

SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	20 th April 2020
Location	Teleconference
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Performance Report – Q4
Item number	6
Presented By	Tom Nelson
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Business Performance Report Q4

PURPOSE

To present Forensic Services Performance Report, Q4 2019/20 for Committee consideration.

This paper is presented in line with;

- The Scottish Police Authority Scheme of Delegation

This paper is for discussion.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Forensic Services Business Performance Report is presented for Q4 2019/20.
- 1.2 This report captures activity conducted across SPA Forensic Services. This performance evidence also informs the content of the Authority's quarterly Strategic Police Plan Delivery Review and the Annual Review of Policing 2019/20.
- 1.4 The report demonstrates SPA Forensic Services delivery over the last year through the following components:
- Progress updates on Forensic Service commitments laid out in the annual business plan
 - Qualitative performance data;
 - Evidence of service initiatives and improvements

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The financial implications are 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 Q4, 2019/20 Performance Report.

Scottish Police Authority

Forensic Services

Performance Report

Quarter 4 2019/20

*For presentation to the SPA
Forensic Services Committee*

20 April 2020

Performance

- Forensic Services have performed well over the last year and taken a significant step forward in achieving the objectives set out in the organisational 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.
- The recent impact of the Coronavirus outbreak has seen demand reduce. Changing demand levels and ensuring appropriate staffing levels are maintained will be continually monitored over the coming weeks and months.
- There continues to be significant input to major crime cases and demand for this input. All areas of the organisation contributing to this requirement.

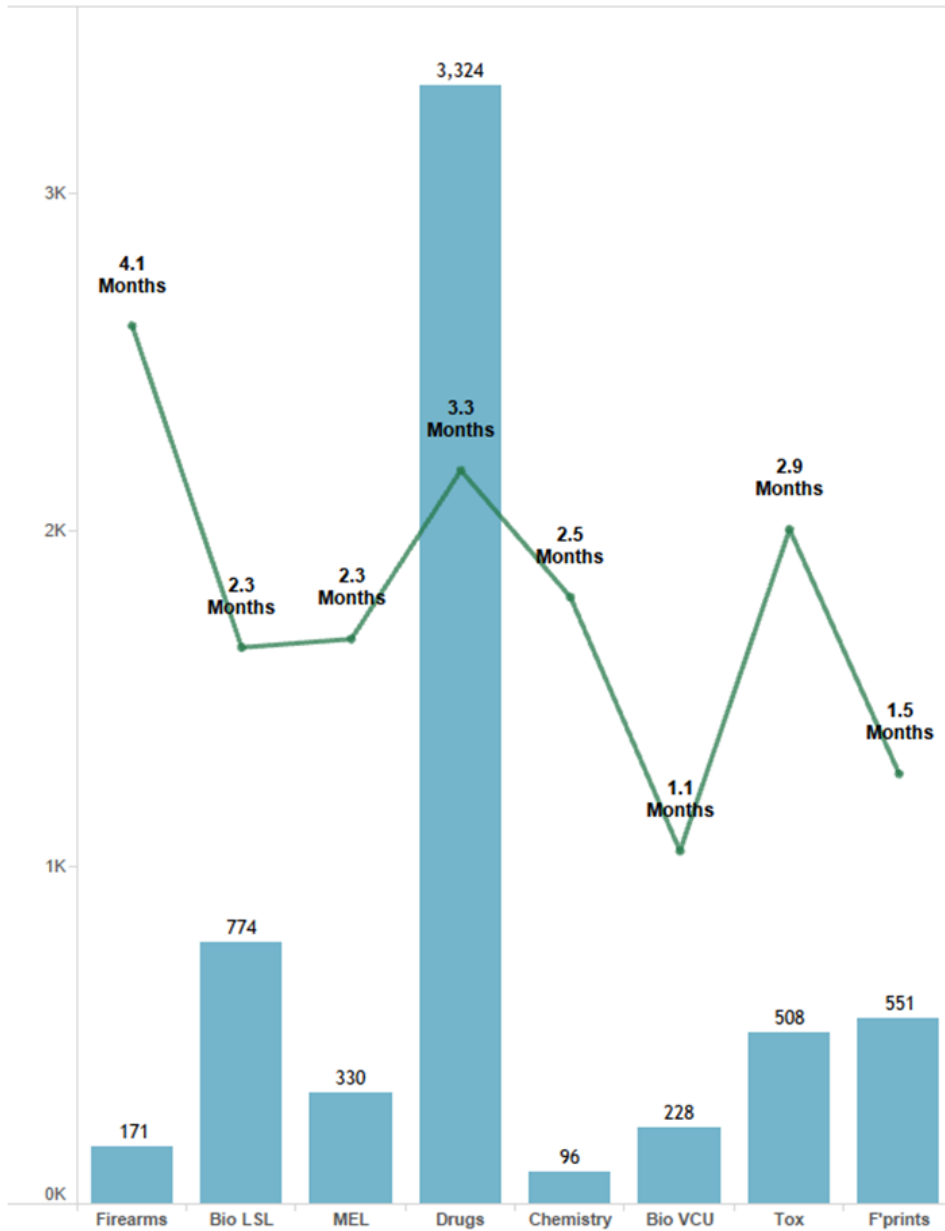
Engagement

- Forensic Services have been working with Police Scotland in taking forward the response to the Coronavirus outbreak. The forensic examination of crime scenes and evidence is continuing as agreed with Police Scotland and COPFS. Staff are working using additional personal protective equipment (PPE) when this is needed.
- As with other organisations Forensic Services are carefully managing stocks of PPE and are supported by Police Scotland to ensure stock replenishment can continue to support operational delivery.
- During the last quarter there was extensive engagement with staff to update them on the work which has been progressed in relation to 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 months.

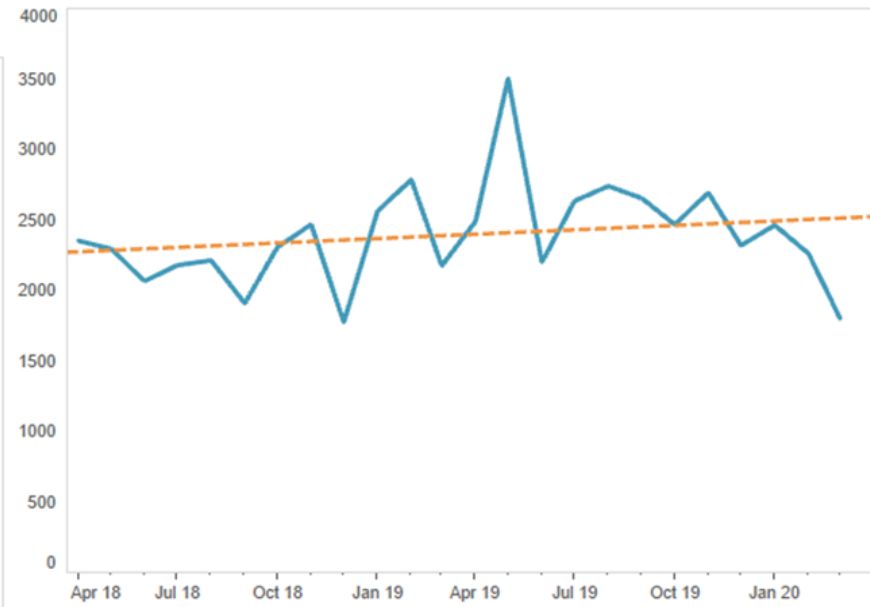
Business Update

- Operational improvement projects are ongoing and delivering value supporting the wider change agenda. Some projects have been impacted by the Coronavirus outbreak and delivery dates adjusted accordingly.
- Workload reduction projects have had a positive impact in reducing casework, this has not necessary resulted in reduced caseload in all areas due to demand, however output has increased.
- Capital expenditure for the year has been completed with all funds spent in the year.
- Coronavirus outbreak planning has been extensive across the business to ensure operational delivery is maintained and staff are safe. The initial planning work has been completed and new service delivery plans are now in place and working well.

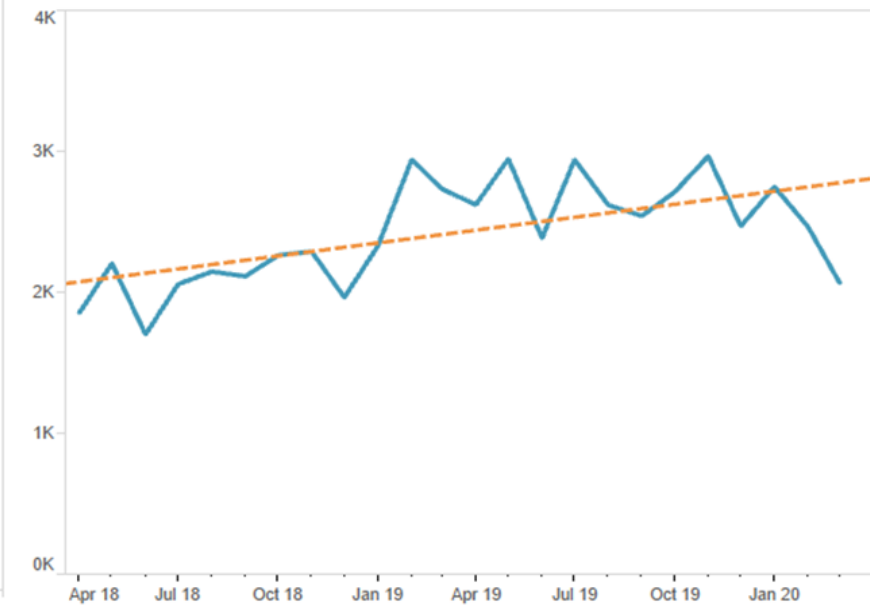
Forensic Services - Laboratory Casework Open Cases - end Q4 19-20 with average age



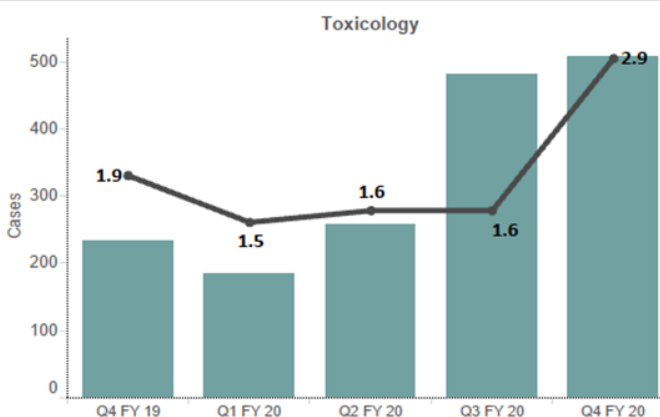
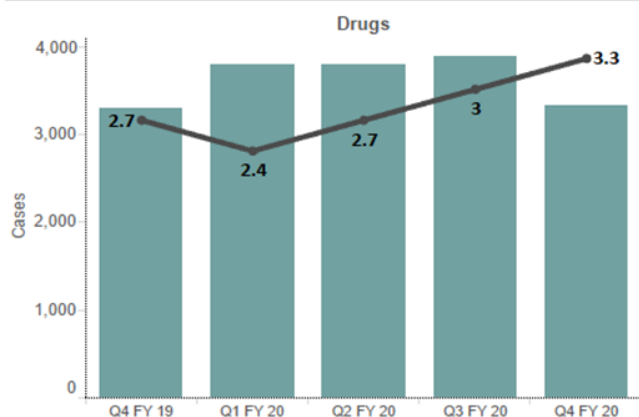
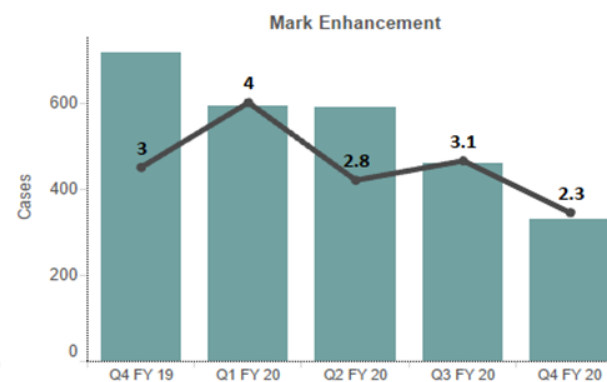
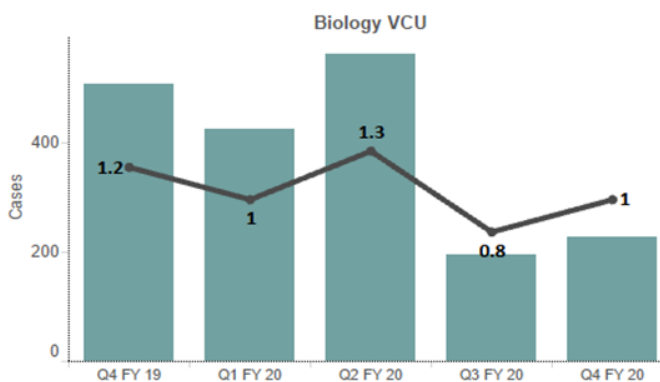
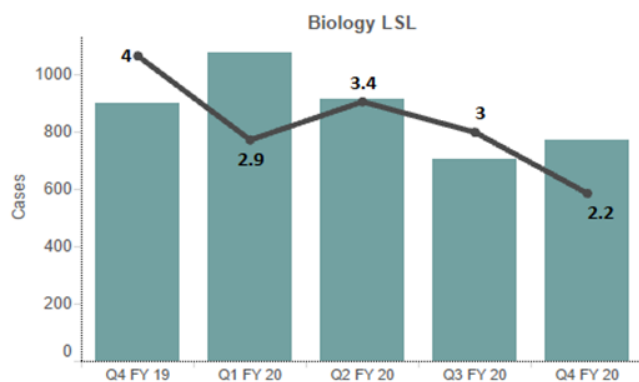
Casework Demand previous 2 years



Casework Output previous 2 years

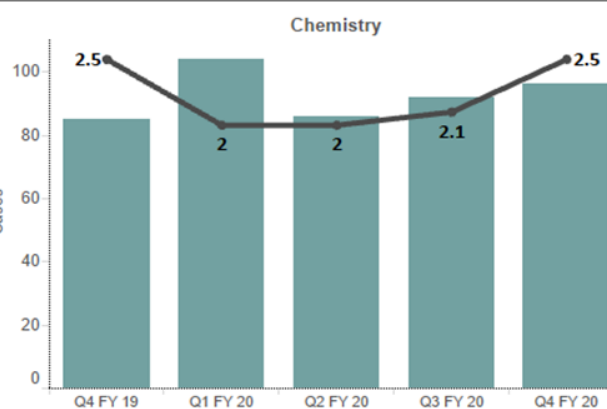
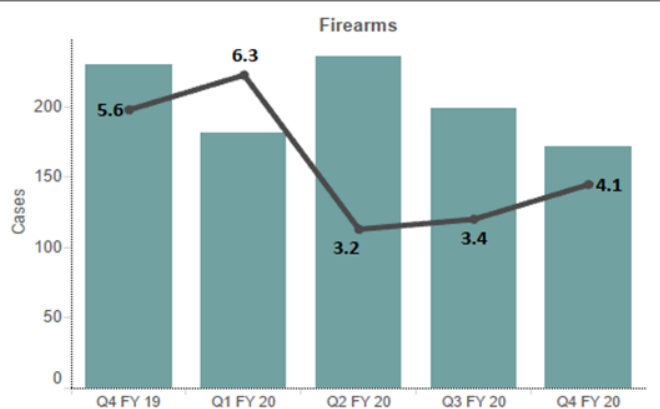
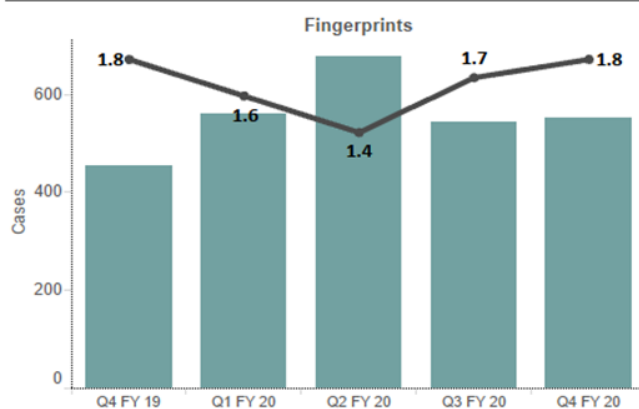


Forensic Services - Laboratory Caseload



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:

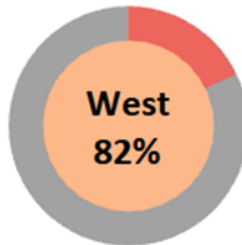
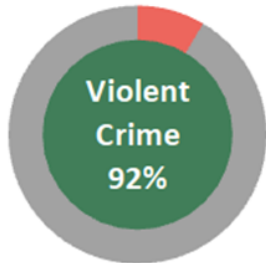
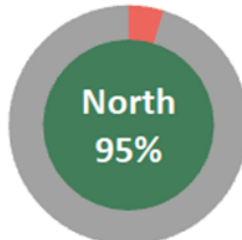
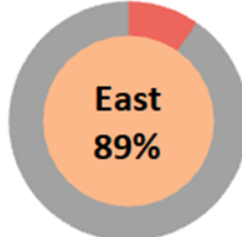
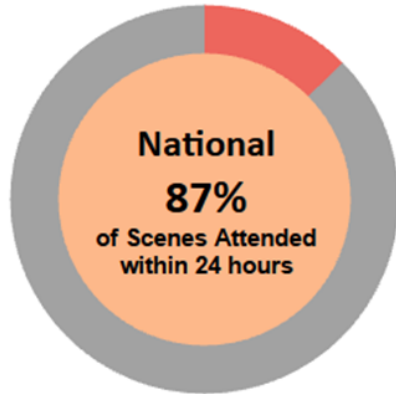
- Drugs, continuing high demand makes reducing workload and ageing challenging
- Toxicology has seen an increase in Drug Driving cases in the last 2 quarters.



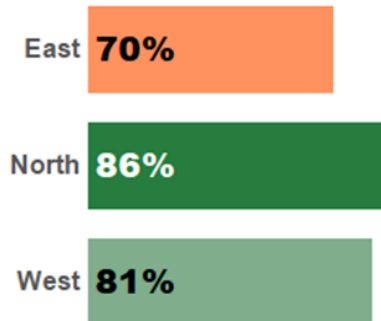
Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit

Quarterly Performance Q4 19-20

Timeliness Scenes attended within 24hrs of request
National target 90% within 24 hours



Evidence Recovery Rates
Non-Photographic scenes resulting in an item recovery

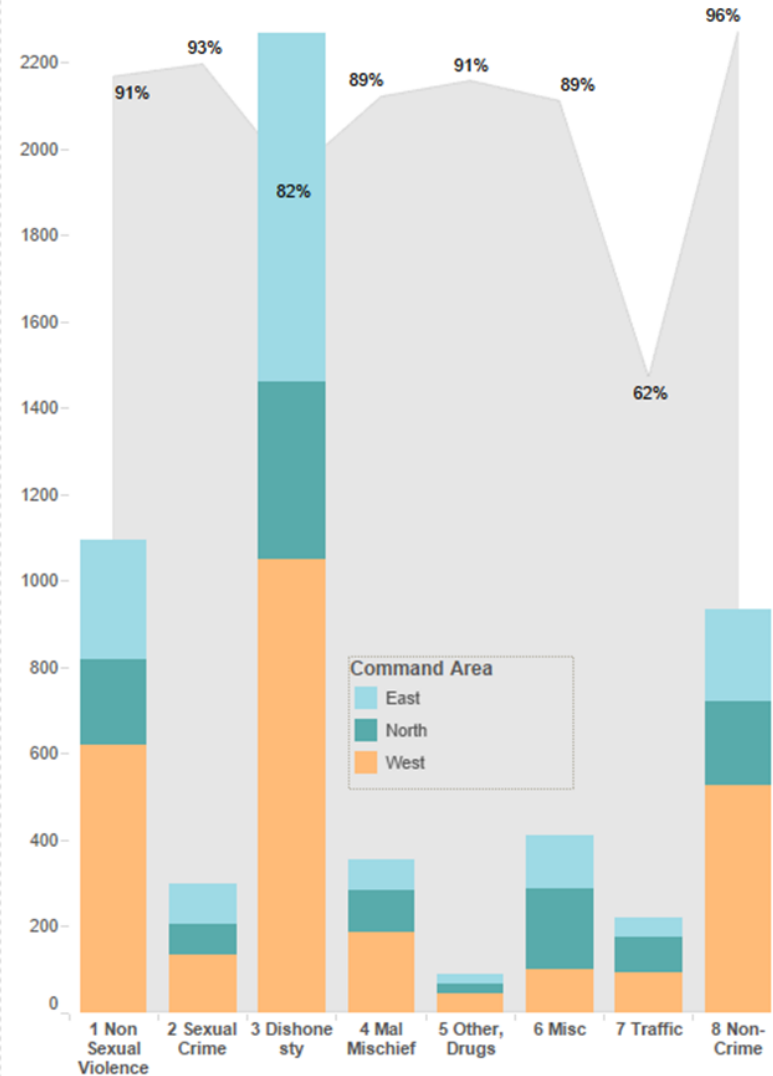


5,528 Scenes Attended Last Quarter

24,116 Scenes Attended for the 19-20 Year

27,594 Scenes Attended for the 18-19 Year

Crime Group Number of Scenes Attended / % within 24hrs of request



Quality Quarter 4 2019/2020

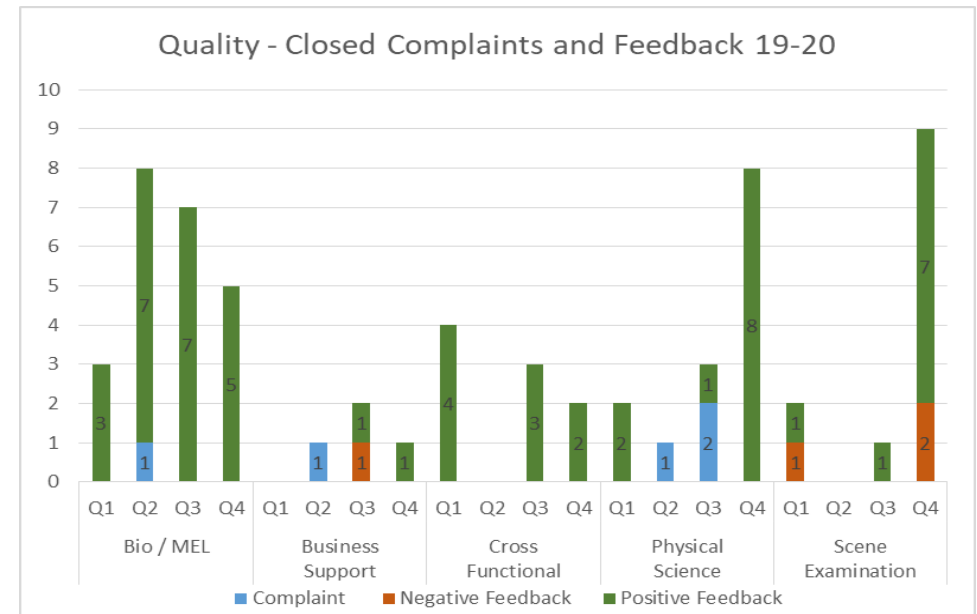
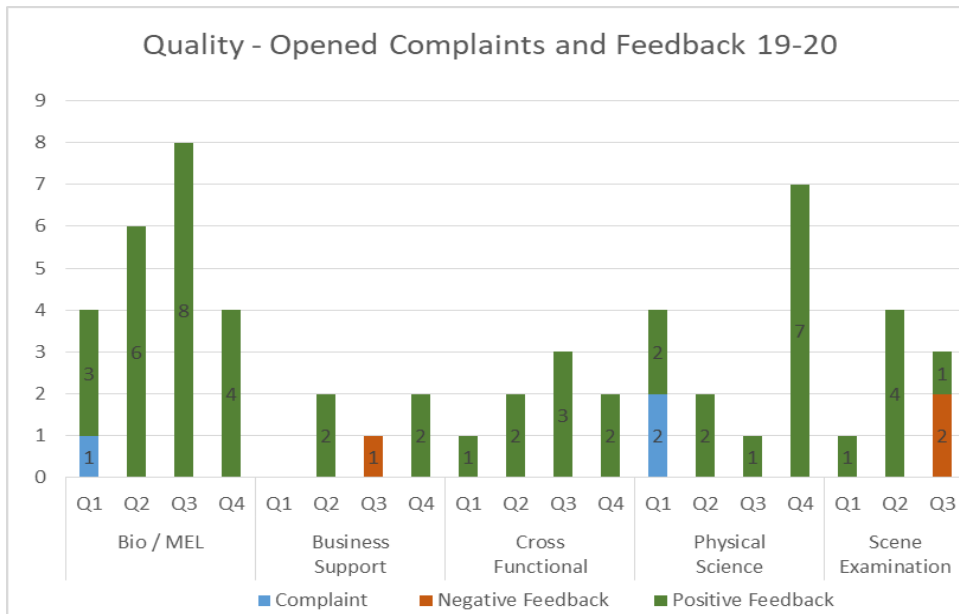
Current Standard

- Reaccreditation of the ISO 17025 was received on 31 March 2020 marking the start of the 22nd year of being an accredited body.
- This re-accreditation was granted following UKAS's review of evidence submitted to substantiate the closure of findings raised during the 2019 UKAS assessment programme.
- Forensic Services have also now transitioned from the 2005 to the revised 2017 ISO 17025 Standard. This is key to continued accreditation compliance.

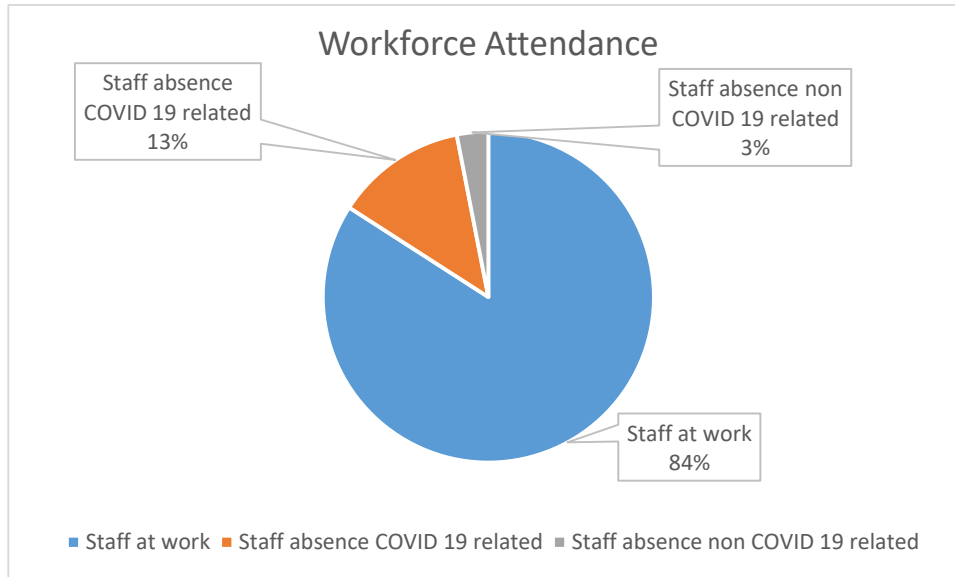


Extension to Scope

- Extensions to scope have also now been received for 5 further areas of service, being enhancements of:
 - 3 areas in Biology
 - 1 in Drugs
 - 1 in Toxicology
- The planned Extension to Scope for accreditation to ISO 17020 in Scene Examination was due to commence this month however this now on hold. This is due to the rescheduling of UKAS inspection visits as a consequence of the Coronavirus outbreak.

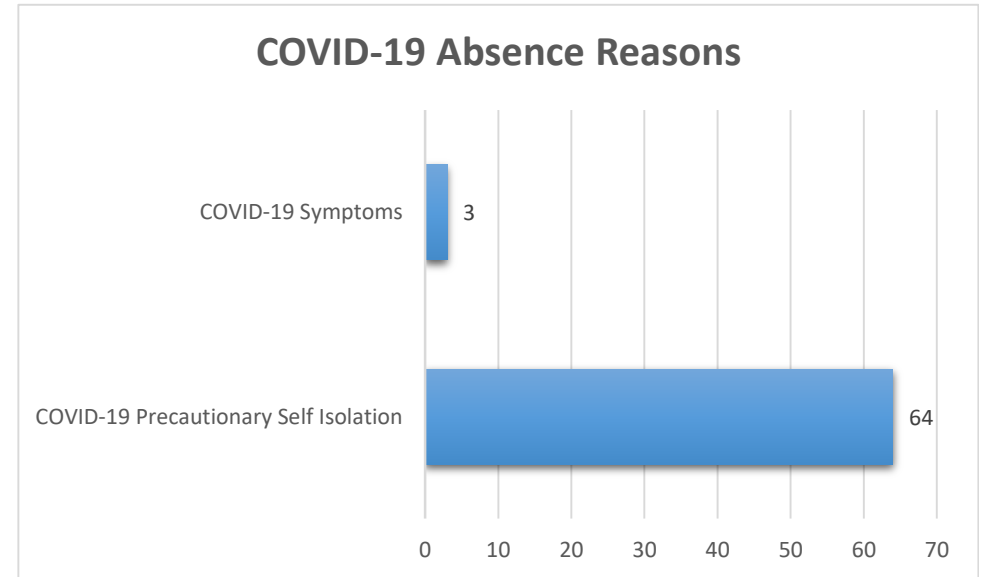
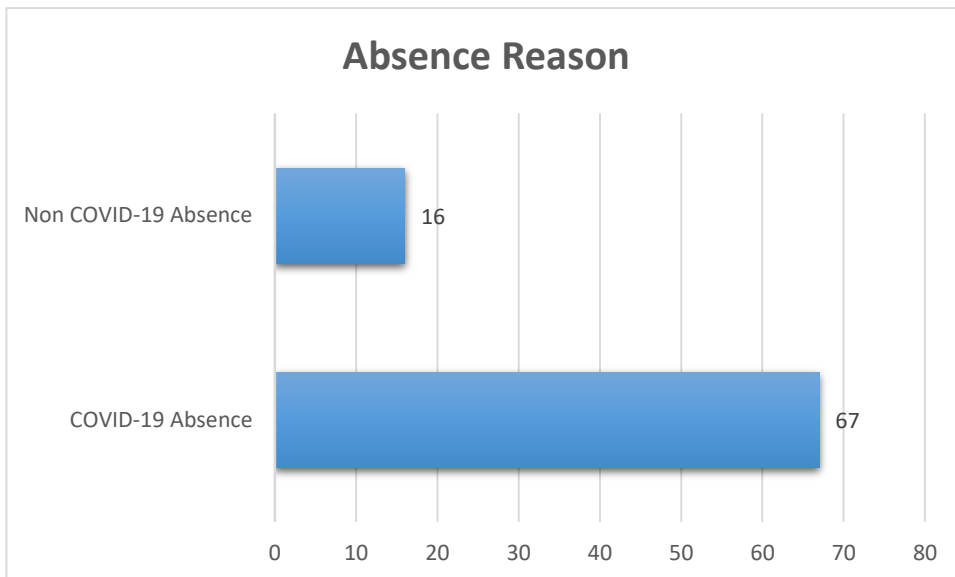


People Report at 31 March 2020

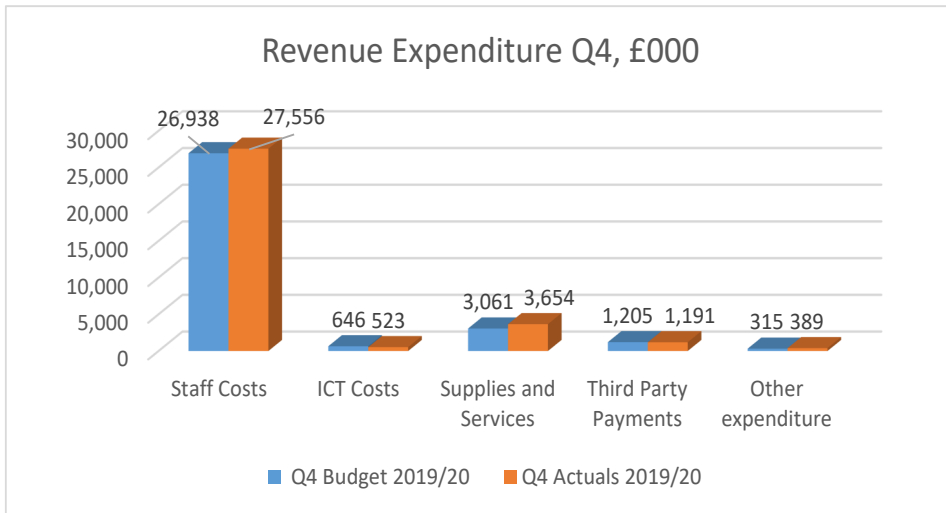


Staff absence figures across the organisation are being monitored daily to ensure operational delivery is maintained for Police Scotland and COPFS.

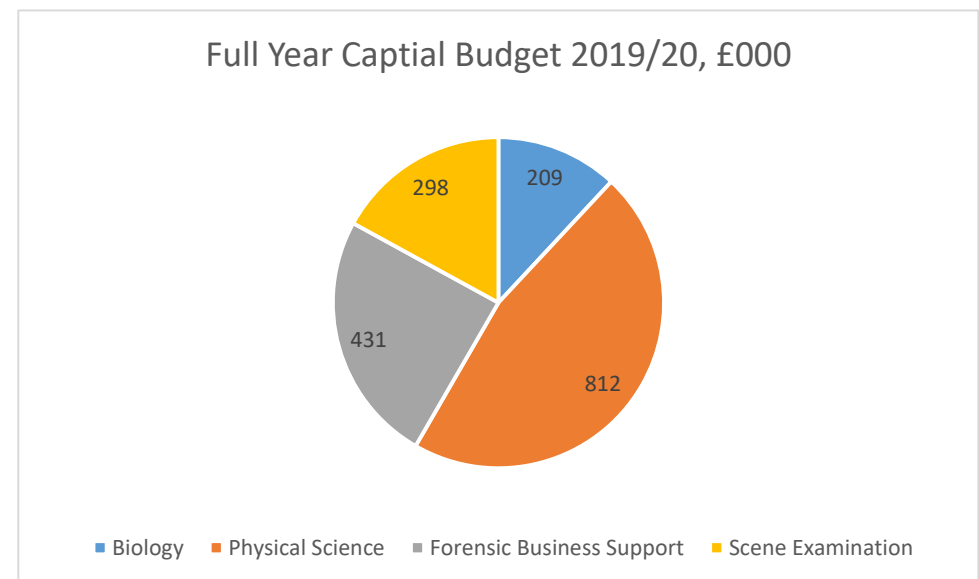
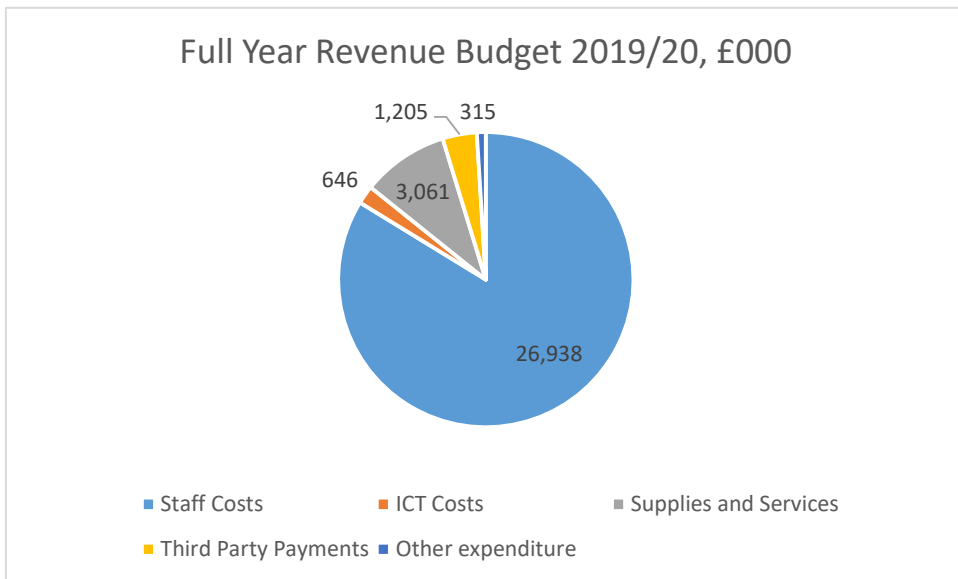
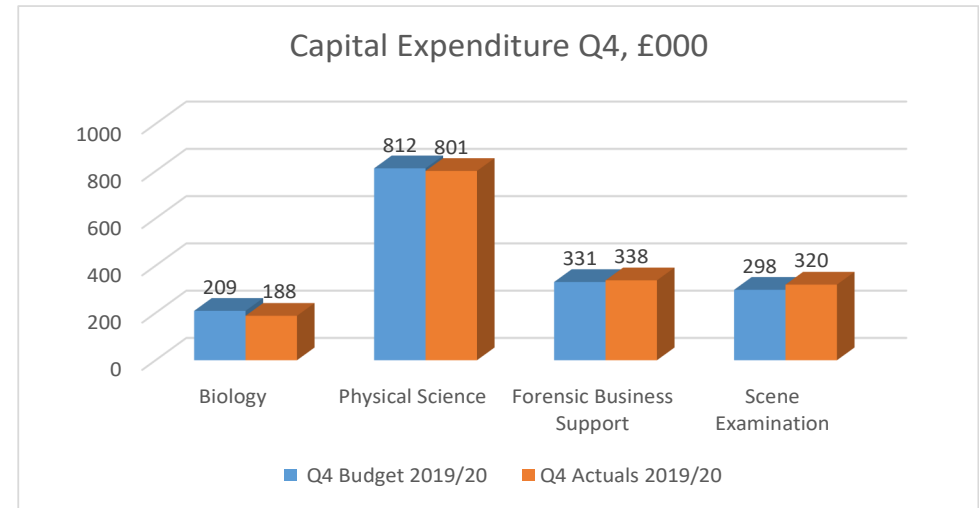
- Operational managers review and discuss staffing daily to both organise staffing levels to maintain delivery levels and ensure staff feel supported.
- Staff impacted by COVID 19 are returning to work. It is expected Key Worker testing will reduce periods of absence.



Financial Performance Q4 Revenue



Financial Performance Q4 Capital



Forensic Services Cold Case Review Team

The Cold Case

- The Forensic Services Cold Case Review Team supports the review of around 20 cases at any one time. The team of scientists work closely with the Police Scotland Homicide Governance Review Team.
- Forensic scientists carry out a thorough review of cases where there is no suspect identified despite extensive Police enquiries when a crime took place. The Forensic Case Reviews look at all available evidence and what forensic work can be done.
- Cold cases tend to present a number of challenges for the forensic scientists to overcome given the age of cases. Working with Police Scotland cases are assessed, looking at the forensic work performed previously and comparing this to what could be done today. Consideration is given to the current processes used for DNA identification and what benefits these could bring.

The Findings

- The advent of more sensitive DNA technology and sophisticated evaluation techniques can enable forensic scientists to find DNA profiles and identify suspects. New technology now allows such evidence to be discovered which previously could not be done.
- Police Scotland can then use this information to progress investigations into cases of murder for example.
- The work of the forensic scientists and their skill in such cases can provide sufficient evidence to enable suspects to be charged and then stand trial for potential crimes committed. In some cases this can be many years after the crime took place.
- The value of forensic science in being able to bring the potential perpetrators of crime to justice is unquestionable.
- The benefits of the latest DNA technology and the expertise of forensic scientists can enable the breakthrough in cases which previously were unsolved.