

Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	28 May 2020
Location	By teleconference
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Assessment of Performance Report 2019/20
Item number	3.2
Presented By	Amy McDonald
Recommendation to Members	For consultation
Appendix Attached	Annual Business Performance Report

PURPOSE

To present Forensic Services Annual Performance Report for 2019/20 for Committee consideration.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Forensic Services Annual Performance Report is presented for 2019/20.
- 1.2 This report captures activity across SPA Forensic Services during the course of the last year 12 months to 31 March 2020. This performance evidence is to support the SPA Annual Report and Accounts process for 2019/20.
- 1.4 The report demonstrates SPA Forensic Services delivery over the last year through the following components:
- Qualitative performance data;
 - Evidence of service initiatives and improvements; and
 - Value opportunities through the development of forensic data.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications noted in the report.

3 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this paper.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with this paper.

5 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct reputational implications associated with this paper.

6 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct social implications associated with this paper.

7 COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no direct community impact implications associated with this paper.

8 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct equality implications associated with this paper.

9 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct environmental implications associated with this paper.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of the 2019/20 Forensic Services Performance Report.

Forensic Services Annual Performance Report

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Forensic Services have performed well over the last year and taken a significant step forward in achieving the objectives set out in the organisational 2026 strategy. Casework aging has fallen, and over many business areas output is higher with workloads reducing. Considerable effort has been put into the reduction of active workload by staff although demand, particularly in drugs work, continues to be high.
- 1.2. There has been continued significant input to major crime cases and demand for such input throughout year. All areas of the organisation contributing to this requirement which has not only included current cases but cold cases too.
- 1.3. The recent impact of the Coronavirus outbreak has seen demand reduce at the end of March 2020. Changing demand levels have seen the forensic response ensure appropriate staffing levels are maintained. This situation is being continually monitored to ensure demand from all users of Forensic Services is delivered upon.
- 1.4. Over the last 12 months Forensic Services have formed a Change function to take forward Phase 2 of the 2026 strategy. Phase 2, covering 2020 to 2023, focuses on transformational change of which there has been much planning taking place in 2019/20. Work particularly over the last 6 months has been progressed to start the development of a new operating model for Forensic Services. This new model is intended to create greater operational capacity particularly for investigative casework. This change will assist in growing the scientific excellence of staff over future years. During the last quarter of 2019/20 there was extensive engagement with staff providing updates on the new operating model. This has developed a clear understanding on the current status of the project and how it will progress over the coming year.
- 1.5. Operational improvement projects continued over the year, some focusing on workload reduction projects, these have had a positive impact in reducing casework. This has not always necessarily resulted in reduced caseload in all areas due to demand increasing even though casework output has gone up.

2. Business Plan Delivery

2.1. The table below highlights the progress against the business plan 2019/20.

2019/20 Business Plan	Continuous Improvement	Forensic 2026 Strategic Change
<p>HMICS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations progressed • Linked to 2026 programme <p>Addressing Critical Resource Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruitment complete – consequential vacancies filled • More experienced staff being recruited reducing training time <p>Infrastructure Investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement work to operating system continuing • Management skills growth programme commenced • Corporate Service support strengthened <p>Maintaining Accreditation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKAS confirmed successful reaccreditation on 31 March 2020 <p>Management Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New management reporting tool made live in Q2 <p>Drug Driving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New toxicology service for Drug Driving completed. 	<p>Continuous improvement work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating system performance improvements • Business as usual investment activity ongoing as part of the asset replacement strategy • Process improvement and compliance projects progressing as planned • Work supporting Strategic Change Programme progressed in respect of Improvements to Management Reporting, and organisational readiness for change work programme • Scene examination quality system improvement work progressed • Validation of new drugs testing instrumentation completed in Glasgow and in Dundee. 	<p>Strategy Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change Programme Governance in place, Programme Boards held • Team structure developed, and resourced to support new operating model development • Target operating model design delivery plan created and outline models developed • Structured delivery plan created for 2019/20 • Engagement with PSoS Corporate Services to supporting strategic development • Implications of 2019/20 budget being assessed in relation to timeline for delivery of benefits • Staff change readiness work commenced and linked to strategic development programme.



3. Quality

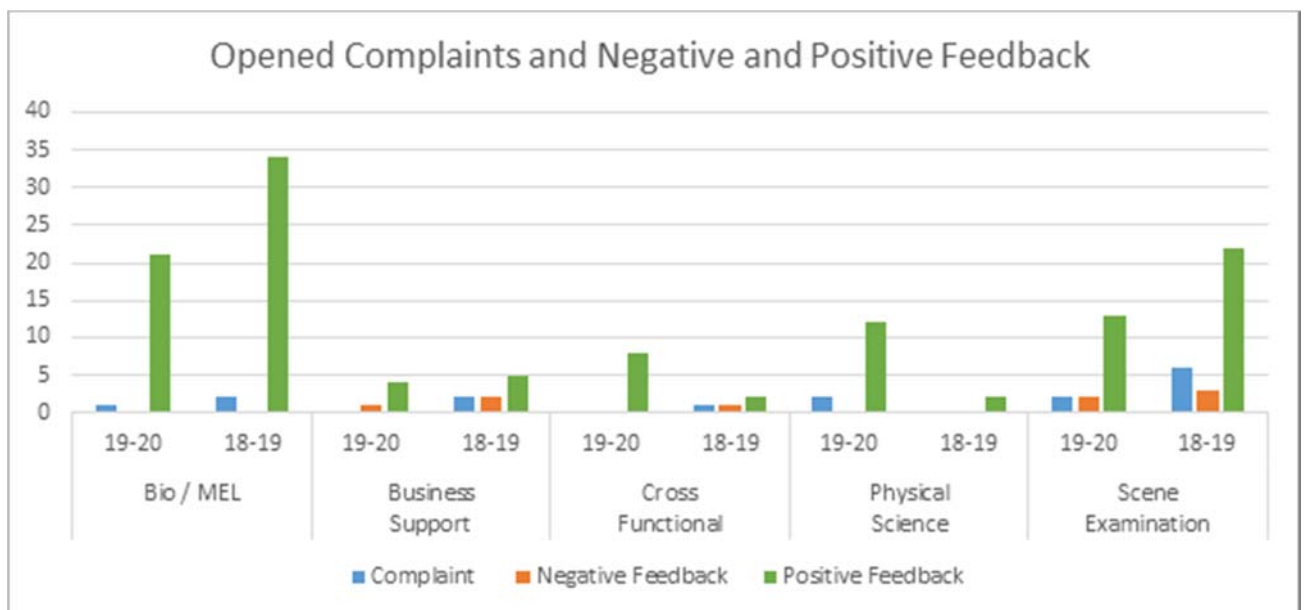
3.1. Forensic Services continue to work under a total quality management system. Following UKAS's annual audit re-accreditation was granted on the 31st of March 2020 to the ISO 17025 standard. Forensic Services successfully maintaining accreditation Standard for the 22nd consecutive year.

3.2. Forensic Services have also now transitioned from the 2005 edition of the Standard to the revised 2017 issue. This is key to continued accreditation compliance.

3.3. The scope of accreditation was extended over the last year with extensions to scope received for 5 further areas of service, being enhancements of:

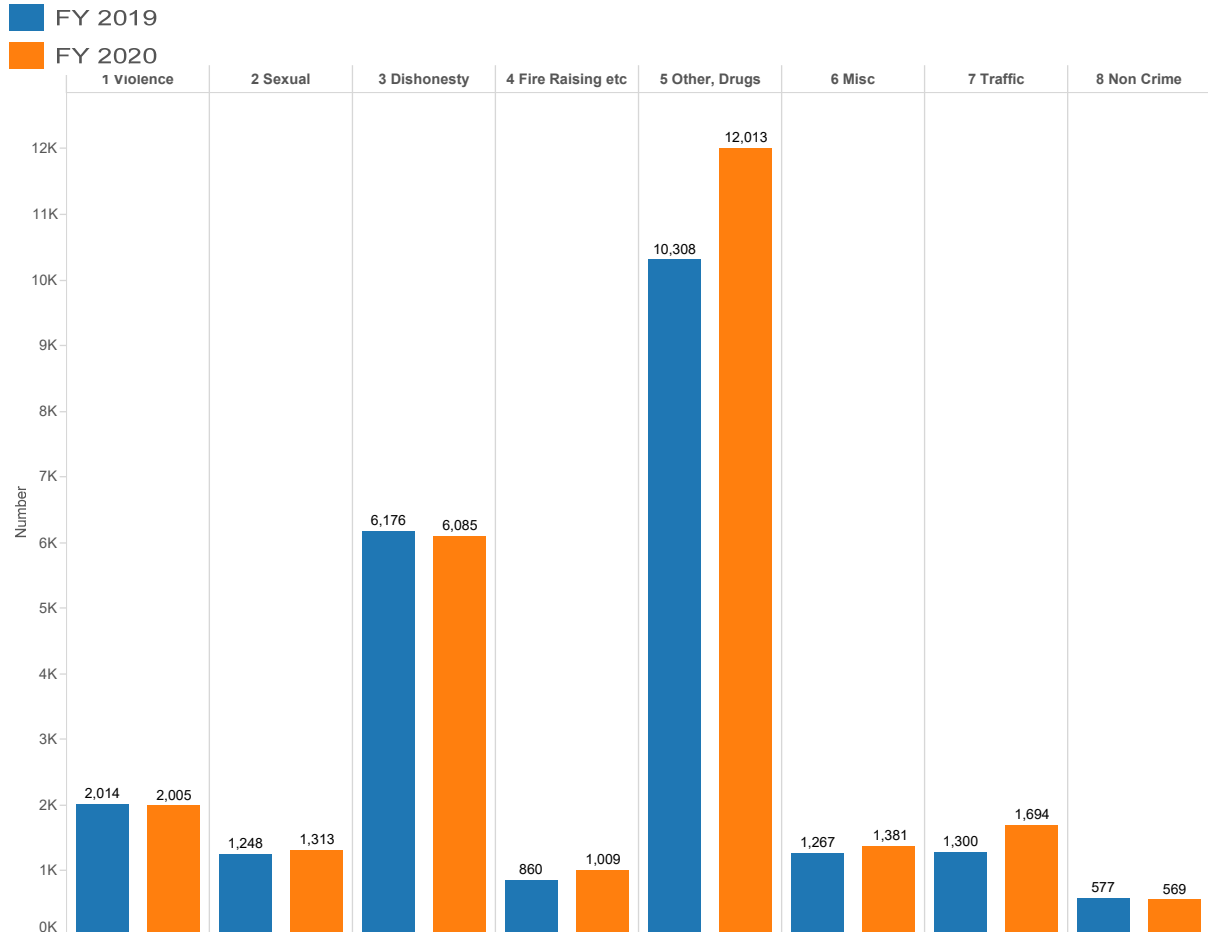
- 3 areas in Biology;
- 1 in Drugs; and
- 1 in Toxicology.

3.4. The table below shows reported feedback on quality performance Forensic Services has received. Positive feedback and a small number of complaints are in comparison to the high levels of activity performed across the functions. The majority of complaints relate to timeliness of service delivery - closure recorded once appropriate investigations, corrective and preventative actions have been taken.



4. Performance Review

4.1. The table below shows the year on year demand across cases which Forensic Services have received during the year. There are no significant changes from the 2018/19 year with the exception of increased Drugs demand as shown.



4.2. The total number of new cases fell slightly by 3% year on year from 27,128 to 26,288.

4.3. As noted the level of drugs cases continued to rise in 2019/20. Forensic Services undertook specific analysis to understand what was driving this increase and developed a specific data set in this regard. This is shown on the following page. This data has been valuable in supporting Police Scotland in informing their Drugs Strategy and highlighting the prevalence of the synthetic drug etizolam in Scotland.

Forensic Services - Physical Sciences - Drugs Unit

11,900 cases commenced in the previous 12 months

40% 3yr demand increase

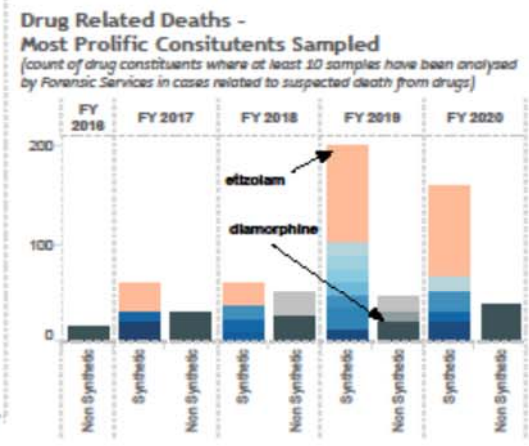
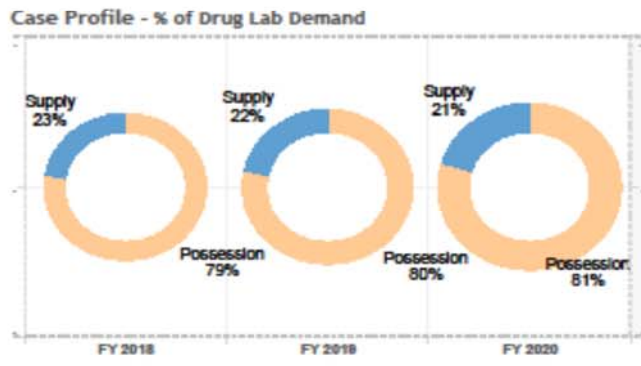
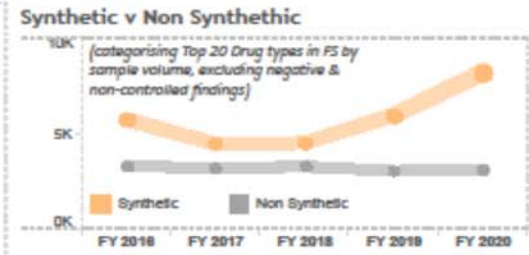
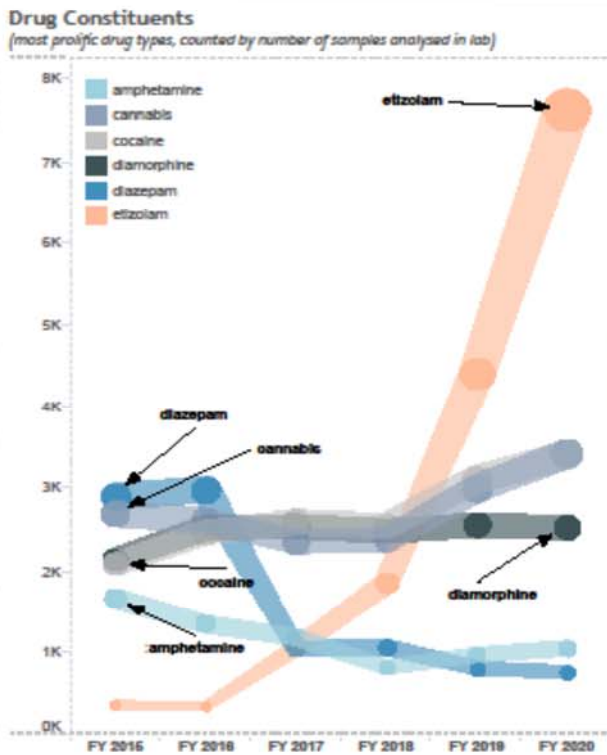
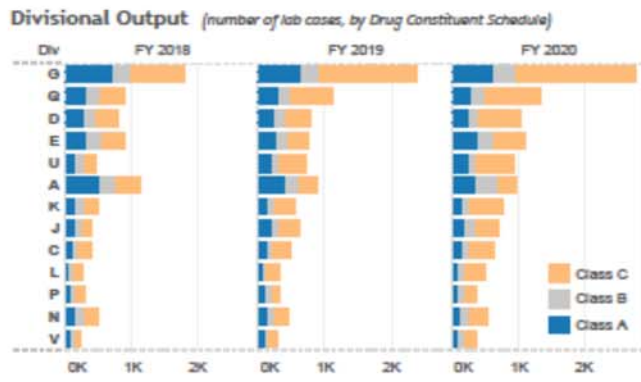
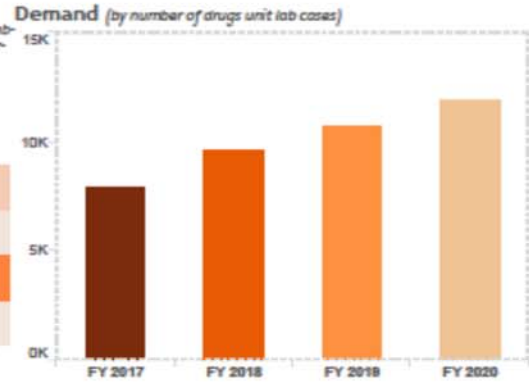
4,000 Cases compared to 2016-17

40% Rise in Output

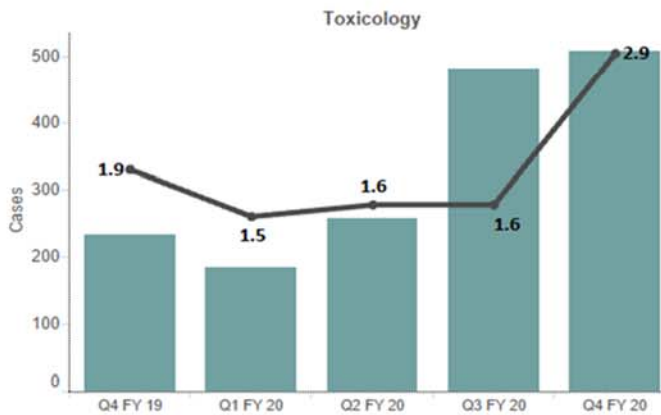
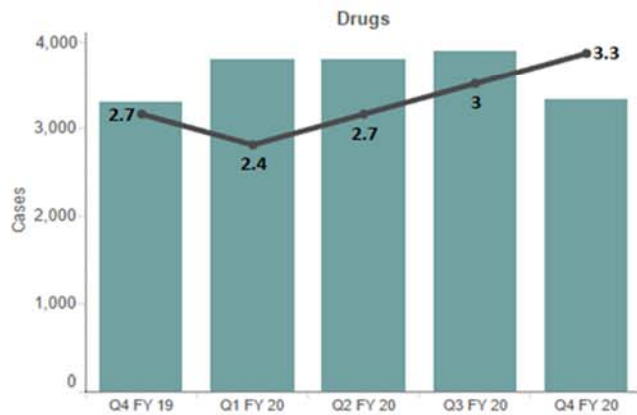
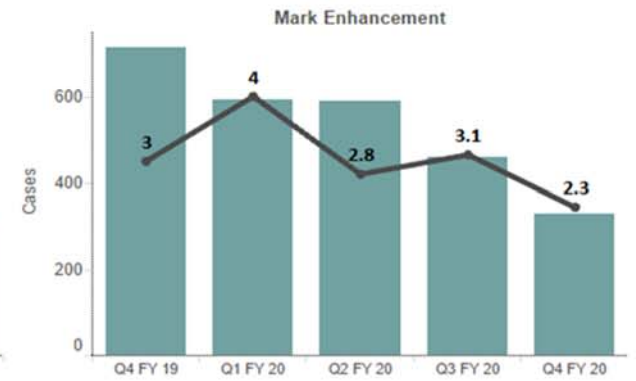
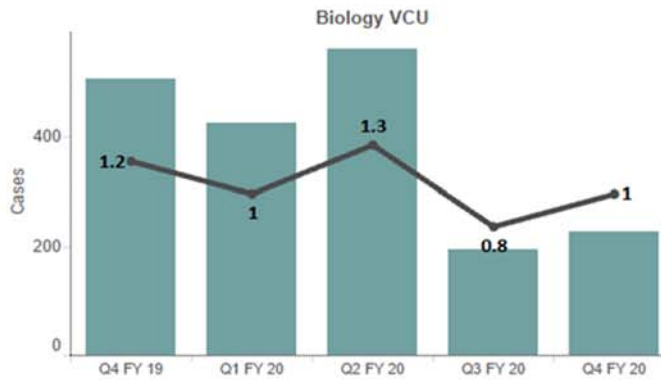
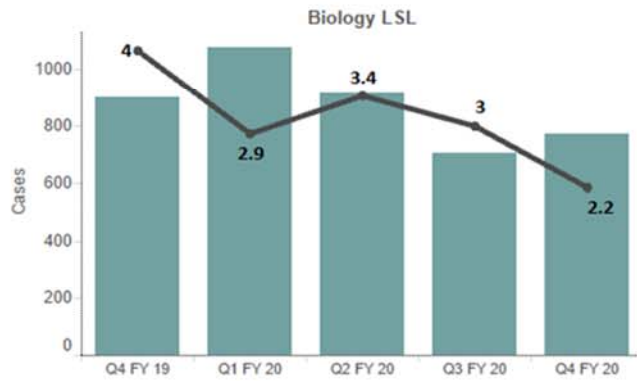
Demand Profile
Data based on financial year reporting period. Based on those cases submitted to Forensic Services for analysis. All data based on Forensic Services management information and should be treated as provisional.

Drug Classification
(proportions of drugs analysed within Forensic Services by schedule - n>100 due to instances of multiple drug types within same case)

	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Class A	43%	37%	31%
Class B	24%	21%	21%
Class C	45%	55%	60%
Not Controlled	20%	20%	20%

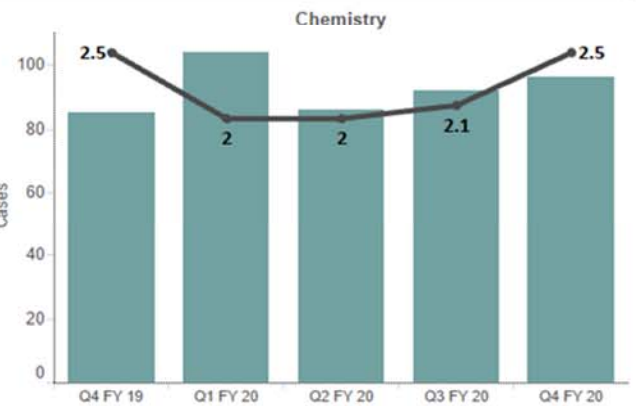
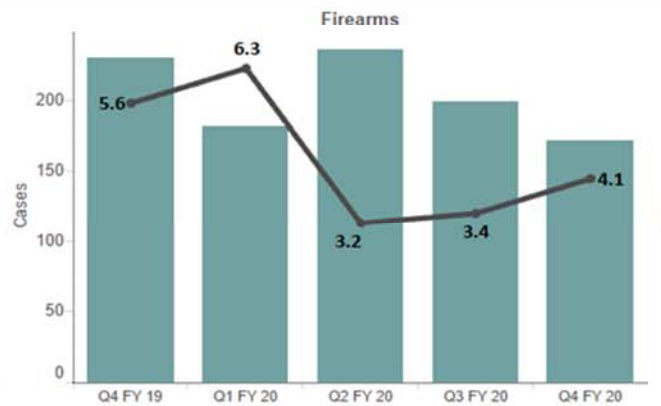
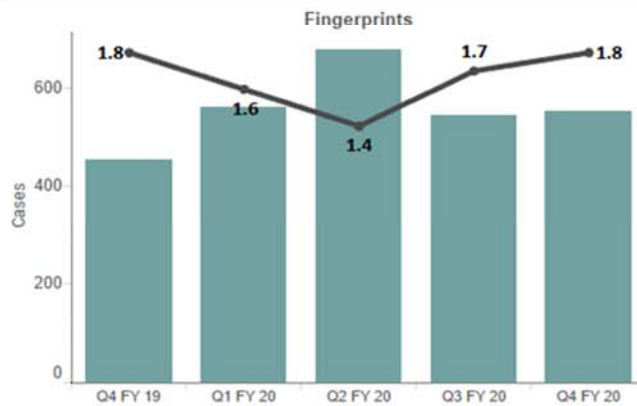


Forensic Services - Laboratory Caseload



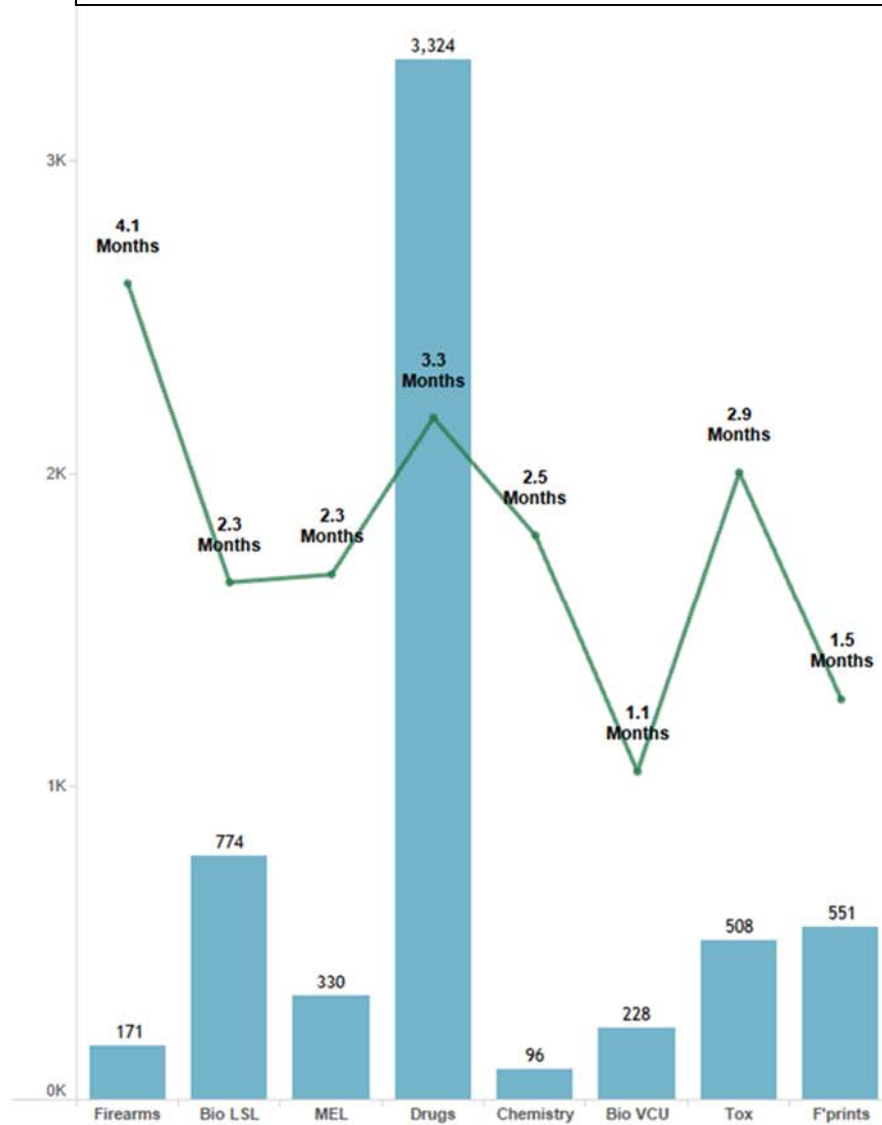
Case numbers are shown for each area with the average month age. The trend of workload reduction and positive ageing is evident across most areas. Where demands are higher this position varies:

- Drugs, continuing high demand makes reducing workload and ageing challenging
- Toxicology has seen an increase in Drug Driving cases in the last 2 quarters.

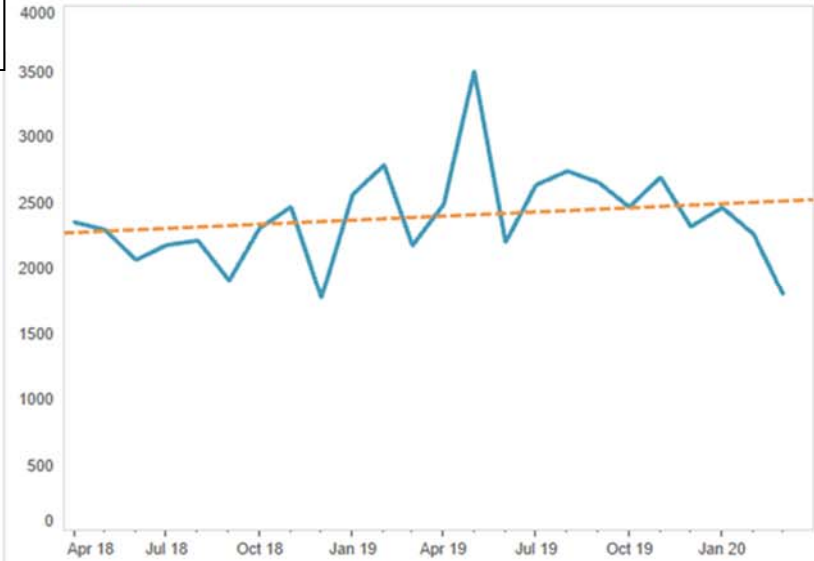


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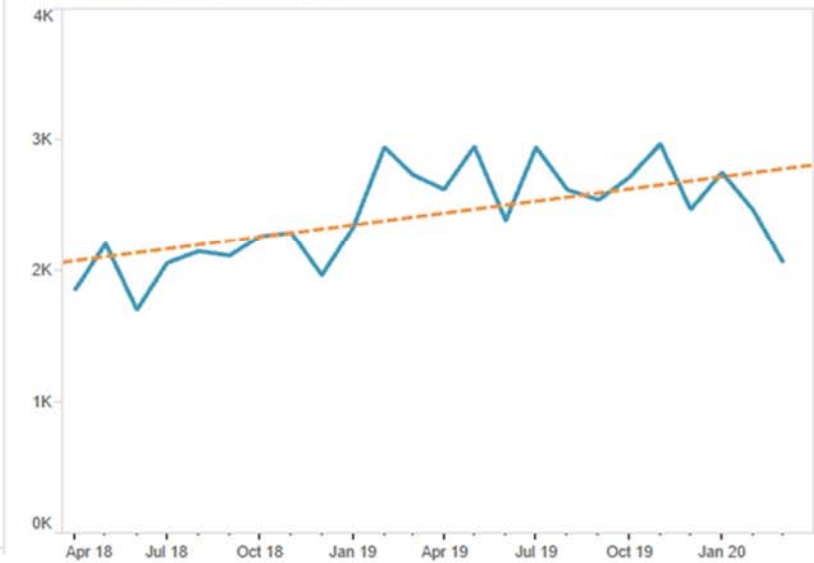
Laboratory case work volumes are shown at 31/03/2020 with the average casework ageing in months. The casework demand and output charts illustrate the growing demand and output for Forensic Services.



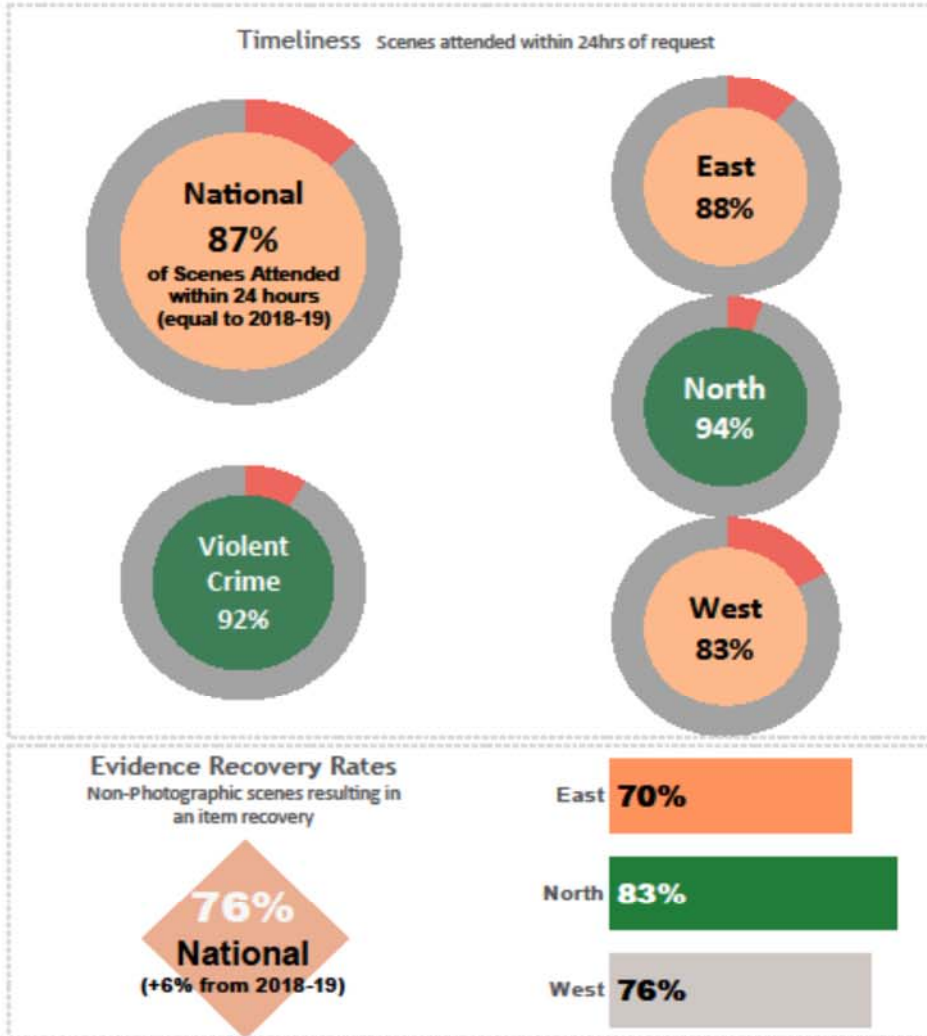
Casework Demand previous 2 years



Casework Output previous 2 years

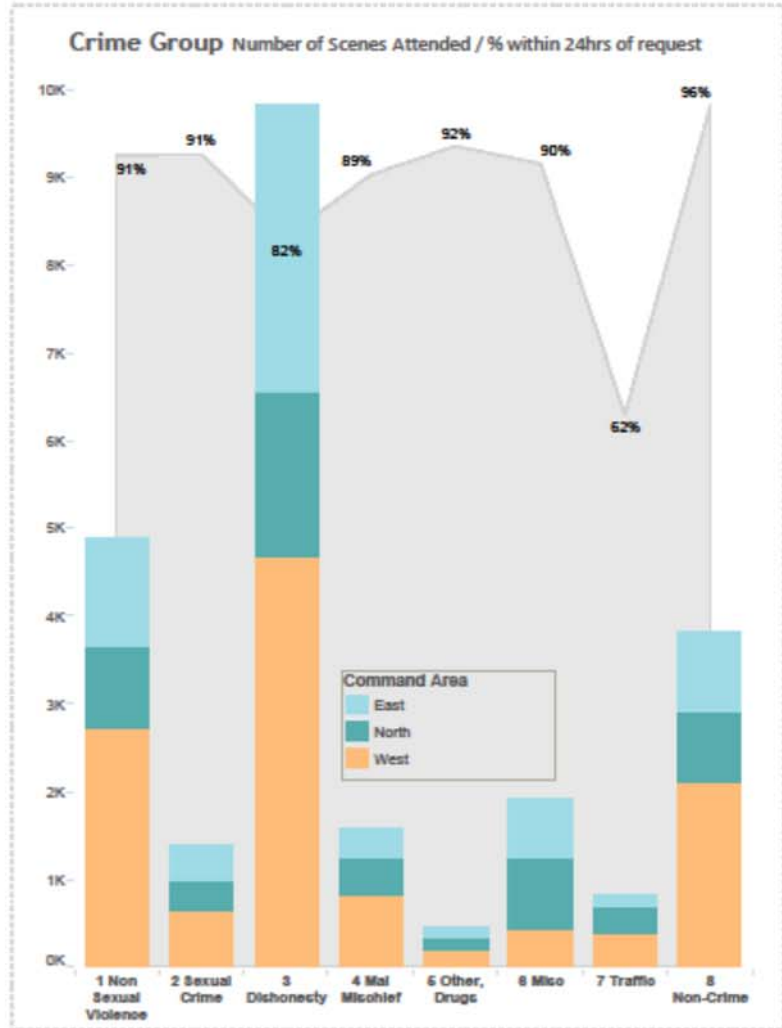


Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit 19-20 Annual Performance



24,116 Scenes Attended
for the 19-20 Year

27,594 Scenes Attended
for the 18-19 Year



5. Operational Performance Case Studies

5.1. *Six Jailed over Glasgow Gang Feud*

- A Glasgow gang were jailed for a total of 104 years having been found guilty of plotting attempts to kill five men linked to a rival gang. The investigation ran over a period of 18 months covering many hundreds of hours of forensic examination, analysis and reporting which started with the attempted murder of an individual.
- Forensic Scene Examiners, Firearms and Biology scientists attended the scene of what was thought to be a shooting incident due to the extent of the victim's injuries.
- From a review of CCTV footage Police Scotland were able to identify three further vehicles linked to this attempted murder, all of which were later found burnt out and subject to analysis by the Forensic team. A machete was recovered from one of these cars and despite the fire damage forensic evidence was found linking this weapon back to the victim.
- There was extensive scene examination activity during this period of time extending to search, enhancement and recovery of articles for further laboratory examination in addition to scene photography.
- When the case was taken to court Forensic Services staff interpreted forensic evidence for the Jury as well as being subject to extensive cross examination.
- On passing down sentence on the 13 May 2019, Lord Mulholland told the guilty men "You sought to turn Glasgow into a war zone for your feud. This is a civilised city, which is based on the rule of law. There is no place for this type of conduct, retribution or the law of the jungle."

5.2. *Drug Analysis Service*

- Forensic Services have a team of scientists and examiners supporting Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. Dedicated teams progress drug analysis work across 2 laboratory sites; Dundee Lab and the Scottish Crime Campus.

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- A large number of substances are received from Police Scotland for analysis to determine what the substance is and whether it is illicit or not. Demand for drug identification and analysis service has grown markedly over the last 3 years.
- Forensic investigation work covers a significant number of substances for both supply and possession cases, sometimes analysis is complex. Other forensic evidence types can also be used in support of such cases.
- The forensic substance analysis is carried out to recognised laboratory standards. Results being provided to support prosecution cases being taken forward by the Police and COPFS.
- Forensic technology used allows for identification of substances which can cause harm as well as those of an illegal nature – this is of equal value when public health is considered. The ability to identify substances quickly which may be harming people is important for public safety.
- Focusing on harm also allows all substances which Forensic Services analyse to be considered whether they are currently illicit or not. In addition the dynamic nature of changes of synthetic drugs requires this wider understanding. This also helps to identify new trends, information which can be shared with partners.

5.3. *Cold Case Review Team*

- Forensic Services have a team of scientists supporting Police Scotland investigation of cold cases.
- Significant investigative skill is required to work through evidence presented and determine what opportunities for further investigation there may be.
- Forensic investigation work can then take some time as analysis is complex. A considerable amount of thought is required in this type of investigation. It is a slow process but can yield results.
- Using the more advanced DNA technology available today can assist in aged cold case investigations. Sensitivity is greater so evidence from the past can now be discovered.

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- Dedicated scientists leading in this work - "this is what I come to work for".
- Such forensic evidence has the potential for closure for family members seeking the truth as forensic science is used to support in the outcomes of cases which have been open for a long period of time.
- Apprehension of criminals who have remained at large while a case has remained open. As much work as possible is completed to give the Police information they require to pursue potential suspects.
- Successes in such operations have led to apprehension of suspects in serious criminal cases.
- The recent Tracy Wylde cold case work saw the jailing of the accused for the murder of this young victim. The forensic work was specifically commended in this case for its high standard. Such was the thoroughness of the investigation the accused pled guilty thus demonstrating the value of this service.