

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	24 February 2021
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Forensic Services 2020/21 Performance report Quarter 3
Presented By	Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	Forensic Services Performance Report Q3

PURPOSE

To present Forensic Services Performance Report, Q3 2020/21 for Members consideration.

This paper is for discussion

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report includes an update on Forensic Services activities and Forensic Services Business Performance Report for Q3 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

- 3.1 I have continued to chair regular Forensic Services Gold meetings to manage the Forensic Services response during the current pandemic. The health, wellbeing, and welfare of Forensic Services staff are at the heart of all our decision making. I have provided all staff with a regular weekly update throughout the pandemic and more often as needed.
- 3.2 The safe working environments Forensic Services created last year, coupled with the blended arrangements with staff either at home and or in the office as appropriate, have proved resilient to changes in the Scottish Government's regulations throughout the pandemic – these working arrangements are kept under regular review. I am grateful for the support of the trade unions representatives on the Gold group as well as the support provided by our Police Scotland colleagues and we continue to work closely with them as a member of the SCD Operation Talla group.
- 3.3 Forensic Services is leading an important piece of work on what future planning may look like in the "New Normal", reviewing our working during the pandemic, considering what the Forensic Services response and what we can learn and how we improve for

the future. This links across with a similar piece of work being carried out by Police Scotland.

Senior Management Team

- 3.4 This month members of the Forensic Services Senior Management Team have taken up new roles with Helen Haworth joining to take over as the Temporary Head of Biology. Derek Scrimger has moved to over as Temporary Head of Function for Scene Examination; Vicki Morton as Head of Function for Physical Sciences; and Gary Holcroft is leading on an important project for Forensic Services.
- 3.5 These moves were announced to all staff in December to allow for a smooth transition. This will refresh and strengthen the Senior Management Team.

Managing Workload

- 3.6 Members of the Forensic Services Senior Management Team have weekly meetings with the COPFS and Police Scotland to discuss the changing workloads and priorities during the pandemic. The changes in the courts during the most recent lockdown period, announced by the Lord President, are expected to reduce the overall number of criminal trials taking place. The meetings involve us working with Police Scotland and COPFS going through their priorities and look forward to see how the changes in the court rollout programme may impact on Forensic Services. This allows Forensic Services to prioritise what we are focusing on in the laboratories and will allow us to be in a better place when we get to the new work schedule.

MyCareer

- 3.7 Forensic Services is taking part, along with Police Scotland C3 and C Divisions, in the Proof of Concept pilot in a new staff appraisal system MyCareer. The first part of MyCareer required staff to take part in online training using Moodle. In spite of the current challenging times, all managers in Forensic Services and more than 90% of staff have now completed this extensive training. MyCareer has been created to recognise that employees have different, individual needs and support for their continuous development using a reflective performance appraisal tool.

Accreditation Update

- 3.8 UKAS has now decided to postpone all scene of crime assessments until April 2021. Forensic Services will continue to work with UKAS to reschedule this work.
- 3.9 UKAS has also agreed that the outstanding surveillance assessments in DNA in Edinburgh and Firearms at the SCC will be carried out remotely - using MS Teams. This will ensure that Forensic Services can maintain accreditation in these areas.

Operational Update

- 3.10 On 12 January 2021, specialist search officers and forensic experts along with SPA Forensic Services (Lead Forensic Scientist Major Crime and Scene Examination staff) discovered human remains in a remote area of ground close to a farm near the A82 at Bridge of Orchy. This work is in support of the enquiry led by Police Scotland's Major Investigation Team (MIT).
- 3.11 The next day a DNA sample was sent to the SPA Forensic Services Laboratory in Edinburgh. Just 24 hours after the sample had been taken, Forensic Scientists were able to confirm the identity of the deceased as Anthony Parson, from Tillicoultry, who had been reported missing in 2017.
- 3.12 The DNA profile was compared with one previously loaded on to the Missing Persons DNA Database (MPDD) by the SPA Forensic Services Biology Volume Crime Unit (VCU) at the time Mr Parson's had been reported missing. Enquiries are still ongoing and SPA Forensic Services continue to support the investigation. Proceedings are now live under the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications are noted in the report.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There no direct legal implications in this paper with this paper.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct reputational implications associated with this paper.

8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

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

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There no direct equality implications associated with this paper.

11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There 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 Q3 Performance report.

Scottish Police Authority

Forensic Services

Performance Report

Quarter 3 2020/21

*For presentation to the Scottish
Police Authority Meeting*

24 February 2021

Executive Summary Quarter 3, 2020/21

Performance

- Forensic Services have now established physical distancing arrangements increasing capacity although available capacity will slightly below 100% for the foreseeable future.
- Demand for services continues to see an upward trend. While demand is high output is also high as demonstrated in the stability of casework ageing. Biology has seen a growth in casework over the last quarter while 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 to further improve service to Police Scotland and COPFS. This is being supported by the setting of internal key performance indicators designed to grow service delivery.

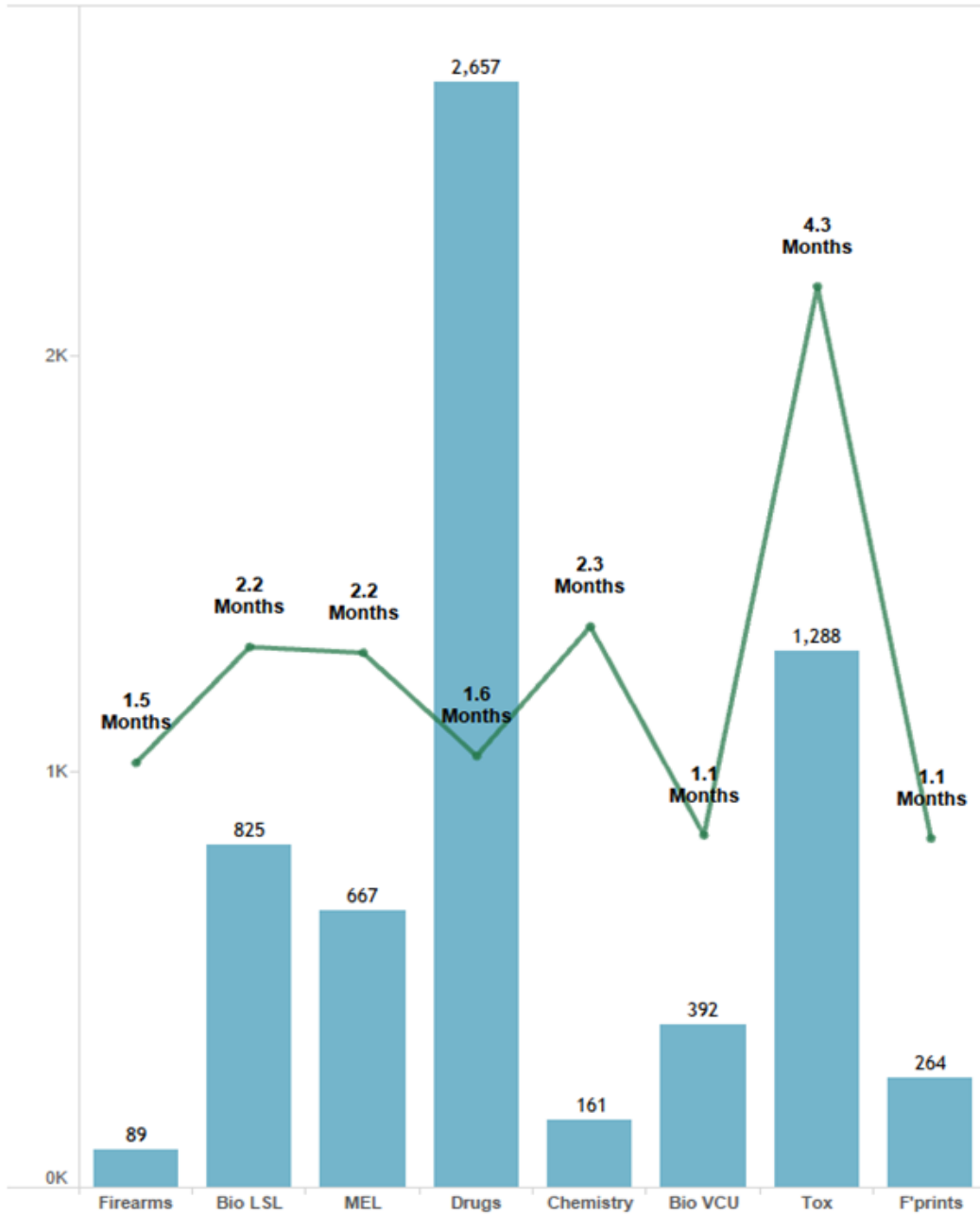
Engagement

- Staff engagement remains high. Frequent communications are issued and teams are engaged on current working arrangements to keep services running.
- 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.

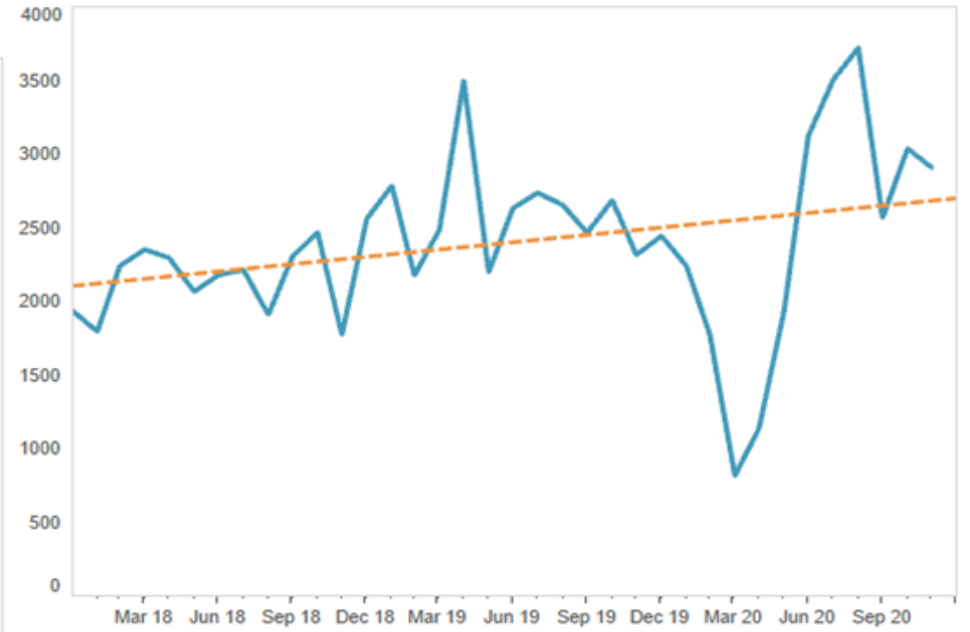
Business Update

- Q3 Revenue budget is £554k overspent largely owing to staff costs being above budget - due to minimal in year staff movement. £75k has also been incurred on additional costs due to COVID related matters.
- Levels of crime which Forensic Services provide response to has continued to increase over the last quarter. Biology particularly has seen further increased demand for services which is being carefully managed.
- Transformational change led by the Forensic 2026 Team has continued with the completion of the full business case for the new Operating Model.
- Refurbishment of the Toxicology Laboratory was completed during the quarter. All services are now up and running again with no adverse impact to overall service provision during this period.

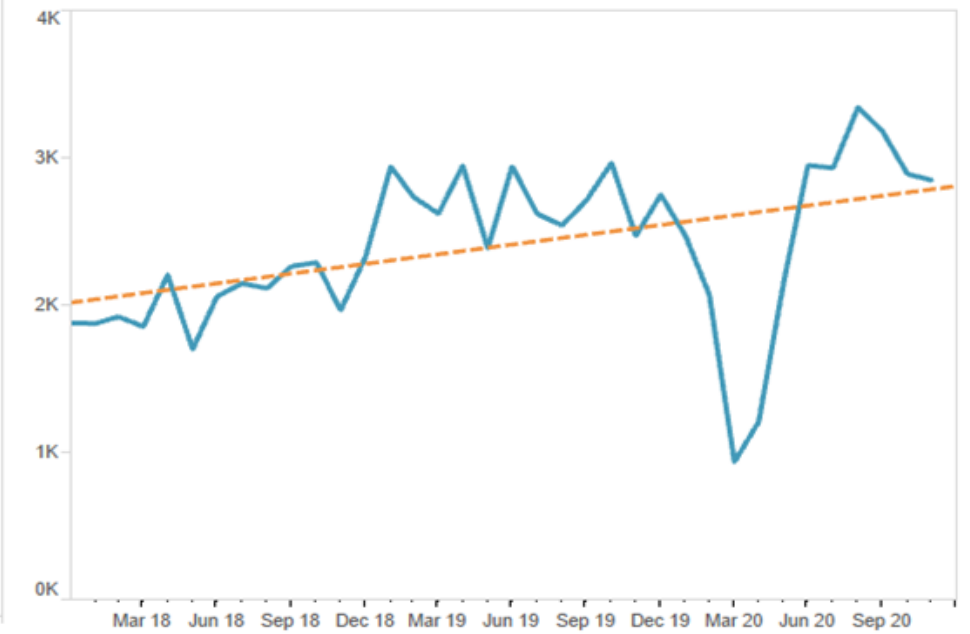
Forensic Services - Laboratory Casework Open Cases - end Q3 20-21 with average age



Casework Demand previous 2 years



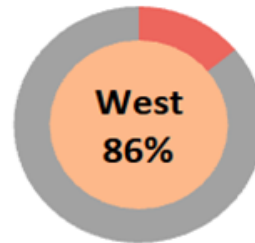
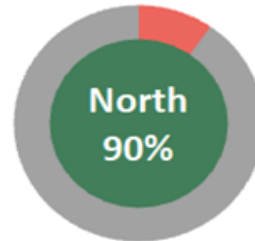
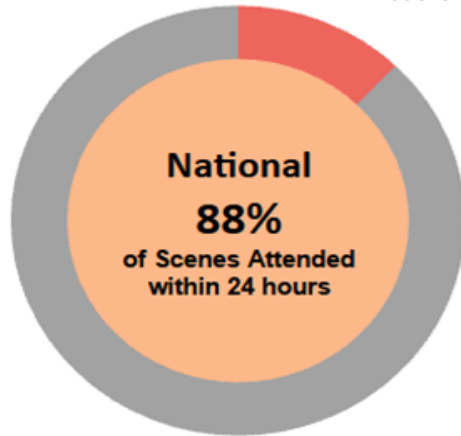
Casework Output previous 2 years



Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit Quarterly Performance Q3 20-21

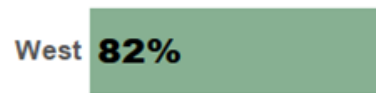
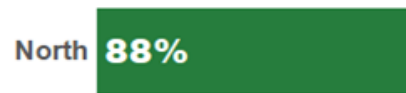
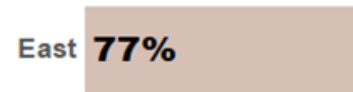
Timeliness Scenes attended within 24hrs of request

National target 90% within 24 hours



Evidence Recovery Rates

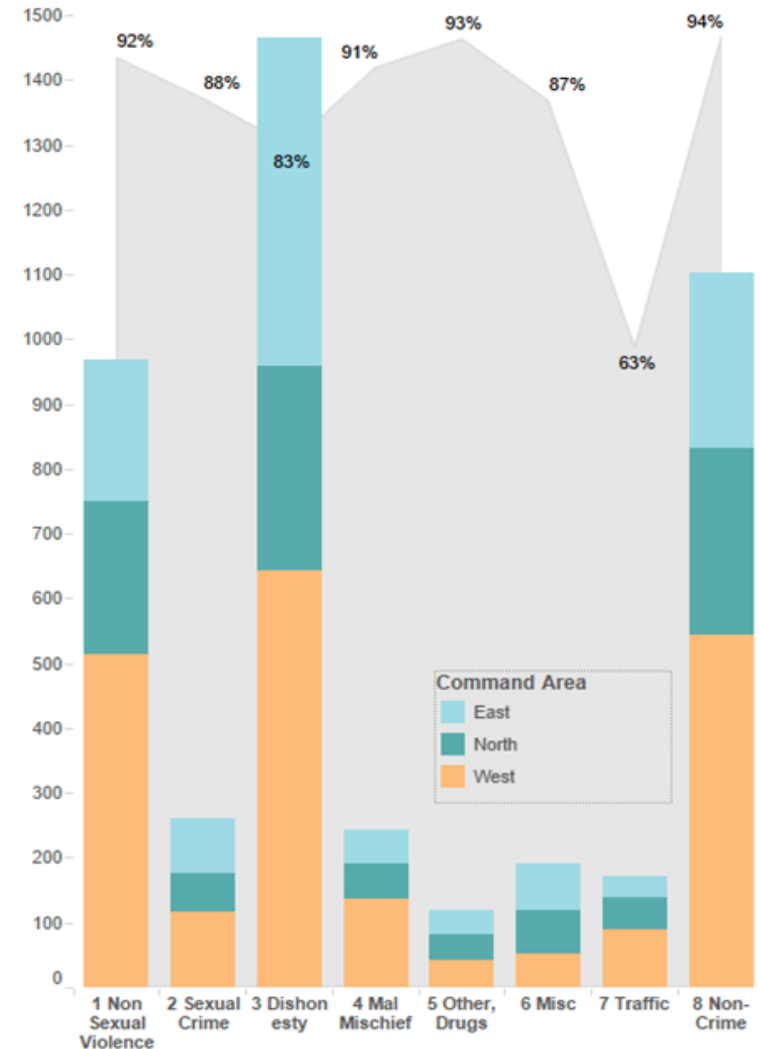
Non-Photographic scenes resulting in
an item recovery



4,421 Scenes Attended This Quarter

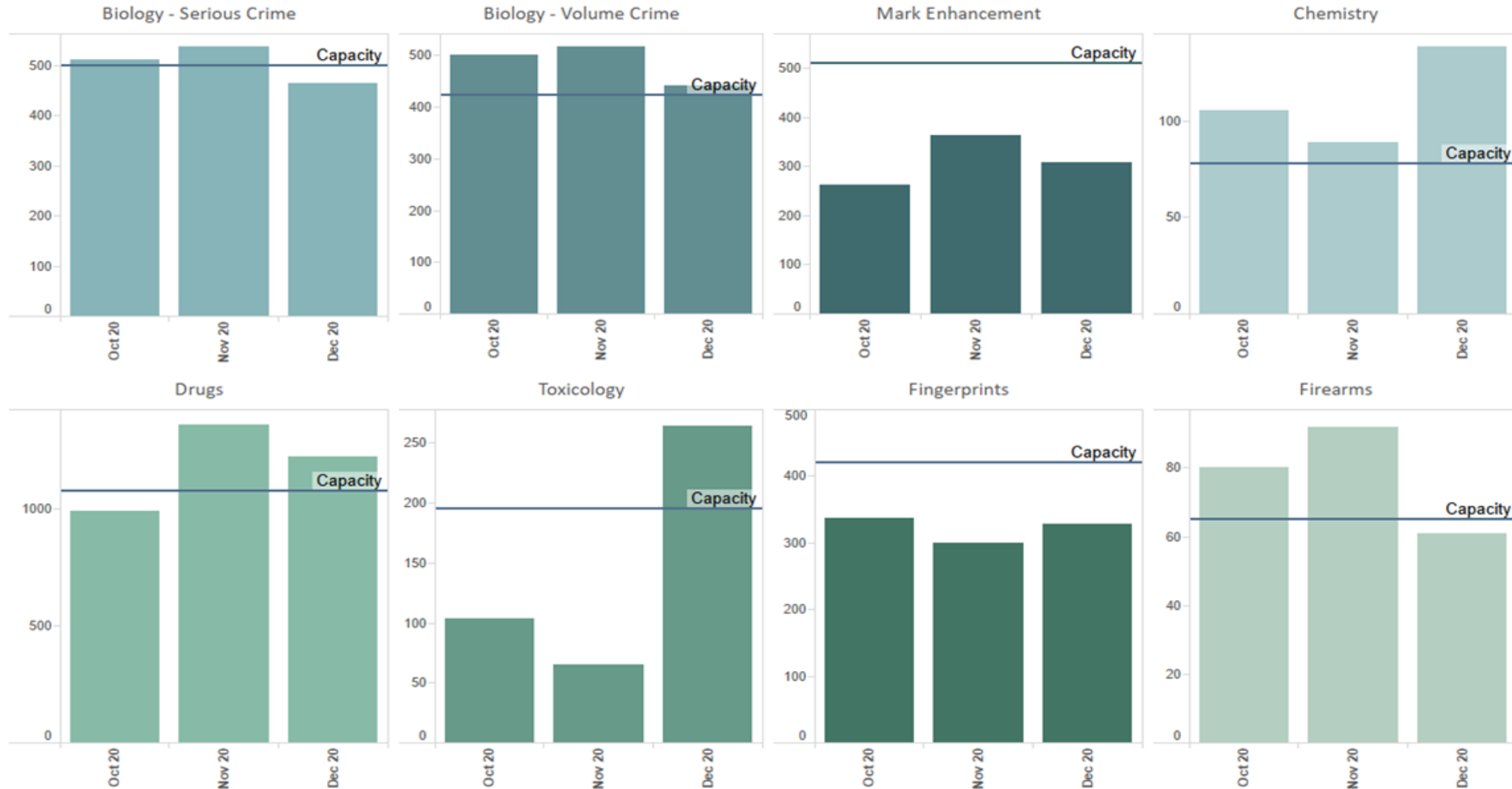
5,960 Scenes Attended Q3 previous year

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



Forensic Services - Laboratory Capacity

Charts illustrate new requests for casework opened per month

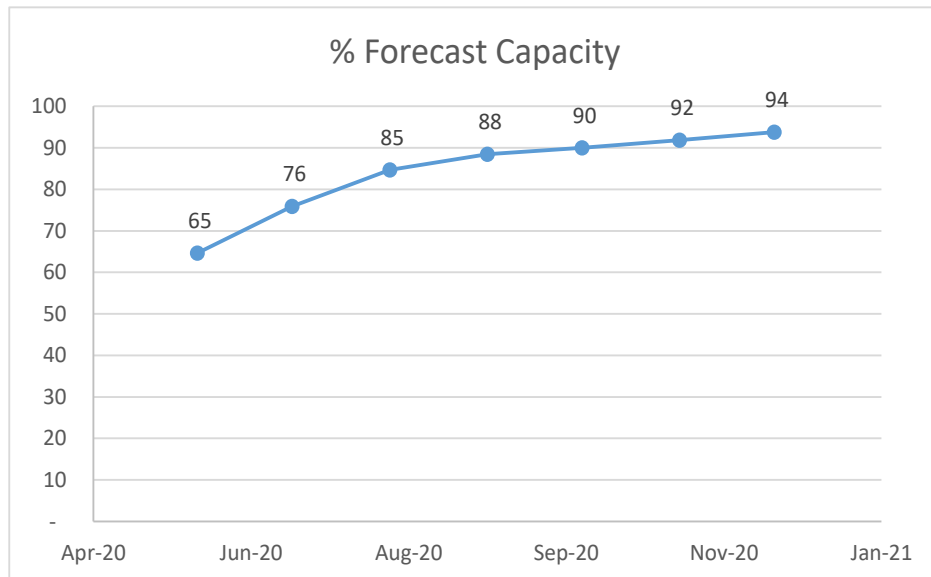


Drug casework output has been significant over the last quarter, additional forensic examiners were seconded to the team to reduce the workload in this area. Secondments end in January 2021.

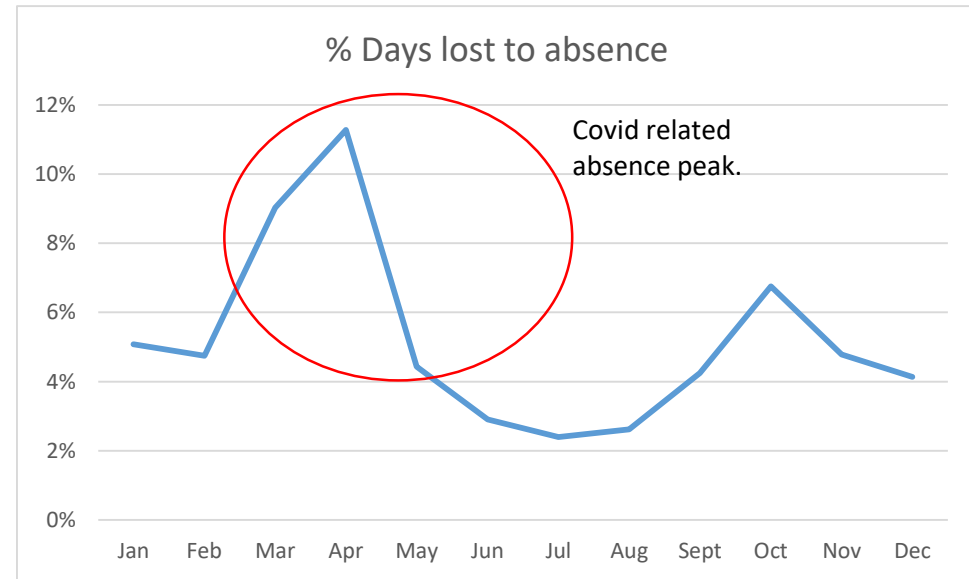
Capacity Review - all areas are reassessing available capacity over the coming quarter to represent new normal working conditions. There are expected to be some changes although no significant shift in the details presented above.

Capacity Overview—Q2 2020/21

- ⇒ There continues to be a significant amount of work dedicated to maximising capacity under the constraints of physical distancing—this is paying dividends and is moving forward positively. Full capacity however is not possible at the current time and the impact of COVID-19 will be a small reduction in overall capacity, forecast at 6%, across the organisation for the time being.
- ⇒ All operational areas have worked on the necessary reassessment of capacity. Through smarter working and working with partners there are opportunities to expand on casework volumes. These initiatives will be progressed over the remaining quarters of the year.
- ⇒ All managers are using visual management data which is updated daily.



Staff Absence Data—Q3 2020/21



- ⇒ The staff absence data illustrates clearly the impact of COVID in the earlier part of 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 3, 2020/2021

Current Accreditation

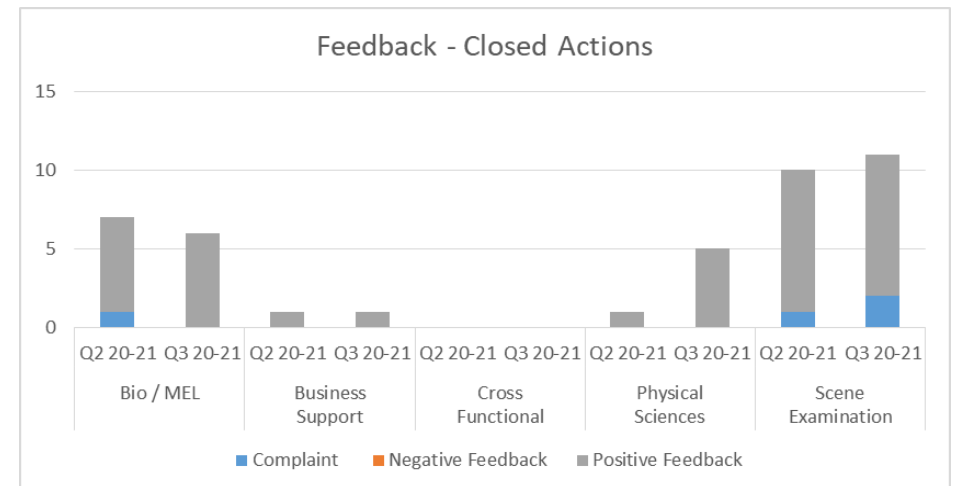
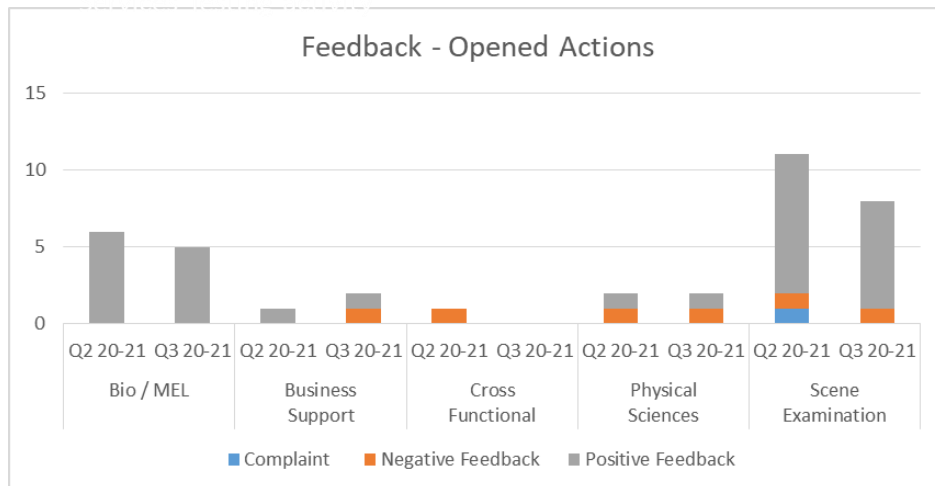
- UKAS 2020 accreditation assessment programme commenced on the 5th of October and continued through to early December 2020.
- Due to UKAS assessor COVID-19 self-isolation, 5 days of the 69 concurrent days of assessment time have been carried into 2021. This has meant that the assessment of the Forensic Services Firearms section will be completed w/c 01 Feb 2021.
- Evidence of action taken to address the findings raised during this UKAS assessment period were sent to UKAS on the 15th of January 2021 in line with the agreed timetable.
- Formal notice of maintenance of accreditation to ISO 17025: 2017 is expected to be received from UKAS in March / April 2021.

Digital Forensics

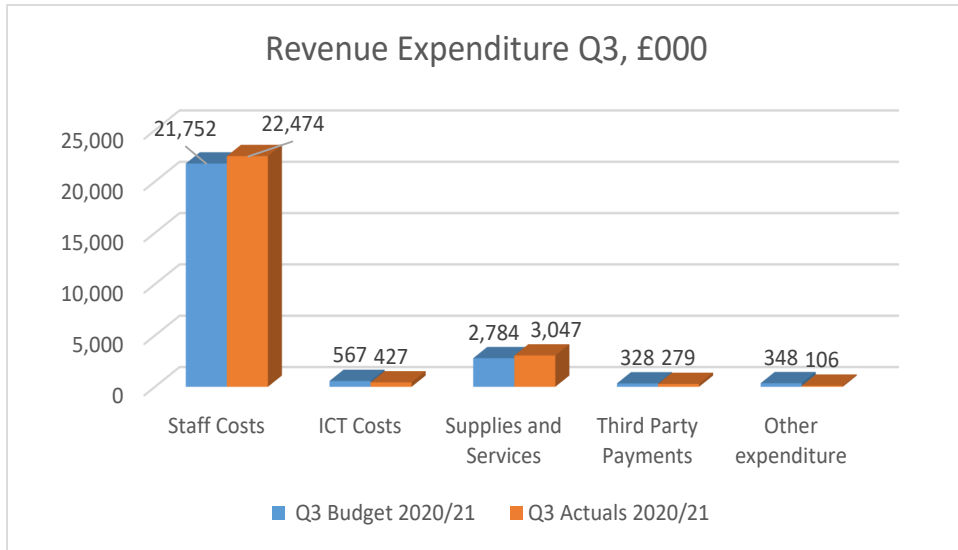
- Forensic Services are assisting in the forward planning for accreditation of this Police Scotland service.
- An overview of the Q-Pulse system in use in Forensic Services was provided.
- Assistance has been provided in the form of review of draft project documents and associated job descriptions.

Extension to Scope

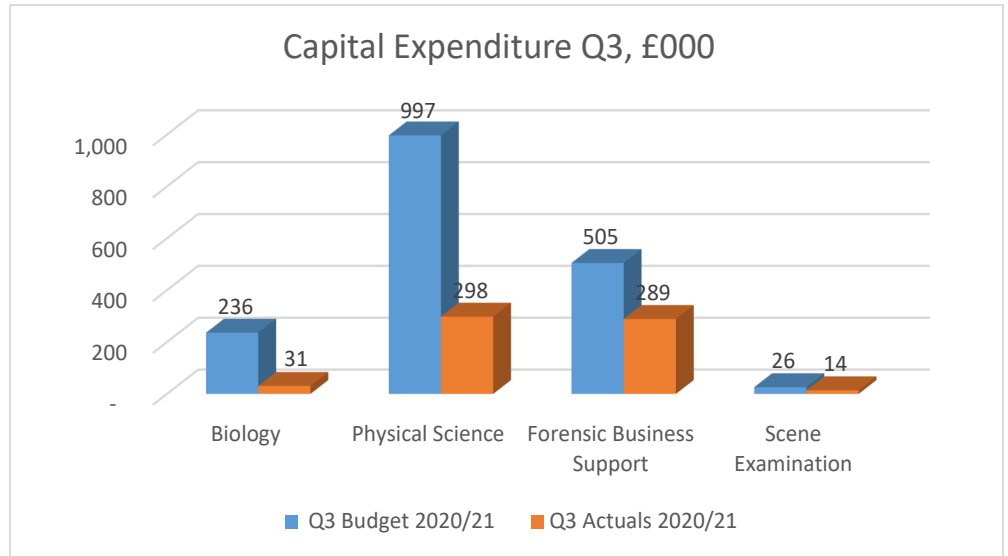
- All accreditation assessments of Scene Examination to ISO 17020 have been further postponed by UKAS as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As a result of these enforced delays and high demand from all UK police forces, extension of ISO 17020 scope to other Forensic Services sites, after initial accreditation is achieved, is now unlikely to be possible in 2021.
- Budget authority was provided for 4 additional staff to support the ongoing needs of this standard which are included in the 2021/22 budget.



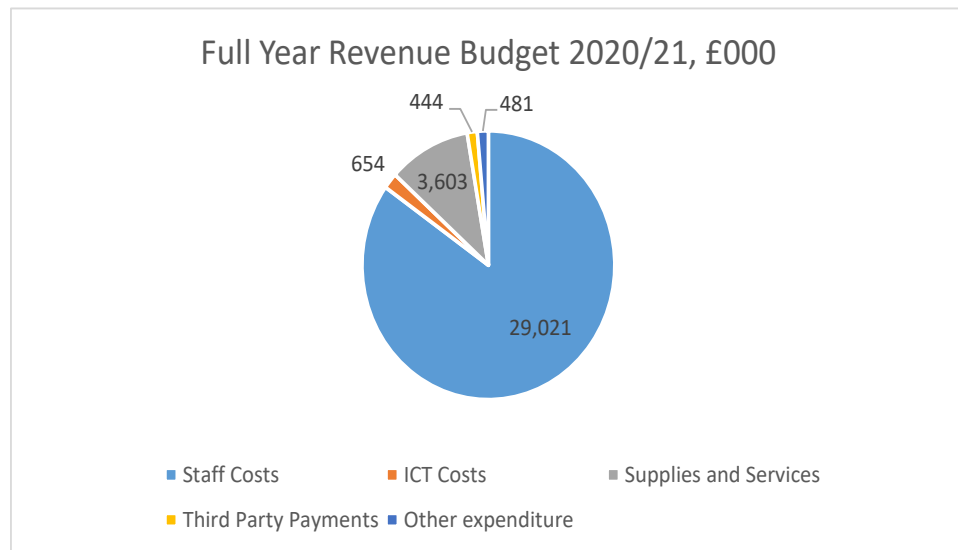
Financial Performance Q3 Revenue



Financial Performance Q3 Capital



Full Year Revenue Budget 2020/21, £000



Full Year Capital Budget 2020/21, £000

