



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Forensic Services Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> February 2023</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>MS Teams</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Forensic Services Performance Report</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Fiona Douglas</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

To present Forensic Services Performance Report, Q3 2022/23 for Committee consideration.

This paper is presented in line with:

- The Scottish Police Authority Scheme of Delegation

This paper is for discussion.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

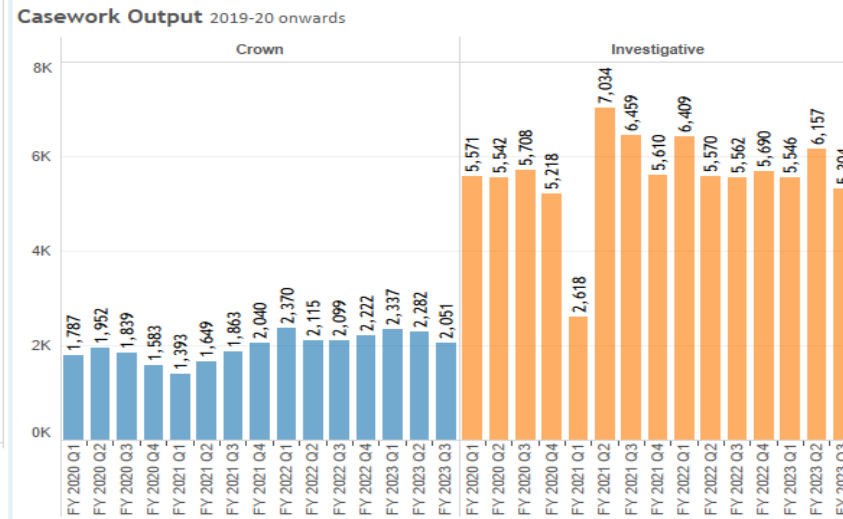
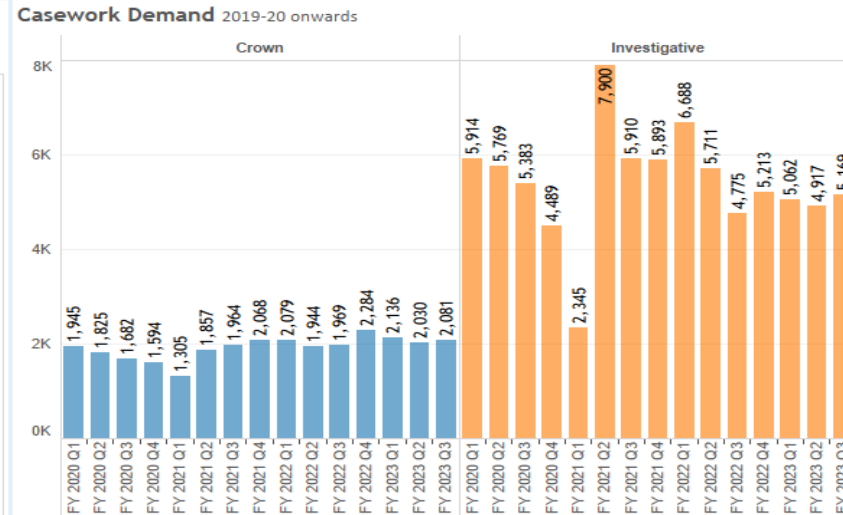
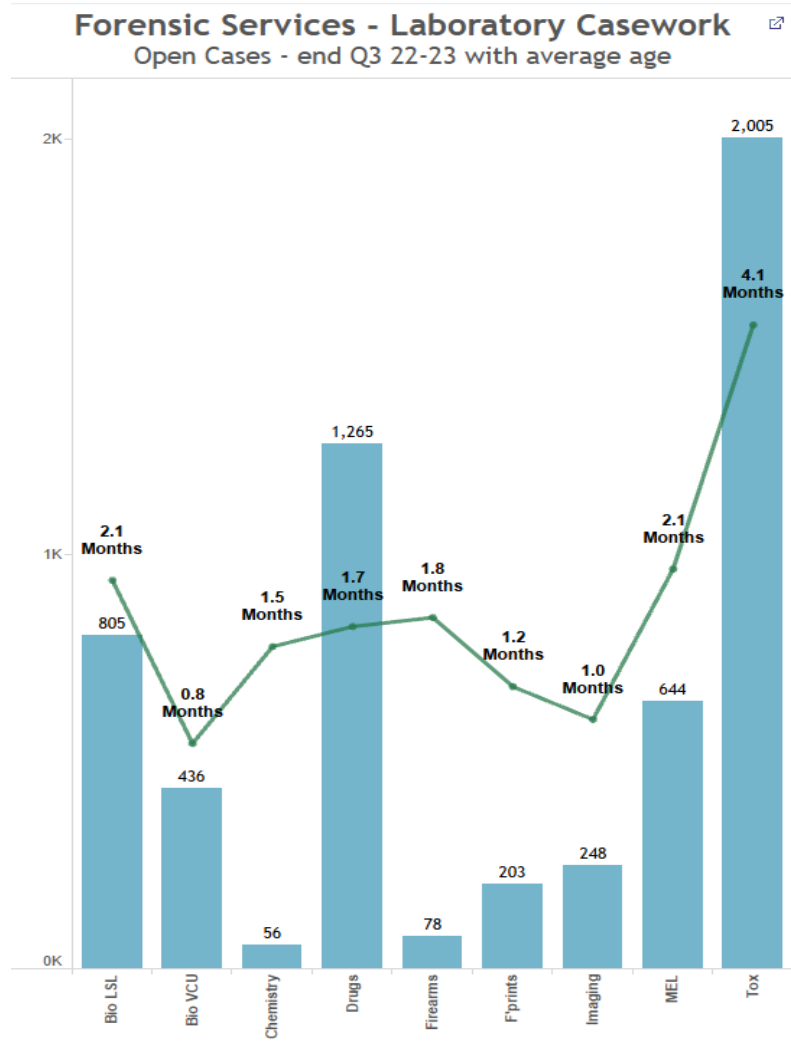
- 1.1 The Forensic Services Business Performance Report is presented for Q3 2022/23.
- 1.2 This report captures conducted activity across SPA Forensic Services. This performance evidence also informs the content of the Authority's quarterly Strategic Police Plan Delivery Review and the Annual Review of Policing 2022/23.
- 1.3 The report demonstrates SPA Forensic Services delivery over the last quarter through the following:
  - Progress updates on Forensic Service commitments laid out in the annual business plan;
  - Qualitative performance data.

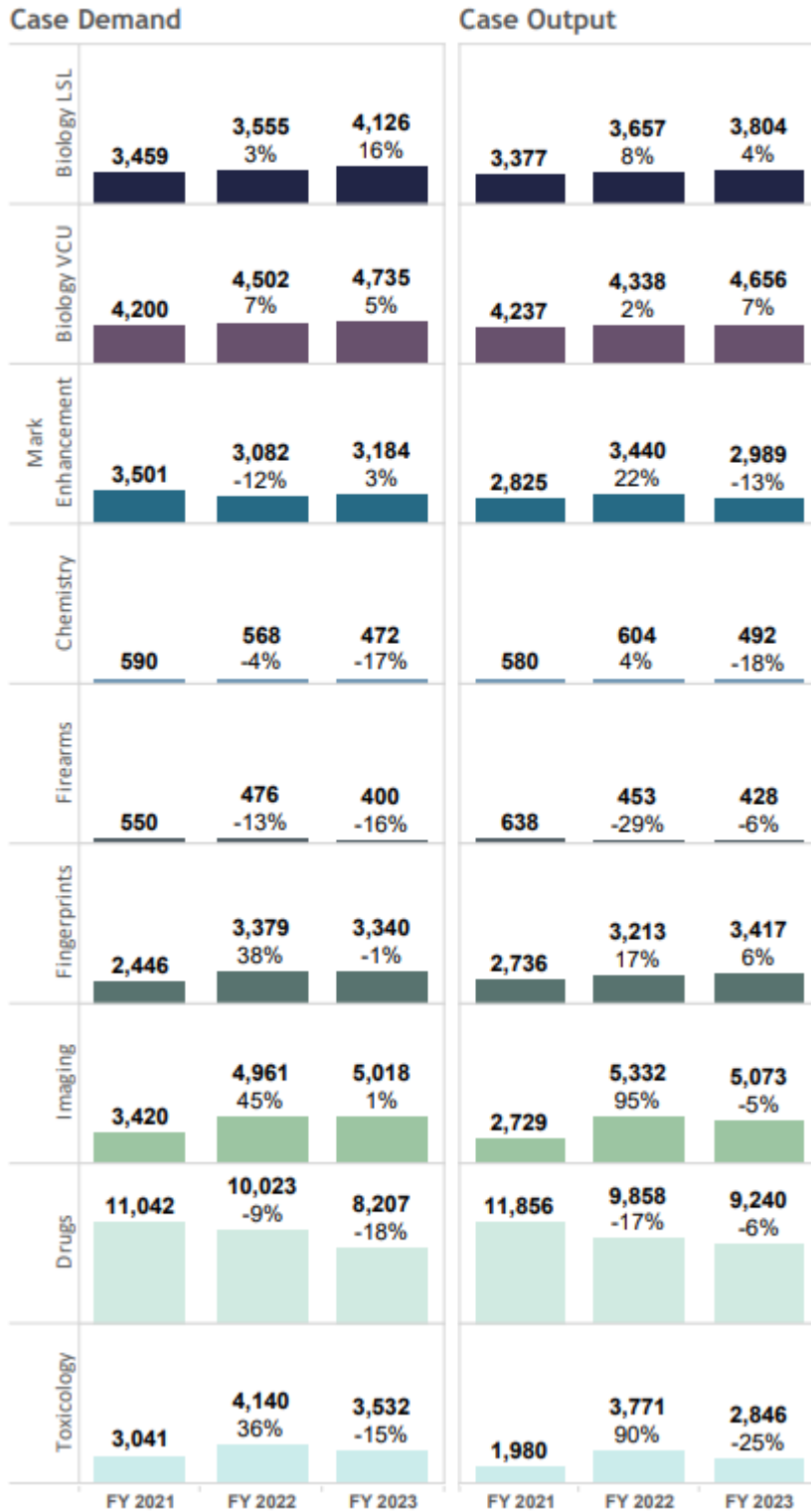
## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 There has been as an increase in demand in Q3 compared with Q2. With the exception of toxicology, output across most areas of Forensic Services meet the level of new demand.
- 2.2 Notable changes include a decline in group 6 offences - miscellaneous – which has led to a reduction in case demand in Chemistry and Firearms. The largest rise in new demand has been in Group 3 - Crimes of Dishonesty – which has returned to pre-Covid levels. Group 2 - Crimes of Indecency – also shows a continuing rise in demand.
- 2.3 We continue our focus on reducing the number of open cases across Forensic Services and improving the timeliness of service provision.
- 2.4 Biology and Mark Enhancement have seen an increase in demand from Q2 to Q3. This increase in demand is being seen year on year, with Biology having the highest increase of all business areas - with the exception of recent increases in Toxicology. Recruitment is ongoing to maximise available capacity levels in this part of Forensic Services.
- 2.5 The average age of cases, date work created in the Evidence Management System (EMS) to the date the work is closed, has reduced in all business areas - with the exception of Toxicology. This is within the target set to be achieved by the end the current Financial Year.

- 2.6 Output in Drugs has continued to remain relatively high, in comparison with demand. Overall, increasing the capacity in this business area has allowed for meaningful progress in reducing the total caseload in the drugs function.
- 2.7 The impact of Covid in Q3 has further reduced, with the absence rate in Forensic Services on par with SPA and Police Scotland and it continues to trend below this time last year.
- 2.8 We have made significant progress with long-term absences in Scene Examination: they have been reduced by 50% from Q2 to Q3 and there has also been a 43% reduction in the number of staff on restricted duties.
- 2.9 There continues to be a high level of demand for Toxicology services and a new outsourcing contract has been implemented. A substantial amount of work has been completed to determine a possible sustainable future model for this service, accounting for the current and potential future demand levels. Toxicology continues to be supported by Biology, Chemistry, Drugs and Business Support to increase staff resilience in this area.
- 2.10 Our new Post Mortem Toxicology service started on 1<sup>st</sup> December and all cases to date have been completed within target dates agreed with COPFS. The team continues to work with an outsourcing company to ensure it will continue to meet these times and the ongoing work of the Post Mortem Toxicology team will be detailed in future performance reports.

### 3. Forensic Services – Overall position

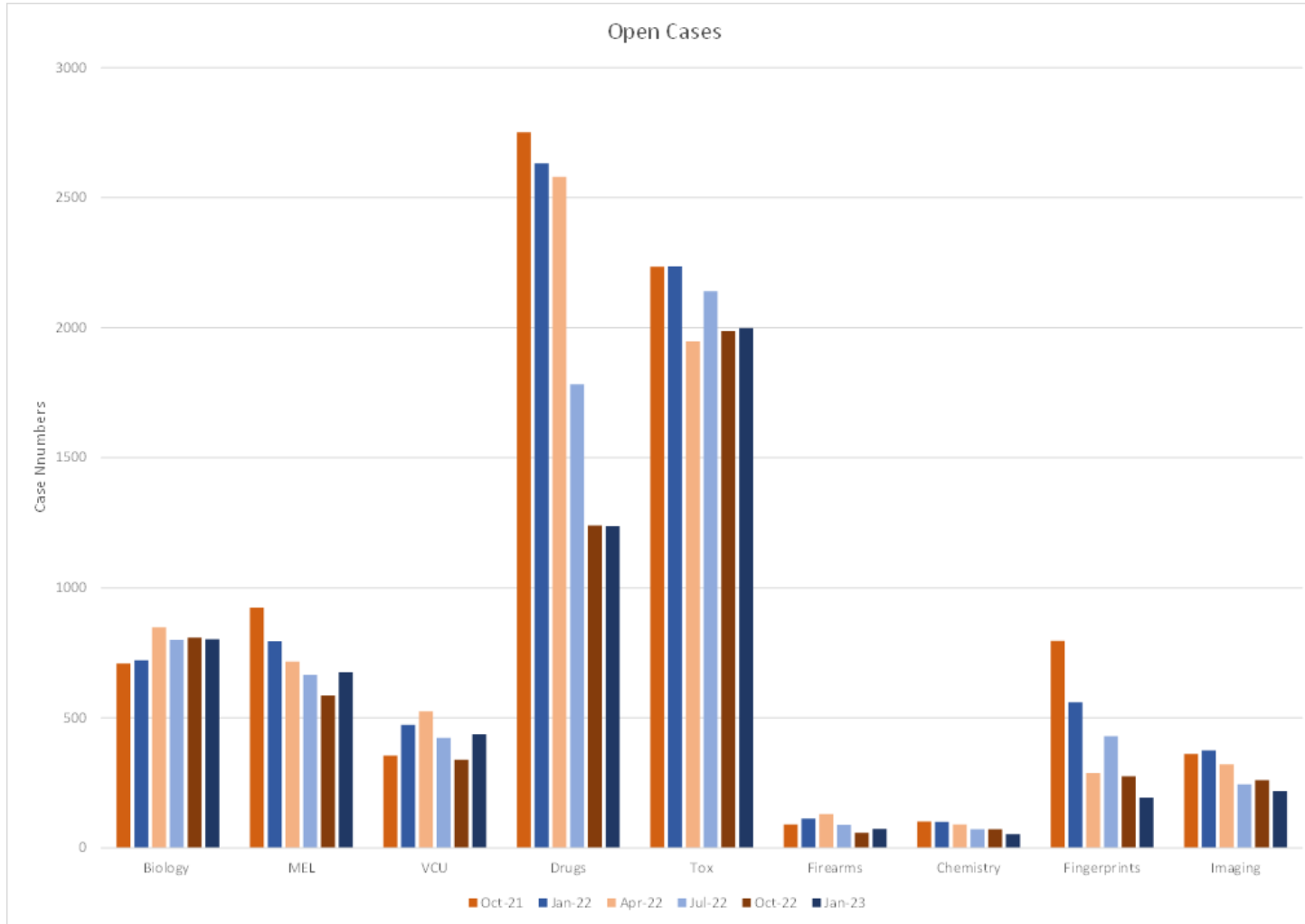




Bar charts display number of unique laboratory cases opened/closed in a financial year. % changes relate to increase/decrease compared with previous year. 2022-23 case figures have had a 1.33 multiplier attached to pro-rata Jan-March 2023 activity. Non-customer facing casework activity excluded from these values.  
 Note that Imaging unit only included in MI from late 2020 hence less focus should be placed on first datapoint

FY 2021 = 2020-21  
 FY 2022 = 2021-22  
 FY 2023 = 2022-23 (extrapolated)

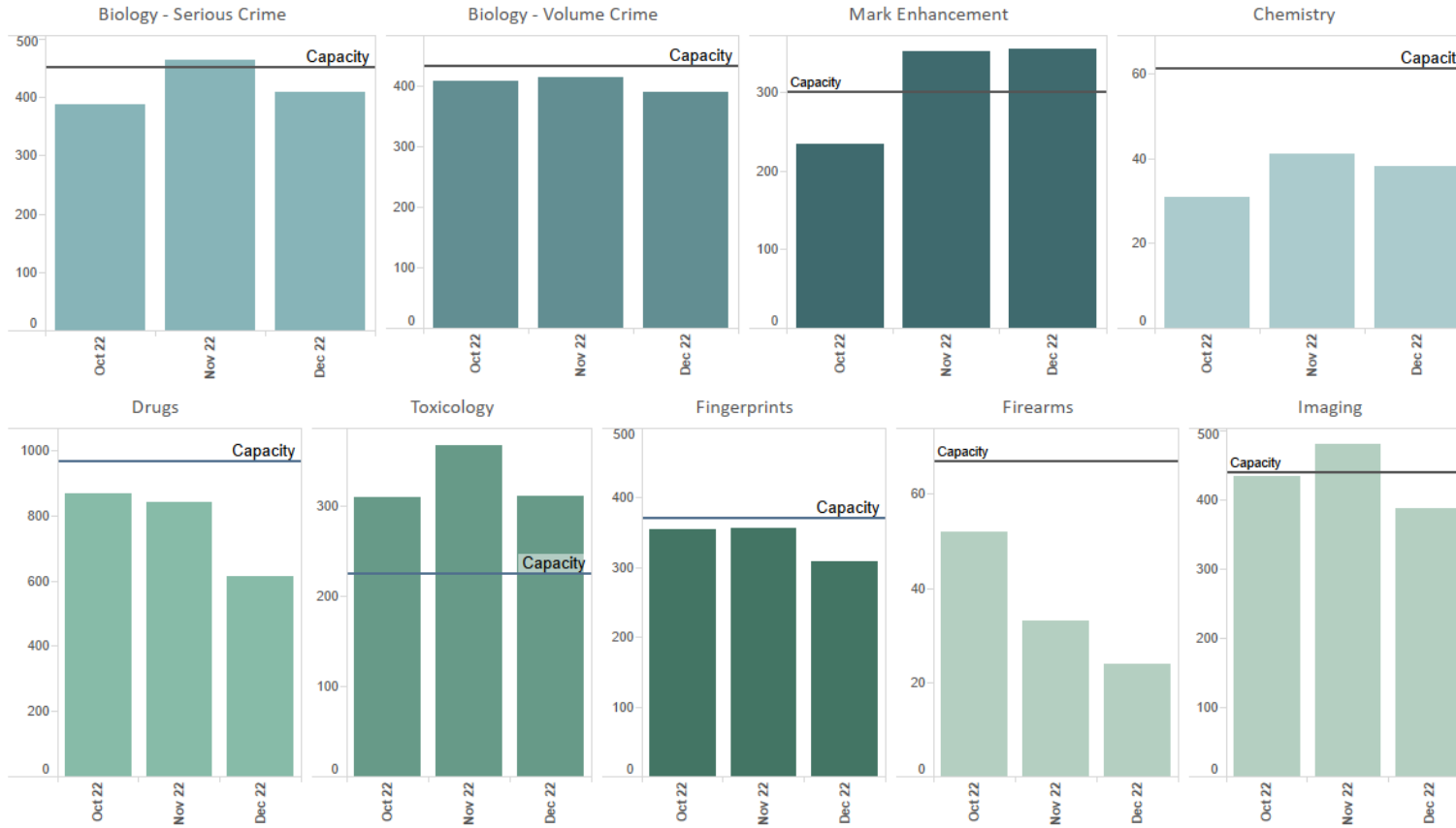
### 3.1 Forensic Services – Overall position, open casework



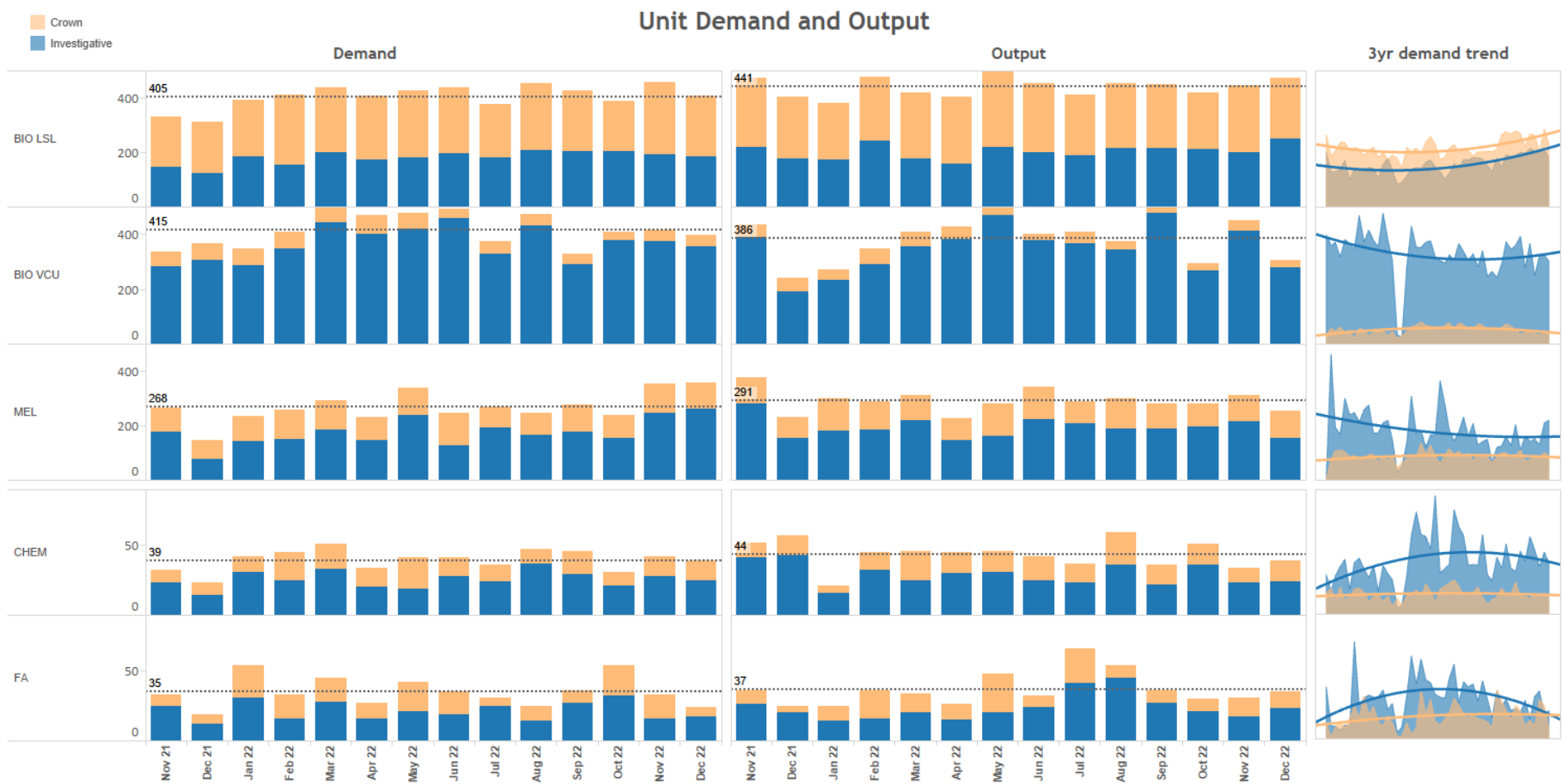
### 3.2 Forensic Services – Laboratory capacity

#### Forensic Services - Laboratory Capacity

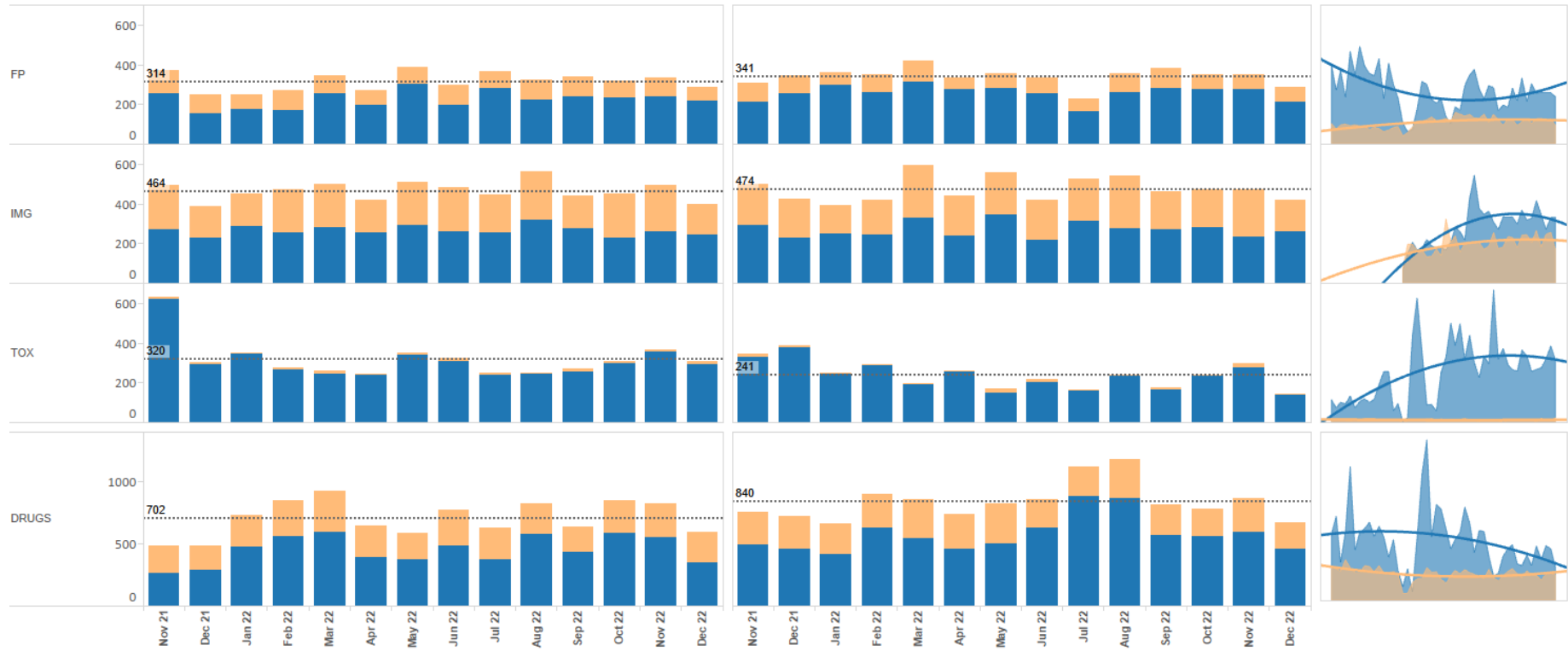
Charts illustrate new requests for casework opened per month



### 3.3 Forensic Services – Unit demand and output

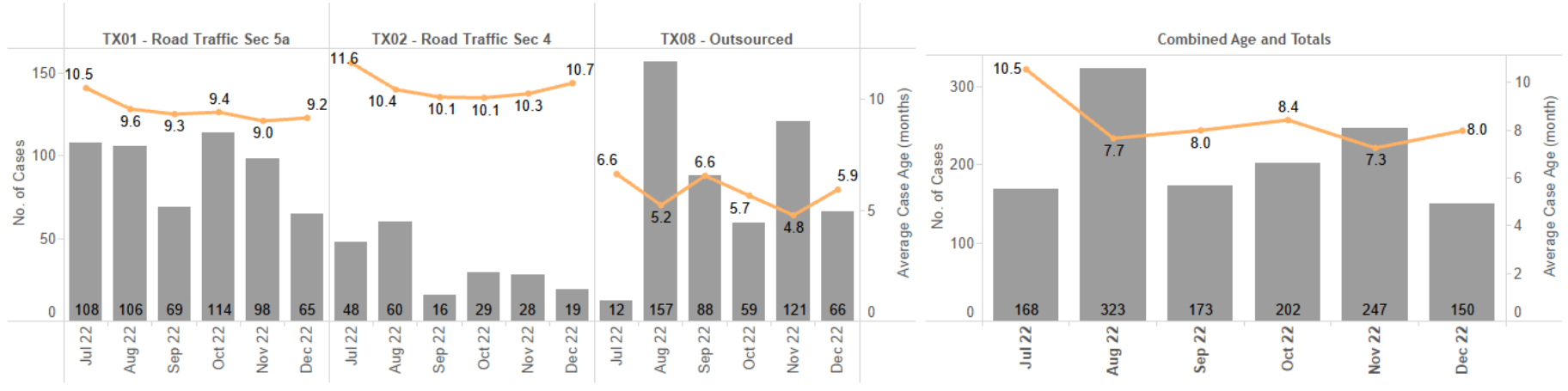






### 3.5 Forensic Services – Toxicology update

Completed Sec 4, 5A and Outsourced Casework by Month of Completion



September, October and November has seen zero cases which could not be progressed to prosecution due to laboratory testing delays. The December figure is expected imminently.

The aggressive outsourcing plan is continuing to be used as much as possible for drug driving and dialogue has been ongoing with SPA and Scottish Government colleagues regarding the outsourcing requirement for 23/24.

December’s output was lower than expected, due to a variety of abstractions. As a result, progress has been slightly slower than anticipated for December (in relation to caseload and aging) but the cases are being actively monitored and managed.

Recruitment activity is in flight to support the Toxicology team further.

### **3.6 Forensic Services – Scene examination update**

SPA Forensic Services prioritises scene attendance requests taking into account:

- Crime/event type
- Risk of loss of potential forensic evidence
- Presence of a PS Crime Scene Manager (generally more serious scenes)
- Skills and competence required by the attending Scene Examiner
- Impact on Police Scotland resource (eg. Police Officer standing by)

Scene Examination resource level may influence the attendance timescales/sequence but does not affect the prioritisation.

All incidents where a Police Scotland Crime Scene manager is deployed, other serious crime, critical incident scenes, and those requested by the PIRC are always defined as higher priority.

Less serious crime scenes will be prioritised taking into account:

- Restricted availability of victim/complainer/accused.
- Proximity to other existing scene requests
- Risk of loss of potential forensic evidence.

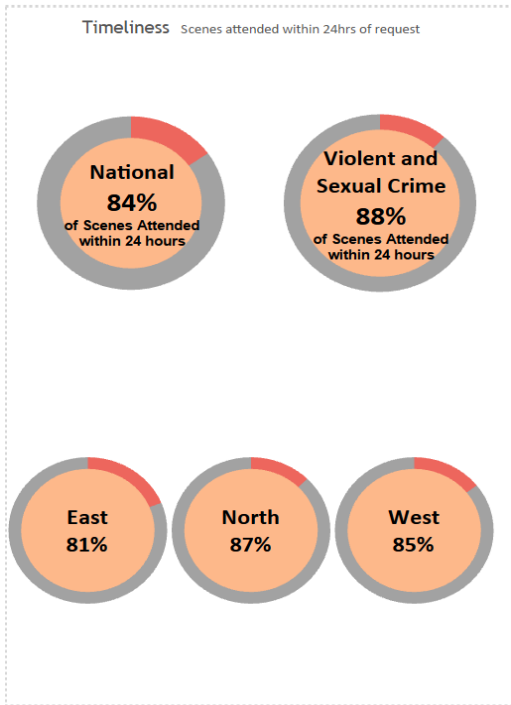
We also prioritise scenes where the public are affected to try to minimise disruption, such as scenes relating to:

- Common stairs
- Streets/paths

We prioritise other attendances, such as Post Mortems to support the small team of Pathologists to maximise their efficiency.

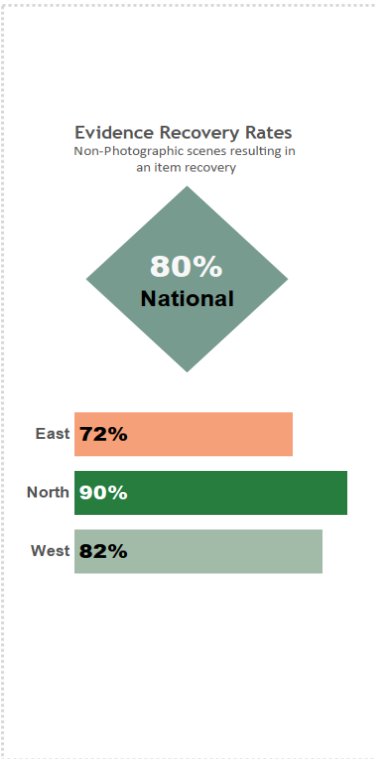
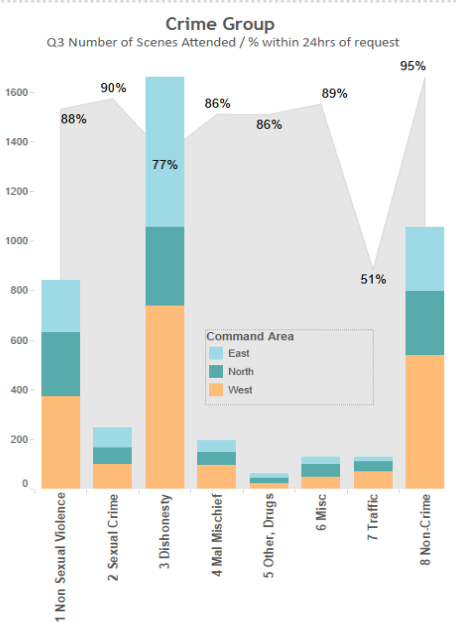
Lower level crime scenes, which generally result in limited forensic value, are not routinely attended unless Police Scotland demonstrate potential for forensic evidence recovery.

Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit  
Quarterly Performance Q3 22-23



4,275 Scenes Attended This Quarter

4,379 Scenes Attended Q3 previous year



There has been a 5% increase in scenes attended from Q2 to Q3 albeit a small -2% difference on the same time last year. There has been a small dip in number of scenes attended within 24 hours of request.

Long-term absences have been reduced by 50% from Q2 to Q3 with eight currently being actively managed. In addition, there has been a 43% reduction in the number of staff on restricted duties with seven currently under review. To maintain service, cross area working is still being proactively carried out with 38% (532) scenes attended from outwith the locus division.

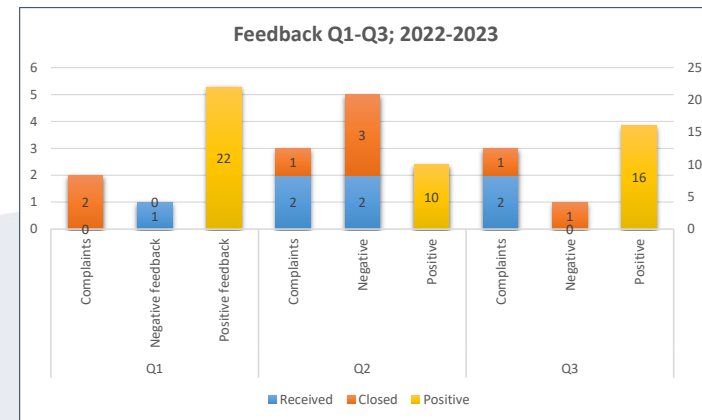
### 3.7 Forensic Services – Quality Management System & Accreditation

#### Accreditation Summary

- The 2022 UKAS accreditation assessment programme was completed on Wed 30 Nov 2022 with a recommendation to maintain our accreditation received by UKAS. This recommendation also included an extension to accredited scope for 'Quant Trio' (quantification of DNA prior to amplification by PCR).
- Evidence for the findings raised was submitted to UKAS on 16 Jan 2023 as planned.
- A follow up assessment of Toxicology at the Edinburgh laboratory is scheduled for Mon 27 Mar 2023 to assess the continued improvement in drug driving and alcohol analysis caseloads and review the improvement planning work.
- 2023 UKAS Surveillance assessments:  
 02-06 Oct 2023: Edinburgh and SCC – Fingerprint comparison  
 09-13 Oct 2023: Aberdeen  
 23-27 Oct 2023: Dundee  
 06-07 Nov 2023: Edinburgh  
 13-17 Nov 2023: Glasgow (SCC)
- The UKAS effort estimate for 2023-2024 has reduced slightly despite an increase in Forensic Services accredited scope and continued, focussed attention on Toxicology at Edinburgh.
- Post Mortem Toxicology UKAS assessment is scheduled for Tue 28 Mar-30 Mar 2023. This will include assessment of the Post Mortem Toxicology J24 laboratory site, implementation of the Forensic Services Management System as well as the technical testing activity.

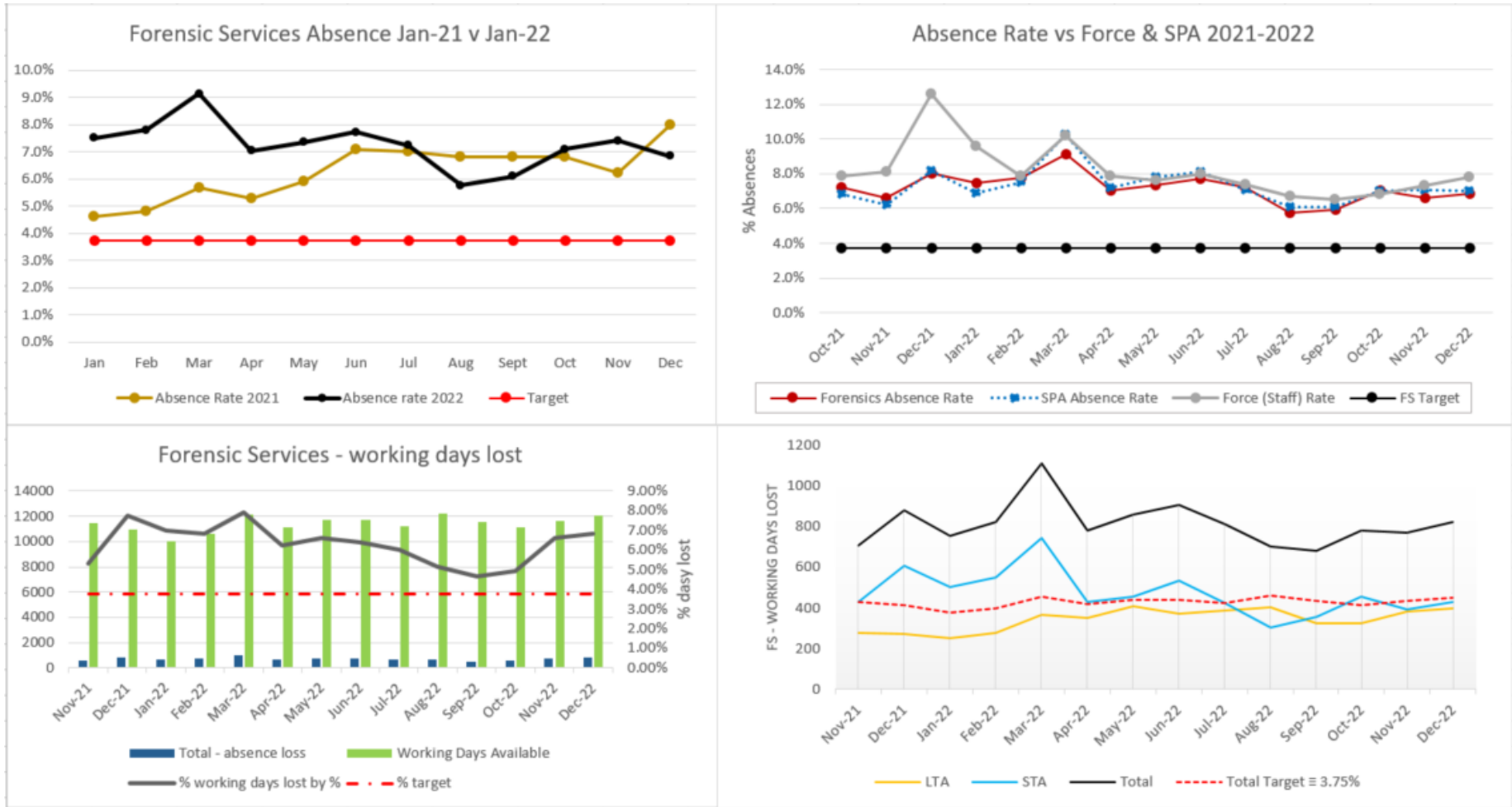
#### Complaints and Feedback

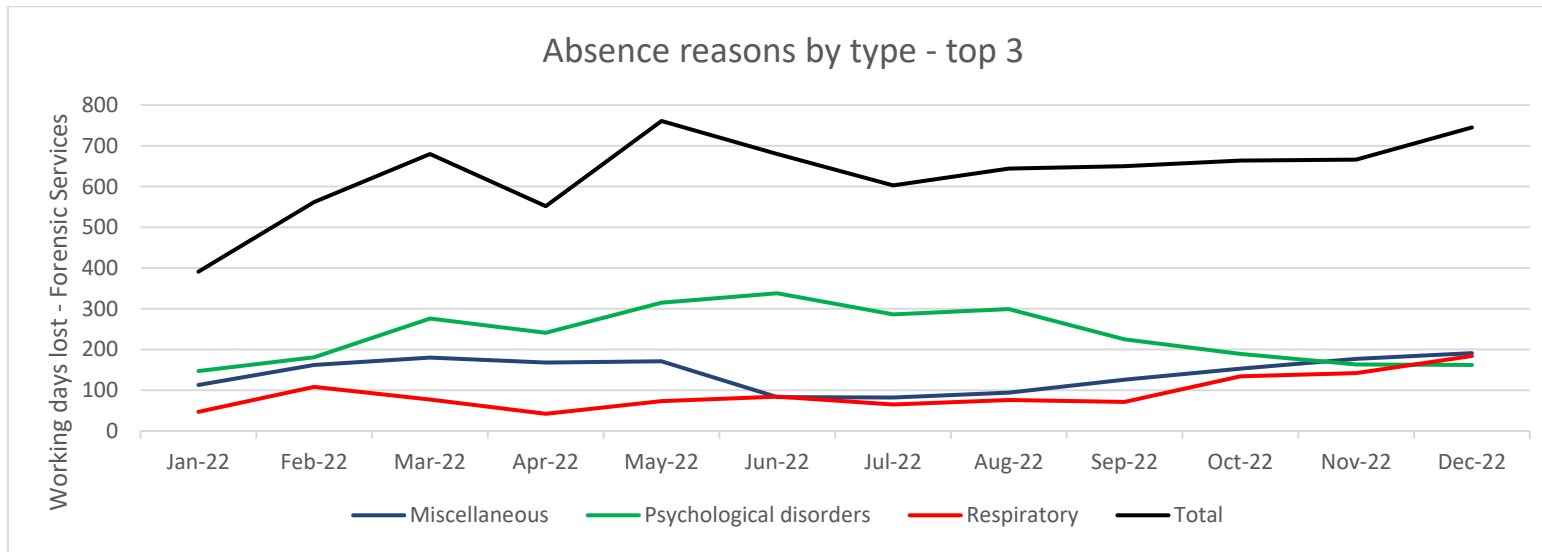
- Complaints and both positive and negative feedback are recorded in compliance with the ISO 17025 / ISO 17020 Standards.
- During this reporting period, none were reportable to the SPA Complaints & Conduct Committee, with all relating to service delivery to COPFS or PSoS.



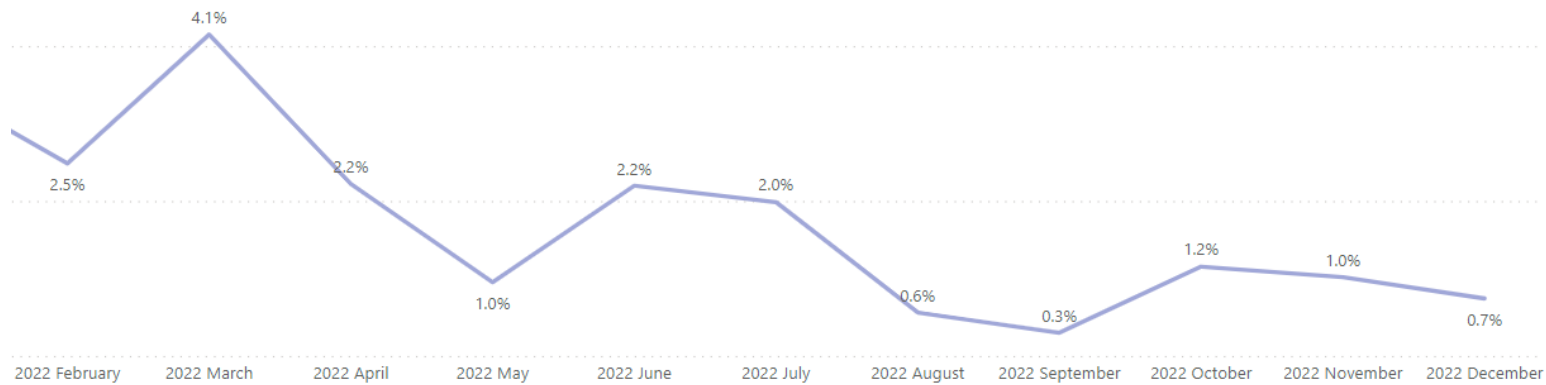
- Four positive feedback were received from members of the public in relation to Scene Examination attendance in the West, East and North.
- All complaints or negative feedback recorded in the Management System have corrective and preventive action documented following Standard Operating Procedure.
- Effectiveness of actions taken are reviewed through the internal audit process and in turn through Management System Review meetings.

### 3.8 Forensic Services – Absence data





### Forensic Services – Covid data



**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

**5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

**7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

**8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no social implications in this report.

**9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 There are no community implications in this report.

**10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

**11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the information provided in this report