

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Authority Meeting</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>26 May 2021</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Video Conference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Forensic Services 2020/21 Performance report Quarter 4</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Forensic Services Performance Report Q4</b>

**PURPOSE**

To present Forensic Services Performance Report, Q4 2020/21 for Members consideration.

This paper is for consultation

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report includes an update on Forensic Services activities and Forensic Services Business Performance Report for Q4 2020/21.

## **2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC**

- 2.1 The performance report captures activity conducted across SPA Forensic Services. The performance evidence informs the content of the Authority's quarterly Strategic Police Plan Delivery Review and the Annual Review of Policing 2020/21.
- 2.2 The performance report demonstrates SPA Forensic Services delivery over the past year through the following components:
- Impact on COVID-19 on capacity and how this will be grown during the year
  - Qualitative performance data
  - Evidence of service initiatives and improvements

## **3. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

### **Murder case**

- 3.1 Graham McGill, 59, was convicted earlier last month of murdering Mary McLaughlin, 58, in her Glasgow flat on 26 September 1984.
- 3.2 The conviction this April, after more than 30 years, followed a cold case review which revealed opportunities using DNA 24 technology brought into Forensic Services in the past few years. The SPA Forensic Services Cold Case Review Team carried out a full forensic review of this case which identified a number of items for further DNA analysis.
- 3.3 SPA Forensic Scientist Joanne Cochrane gave evidence at the High Court in Glasgow that this analysis resulted in finding DNA attributable to Graham McGill on several items.

### **Operational**

- 3.4 Forensic Services Scene Examiners and Scientists have been working extensively with Police Scotland officers in Dundee where two bodies were discovered concealed in the house at Troon Avenue on 18 March. As reported previous a 50-year-old man was arrested and subsequently appeared at Dundee Sheriff Court where he was

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remanded in custody in respect of the murders of Bennylyn Burke and her daughter Jellica. Enquiries are still ongoing and SPA Forensic Services continue to support the investigation.

### **New appeal after DNA breakthrough**

- 3.5 A review of two cases from 2015 using the latest DNA techniques available to FS has given evidence they are linked which led Police Scotland to issue a fresh appeal about the rape and sexual assault, which was supported by FS.
- 3.6 Lead Forensic Scientist Amanda Pirie reviewed all the work that was undertaken in the original investigation for FS and told the BBC: "We retested samples taken at the time and carried out more tests with the new DNA testing systems that we now have. They're much more sensitive. We can get DNA profiles from much smaller amounts of material than we were able to do before. We can get DNA profiles that are usable where we previously just didn't get anything at all."

### **COVID-19**

- 3.7 The start of the removal of some COVID restrictions across Scotland is very welcome and Forensic Services continue to work in closely with Operation Talla to ensure a safe environment for all staff. While Operation Talla has indicated there is currently no intention to change the current arrangements until at least June, we will continue to work closely with them over the next few months to plan for future changes - when it is safe to do so. The health, safety, and wellbeing of staff will remain the priority for FS.
- 3.8 Throughout this past year, FS staff have continued to show their commitment and produce outstanding results – which is reflected in the attached FS performance report.

### **Managing workload**

- 3.9 Forensic Services continue to work closely with our partners Police Scotland and The Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and have held fortnightly meetings to manage and prioritise our workload throughout the pandemic.
- 3.10 As the current restrictions change we have established a short-life working group, chaired by Vicki Morton and with representatives from Police Scotland and COPFS, to manage the transition for cases that have had extensions to their timelines and cases that have no

extension. We will continue to keep members apprised of this work.

### **Forensic 2026 Strategy update**

- 3.11 A number of discussions have been held with the SPA Accountable Officer about the Forensic Services 2026 Operating Model Project since the Full Business Case was presented to the Forensic Services Committee in February. The Access to Lab and Scenes projects in the programme have now progressed to Full Business Case. A further update was provided to the SPA Forensic Services Committee last month on Core Operating System Project following the previous approval of the Initial Business Case by the Forensic Services Programme Board.
- 3.12 All work is currently on track within agreed timeframes.
- 3.13 Delivery of the plan to refresh the Forensic 2026 Strategy in conjunction with Police Scotland and other key stakeholders, including members of the Forensic Services Committee and the SPA is progressing well.
- 3.14 The budget submission for 21/22 has been approved with the exception of the capital costs which can be covered from the Forensic Services budget.

### **Staff training**

- 3.15 An evaluation of the Forensic Services Management Development programme showed all participants confident that they will be able to apply the knowledge and skills they learned into the workplace. The programme was created to develop the leadership and management skills to deliver to the current and future demands of FS, including the proposed organisational change as part of the 2026 Forensic Services Strategy.
- 3.16 This modular programme for all line managers, led by Darren Tattersall who joined FS last year, consisted of seven two-day workshops spaced over nine months. The workshops focused on impact, teams, engagement and motivation, coaching, priority management, customer service, and change. A total of 90% of attendees expressed overall satisfaction with the workshop with 97% feeling that the learning outcomes had been met.

## **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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4.1 There financial implications are noted in this report.

### **5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this paper.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

### **7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

### **8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

### **9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

### **10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to discuss the contents of the Forensic Services update and the Forensic Services Q4 Performance report.

## Scottish Police Authority

### Forensic Services

#### Performance Report

#### Quarter 4 2020/21

*SPA Board*

*26 May 2021*

## Executive Summary Quarter 4, 2020/21

### Performance

- Forensic Services performance levels have been strong throughout the year and are now well established under new physical distancing arrangements. Responding to the COVID pandemic had the impact of reducing output during Q1 which was largely recovered during Q2 and 3.
- Demand for services has continued to be strong throughout the year. While demand is high output is also high as demonstrated in the stability of casework ageing. Biology capacity has increased over the last year which will allow workload to stabilise. Drugs casework has progressed positively as a direct result of additional staff working in this area.
- The Performance Board is actively monitoring casework across the organisation and has the full engagement of the operational leads. This will further improve service to Police Scotland and COPFS over the coming year.

### Engagement

- Staff engagement has been high over the last year. Frequent communications inform staff and teams are engaged on current working arrangements to keep services running effectively.
- The MyCareer platform has launched giving staff a structured platform for their development aligned to organisational objectives.
- Management development training has continued over the last quarter with all managers within Forensic Services being involved in development training. Additionally focused support on performance management has continued.
- The Director of Forensic Services and Senior Managers have been engaging with Police Scotland and COPFS on a fortnightly basis. This work has helped manage flow of casework and look for opportunities to improve available forensic capacity.

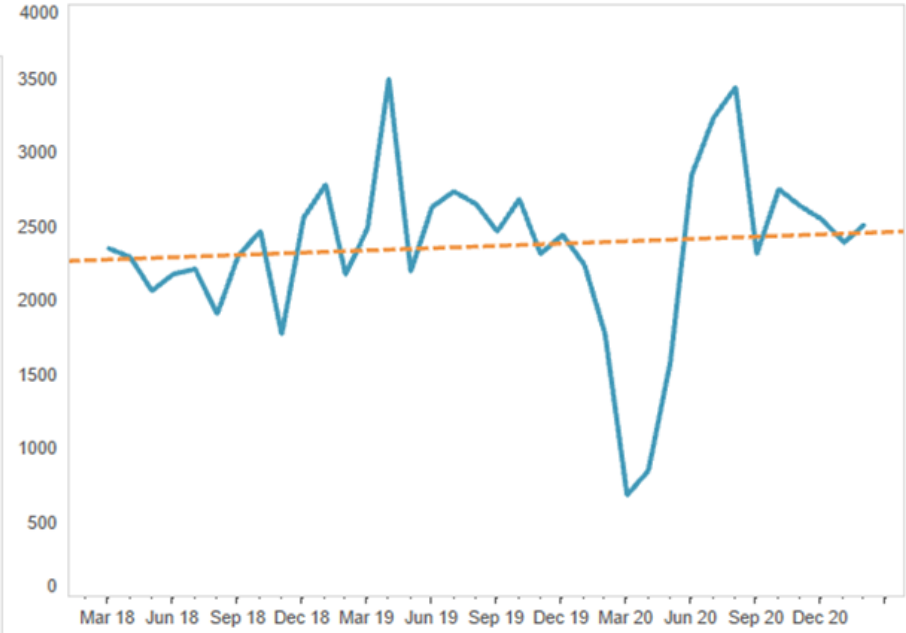
### Business Update

- The forecast year end position is a revenue overspend of approx. £342k. This is as a result of staff costs being above budget – a direct result of minimal in year staff movement. Capital expenditure was approx. £450k underspent as a consequence COVID related impacts.
- Transformational change led by the Forensic 2026 Team has continued with the completion of the full business case for the new Operating Model and the initial business case for the new Core Operating System. Business as usual improvement projects have also moved forward during the year.
- Refurbishment of the Toxicology and Edinburgh Biology Laboratory was completed during the year. Planning was sympathetic to ensuring there was no adverse impact to overall service provision during this period.

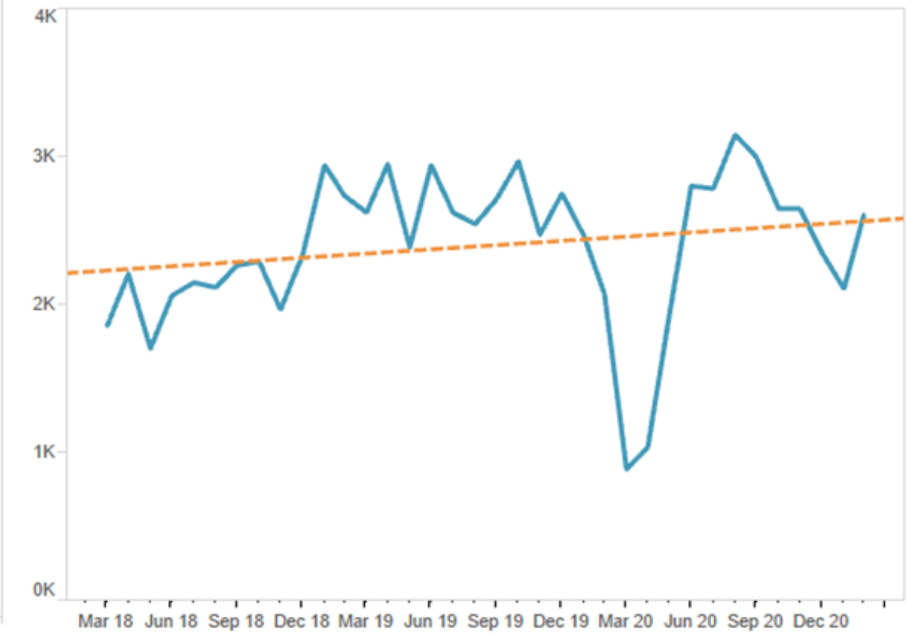
### Forensic Services - Laboratory Casework Open Cases - end Q4 20-21 with average age



### Casework Demand previous 2 years



### Casework Output previous 2 years

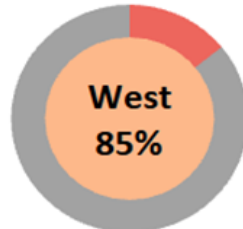
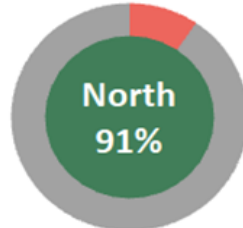
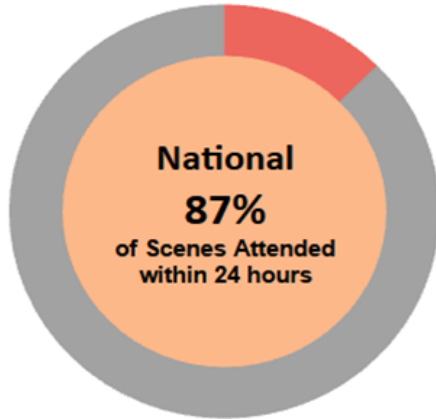




## Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit Quarterly Performance Q4 20-21

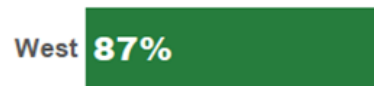
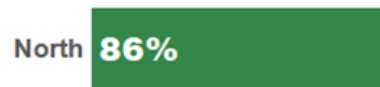
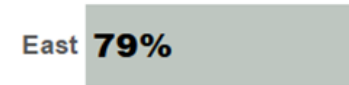
### Timeliness Scenes attended within 24hrs of request

*National target 90% within 24 hours*



### Evidence Recovery Rates

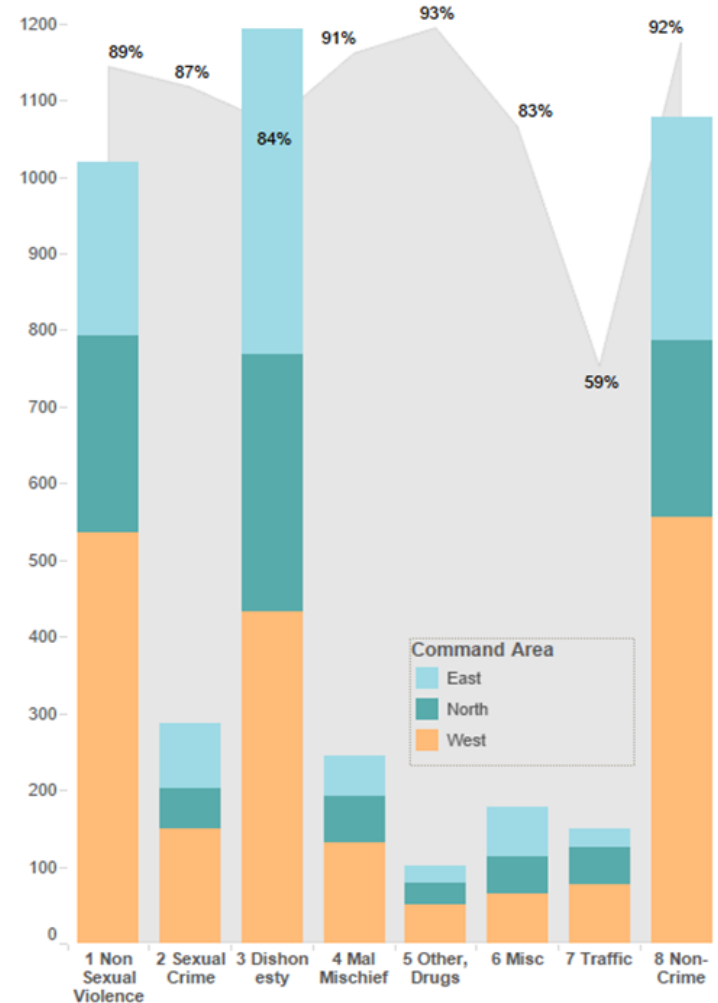
Non-Photographic scenes resulting in an item recovery



**4,159 Scenes Attended This Quarter**

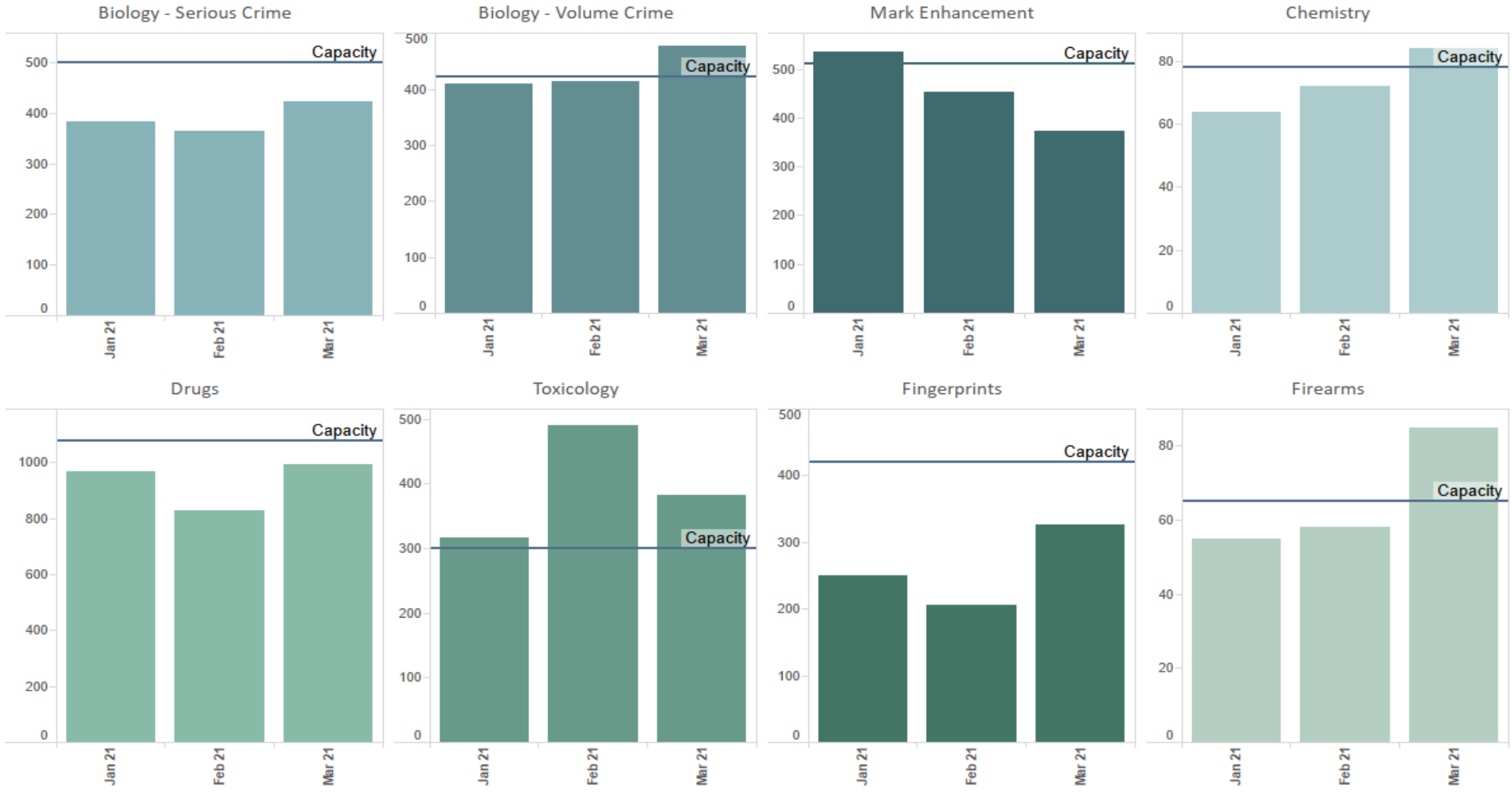
**5,545 Scenes Attended Q4 previous year**

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



### Forensic Services - Laboratory Capacity

Charts illustrate new requests for casework opened per month



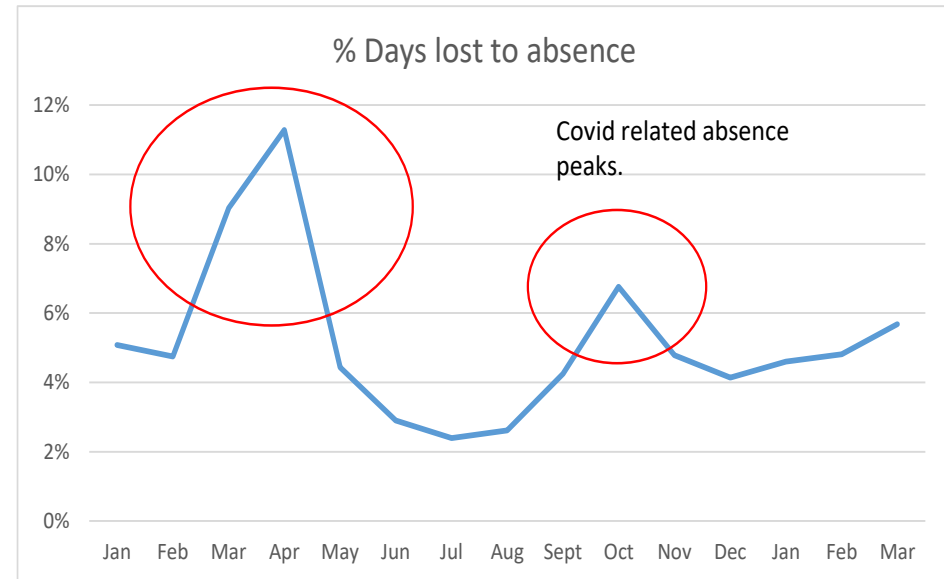
**Toxicology** casework demand has been significant over the last year as a result of new Drug Driving legislation. External support has been purchased as part of the service development plan. Increased capacity over the coming 18 months will more fully address this capacity constrained service.

**Capacity Review** - all areas have reassessed available capacity which represent new normal working conditions. This detailed planning work complements the future service model developed through the FS 2026 programme. The gains from business as usual capacity planning work will be realised during the coming 12 months.

## Capacity Overview—Q4 2020/21

- ⇒ A significant amount of work was completed during the year to manage through the constraints of social distancing and return casework capacity levels to near normal by the end of March.
- ⇒ Split working patterns have been necessary to maximise available laboratory capacity and we are grateful to our staff for accommodating changes to their normal working patterns.
- ⇒ Work to further increase capacity over the coming year has commenced. It is intended that current capacity is maintained and grown further over the coming 12 months.
- ⇒ To date an assessment of current working levels based on performance levels across all business areas has been completed. New reporting dashboards for managers have been developed to provide better visibility of casework to enable efficient work scheduling.
- ⇒ All operational areas are involved in this work. Through smarter working and working with partners there are opportunities to deliver casework volumes. These initiatives will be progressed over the coming year.

## Staff Absence Data—Q4 2020/21



- ⇒ The staff absence data illustrates clearly the impact of COVID during the year.
- ⇒ Staff sickness levels are now largely unaffected by COVID illness are in line with seasonal variation.
- ⇒ Staff welfare continues to be a priority for the organisation with home working assessment being carried out for all affected staff.
- ⇒ There has been adherence to the Scottish Government advice and consistency with Police Scotland safe working practices.
- ⇒ The 'new normal' is now well established and services continue to be provided to key stakeholders.

## Quality Quarter 4, 2020/2021

### Current Accreditation

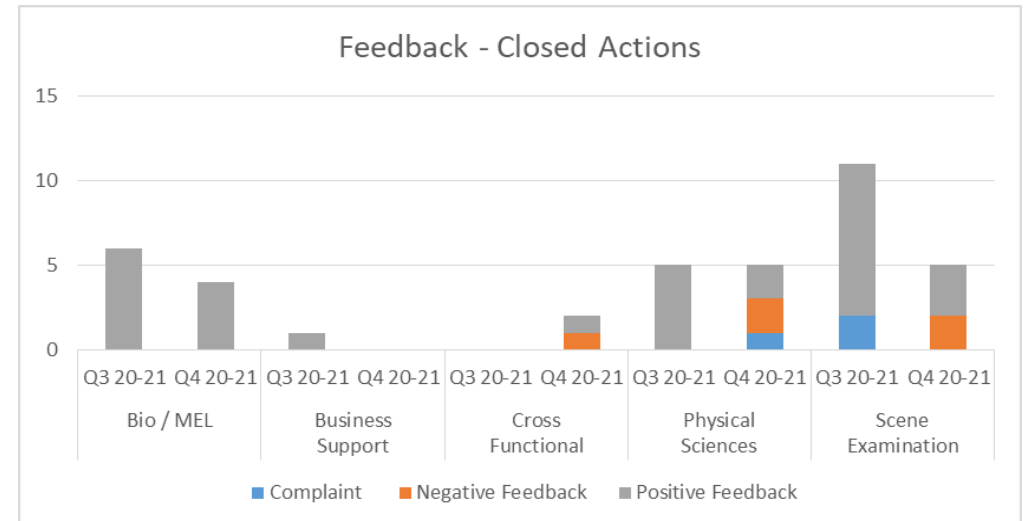
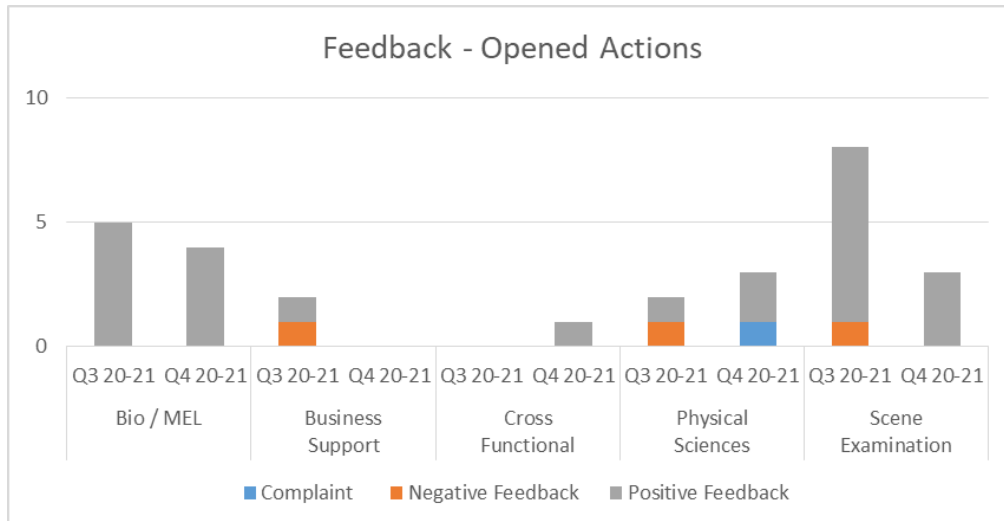
- UKAS 2020 accreditation assessment period which commenced in October 2020 was largely completed in December 2020.
- Evidence of action taken to address the findings raised during this UKAS assessment period was submitted to UKAS in January 2021 in line with the agreed timetable.
- The programme experienced COVID related delays owing to an assessor requiring to self-isolate, this resulted in a small amount of assessment time moving in February 2021.
- Formal notice of maintenance of accreditation to ISO 17025: 2017 is expected during April 2021.

### Digital Forensics

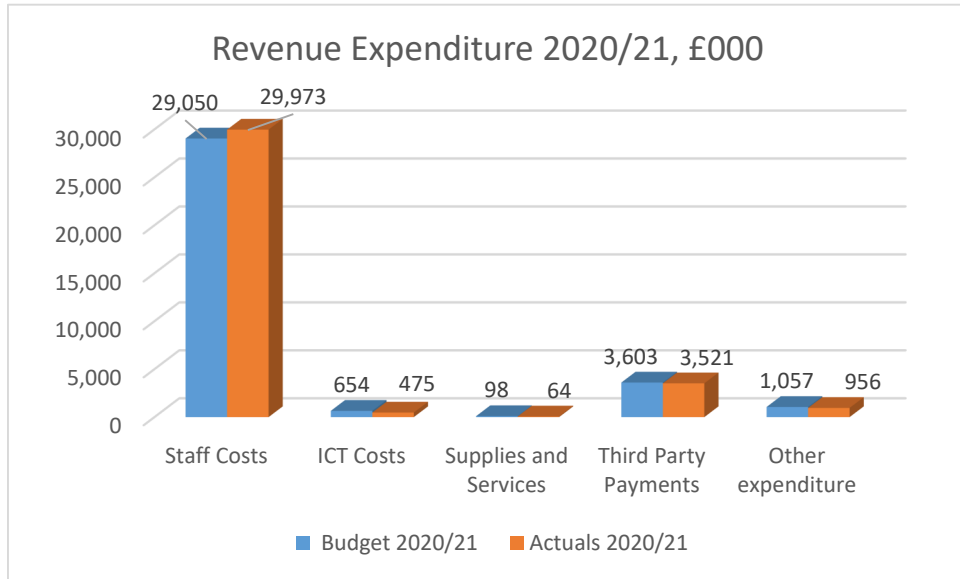
- Forensic Services are assisting in the forward planning for accreditation of this Police Scotland service.
- An overview of the Q-Pulse system in use in Forensic Services was provided.
- Assistance has been provided in the form of review of draft project documents and associated job descriptions.

### Extension to Scope

- Accreditation assessments of Scene Examination to ISO 17020 commenced during April 2021. Such assessments had previously been postponed by UKAS as a direct result of the COVID pandemic.
- Due to COVID related delays and high demand from all UK police forces, it may be unlikely that all ISO 17020 accreditation work required across Forensic Services sites can be completed in 2021.



## Financial Performance Period 11 Revenue



## Financial Performance Q4 Capital

