

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	25 August 2021
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Quarterly Report
Presented By	Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	Forensic Services Performance Report Q1

PURPOSE

To present Forensic Services Performance Report, Q1 2021/22 for Members consideration.

The paper is presented in line with:

- The Scottish Police Authority Scheme of Delegation.

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 Q1 2021/22.

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 2021/22.
- 2.2 The performance report demonstrates SPA Forensic Services delivery over the past year through the following components:
- Qualitative performance data
 - Evidence of service initiatives and improvements
 - Impact on COVID-19

3. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Post Mortem Toxicology

- 3.1 The Scottish Government has now announced a [new £6m toxicology laboratory for Scotland](#) to test for a wide range of substances, including drugs and alcohol which will be run by the SPA Forensic Services.
- 3.2 This funding will enable the transition of post mortem toxicology service from the University of Glasgow to SPA Forensic Services with specialist staff transferring. This large investment will help support a sustainable business.
- 3.3 Gary Holcroft, from Forensic Services' Senior Management Team, is leading on this project for Forensic Services with significant assistance from Police Scotland colleagues as well as working very closely with both COPFS and Glasgow University. We are very grateful to Police Scotland's Deputy Chief Officer David Page and his team for their continued support to help us deliver this important project.
- 3.4 As Martyn Evans, the Chair of SPA, [reflected in his statement](#) the lead up to this announcement involved a great deal work by the Authority, The Forensic Services Committee and Police Scotland with the Scottish Government and COPFS. FS will continue report

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this project's progress in the coming months to both the FS Committee and the Authority.

Forensic 2026 Strategy

- 3.5 The business cases for the Operating Model, Access to Lab, and Deployment of Scene Examination are all at Full Business Case and recommended by the Forensic Services Committee. A number of discussions are currently under way with colleagues in SPA to prepare to present these to the Resources Committee and The Authority in September 2021.
- 3.6 I want to thank particularly the wide group of external organisations and people who have given their time so generously to help us refresh the Forensic 2026 Strategy, which will be coming to the next meeting of the Authority for approval.
- 3.7 As well as colleagues from forensic science professional bodies and other operators this has included: representatives from academia; Police Scotland and the wider policing community; COPFS; members of the Forensic Committee and the SPA; the Biometrics Commissioner; HMICS; and others.
- 3.8 Many of these people took part in a recent Insights Day organised and guided by colleagues from Police Scotland's Strategy, Insight and Innovation team, who are playing a key role in help us develop our refreshed strategy. I am grateful for their time and insight which will help improve this strategy.

Retirement

- 3.8 As members are aware, I will retire after more than 41 years working in forensic science - the past 26 years in Scotland.
- 3.9 As I leave Forensic Services can look ahead to a strong future with our refreshed strategy, the FS 2026 Full Business Cases finalised, and the recent Scottish Government investment in the new toxicology laboratory. While I feel this is right time for me to retire, I also have confidence that this is right time for Forensic Services to have a new director to lead these future plans.
- 3.10 I am very proud of all we have been able to achieve in Forensic Services by working together to create and nurture a national service of world-class standing. I want to thank the members of the Scottish Police Authority for your support and challenge over the past years.

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- 3.11 I will work to ensure as smooth as handover as possible to the new director and I will continue to watch with great interest the developments of both Forensic Services and in forensic science.

Transforming Forensics

- 3.12 SPA Forensic Services has been supporting the work of the National Police Chief Councils (for England and Wales) supporting their Strategic Review of Transforming Forensics and Forensic Capability Network.
- 3.13 There have been continued changes to the funding and the delivery of forensic science services in England and Wales in the recent years and this review is looking at how best to take this forward to provide some stability for the future.
- 3.14 Forensic Services have been supporting Police Scotland chief officer colleagues on this project to explain how forensic services are delivered throughout Scotland to help inform this NPCC review.

Biometrics Commissioner

- 3.15 Along with Martyn Evans, Chair of the SPA, and Lynn Brown, chief Executive of SPA, I met with Dr Brian Plastow, the inaugural Scottish Biometrics Commissioner.
- 3.16 Forensic Services will continue to work with Dr Plastow, as a member of his Advisory Group, as he develops the first strategic plan and the first Code of Practice for Biometrics in Scotland.

Award for work on polymer banknotes

- 3.17 Carina Joannidis, who works as a Forensic Services Mark Enhancement Officer at the Scottish Crime Campus, has been awarded the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining Materials World Medal for Money Talks - the best feature published during the year in the Institute's Materials World magazine. The award was for her contribution to a collaborative project about examination of the new polymer banknotes.

COVID update

- 3.18 As throughout the pandemic, the health, safety, and wellbeing of staff remain the priority for FS. We continue to work closely with Operation Talla to plan for future changes - when it is safe to do so – aligned with the cautious approach outlined by the First Minister.
- 3.19 While of the removal of some COVID restrictions across Scotland is welcome, given this cautious approach staff who can will continue to work from home until Op Talla advises it is safe to change the current working arrangements. In spite of these challenges, Forensic Services staff have continued produce outstanding results – which is reflected in the attached FS performance report and I thank them for their continued commitment and dedication.

My Career

- 3.20 MyCareer, our new appraisal system underpinned by the Competency & Values Framework, completes its Proof of Concept pilot on 31st August. Forensic Services has been one of three areas of business, alongside Police Scotland's C3 and Forth Valley Division, taking part in the pilot.
- 3.21 Staff received detailed support, guidance, and training to help them use this new appraisal system which underpins one of the Forensic 2026 Strategy strategic objectives to value and develop our people, promoting equality and wellbeing. We now look forward to receiving the feedback from this pilot.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 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 Q1 Performance report.

Scottish Police Authority

Forensic Services

Performance Report

Quarter 1 2021/22

*For presentation to the SPA
Scottish Police Authority*

25 August 2021

Executive Summary Quarter 1, 2021/22

Performance

- Forensic Services performance levels have been strong over the Q1 period. This builds on the solid performance over the previous quarter under the established physical distancing measures.
- Demand for services continues to be strong. Three areas of increases in demand are:
 - In Scene Examination as we come out of the COVID restrictions demand has increased.
 - There remains a significant increased demand for Tox Section 5a analysis.
 - Biology is also seeing an increase in major crime and complexity of casework which is increasing the time taken per case
- Although demand is high, output has also been high.
- Our Performance Board is now well established and is actively monitoring casework across the organisation.

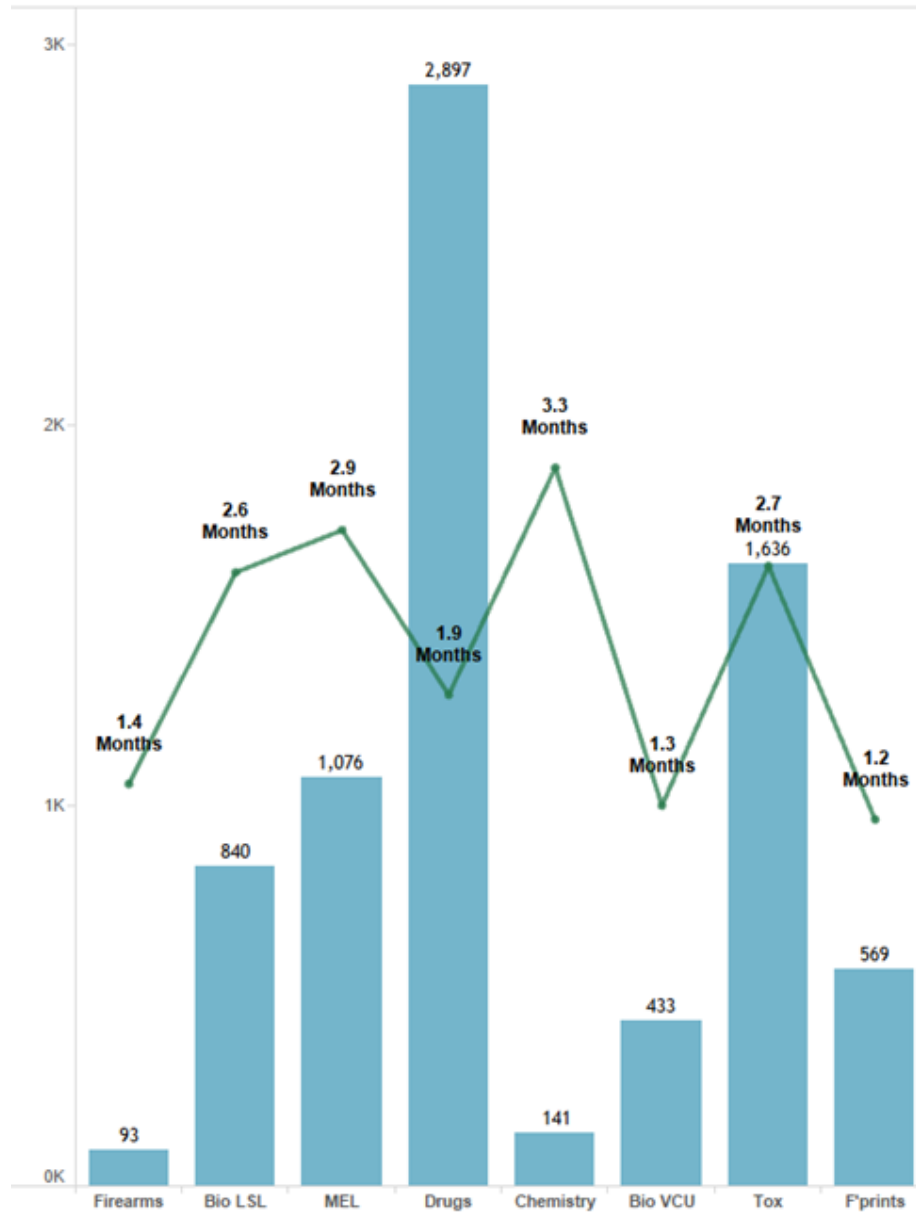
Engagement

- Staff engagement has been high over the period. With frequent communications to inform staff and teams on the current working arrangements, keeping services running effectively.
- Working groups have also been exploring with staff across Forensic Services what the new normal will look like and a plan is developing well to account for what has worked well over this period and how changes in restrictions will impact on organisational practice.
- Our management development training has been continuing over the last quarter. Feedback from those participating has been positive.
- We continue to be part of the pilot for the roll out of My Career giving all staff a structured platform for performance feedback and career development with focus on the new Competency Values Framework. The proof of concept pilot will finish on 31/08/21.

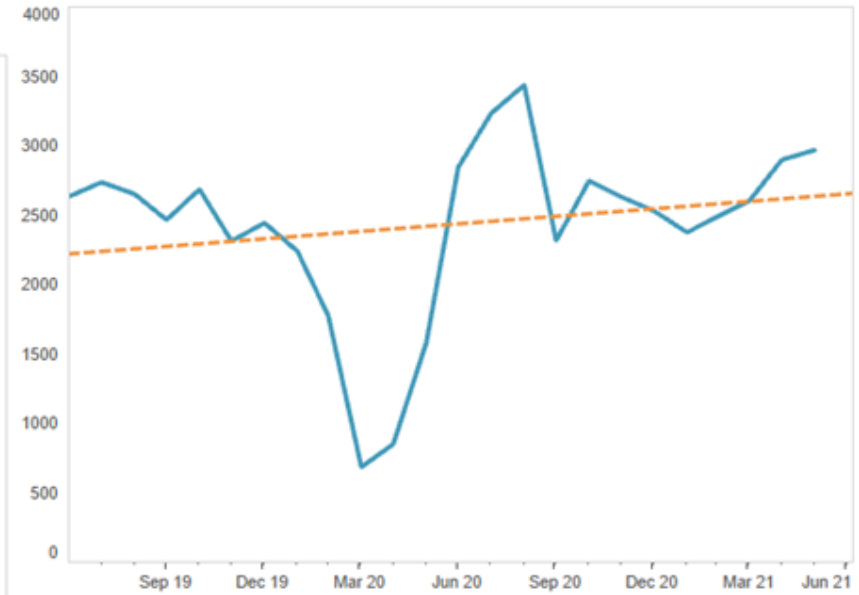
Business Update

- On the 9 July the Scottish Government announced an investment of £6m in Forensic Services Scottish Police Authority (SPA) to deliver a bespoke Post Mortem Toxicology Service by December 2022.
- The Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Bill was voted for by MSP's and passed on the 24 June 2021. The legislation extends other measures beyond the original expiry date of 30 September 2021 to 31 March 2022. This Bill allows for courts to extend some of their deadlines which will have a positive impact on Forensic Services in the short term.
- To help support our people we now have established the People and ICT Boards which work to ensure we have the correct level of support for our staff. The People Board which looks at and addresses all staff related matters is well established and we will be soon having the first meeting of the Change and Improvement Board.

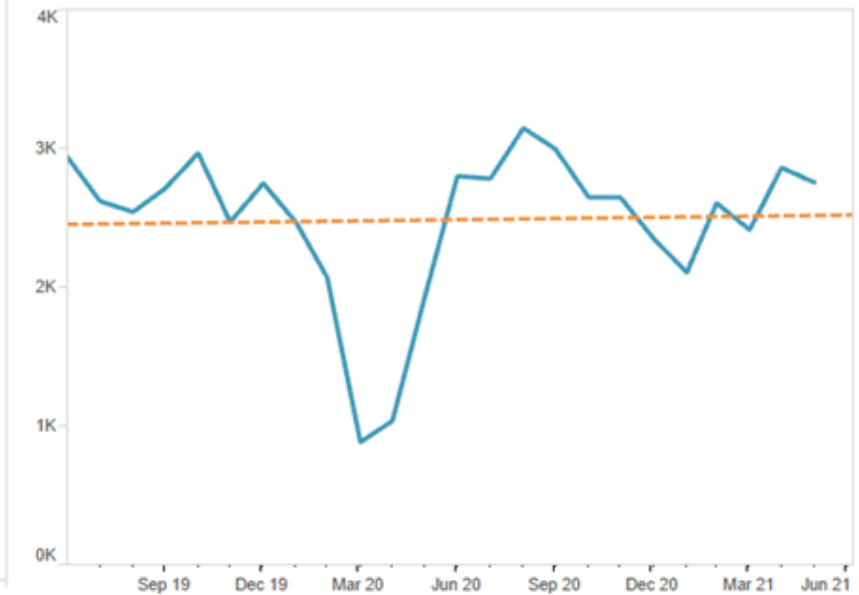
Forensic Services - Laboratory Casework Open Cases - end Q1 21-22 with average age



Casework Demand previous 2 years



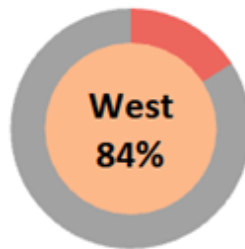
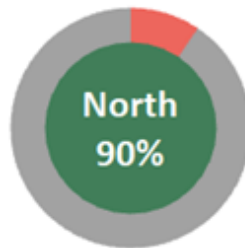
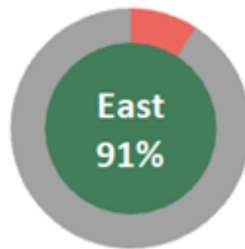
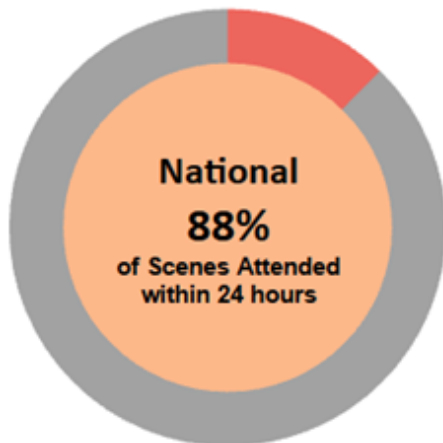
Casework Output previous 2 years



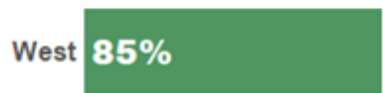
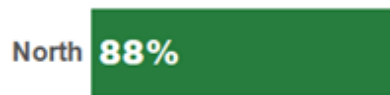
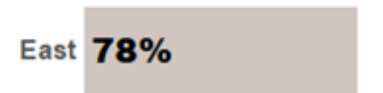
Scene Examination Performance Quarter 1, 2021/22

Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit Quarterly Performance Q1 21-22

Timeliness Scenes attended within 24hrs of request



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

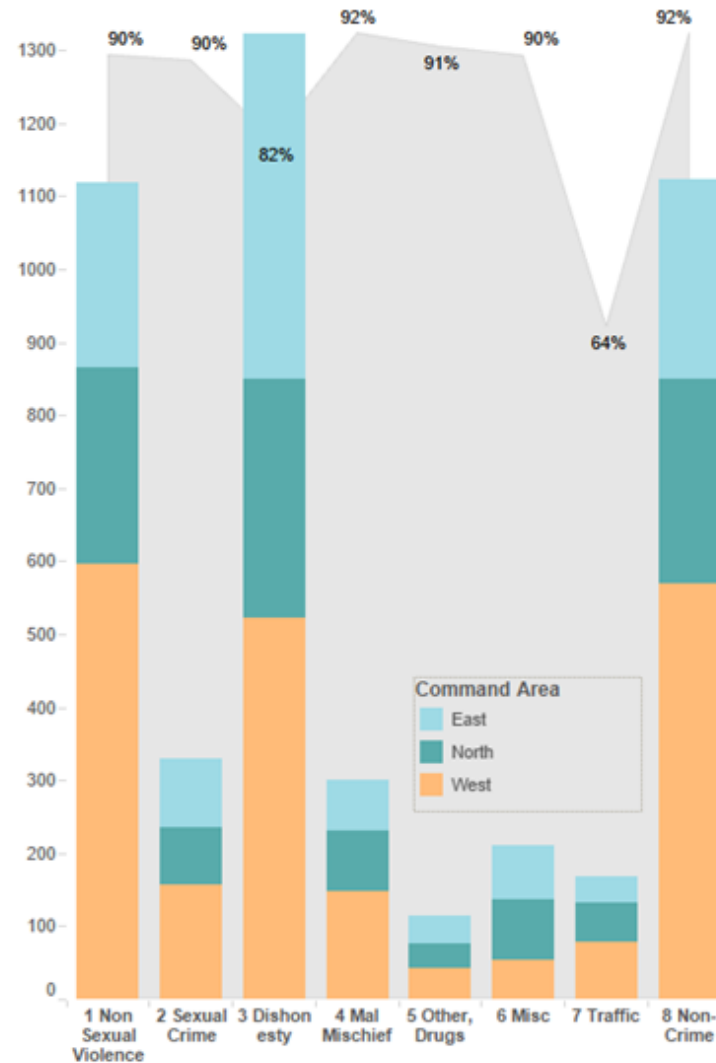


4,558 Scenes Attended This Quarter

2,643 Scenes Attended Q1 previous year

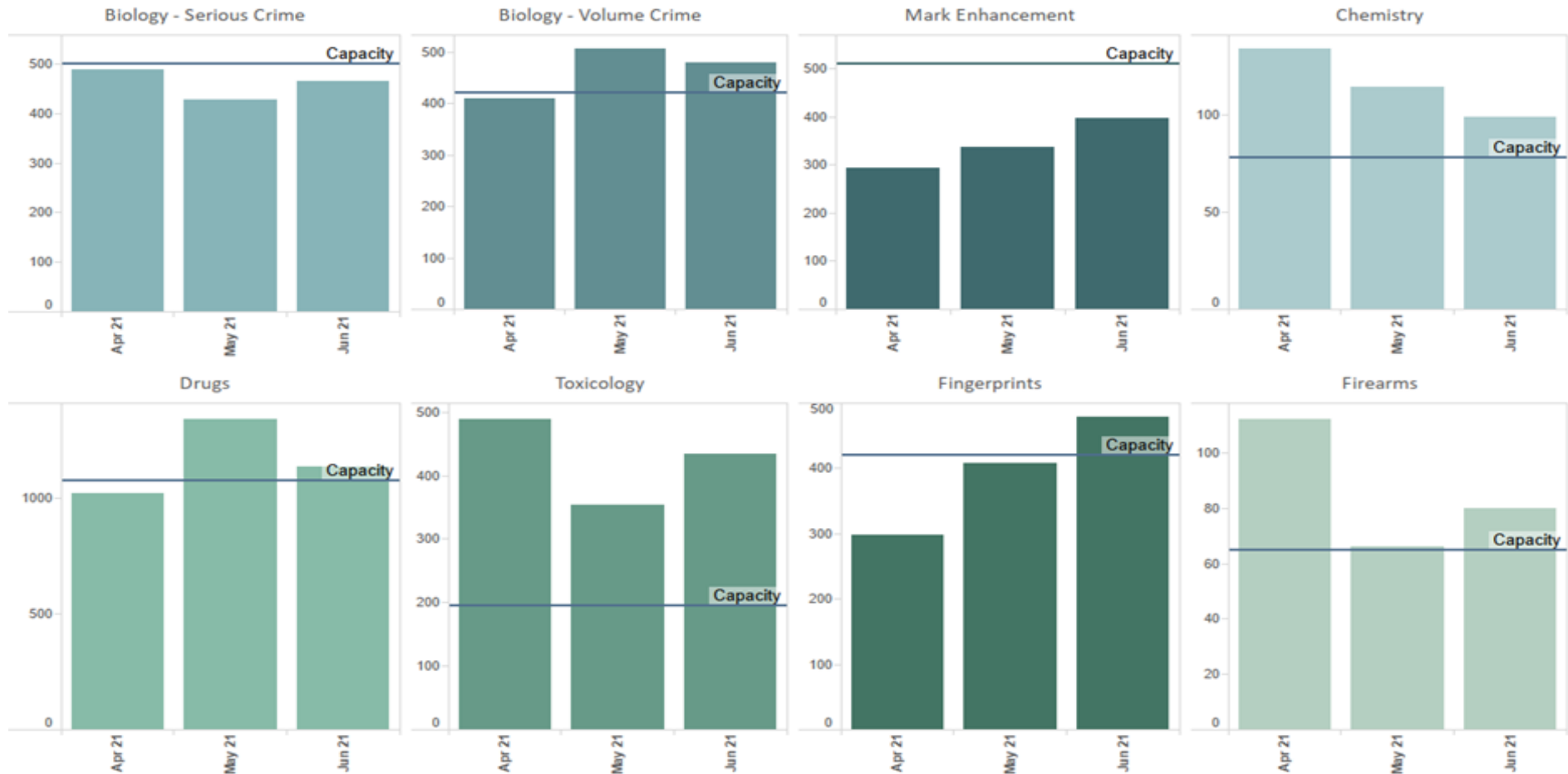
Crime Group

Number of Scenes Attended / % within 24hrs of request



Forensic Services - Laboratory Capacity

Charts illustrate new requests for casework opened per month



Toxicology

Toxicology demand continues to track significantly above the available capacity within the organisation. This is a significant risk which is captured within the risk review report. An overarching justice system strategy for Drugs Driving could consider what options may be available to grow this capacity further in the future.

Capacity Review

A detailed capacity review is currently underway that will update the current capacity of Forensic Services across each of the business units within the laboratory, this will fully account for any impact of physical distancing measures that cannot be mitigated through the new blended working arrangements due to COVID.

Quality Quarter 1, 2021/2022

Quality Performance

- Forensic Services Management System Review meeting was held during Q1 2021-2022. Forensic Services continue to maintain a comprehensive and effective Management System meeting the requirements of the international standard ISO 17025.
- The Management System Review process is an important and integral part of the Forensic Services Management System and is underpinned by similar detailed reviews that take place regularly across each of the functions within the organisation. The Head of Quality takes oversight of all quality related matters through these reviews and provides assurance to the Director of Forensic Services on the high standard of forensic science being undertaken across the service.
- Formal maintenance of UKAS accreditation was finally received on 07 June 2021 after acceptance of the evidence provided and closure of the findings.
- The proposed dates of the annual UKAS accreditation assessment programme have been provided for this year's full re-assessment of Forensic Services Management System.
- An assessment visit in April 2021 of Scene Examination activity to ISO 17020 raised valuable findings which will allow Forensic Services to further develop processes and procedures in this difficult to accredit area.

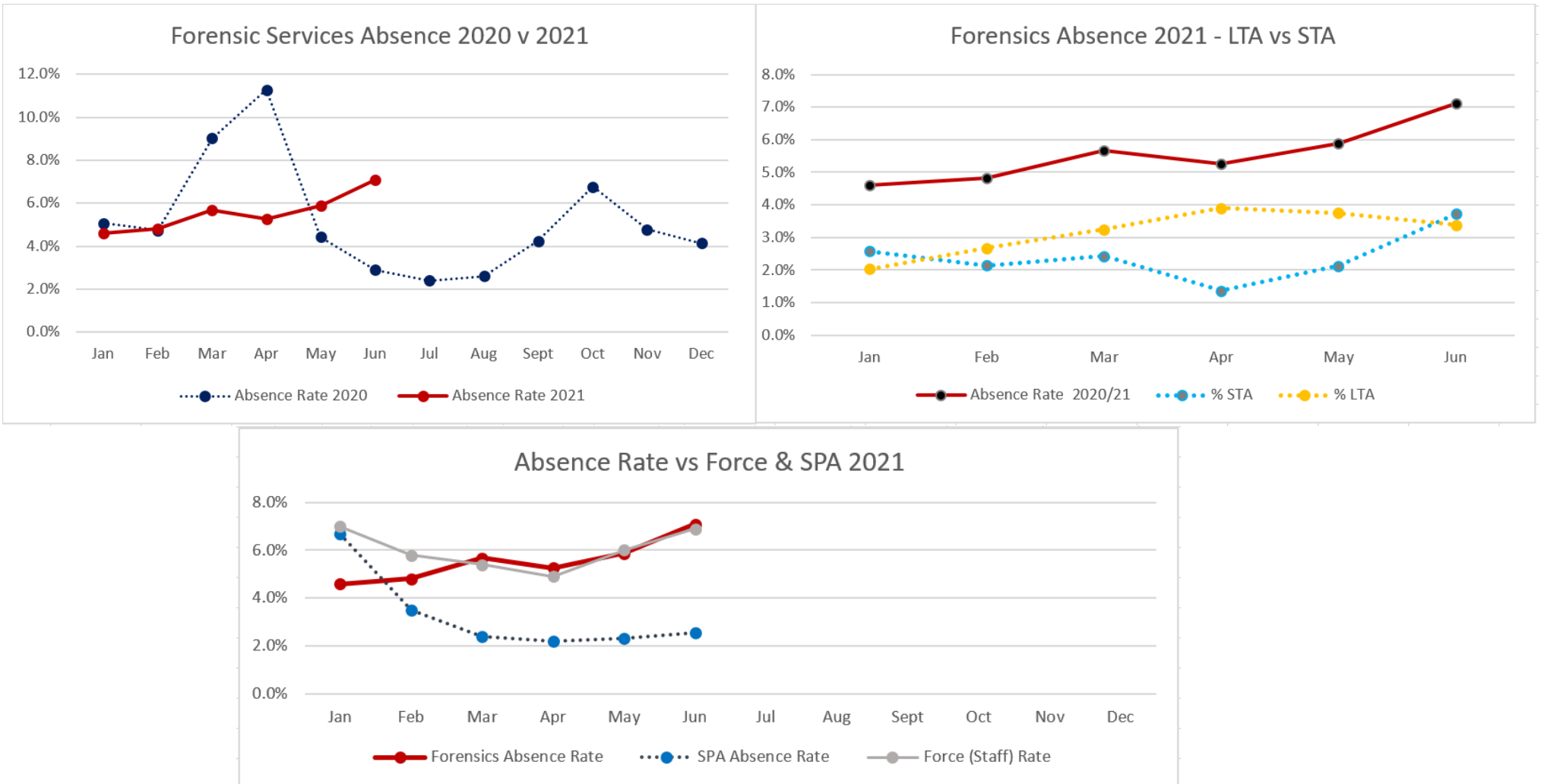
Complaints and Feedback

- Complaints and both positive and negative feedback is recorded in compliance with the ISO 17025 Standard from our Partners and customers. The graph below shows the feedback received during Q1 Apr-Jun; 2021-2022:



- All complaints or negative feedback recorded in the Management System will have corrective and preventive action documented following Standard Operating Procedure. Effectiveness of the action taken will be reviewed through the internal audit process and in turn through Management System Review meetings.

Staff Absence Data—Q1 2021/22



- Forensic services has seen an increase in absence rates due to Covid related issues. Currently 36% of all absences are Covid related.
- This increase is in line with other areas of Police Scotland Staff rates and is likely to be due to lifting of lockdown restrictions where people are contracting Covid or self-isolating due to Scotland Track and Trace App.
- Forensic Services continues to focus on managing and supporting staff who are absent with specific interventions based on trend analysis being considered and progressed in the Attendance Management sub group of the People Board