could be used to justify collection by force, although current procedures do not allow for this.

Panellists felt that asking the police to consider the severity of the crime was leaving too much ambiguity in terms of the procedures that should be followed and the remit that they have. And they highlighted the need to have clear and enforceable guidelines to determine what is sufficient evidence to justify collection by force.

The forcible collection of DNA was also felt by some panellists to contribute to mistrust of the police, exacerbated by a lack of information and understanding about why the sample was being taken.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The police should have the right to take samples by force, but only in instances where there is sufficient evidence to suggest criminal involvement. Innocent individuals, and those picked up for minor offences like breach of peace should not have their DNA forcibly taken.

Reasons

- DNA samples may be needed to convict a suspect so should be forcibly taken.
- Where the police do not have enough evidence they can criminalise people by taking their DNA.
- Forcible collection of DNA violates individuals' human rights where they are not guilty or have been arrested for minor crimes.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 13A

There is a need for well-publicised and strictly applied procedures. If force is required, very clear/witnessed procedures must be applied so that people do not feel abused.

Reasons

- A lack of clear procedures will leave the use of force wide open for abuse.
- Knowledge of why DNA is being taken and what will be done with it will help reduce people's fears of having it taken.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 13B

If someone refuses to give their DNA sample, they should be given a warning that the action is compulsory. They should be given an information pack with detailed information about the process of converting the sample into a profile, as well as facts and statistics about the DNA database, for example who looks at it and what other uses the database has.

Reasons

- To eradicate fear.
- To educate the individuals concerned.
- It will stop some forced DNA being taken because people would understand better what is happening and that this is the law.

Majority

Scientists

Recommendations linked to scientists related a great deal to the impact that scientists could have on people's perception of DNA, rather than the proficiency or accuracy of the work that they undertook. The direction and form of the recommendations stemmed from panellists' concerns about their own initial lack of knowledge at the outset of the process, which only became more apparent as they learnt more.

Clare Stangoe spoke to the panel about the independence of scientists and the scientific procedures to which DNA samples are subject. She expressed her view that scientists are independent and provide unbiased expertise on scientific evidence. However, some panellists still felt that a scientist's independence could be compromised by the fact that they could be employed by either the prosecution or the defence. The adversarial nature of the British system was seen as providing the potential for scientists to be influenced by the agenda of whichever side of a legal case they were working for.

The adversarial system of the UK, and that of the USA, provided a context for why the experiences and use of scientists in judicial cases are different from those in much of continental Europe.

Panellists considered that the prestige of scientists and the apparent certainty of fact with which they work sat uncomfortably alongside human fallibility and working within an adversarial system. This was particularly illustrated by one of the role plays enacted by the panel, in which a partial DNA sample subject to low copy number technique was used to build a case against someone on the strength of a scientist's qualifications and incomplete explanation of the data. The panellists enacting the role play asked the remaining panellists if they would have found the suspect guilty or not guilty on the basis of what they had heard. The majority felt they would have found her guilty had they not been part of the Inquiry process, but were now more likely to question the evidence presented.

The perceived bias to which scientists are subject is made all the more prominent by the lack of information on how an incriminating piece of DNA may have been deposited in a particular place. The 'opinion' of scientists on how the DNA came to be in that place was considered highly problematic by panellists, particularly given the influence that scientific opinion would have on such an issue.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Scientists concerned with the DNA database should be independent and from multiple funders. This includes for the processing of crime stains and samples, auditing labs and controlling access. There should be known and qualified eligible scientists in these processes. These scientists should also advise on future legislation so that it is monitored properly.

Reasons

- If a scientist is biased or works for only the prosecution then this has the potential to affect the way they read the DNA evidence.
- Without effective safeguards in place, laboratories can make mistakes or not maintain sufficient standards.
- Scientists and laboratories have an important role to play in building a case against somebody or in somebody's defence. This should be tightly regulated to make sure they are independent.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 15 (i)

Experienced scientists should not give opinions and should only report factual findings.

Reasons

- Scientists have a lot of sway with juries and 'Joe Public' because of their qualifications and how much they know.
- Views of scientists are often considered fact, but they are only opinion. As such, they should only be allowed to present and discuss the facts.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 15 (ii)

Scientists should not be biased. Thus in a court of law there should be a scientist from more than one laboratory. Both sides should be represented by scientists.

Reasons

- Both sides of a case should have a chance to check the evidence.
- If the scientists both work for the same organisation or laboratory they may not disagree with one another even though they should. Separate workplaces will help make sure they remain impartial.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 15 (iii)

In serious cases we need more than just the two adversarial experts: one extra independent scientist (possibly two in very difficult cases).

Reasons

- It is important that juries have the option of hearing as much evidence as possible.
- The third scientist will be able to present an independent perspective.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 16

Juries need some independent guidance about DNA before hearing from adversarial scientists.

Reasons

- The jury should be educated about DNA before trial so that they do not get swayed by what the scientists or experts have to say and can make up their own minds.
- Juries do not learn enough about DNA before they are asked to judge its importance to a case. Jurors need to be formally made aware (through induction training) of the role of DNA evidence in determining a conviction. This should include an understanding of the intricacies of DNA usage and its pitfalls, for example the possibility of planting DNA and the use of partial samples.
- It is easy to be blinded by the qualifications of scientists and the authority with which they speak.

Unanimous

RECOMMENDATION 17

Scientists should be much more involved in education; there should be more people involved with education to help understand more about DNA and raise public awareness.

Reason

- Not enough people know about DNA and how it is used, but the issue concerns them all. It is especially important now when more and more young people are getting arrested but still do not know what it is.

Unanimous

Retention

The retention debate took on a different dimension once the distinction between the DNA sample and the profile had been established; this also changed panellists' perspective on the remit and scope of the National DNA Database. The retention of some DNA samples by the laboratories responsible for processing them, the fact that a sample contains a great deal more information than the components used for the profile, the payment of those laboratories to hold the samples and the different legal status (public and private) of the laboratories all led to considerable debate on the merits and necessity of holding a sample.

These discussions were set against some panellists' initial views as to the merits or otherwise of retaining a sample at all. One panellist put forward the perspective: 'Retention of sample makes no sense if the profile has already been determined. The person the profile belongs to will have to be found and if doubt exists as to the actual match the person will be in custody and can thus provide a fresh sample.'

Panellists were keen to understand, through dialogue and expert questioning, the extent to which DNA changes over time and the ways in which samples can deteriorate – together with the impact of this on the information then obtained from them. The distinction between the profile and the sample and the purposes to which both are used was important to this understanding.

The extension of the database's powers to retain a sample and the change in legislation in 2003 was not discussed at any great length. Dr Helen Wallace cited the potential identification of murderers as having been the reason for the change in legislation. This was not questioned by the panellists, who seemed to accept that the identification of a potential culprit should have been acted upon. This did not prevent the debate on whether the system of retention should be changed.

Debates on retention also incorporated and overlapped with those on ownership of a sample. Some panellists felt that retaining a sample was a contravention of the Human Tissue Act, particularly in instances where the individual to whom it belonged had been found not guilty. Others felt that, once DNA had been obtained, it no longer belonged to the individual.

Having established the distinction between the profile and the sample, retention of profiles of those found guilty generated less debate then the retention of samples. Having reached a fairly rapid consensus on the retention of guilty profiles, the panel engaged in lengthy debate as to the length of time for which the profile should be kept. For some panellists, indefinite retention of a profile presumed that the individual to whom the profile related was likely to commit a crime in the future. Some panellists felt that, after someone had served their sentence and a sufficient amount of time had elapsed, the profile should be removed. Other panellists disagreed with this position and felt that profiles should be retained regardless of guilt or innocence. These competing perspectives are reflected in the differences between Recommendation 20 and Recommendation 21.

RECOMMENDATION 18

If a person whose DNA has been loaded on to the database is found to be innocent or is released, the DNA sample must be destroyed and the profile removed from the database by law. Innocent people on the database should now be removed.

Reasons

- If there is a National DNA Database storing samples, storage could be used to find out more sensitive information or laboratories could use the stored samples for other inappropriate reasons.
- Retaining the sample criminalises the innocent and we know removal works well in the Scottish system.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 19 (i)

The DNA sample should not be stored regardless of whether the person is charged or not. The original DNA sample should be destroyed once the DNA profile has been loaded on to the database. It should be made illegal to retain it.

Reasons

- Samples are not necessary unless they are going to be used in the future. The suspect would need to be found anyway and a second sample can be collected at this stage, if necessary.
- DNA samples could fall into the wrong hands, for example insurance companies who may discriminate against people..

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 19 (ii)

Samples should not be stored. However, because they are at the moment, they should be stored at the laboratories they are sent to. There should be better security and restricted access so that it is illegal to use these samples for any other purposes.

Reason

- The Human Tissue Act 2004 means people own their own DNA and body samples; this should be kept in mind when storing and giving access to samples.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 20

The length of time the DNA profile should stay on the database should be proportionate to the severity of the individual's crime or a minimum of five years – whichever is longer. The principle of proportionality is similar to that of sentencing for criminal offences.

Reasons

- Once people have served their sentence they should feel safe that they are able to move on. Retaining their profile continues to criminalise them.
- Currently no distinction is made between someone who has been arrested for breach of the peace and someone who has murdered somebody. That their profile is on the database automatically suggests they have been involved in criminal activity.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 21 (i)

Regardless of whether someone is found innocent or guilty, the DNA profile should be retained indefinitely.

Reasons

- Once a profile has been collected there is no need to remove it – it is simply a string of numbers.
- Retention a profile could actually eliminate someone from an inquiry.
- Retention may help if that person goes on to commit a crime.

Minority

RECOMMENDATION 21 (ii)

If someone is convicted, their profile should be kept until their death.

Reason

- See 21 (i).

Minority

RECOMMENDATION 21 (iii)

DNA profiles should be retained after a person's death. The profile should be retained for five years after the person's death just in case the dead person is guilty or innocent of a crime.

Reason

- Crimes may come to light after someone has died. Retaining their profile will help identify the person responsible, or eliminate them from the inquiry.

Minority

Over-reliance on the DNA database

Many of the concerns surrounding over-reliance on the National DNA Database stemmed from dialogue relating to the potential for DNA evidence to be accidentally or deliberately found at a crime scene, and the injustice that this might give rise to. A number of the experts were asked whether they were aware of wrongful convictions arising from DNA evidence. There was a recognition among experts that, while the technique for identifying and matching DNA data had never resulted in a wrongful conviction, the presence of DNA at crime scenes was not necessarily evidence that someone had been present.

It is important to recognise that the panellists did not at any time question the original technique of analysing the 22 components on a full DNA profile and comparing them with a full crime stain sample; the possibility that such a profile could belong to anyone else was considered, by implication, inconceivable.

Techniques such as low copy number and the consequent degradation of the sample, as well as reliance on partial samples, led to concerns over the use of DNA as apparently incontrovertible evidence. They also fed into panellists' concerns with regard to juries' level of understanding about the evidence being presented to them, and the extent to which it may be less accurate than it is perceived to be by those who put a great deal of faith in science.

The second dimension to the debate on over-reliance arose in relation to policing strategies. Panellists raised concerns that the weight given to DNA evidence may mislead investigators or distract them from other, more compelling evidence. Termed 'armchair policing', three out of the five role plays devised by the panel portrayed instances where the discovery of DNA evidence either brought any further investigation to an end or caused other evidence to be overlooked. The concerns around such over-reliance were further evident in panel discussions; while acknowledging the opinion of external experts that DNA evidence is rarely considered on its own, some panellists felt that this was an inaccurate representation of reality.

RECOMMENDATION 22

DNA should never be taken as evidence on its own, except in exceptional circumstances. Convictions should be made on multiple forms of evidence, for example circumstantial evidence, fingerprints, witnesses.

Reasons

- DNA can be planted or accidentally moved from one place to another. Its presence somewhere is not enough proof.
- Over-reliance on DNA might lead to lazy policing.
- DNA evidence is not always the strongest evidence in a case.

Majority

Impact

Discrimination

Many of the deliberations and discussions relating to the theme of discrimination have been elaborated upon in earlier sections. Some panellists' concerns around issues of discrimination and disproportionate representation of certain communities on the database were apparent throughout the Inquiry.

Discrimination was considered not only in relation to BME communities but also in relation to the disabled. The external expert Richard West provided panellists with a very personal but poignant account of his experiences as a BME man who is also deaf. Richard's experiences were made all the more real when he was stopped leaving the Inquiry at the train station, while in the company of two panellists. Although he did not have his DNA taken, nor was he suspected of any criminal activity, just the fact that he had been stopped was considered by the panellists to be indicative of the sorts of treatment experienced by large segments of the population because of their ethnicity or a perception that they are different.

Panellists considered many ways in which discrimination could be combated. Some suggested that a change in legislation might reduce discrimination; having engaged this line of reasoning with experts, the panel felt that present anti-discrimination legislation, if implemented correctly, should be sufficient.

The lack of recourse to legislation as a means of combating discrimination left little ground for the panel to make recommendations. As highlighted previously, initial recommendations relating to policing procedures were considered to be beyond the remit of the Inquiry and thus omitted.

The panel chose instead to focus on discrimination as it directly linked to the role, remit and construct of the database. To this end the debate centred on the manner and purpose of recording an individual's ethnicity when collecting and storing a DNA sample.

Three broad positions were developed within the panel. The first felt that discrimination was unrelated to the database or the forensic use of DNA, both of which were tools in the system and were thus not at fault. Panellists holding this view felt that there was no reason to amend, change or develop the database, as changes to its structure would not affect the way in which people were treated.

The second position taken by panellists was that the allocation and recording of individual ethnicity – baed on the police officer's categorisation rather than that of the suspect – is itself an infringement of civil liberties. Some panellists argued that the DNA of an individual would remain the same irrespective of his or her ethnicity. Although panellists acknowledged that recording ethnicity allowed the disproportionate impact of the database to be measured, they said it was doing more harm than good because it resulted in the demonisation of entire communities.

A third group of panellists felt that ethnicity should be recorded so that levels of discrimination could be measured, without which no one would be held accountable.

This line of reasoning also argued that to eliminate ethnicity from the database would, to some extent, reduce the impact and usefulness of the database. The visual marker of ethnicity was considered an important tool for policing.

These competing perspectives gave rise to two contradictory recommendations – Recommendation 23 and Recommendation 24.

RECOMMENDATION 23

We recommend that a person's ethnicity should be recorded.

Reasons

- Without recording ethnicity we would be unable to know about the disproportionate race figures on the database.
- Some on the panel believe ethnic appearance is needed for policing as it makes the 'detection' of a criminal easier.
- If ethnicity was not recorded it may result in even more disproportionate figures being recorded as there would be no checks and balances.

Minority

RECOMMENDATION 24

We recommend that a person's ethnicity should not be recorded.

Reasons

- If DNA is found at a crime scene the ethnicity of the person to whom it belongs does not matter anyway – the sample will match regardless.
- Recording ethnicity could be used to discriminate in other ways.

Opinion

Some of us believe that defining ethnicity based on police officer perception is itself discriminatory.

Majority

Age

The issue of age was one of the most debated themes throughout the Inquiry. Concerns relating to criminal culpability, consent, procedures for DNA collection, appropriate treatment and collection for the universal database were centrally linked to ethical and moral considerations of age. Many of these have been elaborated on in earlier analysis. Given the number of recommendations made on the theme of age, however, it is important to revisit the panel debates, overlapping with earlier discussion if necessary.

The relevance of age became starkly evident to the panel in the second Inquiry session during discussions with Tom Ross and Tom Nelson of the Scottish DNA Database. In his breakdown of the database, Tom Ross told panellists that criminal culpability, and therefore DNA profiling, begins in Scotland at the age of eight. A number of panellists asked why the age boundary was so low and what the implications of being on the database were for someone so young. Tom highlighted the very low number of young people on the database, despite the legality of having them on it, and elaborated on the types of crime that have led to some of those profiles being recorded.

Numerous panel discussions revisited the issue of age. Dr Mairi Levitt's work was of particular interest as it provided an insight into the perspectives and views of young people themselves. Although the panellists were not surprised at young people's lack of knowledge about the database, they were surprised that the parents of some of those interviewed were not aware that their children were on the database.

Some panellists' unease at this lack of knowledge was compounded by the Hackney visit and the apparent apathy of some young people who were on the database. For other panellists, the young people's disregard for the database and its potential impact was indicative of the disconnect felt by many, and was the actual reason that young people should be on the database. These panellists did feel, however, that young people should be made more aware of the consequences this could have.

One strand of the debate relating to age focused on the contradiction between legislation that on the one hand protects young people by virtue of their age and on the other allows forcible DNA collection that might otherwise be deemed abuse. This debate focused on issues of consent, parental control and appropriate levels of force in relation to age.

For some panellists, age bore no relevance. They put forward the argument that, if young people are thought to have committed a crime, they should be subject to the same legal measures as adults – and this includes the forcible collection of DNA where necessary. Other panellists felt that this position was untenable and argued that young people may not always be aware of the repercussions that particular actions would have. They also felt there was little justification for contradictory legislation that would deem something done by the police (such as the forcible removal of a hair strand for the purposes of collecting a DNA sample) to be appropriate while considering it as abuse if done by a parent.

When recommendations were being generated, some panellists constructed a hypothetical scenario involving a crime committed by a young person under the age of eight, where parents were aware of their child's tendency to behave inappropriately. Panellists involved in the debate adopted two positions. Some felt that, while young people under eight were able to understand and take responsibility for a criminal action, parental responsibility was too easily absolved; the argument was put forward that parents held responsible for their children's behaviour would be less likely to leave inappropriate behaviour unchallenged. Other panellists felt that parents were not always able to control the behaviour of their children; they argued that where a serious crime was committed young people should be held culpable, but said that it was unfair to also hold parents responsible.

As discussed above, the feasibility of a universal database was discussed at length, particularly in relation to how everyone's DNA would be collected and the possibility of people (such as visitors and non-residents of the UK) slipping through the net. It is in relation to this feasibility that the collection of DNA at birth was considered a viable option, particularly as one expert had spoken of the existing measures for the NHS to take people's DNA when conducting the newborn blood spot test.

Some of the panellists felt that the collection of DNA at birth would decriminalise the entire database, be far more cost-effective in the long run and prevent the database being used as a means of discrimination. This led to a detailed and lengthy debate around issues such as consent, feasibility, short-term costs and implied criminal intent.

Some panellists felt that collection of DNA at birth would be a fundamental breach of human rights as babies would be unable to give their consent. The panel debated the possibility of temporary profiling upon parental consent until the age of 18, and then re-profiling when the individual was able to give consent. Upon reflection, panellists felt that this would defeat the objective of taking DNA at birth as it could result in a two-tier system of those who gave consent and those who did not, as well as reducing the cost-effectiveness of the system (as a DNA sample would have to be retaken at a later stage).

Some of the panellists raised concerns around the collection of DNA at birth in relation to babies born outside the UK but resident here. Some also felt that, as the primary use of a DNA database is to identify criminals, taking everyone's DNA at birth presumes a level of criminal intent. Those panellists in favour of DNA collection at birth refuted this argument on the grounds that a DNA database incorporating everyone would do precisely the opposite as it would, by definition, remove the criminalising component. For these panellists, collection of DNA at birth was a long-term project which would eventually lead to a universal DNA database.

Notwithstanding the lengthy debates that took place, little concession was made by either side. In reflection of this, two directly contradictory recommendations (Recommendation 28 and Recommendation 29) were made.

RECOMMENDATION 25

A full explanation of what being on the DNA database actually entails should be given before a child's DNA is taken. There should be a counselling discussion with the child and parent/guardian.

Reasons

- It is important that children and young people added to the database are able to understand why and how this would happen.
- Levels of awareness of this new technology are low so steps need to be taken to address people's right to information to avoid any misunderstandings.

Unanimous

RECOMMENDATION 26 (i)

If a serious crime takes place, irrespective of their age the person who committed the crime should be placed on the DNA database.

Reasons

- Some young people do know what they are doing and so should be held responsible.
- In the case of serious crimes there needs to be a level of accountability and repercussion.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 26 (ii)

If a very young person (below the age of eight) is convicted of a serious crime, both they and their parents should be placed on the database.

Reasons

- Parents should be held responsible because some children are too young to be held responsible and do not always understand the implications of their actions.
- If the child has full understanding of what they have done, it's not useful just to blame parents.

Minority

RECOMMENDATION 27

If children commit a minor offence, they should be on the DNA database but only for a short amount of time. They should only remain on the database if they are repeat offenders or it is a serious offence, for example violent crimes and sex offences.

Reason

- Children are not as accountable for their crimes as adults and should not be held as responsible for them.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 28

A sample of everyone's DNA should not be taken at birth.

Reasons

- Taking everyone's DNA would be very difficult to implement, and require different procedures for different cases such as immigrants and visitors.
- Complications will arise in difficult cases, for example what happens for those children born abroad who have British parents and come to reside in the UK?
- As a baby is unable to give consent, taking a DNA sample is in contravention of the Human Tissue Act 2004.
- Taking DNA from birth is an automatic assumption that everyone is a potential criminal.
- It is an infringement of basic human rights and the right to privacy.

Majority

RECOMMENDATION 29

A sample of everyone's DNA should be taken at birth.

Reasons

- This will cut down miscarriages of justice and the police will be able to identify the right culprit.
- This may be able to aid in the early detection of health problems.
- This may be able to help in potential kidnappings.
- If it was decided in law to have a universal database, this might be the most cost-effective way of creating it.

Minority

Reflections on the Inquiry Process

Introduction

By their very nature, participatory processes make space for the voice of participants. To be able to facilitate such a process effectively, those who are facilitating must also have the opportunity to reflect and learn.

The methodology utilised in the Inquiry was a combination of numerous processes Vis-à-Vis (VaV) has previously adopted. The facilitation of such a comprehensive national Inquiry was novel in the first instance. The addition of an Inquiry panel with such a range of diversity, two additional tiers of accountability in the form of an advisory panel (AP) and a working group (WG), two separate geographical locations and videoconferencing generated numerous challenges but, more importantly, invaluable opportunities to learn.

It is VaV standard practice to conduct an internal evaluation of any participatory process in which it is involved. The potential for learning from such an evaluation extends to all stakeholders of a project.

The Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database was commissioned alongside an independent external evaluation by Leeds Metropolitan University. The findings of this evaluation are reported separately.

This report concludes the contractor's report into the Citizens' Inquiry by highlighting the key points of learning from the VaV internal evaluation and measuring the project success against stated objectives.

Structured in accordance with the timeline of the project, the first section – entitled Vis-à-Vis learning – evaluates each step of the process from the perspective of VaV. The second and third sections turn to the panellists and external experts respectively, to measure the success of the project through the perspective of the participants. The concluding section summarises the process, analysis and evaluation against the project objectives, drawing particular focus to future learning.

Vis-à-Vis learning

This section provides a step-by-step internal evaluation of the process. A detailed breakdown of the project timeline can be found in Appendix 1.

Preparation and planning

The initial phase of the project was significantly curtailed as a result of delays in completing legal formalities related to the commissioning of the work. Contractual obligations of VaV meant that the project deadline could not be extended beyond the May deadline to compensate for this. As a result, the planning, selection and recruitment phase, originally to be conducted over 10 weeks, was reduced to a five-week period; this placed significant strain on the project from the outset, especially as it included the Christmas and New Year period.

The facilitation team had five weeks in December 2007 and early January 2008 to:

- recruit and select Advisory Panel (AP) members;
- recruit and select Inquiry Panel (IP) members;
- begin identifying and contacting potential external experts;
- devise Inquiry session plans;
- identify suitable venues for Inquiry sessions;
- manage all logistical arrangements for the Inquiry sessions;
- brief all IP and AP members about the wider scope of the project; and
- undertake adequate promotion to help generate interest in participating as audience members.

Consequently, the recruitment and selection of experts and AP members, Inquiry promotion and many of the logistical arrangements overlapped with Stage 2, the Inquiry phase. This proved to have both positive and negative consequences for the Inquiry.

Ongoing preparation enabled responsive development of the AP and experts' list, which met the need of the IP in a much less structured but ultimately more effective manner. On a less positive note, the limited time left for promotion meant that the recruitment of audience members through promotion and direct engagement was de-prioritised. Consequently the intended national dialogue was somewhat curtailed, with only 30 audience members rather than 100–150.

Geographical location and venue

The selected locations of Birmingham and Glasgow were conducive to the Inquiry process, proving accessible for experts and audience members as well as generating a diverse and inclusive panel.

Finding a suitable venue that was easily accessible for all panellists and provided videoconferencing facilities proved difficult, mainly owing to budget constraints and availability. One of the venues approached during the tender phase was no longer available by the time the project was commissioned. Central conferencing facilities in Glasgow that could accommodate the weekly Inquiry sessions cost in the region of £2,000 and upwards, an entirely unfeasible figure. A compromise was achieved by hiring the conferencing facilities of the Audi centre in Glasgow, which can accommodate videoconferencing but does not provide it in-house. An external firm was contracted to provide this. Although not ideal in terms of the distance from the city centre, this was the only financially feasible option that was also available on the dates required.

The use of new technologies, combined with a lengthy schedule of meetings, is vulnerable to significant problems, not least of which are technological difficulties and financial challenges. This susceptibility should have been foreseen and adequately provided for in the budget.

Selection and recruitment

Advisory Panel

One of the core aims of the AP was to represent a broad spectrum of interests and opinions on and around the National DNA Database. VaV was keen to ensure that there was a balance between competing perspectives on the AP. By the date of the first scheduled AP meeting this balance had not been struck. The knowledge and networks of AP members themselves, as well as Working Group (WG) members, was drawn upon to invite additional AP members.

Direct face-to-face engagement, carried out as a means of generating Inquiry panellists, was also key in identifying potential AP members, who offered a grass-roots perspective to the middle tier of the project.

The final AP membership spanned a broad range of experiences and interests, covering the legal, political, ethical, social and scientific spectrum of the debate. Conflicting views among the AP were welcomed, as they added to the vibrancy of the debate and the Inquiry as a whole.

AP time commitment was limited to three meetings, timed at critical junctures of the Inquiry: during the selection of IP members, midway though the Inquiry process and following the preparation of the draft *Citizens' Report*. At all three meetings, AP input was extremely valuable and insightful for the facilitation team. There is little doubt that the role and selection of the AP met two of the three aims: panel selection and assistance in the identification and selection of external experts. The third aim, of assisting with the implementation of recommendations wherever possible, cannot be assessed until more time has elapsed.

Inquiry Panel

Casting the net wide in contacting groups and individuals proved an effective method of generating a broad range of contacts for the initial database of groups and individuals to invite as potential panellists. The preliminary research and scoping phase was crucial in informing the understanding of the areas identified and appreciating the degree of diversity in these areas.

Time constraints placed intense pressure on the outreach and engagement phase, with trips to both Glasgow and Birmingham condensed into less than 10 days.

Direct engagement with groups and individuals in early January proved extremely successful and was well received, generating considerable interest albeit on a limited scale. The availability of more time would have led to a much more inclusive panel and abated the concerns of some AP members that panellists may have heard about the Inquiry from the same source.

Media promotion was undertaken on a very small scale, but proved very fruitful in generating a great diversity of panellists. Upon reflection, the effectiveness of local and national media promotion suggests that a more comprehensive media engagement strategy should be adopted in the future.

All of the categorised targets, designed to ensure an inclusive and **not** representative, panel, were met:

- 50% male and 50% female;
- 50% of black and minority ethnic (BME) heritage;
- at least 25% with a declared impairment;
- at least 25% under the age of 20 (minimum age 14); and
- at least 25% over the age of 50 (no maximum age).

The allocation of 50% BME representation was called into question by some members of the AP. Concerns were raised about the degree to which panel findings would be rejected because of the apparently biased panel. However, the over-representation of groups that are often marginalised significantly aids effective and inclusive participation. This was evidenced by the level of panel participation throughout the Inquiry.

AP members also felt that there was an absence of white males over the age of 40 in the pool of 50 people who expressed an interest being panellists. As a result, only 26 members of the Inquiry panel were selected from the pool at the first AP meeting, taking into account the categorised targets and the inclusion of white males, and VaV committed to ensuring the recruitment of another four white males prior to the first Inquiry session. Interested individuals who had previously contacted the WG directly were approached, and one was selected to participate. Two other panellists were selected as a result of previous direct engagement, and one was selected through AP networks.

The panel criteria succeeded in creating an eclectic panel, representing a broad range of experiences, interests and perspectives – a blend that was appreciated by the panel.

Nine panel members were under the age of 20, complemented by six panellists over the age of 50. Contrary to prevalent public opinion that suggests significant difficulties in engaging young people, the younger IP members remained fully engaged throughout the Inquiry and added immense value to the level of dialogue.

Inquiry sessions

The over-arching aim of 'designing and facilitating a deliberative process involving a random selection of citizens' can be assessed through the various stages of the Inquiry.

Induction day

The first induction day was in Birmingham on 26 January, the second in Glasgow on 27 January.

Consecutive induction days resulted in part from the time constraints of the Inquiry and in part from the desire to ensure as small a time lapse as possible between panel introductions and the first Inquiry session. Holding the sessions so close together brought significant benefit to both panels, who generated a sense of togetherness even though they had never met.

However, for VaV this approach detracted from a team-wide appreciation of the breadth and scope of the project.

The structure and content of the induction days worked well, as evidenced by the levels of participation and ownership of the process, and the fact that all panellists were retained at this stage.

Weekly Inquiry sessions

Although tests between both venues had been carried out prior to the first Inquiry session, the technology did not work at the first Inquiry session. The technological failure was due to a change in rooms at the venue which did not take into account the change in connection speeds in different rooms.

A key learning point from this evening was the need to maintain back-up technological equipment such as webcams when engaging with new technologies. The session was conducted through audioconferencing facilities which proved difficult, particularly given the subject matter.

Despite the difficulties experienced, panellist evaluations following the first Inquiry session were very positive. Much of this is down to the calm approach of the expert, Clare Stangoe, who was able to accommodate the change very well, and did her utmost to ensure that everyone was included and understood what she was saying.

In order to accommodate a minimum of two experts at each session, group discussions, Q&A after each expert and panel feedback, strict timelines had to be adhered to. It was imperative for facilitators to remain acutely aware of time constraints. During the course of an Inquiry session, one facilitator from each location remained in constant contact with the other through mobile phone calls and text messages to ensure the smooth running of the sessions and to communicate any difficulties. Panellists felt that there was not always sufficient time for Q&A, but recognised that sessions could not commence earlier than 6pm or finish later than 9pm.

It was important to strike a balance between the number of experts the IP heard from and the number of weeks they would be asked to commit to the Inquiry. Future projects should allow for six or seven weeks of Inquiry sessions and should feature two experts one week and one expert the following week. This would provide enough experts to ensure that all dimensions of the debate are addressed while leaving time for the panellists to reflect and regroup with one another throughout the Inquiry.

Notwithstanding technical difficulties at one session, the use of videoconferencing at each of the Inquiry sessions allowed genuine engagement from the panels in both England and Scotland.

External experts

One of the main challenges faced in recruiting experts was confirming their availability and ensuring that they were well prepared for the sessions. AP and WG suggestions were invaluable in identifying relevant experts. Contacting and securing expert participation was made much easier where AP or WG members initiated contact or made introductions.

For the future, it would be useful to meet with experts face to face prior to the sessions. These meetings would allow a more in-depth explanation of the project and improve expert understanding of the Inquiry. Ultimately this would reduce repetition of information between experts, improve IP experience and facilitate a more sustainable relationship between experts and panellists.

To deter the use of jargon or ambiguous statements by experts, the facilitation team put in place a 'red card' system that allowed panellists to intervene and request clarification if they did not understand something. The system worked extremely well and panellists felt very comfortable utilising this tool. Some panellists used the red card to interrupt with a personal response to a comment made by an expert, which hindered the flow of debate and dialogue. Overall, however, the red card was an invaluable tool in keeping experts focused.

Experts were not restricted in putting forward their perspective, and this allowed a free and frank debate to ensue. Each expert was sent guiding principles (see Appendix 4) relating to the style of talk, time and degree of written literacy expected. A lack of guidance in relation to content did result in some experts pushing their particular agenda quite forcefully. Although this was not ideal, it is difficult to see how the approach could be modified while staying within the participatory principles of enabling and facilitating an open and unmediated dialogue.

Communication and retention

The facilitation team endeavoured to maintain regular contact with all panellists throughout the process. The Inquiry sessions were often quite intensive and it was not always possible to 'touch base' with panellists and gauge how they found the sessions, or to discuss any other concerns or thoughts they might have about the Inquiry on the night. Weekly evaluation forms offered a brief glimpse of IP feedback, but they did not compensate for one-to-one dialogue.

Weekly phone calls between sessions to 'check in' with IP members allowed facilitators to explore panellists' feelings about the process and provided an opportunity for both sides to develop a stronger rapport.

The level of communication between panellists and VaV contributed significantly to the retention rate; only five panellists left the Inquiry, and only two of them for reasons directly related to the Inquiry. One felt that his contribution did not justify the amount of time he would need to commit, and another felt that the distance to the Inquiry venue was too far. While unfortunate, neither of these reasons could have been eliminated to enable the panellists to stay.

Facilitation

The VaV delivery team comprised seven facilitators who drew on their experiences from similar processes. The facilitators' skill set enabled them to complement and support each other, ensuring the success of the project. In spite of the skill set and experience of the facilitators, however, time and budget constraints posed many challenges for the team.

Delays incurred at the start of the project and the subsequent time constraints in planning for Stage 1 of the project (planning, selection and recruitment) meant that there was no time for an effective staff induction.

Some facilitators were more directly involved in the planning and preparation than others, and developed a better grasp of the wider scope of the project. It is highly advisable for similar projects to allow the time and resources for a minimum of two team and project development days. These would have provided an invaluable contribution to the delivery of the project by generating ownership throughout the facilitation team.

The split between Glasgow and Birmingham worked well, allowing facilitators to build up a rapport between themselves and their respective panels. Building on familiarity and deploying a truly participatory approach helped to build trust between facilitators and panellists and forge stronger ties.

At each Inquiry session a significant amount of facilitator time was taken up by administrative tasks such as expert and panellist transport, expenses, evaluation forms and general issues. An additional person to deal with administration would have proved a more effective use of time and resources. This would have allowed facilitators to focus on the Inquiry and engage more freely with panellists and experts.

The overlap between session planning, securing experts and delivery of sessions made sessional team de-briefs difficult. A teleconference team meeting was conducted midweek, and incorporated the planning for the following session. Very little time was available for facilitators to address their own issues or concerns. Future projects should incorporate a facilitator 'check-in' to ensure that facilitators are able to relax before a session and inform colleagues of any factors that may affect their delivery of a session. More importantly, any delays at the beginning of a project should be reflected in the delivery, notwithstanding completion dates.

Regional visits

Birmingham

The Birmingham panel's regional visit to Hackney was planned thoroughly, with all the relevant bodies and stakeholders contacted in good time, but was undermined due to unforeseeable external influences. A violent incident two weeks before the planned visit meant that tensions in the area were high and, while the facilitation team took all the necessary precautions in organising the trip, it was not possible to control the level of support that could be expected from the local community we were visiting. Upon arrival in Hackney, VaV was informed that local youth workers had been advised not to attend the meetings.

A key factor in the failure to attract Hackney participants to the dialogue was the failure to incentivise participation. In any participatory process it is important not to presume that individuals or communities will be willing to participate for participation's sake. However marginalised a community is and however disenfranchised its voice, the opportunity to be heard is not always enough. A valid criticism of consultative exercises or research projects is that they often fail to give anything back to the community from whom they take time, effort and information. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm felt by the IP in being part of the Citizens' Inquiry, their participation was always rewarded by a gift of £10 per session. Although not much, this was a sign of appreciation. No incentive was offered to participants in Hackney.

While it is beyond doubt that the limited number of participants was linked to the tragic incident that had occurred two weeks earlier, an incentive to attend – whether financial or otherwise – would have demonstrated VaV's commitment to contributing something to the communities in which it works. This is a principle that VaV usually adheres to, but in this instance failed to do so.

Despite the prevailing circumstances, the number of people who did attend allowed an in-depth, passionate and very enlightening discussion to take place between the IP and members of the Hackney community. A visit to a local community centre also allowed some of the panel to engage with young people.

Glasgow

The main difficulties faced in organising the Scottish Parliament visit were essentially due to time constraints. Co-ordinating MSP diaries, especially on a Committee day, was an incredibly difficult task. Constraints on the project timeline meant that the visit had to precede the Birmingham residential of 16–17 March, and could not occur sooner than the week commencing 10 March.

Potential support from WG members in securing access to the Parliament was not achieved. VaV's over-reliance on this meant that little time was left to prepare for the visit. Nevertheless, the Scottish regional visit went exceptionally well, and achieved the outlined aims and objectives.

Panels engaged with their regional visits in an informed and comfortable manner. Both regional visits highlighted the level of capacity development, confidence and knowledge that the IP now had.

Birmingham residential

The Birmingham residential was exceptionally successful in meeting the aims of the project as well as establishing strong bonds between panellists and increasing levels of ownership.

The wide variety of activities, focusing on developing relationships as well as generating recommendations, worked well. Ample space and a flexible agenda allowed for sustainable dialogue and debate. Proactive, unmediated dialogue allowed panellists to assume full control of this critical part of the Inquiry.

The presence of WG members at the residential provided an invaluable context for the Inquiry. Their presence communicated funders' commitment to the panel and was an invaluable step in beginning the relationship between funders and panellists, independent of VaV. It was also an important factor in allowing funders to understand the process and the panellists better.

Writing the *Citizens' Report*

Following the Birmingham residential, the first draft of the *Citizens' Report* was compiled in two weeks. It would have been good practice for the write-up to have begun much earlier in the Inquiry process, with facilitators reflecting upon dialogue and discussion as the process developed. Overlaps in the first and second stages of the Inquiry meant that this was impossible, and left little time for adequate engagement with the vast amount of audio-visual and written data that had been generated.

Over 64 hours of audio-visual recordings, as well as one-to-one phone interviews and countless discussions captured on flipchart paper, provided substantive content for the report, but required far more than 10 days to transcribe, transfer and translate into a legible format that could then be incorporated into a report.

Writing the report in the words of the Inquiry panellists without drawing inferences or inserting facilitator views was a delicate balance. It was decided that a second residential – which had not been budgeted for – was imperative to ensure that the voice of panellists had been accurately captured, and to allow an opportunity for panellists to offer feedback and critique their report. Allowances should have been made in the budget for this eventuality.

Glasgow residential

Providing panellists with copies of the first draft of the report a week prior to the final residential gave them an opportunity to reflect, some more than others, on the changes and developments that they wanted to make.

VaV was keen to ensure that a balance between relaxation and work was struck. Learning from previous processes has bought to the fore panellist frustration at giving up significant amounts of time for such residential weekends, but not achieving enough in the form of outcomes to feel that the time was well spent. To this end, VaV left much of the agenda open to the panellists for them to decide the balance they would like to strike. The levels of panel satisfaction and the considerable development of the report show that an effective balance was struck.

The time allocated to future actions and action planning was invaluable in ensuring that panellists had a realistic understanding of what would be feasible upon completion of the Inquiry while not leaving them with the sense that this was the end of the Inquiry. The mediation of expectations in this way is imperative in ensuring that participatory processes do not themselves become disempowering.

Citizens' reflections

The Citizens' Inquiry set out with the aim of creating, in the words of the Human Genetics Commission tender specification, 'a space in which an inclusive group of UK citizens – having considered key social and ethical issues involved – can effectively communicate their informed views on the current and future use of DNA for forensic purposes to policy-makers'.

The following sections will assess whether or not these aims were met, through panellist feedback.

Diverse panel

One of the primary aims of the Inquiry was to 'bring together individuals from different and diverse communities in an open and safe space for dialogue and discussion' (VaV tender submission). The diverse composition of the panel demonstrated that this aim was achieved.

> 'I was pleasantly surprised to see the breadth of different peoples being represented through the different backgrounds and origins that were present. There were about 20 people ranging through from teenagers and students to middle-aged, to senior citizens and an individual who was wheelchair-bound. Every sector of the community appeared to have been present.' (IP)

Detailed breakdowns of the inquiry panellists by gender, age and ethnicity are provided in Figures 1–3 of the process report (see pages 12–13).

The diversity of the group was invaluable in helping to shape a unique, multifaceted dialogue. Panellist feedback demonstrated a genuine feeling of safe and open space – meeting comprehensively one of the project's primary objectives.

> 'The diverse nature of our group has enriched us and made us grow over the weeks.' (IP)

> 'I sensed that there was a natural chemistry and ambience that allowed all of us to feel included, and that each of our points of view were being considered.' (IP)

Agenda-setting dialogue and ownership

The VaV approach to participatory inclusion is informed by the principles of agenda-setting dialogue that allows participants to assume more control over the process in which they are engaging.

The project aimed to 'develop the capacity of the citizens to deliberate and ask pertinent questions, identifying key concerns/inquiries before the arrival of experts' (HGC Tender specification) and to 'make demonstrable to people, especially those from parts of the population who may be particularly affected, that the public's informed views and concerns have been heard by policy-makers, even on issues not directly connected to the use of DNA for forensic purposes' (HGC tender specification).

Participatory techniques and the approach adopted by VaV throughout the Inquiry ensured that the panellists felt safe, confident and in control of the process. Agenda setting in particular was established from the outset of the Inquiry, and panellists took almost complete control of the direction the Inquiry took.

Inquiry induction day

The aims of agenda setting and ownership combined well with the need to explore public views and concerns of issues related to the database or otherwise. The induction day was the primary opportunity for this dialogue, as it was the only time that panellists would attend an Inquiry session with no external experts present.

Establishing an unpressured, creative environment for such views to emerge was central to the range of activities employed. Panel feedback on the first day showed a high level of satisfaction and affirmed their sense of ownership.

> 'We did quite a lot of brainstorming in groups to get to know each other and to find out what our initial feelings were about the database.' (IP)
>
> 'It was explained to us that we would be able to have experts to talk to us and we could choose the type of experts we wanted, for example a forensic scientist, somebody who was working on the ethical side of things, senior police officers etc.' (IP)

Throughout subsequent sessions and stages, the panellists were given sufficient time to continue open-ended and unrestricted dialogue, enhancing the scope and discussion of the wider debate around the National DNA Database.

Weekly Inquiry sessions

A primary aim of the Citizens' Inquiry was 'to develop and facilitate a comprehensive, nationwide, informed dialogue with, and between, residents of the UK and stakeholders and decision-makers involved in the forensic sciences and the National DNA Database' (VaV tender submission).

The weekly Inquiry sessions were devised to facilitate and generate this informed dialogue.

Experts

Whether panellists agreed or disagreed with the experts, they appreciated having the opportunity to hear divergent and broad perspectives of the debate.

> 'It was quite a privilege to hear some specialists in their field. I learnt quite a lot.' (IP)
>
> 'The experts' talks were very interesting because they were different and each gave their own views and what they specialised in.' (IP)

Criticisms about experts related mainly to their manner of delivery or approach.

> 'Sometimes they weren't clear in their information.' (IP)
>
> 'Answers were partly irrelevant to questions asked.' (IP)

Video link

Videoconferencing to link both panels was important in ensuring genuine engagement from both the English and Scottish contingents.

Technical difficulties or poor sound quality caused some disturbance to the sessions, but overall the videoconferencing achieved the objective of allowing both panels to engage in dialogue with one another as well with experts at both sites.

> 'It was very useful to know what Birmingham asked and it brought different aspects to it.' (IP)

> 'The video link-up with Glasgow worked very well apart from a few initial problems.' (IP)

Some panellists and external experts did not feel that the video link was entirely useful, arguing that it wasted time and stifled debate. This was particularly the case in Q&A slots where panellists found it difficult to remain engaged when the other panel was asking their round of questions.

Overall, panellists were happy with the sessions and the level to which the agenda of each session responded to the needs expressed by them.

> 'I think we all equally get a chance to talk and each session is well planned and thought through.' (IP)

Group discussion

Group dynamics were encouraged through short team-building exercises at the start of the weekly Inquiry sessions and group discussions as a means of generating questions.

> 'We came up with questions in groups through discussions – which was very informative, because people had other ideas and not everyone's opinions were the same.' (IP)

> 'It was fantastic because I made a lot of friends, we got paid for it and I got a lot more information that other people don't have and you got chosen to be part of it.' (IP)

Informed debate

The core aim of the weekly Inquiry sessions was to present panellists with a broad spectrum of information that would allow them to challenge, develop and explore their own ideas about the National DNA Database and the forensic use of DNA. Panel evaluations, facilitator observations and the outcomes of the Inquiry indicate that these aims were successfully met.

> 'What has surprised me about the Inquiry was how many different aspects there were: social, political, scientific, the fight against crime.' (IP)

> 'You could start to see people changing their views on the DNA database. At the start of this whole project our questions were general and by the end they were very specific; it was clear they were learning a lot.' (IP)

> 'The more we heard from each expert helped broaden out our views; that it wasn't a simple yes or no. Hearing all this new information, processing and understanding it and then discussing helped us reach a conclusion on our understanding of DNA.' (IP)

Facilitators balanced the need to encourage open-ended and unrestricted dialogue, building up panellist understanding and confidence, with the need to maintain a supporting role that would not undermine panel ownership of the process.

Panel feedback strongly indicates that the above aims were met; the statements below are consensus statements generated and agreed by the entire panel at the final residential in Glasgow:

> 'The experience was informative, interesting and definitely panel-led. By this, I mean the facilitators were approachable, but not involved in the Inquiry. We felt comfortable making our requests and liberal in the sense it was "our" inquiry.' (consensus statement, IP)
>
> 'Trust and respect has been at the heart of our group and was encouraged/established by the Vis-à-Vis team.' (consensus statement, IP)

Regional visits

The interaction and level of discussion both panels had at their regional visits demonstrated their advanced understanding of issues surrounding the DNA database.

> 'We applied a reality test of what we'd learnt to the application with people who we knew were really affected.' (IP)
>
> 'It was good getting the chance to go there and meet the MSPs as well. It was really good to hear some of their different views.' (IP)

Residentials

Both residential weekends were designed to bring together the panellists and draw on their experiences to form key recommendations for the *Citizens' Report*. In spite of logistical and budget challenges, it was felt that two joint residential weekends were needed to produce a report and generate outcomes that would be worthy of the citizens' journey through the Inquiry. The workload and the fun had at each residential also reflected the tone of the entire Inquiry.

> 'Overall I thought the whole event was effectively managed and the ethos of inclusion and the lengths that Vis-à-Vis went to to ensure that as many points of view were at least aired was admirable.' (IP)
>
> 'It was a very enjoyable weekend and I thought that we had achieved a tremendous amount with the help and guidance of the staff at Vis-à-Vis and we had fun!!' (IP)

Throughout the residentials the entire panel was in control and comfortable, setting the tone and agenda of the discussions and coming up with themes to frame the recommendations. Once the themes had been outlined, facilitators stepped back and created the space for panellists to engage with the debates among themselves. This led to a number of passionate and lively discussions between different groups of panellists around different themes. The shared experiences of the group inevitably led to certain ties and friendships forming, with panellists recognising and respecting the needs and concerns of each other.

> 'There was a lot of trust built up between the group through the sessions.' (IP)
>
> 'The facilitators recognised our group dynamics which emerged over the weeks and encouraged the group to blossom into a well-informed, amazingly fabulous group!' (IP)

The use of multiple methodologies assisted panellists in thinking through recommendations in different ways and from different perspectives. DNA role play performances by the panellists were particularly beneficial in stimulating thought around recommendations.

> 'It was a creative way in which we could find out the opinions of the other panellist members and how to form recommendations.' (IP)
>
> 'The role play was enjoyable – everyone was very good and produced some excellent scenarios.' (IP)

For some panellists they were also an indicator of a marked increase in confidence and working in groups.

> 'I don't usually like acting, but this was good because we were all doing it together. They didn't laugh at you if you did something wrong. It wasn't you and them – it was together.' (IP)

The purpose of inviting representatives from the WG to the second day of the Birmingham residential was twofold. Panellists had many unanswered questions regarding the broader remit of the Inquiry, so having the opportunity to pose those questions was very useful.

> 'The funders also came and explained why they wanted to do this project and why they choose Vis-à-Vis. And that was interesting because I didn't know why they'd chosen this project and how they put it all together.' (IP)
>
> 'We also had a chance to meet with the funders and ask them any questions that we had regarding the Inquiry and why the government wanted to know the views of ordinary people.' (IP)

Meeting representatives of the WG created a platform that could lead to 'sustainable linkages between stakeholders, decision-makers and UK residents, thereby leading to future discussion, dialogue and debate' (VaV tender submission). Panellists obviously benefited from meeting funders, and expressed an enthusiasm to stay linked. As with any such process, however, the onus of responsibility in maintaining this link lies with the funder.

Inquiry Panel development

The Inquiry panel demonstrated an incredible commitment, focus and camaraderie throughout the Inquiry process. It is quite an achievement for such a diverse mix of individuals to have undertaken such an intense learning curve, and to have produced such fruitful outcomes while developing and maintaining strong ties with each other. The panellists' own words best capture the team spirit that is a huge achievement and a hallmark of this Inquiry.

> 'We became like a DNA family at the end of the sessions. The fact that people from all different places and backgrounds got on and tolerated each other is amazing. It was a brilliant experience.' (IP)
>
> 'I found all the group to be very considerate, everyone respected and worked together. There were no clashes in the group. The people were friendly. Everyone in the DNA panel encouraged each other to talk and give their opinions; all were willing to talk, to work together.' (IP)
>
> 'Despite the diversity, everyone was supportive of each other's opinion. When we were split into smaller groups, we began to see everyone having something to say. As our sense of teamwork grew stronger, we began to work together and respect each other more. Everyone was considerate of each other, e.g. tolerance, encouraging everyone else to talk, being friendly and no conflicts.' (IP)

Individual development

The process constantly challenged all panellists, creating many opportunities for learning, sharing and deliberating. The recommendations represent one aspect of the journey undertaken by the Citizens' Inquiry panellists; there are many more strands to their experience. In one-to-one interviews panellists were asked to summarise their 'DNA journey'; below are some excerpts from their responses, which illustrate and affirm the successes of the Citizens' Inquiry.

> 'Very interesting. Broadened my way of thinking with things that are happening. I've never been on anything like this before. The opportunity to make recommendations is definitely a good thing for people and is really important. I would be interested in doing more stuff like this and have the opportunity to explore more about other topics.' (IP)
>
> 'I was talking to people about it all the time. Especially every taxi ride there and back [from weekly Monday evening sessions] was all about DNA. I'd be doing a DNA prequel on all my journeys.' (IP)
>
> 'A very educational journey.' (IP)
>
> 'So I changed from my anti-DNA stance to look at positives it can be used for, like freeing people.' (IP)

> ‘I’m glad I took part, it was well worth it.’ (IP)
>
> ‘Now, anything on the news – we’re thinking, oh that’s us and it certainly makes you feel important.’ (IP)
>
> ‘The main benefit of this experience was that we all learnt so much about DNA and the way in which it is run, which without joining this Inquiry we would have not known, and also educating the population to matters that are concerning as our Inquiry group only represents a tiny fraction of the UK.’ (IP)
>
> ‘From where I started I didn’t have that much knowledge on DNA but now I feel my experiences have expanded and when you read the paper I’m more aware of DNA and its purpose. It’s improved my outlook. I would like to expand my knowledge more.’ (IP)
>
> ‘I hope that as a result of this debate real change will take place, that the law-makers will listen to the voice of the ordinary people represented here who put them into power in the first place and that I can say that I was a part of something meaningful that made a positive difference to the society I live in.’ (IP)
>
> ‘At the end we were like experts.’ (IP)

Reflections of external experts

The involvement, experience and perspectives of external experts (EE) are essential to any participatory process built on the Inquiry model. The Citizens’ Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database benefited from the experience of 12 experts with diverse perspectives.

In order to maintain and improve the effectiveness of participatory processes, it is imperative that experts are given the opportunity to evaluate and learn from their experiences. Each of the experts was asked for feedback relating to their experience of the Citizens’ Inquiry, and to respond to the following questions:

1. What did you think about the process?
2. Did the process give enough voice to participants?
3. Did you feel you were able to convey your opinion effectively enough?
4. What did you most enjoy about the process?
5. Did you feel you were sufficiently informed of experts from previous sessions?
6. What could have been done differently?
7. Would you act as an expert for another similar process?
8. Would you recommend the process as a way of engaging with citizens?

All experts answered ‘yes’ in response to the question of whether they would participate in another similar process, and they were unanimous in their view that the Inquiry process is an excellent way to engage with citizens. All agreed that the process created an important and much-needed platform for community engagement.

While these responses demonstrate the success of the Inquiry process, it is important to unpick the experts' experiences to benefit from potential learning. The experts put forward a number of observations, perceptions and critiques of the process that highlight points for learning and improvement.

What did you think about the process?

Most experts viewed the Inquiry in a positive light and as a useful starting point in the wider debate around the National DNA Database, recognising that the format created a useful platform for experts from various fields to engage with a diverse range of ordinary citizens on the subject matter.

> 'It is an excellent start to a much-needed debate, but the database cannot be understood in isolation.' (EE)
>
> 'I thought it was a worthwile project, I enjoyed interacting with members of the public which is something my position does not normally allow.' (EE)

In terms of representation from experts, it was felt that the line-up should have included more lay people, for example individuals who may have been directly affected by the National DNA Database as a victim of a crime. This was a perspective shared by the AP. Although attempts were made to recruit an expert who represented this viewpoint, they were to no avail. Other than the discussions by Satish Sekar, which incorporated the perspective of murder victim Lynette White's mother, the panel did not benefit from the views of any victims of crime.

> 'I think that the process would have benefited from participation by victims of the criminal justice system as they are the very people with least reason to trust it.' (EE)

Some experts felt that panellists could have been better briefed and prepared prior to each session. While this could have maximised the benefit from each expert session, it was unfeasible given the panellists' time commitments. It would also have been contrary to the aim of the Inquiry, which was to allow the panellists themselves to determine what information they wanted to hear and take on board.

> 'I think the participants would have benefited from a full factual briefing ahead of the start of the sessions.' (EE)

The limited time between sessions and the often late confirmations from experts meant that it was not always possible to offer prior information to panellists. Panellists were, however, provided with brief biographies of the experts on the day, as well as transcripts after each session.

VaV committed itself to providing any form of language, learning or physical support throughout the Inquiry, and this was appreciated by our experts.

> 'It was very clear to go through with the help of a sign language interpreter.' (EE)

Did the process give enough voice to participants?

For the most part, experts felt that the panel had sufficient ownership and grasp of the debate to generate an interesting dialogue.

> 'Participants were allowed a full and frank exchange of opinions.' (EE)
>
> 'From the perspective of the members of the public participating, I believe there was a good level of engagement and everyone seemed able to put their views across.' (EE)

One expert felt that the videoconferencing facilities were not conducive to participatory engagement and felt that this precluded more thorough interaction between experts and panellists. This view was echoed by another expert who felt that visual aids might have been more useful than a video link, and that panellists would have benefited far more from direct engagement and informal interaction with the experts on site.

> 'I think that the video link was not useful. The "informal" conversation over coffee was much more effective. Perhaps just a "meet the expert" would have been better with a round-table format.' (EE)

The benefits of the red card system were felt and cited by another expert, who had been uncomfortable with the use of technical jargon while being addressed by a second expert in a direct exchange. The expert felt that this was an attempt to undermine the debate:

> 'I do a lot of public engagement with young people, and scientific experts often try to undermine the points they make by focusing on a technical issue instead of listening to the point being made.' (EE)

Did you feel you were able to convey your opinion effectively enough?

Most of the experts felt that they were able to convey their messages effectively, but felt that time was not sufficient to elaborate on their points:

> 'I don't think there was sufficient time to discuss and explain what safeguards I was talking about.' (EE)
>
> 'The style of the Q&A session – requiring very brief answers to often complex questions – did not make for good understanding. This concern was compounded by the limited time available for the introduction by the speaker.' (EE)

What did you most enjoy about the process?

Expert feedback highlighted the success of the methodology employed by VaV and correlated to the aims and objectives outlined in the HGC tender of creating a platform of dialogue between policy-makers and citizens to develop better understanding from both sides.

> 'The fact that ordinary people were involved in the process by leading it and that they were interested and inquisitive enough to want to understand, debate issues and reach important conclusions based on it.' (EE)
>
> 'The interaction with a very diverse group who had equally diverse views on the use of DNA. I enjoyed the debate with a friendly group of people who not only wanted to voice their opinion but were very interested to hear other people's views.' (EE)
>
> 'I enjoyed being able to present facts about my area of responsibility and hopefully allay some of the myths which prevail concerning the misconception that to some extent manipulating or abusing DNA evidence is possible.' (EE)

Did you feel you were sufficiently informed of experts from previous sessions?

An extensive briefing of the experts prior to the Inquiry sessions should have been an integral part of the Inquiry process, but was not always possible owing to experts' commitments elsewhere and a lack of time.

VaV committed to ensuring that every expert was provided with a detailed email which provided the background to the Inquiry and guiding principles to which experts should adhere when giving their talks. Experts were not, however, briefed on the previous or upcoming experts, nor were they provided with any guidance on what their talks should include.

Of the experts who completed the evaluation, three did not answer this question as they were unsure of what it was asking. All other experts, with one exception, felt that they had been sufficiently informed.

> 'No. I wasn't told what they had said or even their expertise in any great detail. Just had gist of some of their positions. Others I wasn't informed about at all.' (EE)

What could have been done differently?

For the most part, experts felt that the Inquiry was run well and did not need to change.

Expert feedback was very useful in informing the evaulation of the process. It is important to note that some of the concerns aired by experts were rooted in a lack of understanding about the wider scope, aims and objectives of the project. This is an important point of learning for future projects as it will go towards significantly improving satisfaction with the project.

> 'More notice could have been provided and explanation of aims and objectives and what in particular was wanted.' (EE)

One WG member suggested the use of case studies – devised by experts – as a way of illustrating their points in a more creative manner which might have been easier for panellists to understand and debate. Although this was put to the experts as a potential medium of delivery, none of them chose to use it.

Conclusion

These reflections have charted the development and delivery of an exceptionally successful project which has met its stated objectives as well as generating an active, vibrant and wholly engaged panel of citizens.

Notwithstanding the success of the project, the preceding sections have provided a comprehensive critique of the Inquiry process from three perspectives. There are discernible learning points implicitly and explicitly embedded throughout the critique.

A number of those learning points are fundamental to the successful delivery of future projects. Having acknowledged the overall success of the Citizens' Inquiry, this section concludes the *Contractor's Report* by providing a brief summary of the key points of learning for facilitators, experts and funders.

VaV:

- The main point of learning from this process was the need to account for time and budget constraints. This may involve challenging funder parameters set out at tender stage, and/or modifying process structures to allow for a smaller process if necessary.
- The need to constantly incentivise participation in any process was starkly demonstrated by the Hackney visit. It is important that VaV continues to maintain standards of best practice by giving something back to the communities it wishes to engage with.
- The project highlighted the significant potential for developing long-term sustainable relationships between panellists and experts. In order to better facilitate this, VaV should endeavour to build in time for the deeper involvement of experts with the process. This would encourage experts to develop a greater stake in the process and in the achievement of panel recommendations.
- Core to any participatory process is the well-being of the facilitation team. During the delivery of such an intense process it is imperative that VaV allows the time and resources for facilitators to make time and space for themselves.

Experts:

- The main point of learning for external experts is that an engagement in participatory dialogue requires them to meet the needs and agenda of the panel they are speaking to, rather than using the forum as a means of promoting their own agenda or perspective. Panellists, particularly those who felt that they owned a particular process, became very quickly disengaged from an expert's dialogue where they felt that their own voice was not being given due consideration.
- The opportunity provided by such a process for long-term dialogue and relationships between external experts and panellists is invaluable. This was not, however, achieved in the context of this process as such relationships might have compromised the independent outcomes of the Inquiry. Provisions should be

made for panellists and experts to be able to meet upon completion of an inquiry, and for such relationships and dialogues to occur on a more equal footing.

Funders:

- On projects with tight timescales, funders need to have worked out the mechanics of the commissioning process before the timeline of the project is due to begin. For the Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database, delays in the commissioning process compromised the entire process; project delivery and outcomes required from that delivery were significantly affected by a limitation in time which, given the project's already tight resources, could not be accommodated.
- Funder engagement with the Inquiry Panel proved hugely successful in this project. The commitment of HGC to allow a truly panel-led process is a key factor in the success of the Inquiry and the level of ownership and capacity developed among the panel.
- This process offers a model of good practice for the development of sustainable relationships between funders and panellists. While there are legitimate concerns around too great an involvement of funders, which may jeopardise the independence of such a process, this project has shown that the confidence of panellists in the process was considerably increased once they had an opportunity to ask the funders directly about why the work was funded, what contribution it would make and what the funders' role in relation to that would be. This was also crucial in developing a sustainable, human relationship with the funder.

Appendices

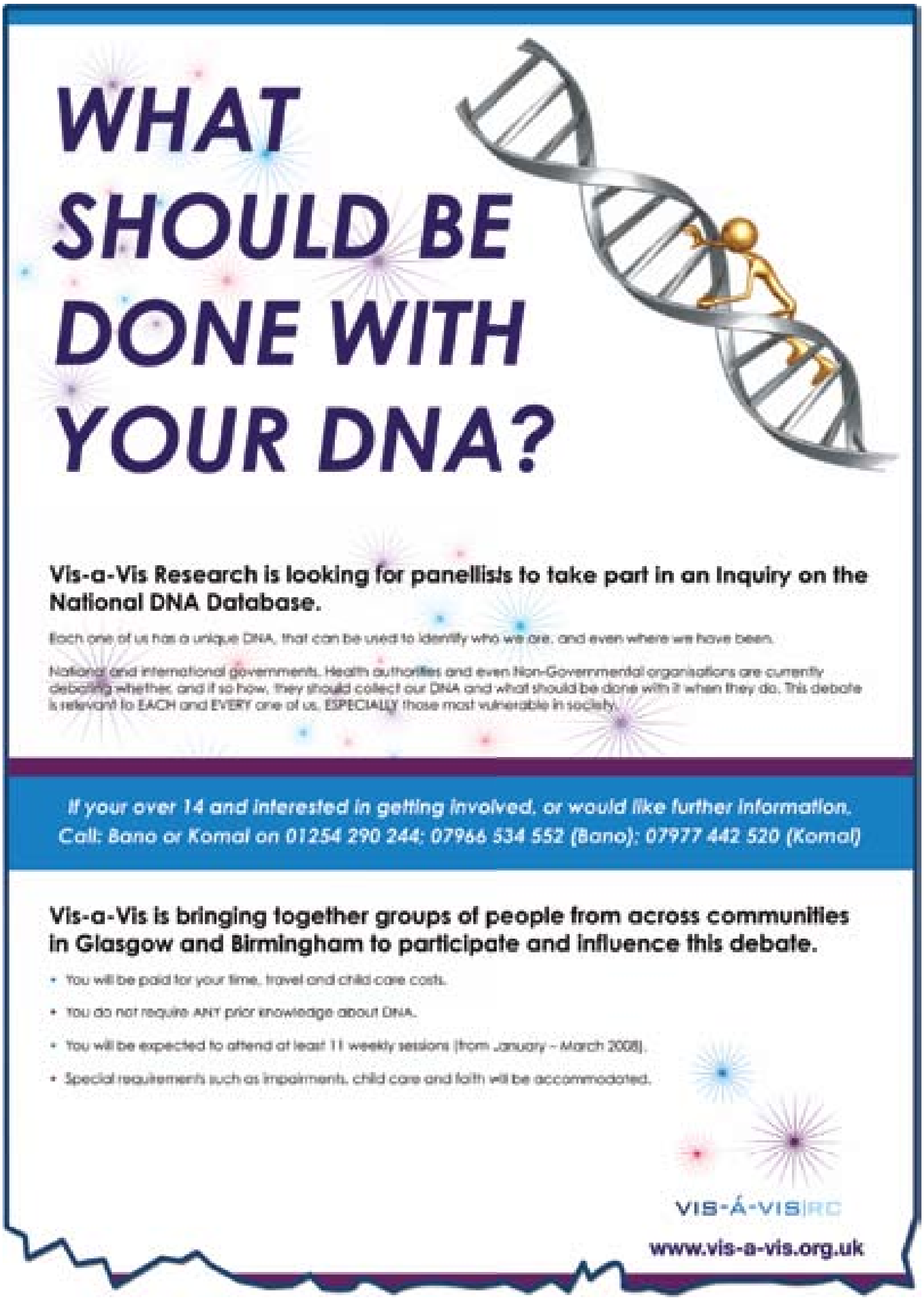
Appendix 1: Timeline of the Inquiry

7 December 2007	Vis-à-Vis commissioned to undertake Citizens' Inquiry on the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database.
16–22 December	Contact with groups in Birmingham and Glasgow and dissemination of information about the project.
7–18 January 2008	Meeting with community groups and individuals in Glasgow and Birmingham to recruit Inquiry panellists.
22 January	First working group meeting. First advisory panel meeting (London). Panellist selection.
26–27 January	One-day introductory sessions for Inquiry panellists in Birmingham and Glasgow.
4 February	First Inquiry session. Expert: Clare Stangoe (Forensic Access).
11 February	Second Inquiry session. Experts: Tom Nelson (Scottish Forensic Services); Tom Ross (Scottish Forensic Services) and Dr Helen Wallace (GeneWatch).
18 February	Third Inquiry session. Experts: Mike Prior and June Guiness (National DNA Database), Dr Mairi Levitt (sociologist) and Richard West (community activist).
19 February	Second advisory panel meeting (Birmingham).
25 February	Fourth Inquiry session. Experts: Professor Peter Hutton (National DNA Database Ethics Group) and Satish Sekar (journalist).
3 March	Fifth Inquiry session. Experts: Professor Allan Jamieson (Forensic Institute) and Derek Forest (West Midlands Police).
10 March	Birmingham Inquiry panel's regional visit to the London Borough of Hackney.

11 March	Glasgow Inquiry panel's regional visit to the Scottish Parliament.
12 March	Second working group meeting.
15–16 March	Joint residential weekend in Birmingham for all panellists to generate recommendations.
17–30 March	Preparation by Vis-à-Vis of the draft version of the report; circulation to all panellists and advisory panel for comments and feedback.
5 April	Third advisory panel meeting (Glasgow).
5–6 April	Joint residential weekend in Glasgow for all panellists to finalise recommendations and suggest any changes to the report.
7 April to 1 May	Finalisation by Vis-à-Vis of the *Citizens' Report*.
1 May	Submission by Vis-à-Vis of the Citizens' Inquiry to the HGC.
13 May	Presentation of findings to the Human Genetics Commission.

Appendix 2: Promotional Material

Invitation to become a panellist



WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH YOUR DNA?

Vis-a-Vis Research is looking for panellists to take part in an Inquiry on the National DNA Database.

Each one of us has a unique DNA, that can be used to identify who we are, and even where we have been.

National and international governments, Health authorities and even Non-Governmental organisations are currently debating whether, and if so how, they should collect our DNA and what should be done with it when they do. This debate is relevant to EACH and EVERY one of us, ESPECIALLY those most vulnerable in society.

If your over 14 and interested in getting involved, or would like further information,
Call: Bano or Komal on 01254 290 244; 07966 534 552 (Bano); 07977 442 520 (Komal)

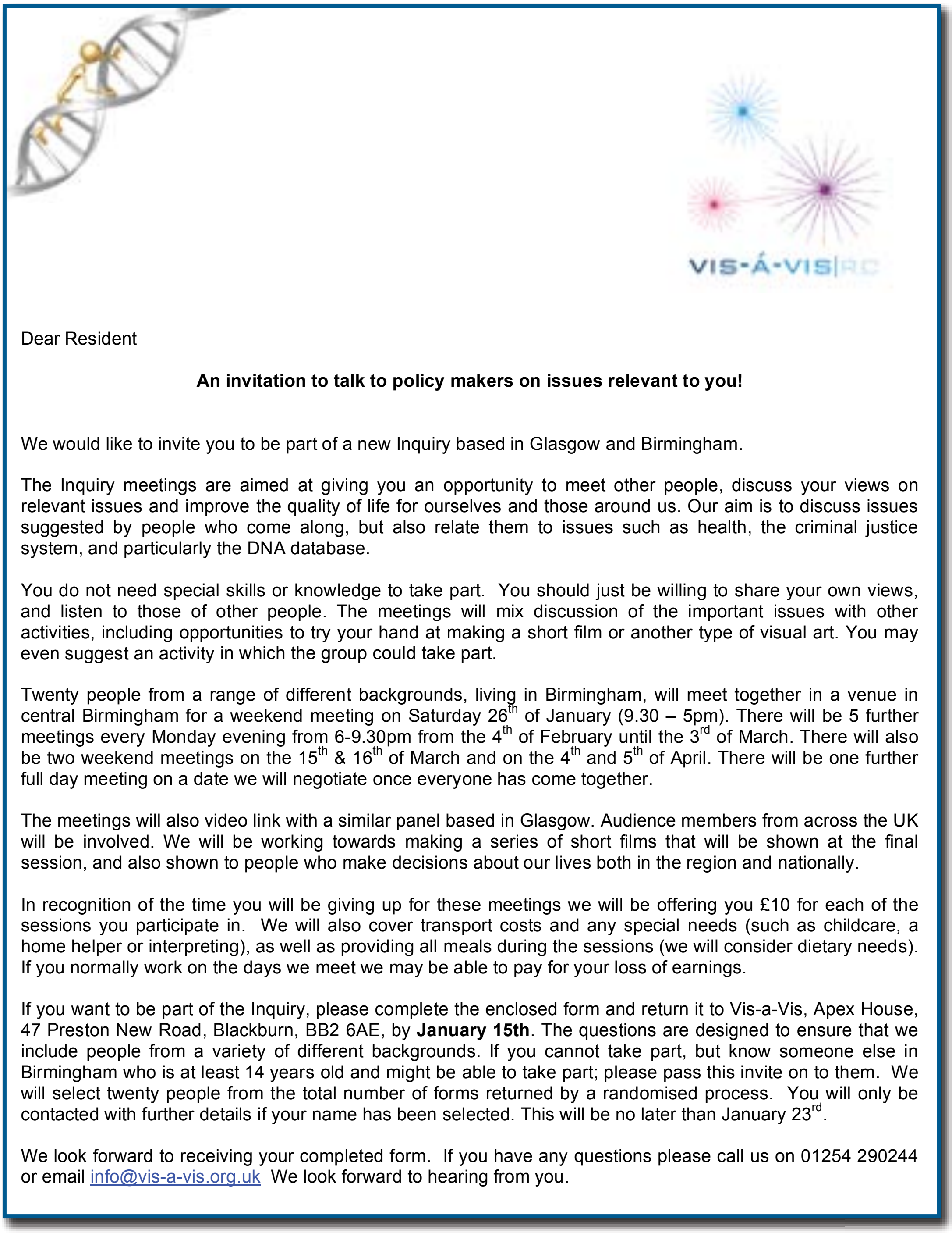
Vis-a-Vis is bringing together groups of people from across communities in Glasgow and Birmingham to participate and influence this debate.

- You will be paid for your time, travel and child care costs.
- You do not require ANY prior knowledge about DNA.
- You will be expected to attend at least 11 weekly sessions (from January – March 2008).
- Special requirements such as impairments, child care and faith will be accommodated.

VIS-Á-VIS|RC

www.vis-a-vis.org.uk

Invitation letter sent to Birmingham



Dear Resident

An invitation to talk to policy makers on issues relevant to you!

We would like to invite you to be part of a new Inquiry based in Glasgow and Birmingham.

The Inquiry meetings are aimed at giving you an opportunity to meet other people, discuss your views on relevant issues and improve the quality of life for ourselves and those around us. Our aim is to discuss issues suggested by people who come along, but also relate them to issues such as health, the criminal justice system, and particularly the DNA database.

You do not need special skills or knowledge to take part. You should just be willing to share your own views, and listen to those of other people. The meetings will mix discussion of the important issues with other activities, including opportunities to try your hand at making a short film or another type of visual art. You may even suggest an activity in which the group could take part.

Twenty people from a range of different backgrounds, living in Birmingham, will meet together in a venue in central Birmingham for a weekend meeting on Saturday 26th of January (9.30 – 5pm). There will be 5 further meetings every Monday evening from 6-9.30pm from the 4th of February until the 3rd of March. There will also be two weekend meetings on the 15th & 16th of March and on the 4th and 5th of April. There will be one further full day meeting on a date we will negotiate once everyone has come together.

The meetings will also video link with a similar panel based in Glasgow. Audience members from across the UK will be involved. We will be working towards making a series of short films that will be shown at the final session, and also shown to people who make decisions about our lives both in the region and nationally.

In recognition of the time you will be giving up for these meetings we will be offering you £10 for each of the sessions you participate in. We will also cover transport costs and any special needs (such as childcare, a home helper or interpreting), as well as providing all meals during the sessions (we will consider dietary needs). If you normally work on the days we meet we may be able to pay for your loss of earnings.

If you want to be part of the Inquiry, please complete the enclosed form and return it to Vis-a-Vis, Apex House, 47 Preston New Road, Blackburn, BB2 6AE, by **January 15th**. The questions are designed to ensure that we include people from a variety of different backgrounds. If you cannot take part, but know someone else in Birmingham who is at least 14 years old and might be able to take part; please pass this invite on to them. We will select twenty people from the total number of forms returned by a randomised process. You will only be contacted with further details if your name has been selected. This will be no later than January 23rd.

We look forward to receiving your completed form. If you have any questions please call us on 01254 290244 or email info@vis-a-vis.org.uk We look forward to hearing from you.

☐ **Yes, I am interested in putting my name forward as a participant**

Name: ____

Address: ____

____

Telephone (& Email if you have it) ____

VIS-Á-VIS RC

Do you have any special requirements? (e.g. wheelchair access, interpretation to and from English, sign language etc)

……….

Do you require any child care for any of the meetings? If yes, please specify.

……….

Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age (please circle your age-range):

14-20 21-35 36-50 50-65 over 65+

How would you identify yourself?

(for example, different members of our team identify ourselves as “new father, originally from Lancashire”, “amateur football fanatic with South Asian-West Midland upbringing” or “employee of community group with a passion for playing the guitar” Just write what you think best describes you!).

……….

……….

What would you describe as your ethnic origin? (e.g. White British, Asian British, Nigerian British etc.)

……….

I can take part in the Inquiry on: (please tick)
☐ 26th January ☐ 4th February ☐ 11th February ☐ 18th February
☐ 25th February ☐ 3rd March ☐ 15th & 16th March ☐ 4th & 5th April
☐ One further date

By signing below I give my consent under the Data Protection Act for the information above to be used for the sole purpose of the Inquiry.

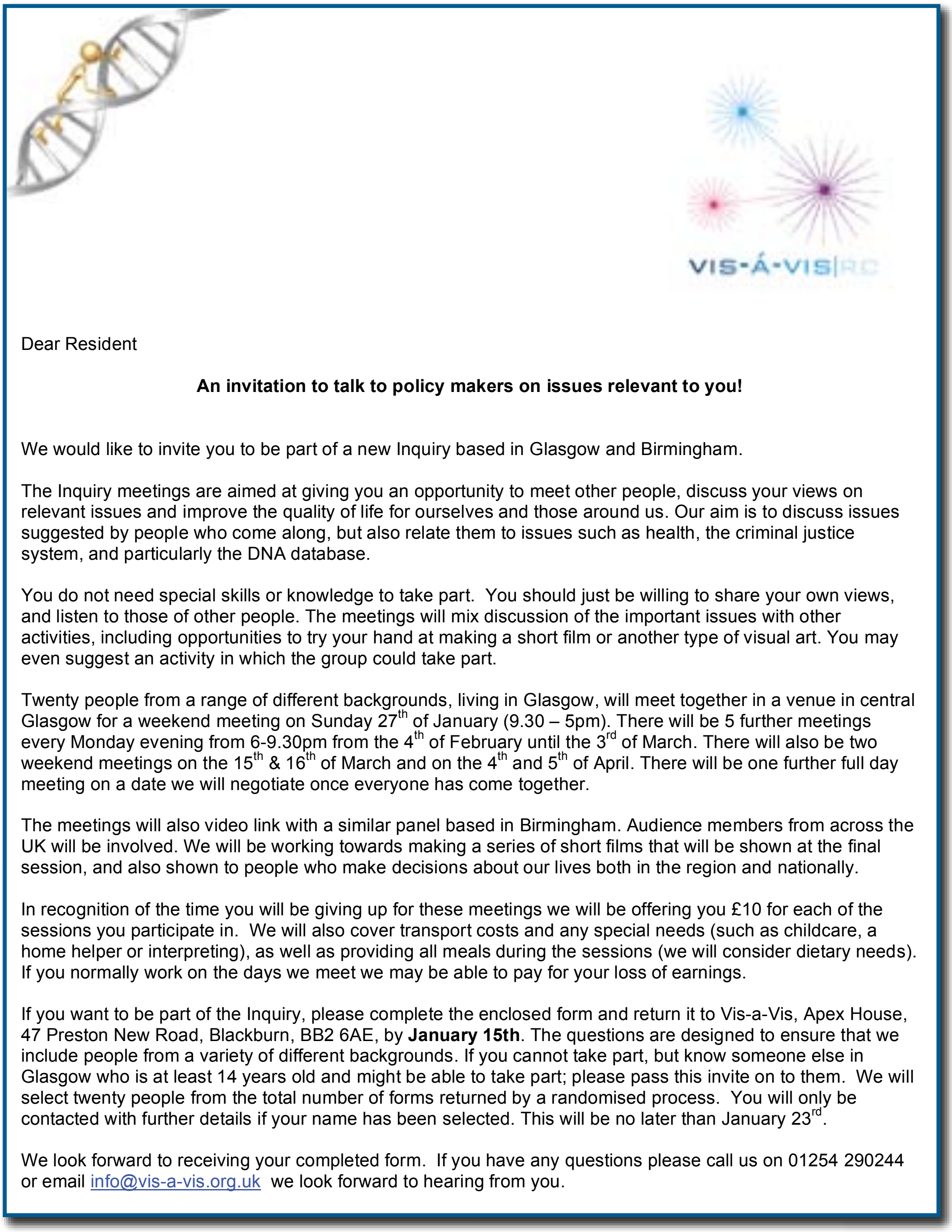
Signed ………………………………… Date ………………….

☐ Please tick this box if you wish to be kept informed of the activities of the Inquiry even if you don’t take part.

This form should be returned to the address below no later than January 15th 2006

Vis-a-Vis RC Ltd
Apex House
47 Preston New Road
Blackburn
BB2 6AE

Invitation letter sent to Glasgow



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Twenty people from a range of different backgrounds, living in Glasgow, will meet together in a venue in central Glasgow for a weekend meeting on Sunday 27th of January (9.30 – 5pm). There will be 5 further meetings every Monday evening from 6-9.30pm from the 4th of February until the 3rd of March. There will also be two weekend meetings on the 15th & 16th of March and on the 4th and 5th of April. There will be one further full day meeting on a date we will negotiate once everyone has come together.

The meetings will also video link with a similar panel based in Birmingham. Audience members from across the UK will be involved. We will be working towards making a series of short films that will be shown at the final session, and also shown to people who make decisions about our lives both in the region and nationally.

In recognition of the time you will be giving up for these meetings we will be offering you £10 for each of the sessions you participate in. We will also cover transport costs and any special needs (such as childcare, a home helper or interpreting), as well as providing all meals during the sessions (we will consider dietary needs). If you normally work on the days we meet we may be able to pay for your loss of earnings.

If you want to be part of the Inquiry, please complete the enclosed form and return it to Vis-a-Vis, Apex House, 47 Preston New Road, Blackburn, BB2 6AE, by **January 15th**. The questions are designed to ensure that we include people from a variety of different backgrounds. If you cannot take part, but know someone else in Glasgow who is at least 14 years old and might be able to take part; please pass this invite on to them. We will select twenty people from the total number of forms returned by a randomised process. You will only be contacted with further details if your name has been selected. This will be no later than January 23rd.

We look forward to receiving your completed form. If you have any questions please call us on 01254 290244 or email info@vis-a-vis.org.uk we look forward to hearing from you.

☐ **Yes, I am interested in putting my name forward as a participant**

Name: ____

Address: ____

____

Telephone (& Email if you have it) ____

Do you have any special requirements? (e.g. wheelchair access, interpretation to and from English, sign language etc)

………..

Do you require any child care for any of the meetings? If yes, please specify.

………..

Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age (please circle your age-range):

14-20 21-35 36-50 50-65 over 65+

How would you identify yourself?

(for example, different members of our team identify ourselves as “new father, originally from Lancashire”, “amateur football fanatic with South Asian-West Midland upbringing” or “employee of community group with a passion for playing the guitar” Just write what you think best describes you!).

………..

………..

What would you describe as your ethnic origin? (e.g. White British, Asian British, Nigerian British etc.)

………..

I can take part in the Inquiry on: (please tick)
☐ 27th January ☐ 4th February ☐ 11th February ☐ 18th February
☐ 25th February ☐ 3rd March ☐ 15th & 16th March ☐ 4th & 5th April
☐ One further date

By signing below I give my consent under the Data Protection Act for the information above to be used for the sole purpose of the Inquiry.

Signed …………………………………. Date ………………….

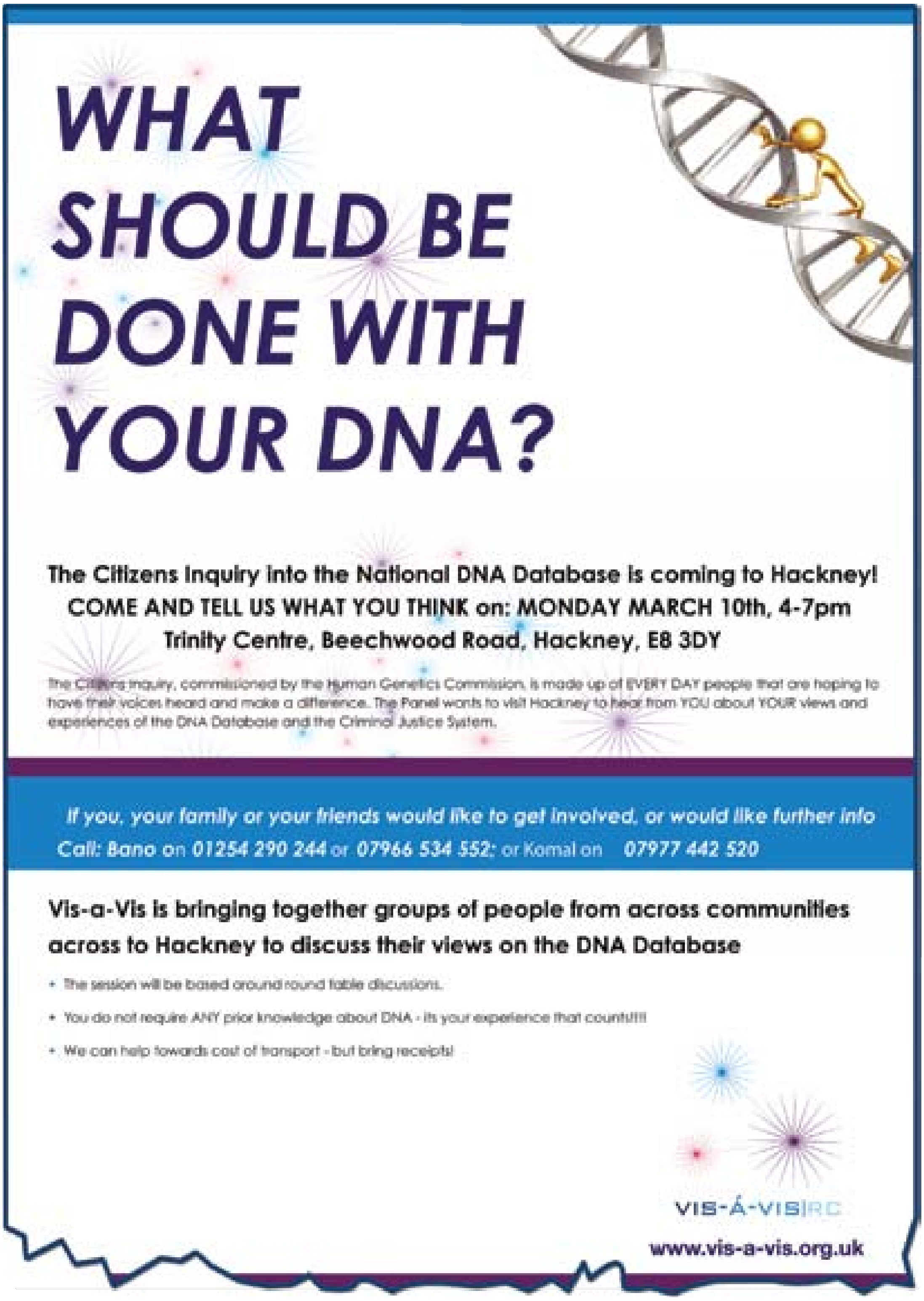
☐ Please tick this box if you wish to be kept informed of the activities of the Inquiry even if you don’t take part.

This form should be returned to the address below no later than January 15th 2006

Vis-a-Vis RC Ltd
Apex House
47 Preston New Road
Blackburn
BB2 6AE

Appendix 3: Hackney Visit

Invitation to groups and individuals in Hackney



WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH YOUR DNA?

The Citizens Inquiry into the National DNA Database is coming to Hackney!
COME AND TELL US WHAT YOU THINK on: MONDAY MARCH 10th, 4-7pm
Trinity Centre, Beechwood Road, Hackney, E8 3DY

The Citizens Inquiry, commissioned by the Human Genetics Commission, is made up of EVERY DAY people that are hoping to have their voices heard and make a difference. The Panel wants to visit Hackney to hear from YOU about YOUR views and experiences of the DNA Database and the Criminal Justice System.

If you, your family or your friends would like to get involved, or would like further info
Call: Bano on 01254 290 244 or 07966 534 552; or Komal on 07977 442 520

Vis-a-Vis is bringing together groups of people from across communities across to Hackney to discuss their views on the DNA Database

- The session will be based around round table discussions.
- You do not require ANY prior knowledge about DNA - its your experience that counts!!!
- We can help towards cost of transport - but bring receipts!

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www.vis-a-vis.org.uk

Appendix 4: Guiding Principles for Experts

Guiding Principles: Speakers

We ask that all audience members and expert adhere to certain principles:

- Please keep all language simple and jargon free. Where you must use complicated language or jargon be clear in explaining what it is from the outset. We operate a red card rule - every member of the panel and facilitation team has a red card. This can be raised at any time to ask for immediate clarification or explanation from the speaker.

- Please stick to 10 minutes - we will be very pushed for time with audience members and both panels needing to ask questions. As such, we will be very strict on maintaining time.

- We DO NOT rely on written literacy - but if you do need to bring handouts please keep them simple, concise and in 16 pt font minimum and a maximum 2 sides of A4. If you would like us to print these before your session please email them to us the Friday before you are due to speak. As our office is in Blackburn we will not otherwise be able to print them in time.

- Please treat this as a dialogue between you and the Inquiry Panellists. We are very keen to stress that the panel are experts in their own right as the life experience that brings them onto the Panel will inform their decisions and perspectives as much as the views of 'outside experts' such as yourself. We feel this is a unique opportunity for 'outside' experts to exchange perspectives with and themselves be informed by the Panel and vice versa - so hope you enjoy it as much as we will.

Human
Genetics
Commission

ESRC genomics network
genomics forum

wellcome trust

Policy
Ethics
And
Life
Sciences

PEALS Research Centre

beacons
for public
engagement

at newcastle and
durham universities

VIS-À-VIS|RC

The Citizens’ Inquiry was commissioned by the Human Genetics Commission in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Genomics Policy and Research Forum and the Policy Ethics and Life Sciences (PEALS) Research Centre.

The Inquiry was funded by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills’ Sciencewise Programme and the Wellcome Trust, with additional support from the ESRC Genomics Policy and Research Forum and from the Policy Ethics and Life Sciences (PEALS) Research Centre and the Newcastle-Durham Beacon for Public Engagement.

The Inquiry was facilitated and delivered by independent public dialogue consultants Vis-à-vis Research Consultancy Ltd.

289238 1p July 08

Produced by the COI for the Human Genetics Commission