



## **Media Release**

### **Forensic DNA Databases: Only the Guilty have anything to fear?**

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**For Immediate Release**

The levels of serious crime in Ireland have risen dramatically in the last number of years and continue to do so. The establishment of a forensic DNA database is being touted as a potential criminal investigation tool to combat this problem. Given the success in other countries of using forensic DNA databases for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, the establishment of one in Ireland is an interesting prospect. However, according to the Irish Council for Bioethics numerous ethical questions arise with respect to individual rights and to how genetic data will be protected from unauthorised intrusion.

The Irish Council for Bioethics is today (3<sup>rd</sup> November) hosting a conference directed to an invited audience of politicians, civil servants and legislators on this topic. The aim of the conference is to present an analysis of the principal scientific, legal and ethical issues surrounding collection, use and retention of forensic DNA samples and profiles.

“It is imperative that with the establishment of a forensic DNA database we strike a balance between protecting society from criminal behaviour and upholding the rights of individuals who may be suspected of committing crimes.” said Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan, scientific director of the Irish Council for Bioethics.

The UK’s National DNA Database has provided many positive statistics; for instance, it is estimated that in a typical month the database links suspects to 15 murders, 31 rapes and 770 car crimes.

The Conference will take place in The Royal Irish Academy, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2 and will commence at 10.30 am.

Ends