



SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Agenda Item 7

Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	8th May 2025
Location	Webex
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan Update
Presented By	Sam Curran, Head of Function
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To provide the Forensic Services Committee with an update on work to develop a strategic workforce plan for Forensic Services.

The paper is presented in line with the corporate governance framework of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Forensic Services Committee terms of reference and is submitted for consultation.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Forensic Services are committed to maintaining a highly skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the changing needs and demands of Scotland's communities and our partners.
- 1.2 This paper provides an update on work that is under way to develop a Strategic Workforce Plan and sets out a timeline for delivery. This builds on previous work that was presented to the Forensic Services Committee.
- 1.3 The Strategic Workforce plan will support Forensic Services to deliver our strategic outcomes as set out in our refreshed *Forensic Strategy 2025-2030*, being presented to the committee today.
- 1.4 The Strategic Workforce Plan will also seek to address some of the results from the staff survey, where staff commented on career paths and perceived lack of opportunities.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 Strategic workforce planning is a systematic process to ensure that an organisation has the employees, skills, and knowledge needed to meet current and future demand. The primary objective of strategic workforce planning is to ensure that the right people with the right skills are in the right roles at the right time.
- 2.2 Following a competitive tender exercise, Forensic Services have appointed Skills for Justice to support the development of the Strategic Workforce Plan. Skills for Justice has significant experience in delivering strategic workforce plans for large public sector organisations.
- 2.3 Work to develop the Strategic Workforce Plan has now started. The Skills for Justice team have been vetted with joint working arrangements confirmed and weekly progress meetings now taking place.
- 2.4 The work to develop and deliver the strategic workforce plan will be progressed over five phases. These phases are:
 - **Investigation phase (under way):** During this phase, key stakeholders will be identified and structured interviews will be

carried out. The current resource profile of Forensic Services will also be examined.

Engagement will take place to understand contemporary challenges within the Forensic Services workforce, including the priorities and perceptions of current workforce needs. Comparison will be made between the priorities / workforce needs and the organisational goals and future ambitions, ensuring they align. This will be achieved through a mixed-methodological approach, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

- **Data collection and analysis phase:** This phase will focus on a comprehensive information harvest, internally, and externally. Areas that will be considered include historic (past three years) and current workforce establishment information. Information considered will include service lengths, reasons for leaving, survey results, internal promotions, absence rates, turnover rates, and cost of the current workforce. Historic demand data will also be analysed. Considerations will include caseload information (number and types), average time spent on a case, and how the timing aligns to partner requirements.
- **Activity analysis phase:** Forensic Services activities will be assessed to establish: which roles perform which activities; the skills needed for the activities; the average time taken; and number of times performed. Current performance measures will be considered, including examining any backlog or where demand is not being met.
- **Gap analysis phase:** A gap analysis of current staffing profile and skills compared with the projected future needs will be undertaken. This will be used to forecast future staffing profiles required to provide an effective service, while acknowledging that staff often undertake varied roles. The gap analysis will also consider recruitment pathways, new ways of working and use of technology.
- **Reporting phase:** Informed by insights gathered during the first 4-stages, a draft first iteration of a strategic workforce plan will be prepared. This will be quality-assured with key stakeholders prior to being presented to the Forensic Services Committee.

3. DEMAND FORECASTING

- 3.1 To support the development of the Strategic Workforce Plan, Forensic Services is undertaking a demand forecasting exercise. This has involved analysing historical demand across crime groups

one to eight and using statistical methodology to forecast for the next five years.

- 3.2 This statistical approach has been further enhanced with input from colleagues across Forensic Services and Police Scotland who have considered policy and operational matters that may have a further influence on future demand for Forensic Services.

4. TIMELINE AND DELIVERY

- 4.1 The below table summarises the delivery timeline.

Phase	Activity / output	Planned end date
Investigation phase	Stakeholder engagement (communication, discussions) / Qualitative intelligence.	9 th May 2025
Data collection and analysis	Data collection, analysis including forecasting workforce and demand profiles.	20 th Jun 2025
Activity analysis	Assess which roles perform which activities, skills required, average time taken, and number of times performed.	27 th Jun 2025
Gap analysis	Synthesis of current staffing profile and skills compared with the projected future need / review of draft Strategic Workforce Plan.	01 st Sep 2025
Reporting	Produce final Strategic Workforce Plan.	12 Sep 2025

- 4.2 The Strategic Workforce Plan will be presented to the Forensic Services Committee for consideration once available.
- 4.3 This plan will also ensure we are well positioned to meet future demand and challenges. Forensic Services recognise that not having

a Strategic Workforce Plan has been a gap which this will resolve, so we can then ensure we have the employees, skills, and knowledge needed to meet current and future demand.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Professional services have been procured to support the development of the Strategic Workforce Plan.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There may be workforce implications associated with this paper. The Strategic Workforce Plan will make recommendations for ensuring that Forensic Services maintains a sustainable workforce in the future. Any personnel implications will be considered further as this work progresses.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

8. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

9. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

10. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 10.1 There may be community implications associated with this paper, given the need for Forensic Services to ensure it maintains a workforce that is responsive to community demands.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no specific equalities implications associated with this paper.

12. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to discuss the update on the Strategic Workforce Plan.