



**Forensic Services Committee**

**07 May 2026**

**Item 10:** Staff Survey Action Plan

**Appendix:** A - Staff Survey Action Plan and B – At Our Best

**Purpose**

To present the Forensic Services Staff Survey Action Plan and approach to Incusivity to the Forensic Services Committee and outline progress made and, highlight next steps.

**Recommendation  
For Discussion**

**Strategic Alignment**

Strategic alignment	SO1
Risk alignment	Forensic Services strategic and operational risks.
Prior governance	Forensic Services People Board – Standing agenda item. Monthly JNCC Sub-Group updates.
Stakeholder engagement	External/Internal engagement - Your Voice Matters Survey. Staff engagement through Staff Survey Working Group.

**Implications**

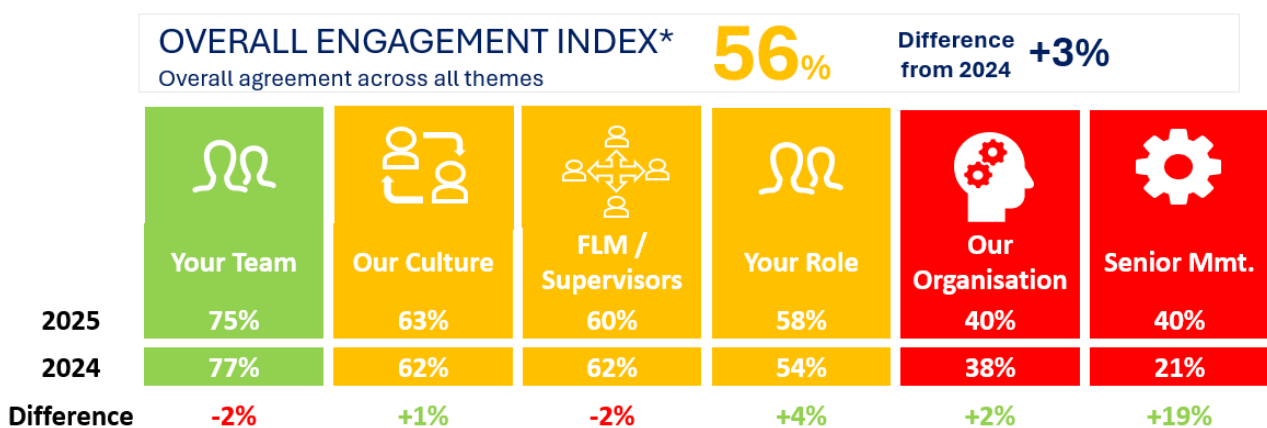
Community		Data & Privacy		Environmental	
Equalities & Human Rights	✓	Financial		Health, Safety & Wellbeing	✓
Legal		Workforce	✓		

# Report Detail

## 1.1 Background

1.2 The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland (PSoS) launched a 'Your Voice Matters' survey in August 2024 and, repeated the survey in August 2025. Both surveys reported in December of each year.

1.3 The 2025 online survey was completed by 68% of FS staff. The table below highlights the broad themes of the survey, alongside the differentials recorded across the 2024 and 2025 survey results.



1.4 In response to the survey, the Director of Forensic Services commissioned a Staff Survey Working Group (SSWG) to review the results and, put measures in place to seek continuous improvement across all areas.

1.5 INvolve identified the following top three priorities that would cause the largest impact:

- Develop and implement clear, measurable objectives for senior leaders regarding DEI initiatives.
- Develop clear, documented career progression pathways accessible to all employees.
- Offer targeted training and professional development opportunities.

1.6 Appendix B – 'At Our Best', *Creating the conditions in which forensic science – and the people within it – can excel*, highlights how Forensic Services will seek to strengthen diversity and inclusion as a central part of how the organisation operates, develops and delivers.

**1.7 Further detail**

**1.8** The SSWG was formed, and first met in March 2025. The group consisted of circa 40 members of FS staff located across a wide range of departments and work locations.

**1.9** Following initial discussions and assessment of the survey information, the following areas were identified for further consideration via dedicated focus groups:

- Culture
- Leadership Improvement
- Inclusivity and Belonging
- Fairness of Opportunity
- Workplace Environment

**1.10** Following further consideration, an additional focus group will be convened in Q1 2026/27. This focus group will analyse, assess and make recommendations associated with:

- Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation.

**1.11** The purpose of the SSWG is to:

- Provide a staff forum for open and transparent discussion
- Support detailed engagement on key areas of focus
- Identify opportunities for continuous improvement
- Work collectively on delivering outcomes
- Report progress through FS People Board, JNCC Sub-Group and Forensic Services Committee

**1.12** Four of the six focus groups are led by staff operating in a non-managerial role. The staff members leading on the groups are supported and offered opportunities for coaching and mentoring throughout the work of their group.

**1.13 Staff Survey Working Group Action Plan**

**1.14** The SSWG and the supporting Focus Groups have sought to develop an Action Plan that is realistic, deliverable and delivers against SSWG staff

inputs. The Action Plan continues to evolve as staff become more active in their personal involvement.

**1.15** Appendix A provides an overview of the current Staff Survey Working Group Action Plan.

**1.16 Next steps**

**1.17** The SSWG will continue to work collaboratively across all Forensic Services work locations and, with all staff groups to promote proactive staff engagement, involvement and participation.

**1.18** The SSWG will progress the priority areas of work identified within the Action Plan (Appendix A)

**1.19 Forensic Services approach to Inclusivity**

**1.20** Alongside the work of the SSWG, Forensic Services has been developing our approach to improving inclusivity across the service. This work has been based on the feedback from staff in the last two surveys and also some specific activity performed by 'INvolve' who undertook both a survey and held focus groups with staff across the organisation.

**1.21** Our commitments are set out in Appendix B - At Our Best – Our approach to creating the conditions *in which forensic science – and the people who deliver it – can excel.*

**1.22** Forensic Services in Scotland will take a deliberate and sustained approach to strengthening diversity and inclusion as a core condition of scientific excellence, operational effectiveness and public confidence.

**1.23** This document sets out a commitment to action. It recognises that while forensic science in Scotland delivers high-quality outcomes, there is more to be done to ensure that the workforce reflects the diversity of the communities it serves, and that all individuals are consistently supported to perform at their best.

**1.24** It also acknowledges that diversity and inclusion are not separate from performance. A more diverse workforce strengthens capability, brings broader perspectives to complex scientific interpretation and enhances

resilience. An inclusive environment ensures that this diversity is realised in practice—enabling individuals to contribute fully, challenge constructively and sustain high performance over time.

**1.25** KPI's and actions associated with the delivery of the plan will be included within the new People Plan for Forensic Services alongside the actions from the Staff Survey Working Group. This is a priority area defined within the updated Strategic Business Plan presented today.

**1.26 Recommendation**

It is recommended the Forensic Services Committee note and discuss the content of this paper, the action plan attached in Appendix A and the approach to Inclusivity set out in Appendix B.

## 2 Strategic alignment detail

### 2.1 Strategic alignment to Forensic Services Strategy and other key enabling strategies

Strategic alignment	SO1: Our people are empowered to provide excellent forensic services in a positive working environment SO2: We are sustainable, adaptable, and resilient to future challenges
---------------------	--

### 2.2 Alignment to risk register and risk appetite

Risk alignment	Forensic Services Strategic and Operational Risks
----------------	---

### 2.3 Prior governance

Prior governance	Forensic Services People Board – Standing agenda item. Monthly JNCC Sub-Group updates.
------------------	---

### 2.4 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement	External/Internal engagement - Your Voice Matters Survey and Involve Survey. Staff engagement through Staff Survey Working Group.
------------------------	--

### 3 Implications detail

Community		Data & Privacy		Environmental	
Equalities & Human Rights	✓	Financial		Health, Safety & Wellbeing	✓
Legal		Workforce	✓		

**Appendix A**

**STAFF SURVEY WORKING GROUP**

**ACTION PLAN 2026 / 2027**

<b>SSWG No:</b>	<b>Action Identified</b>	<b>Focus Group / Owner</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>Overarching Actions</b>					
<b>SSWG – Org 1</b>	<b>SPA FS Staff Survey Working Group (SSWG) to regularly review staff survey results and prioritise activities relating to continuous improvement</b>	<b>SSWG</b>	<b>Iterative / Ongoing</b>		<b>14/04/26</b> <b>SSWG meets monthly and monitors progress against agreed actions</b>
<b>SSWG – Org 2</b>	<b>Create service wide communication plan to promote organisational awareness and ensure visibility of SSWG activities</b>	<b>SSWG</b>	<b>Iterative / Ongoing</b>		<b>14/04/26</b> <b>Draft Communications Plan produced and under review</b>
<b>SSWG – Org 3</b>	<b>Create an environment where the SSWG remains open for new staff volunteers to become</b>	<b>SSWG</b>	<b>Iterative / Ongoing</b>		<b>14/04/26</b> <b>Inclusive approach taken and regular communication issued,</b>

**OFFICIAL**

	<b>involved as workstreams progress.</b>				<b>formal and informal, to encourage staff involvement</b>
<b>SSWG - Org 4</b>	<b>Establish a dedicated focus group to analyse 'bullying, harassment and victimisation' results from 2024 and 2025 surveys.</b>	<b>SSWG</b>	<b>30 April 2026</b>		<b>14/04/26 Director email issued end March 2026. Follow up communications under development in order to seek volunteers and establish the group.</b>
<b>Focus Group Actions</b>					
<b>SSWG - FG - 1</b>	<b>Introduce 'lunchtime learning' events to increase staff experiences relative to inclusivity</b>	<b>Inclusivity and belonging</b>	<b>May 2026</b>		<b>14/04/26 Staff volunteers identified to participate in lunchtime learning events – subject matter under development however examples include: diabetes, grief, neurodiversity and hearing impediments.</b>
<b>SSWG - FG - 2</b>	<b>Produce dedicated annual calendar of known events in line with the Policing Together Inclusion Group.</b>	<b>Inclusivity and belonging</b>	<b>May 2026</b>		<b>14/04/26 Paper produced, events identified and roll out programme being devised</b>

**OFFICIAL**

<b>SSWG – FG - 3</b>	<b>Introduce a framework to support a reverse mentoring programme for managers.</b>	<b>Leadership Improvement</b>	<b>June 2026</b>	<b>14/04/26</b> <b>Two pilot reverse mentoring sessions have been undertaken in March and April 2026 to inform the production of the framework.</b>
<b>SSWG – FG 4</b>	<b>Review the application of the MyCareer / One-to-One within Forensic Services.</b>	<b>Leadership Improvement</b>	<b>Aug 2026</b>	<b>14/04/26</b> <b>Identified through the Leadership Improvement working group</b>
<b>SSWG – FG 5</b>	<b>Review, understand and communicate process of managing Estate issues across SPA FS</b>	<b>Workplace Environment</b>	<b>May 2026</b>	<b>14/04/26</b> <b>Discussions held with Estates lead and process of improvement under assessment</b>
<b>SSWG – FG 6</b>	<b>Raise awareness relative to SPA FS recruitment processes, the format and, how they are applied across the organisation</b>	<b>Fairness of Opportunity</b>	<b>June 2026</b>	<b>14/04/26</b> <b>HR input delivered to Fairness of Opportunity Working Group to promote joint understanding of process prior to making further recommendations</b>

## Appendix B



### At Our Best

*Creating the conditions in which forensic science — and the people who deliver it — can excel*

#### Foreword

Forensic Services in Scotland will strengthen diversity and inclusion as a central part of how we operate, develop and deliver. This is a clear and sustained commitment: to build a forensic workforce that is more representative of the society it serves, and to create an environment in which every individual can contribute fully and perform at their best.

Diversity and inclusion are not separate from scientific excellence—they are fundamental to it. A workforce that brings together different perspectives, experiences and ways of thinking strengthens decision-making, improves the quality of scientific interpretation and enhances resilience. An inclusive environment ensures that this diversity is realised in practice, enabling individuals to contribute with confidence and consistency.

This is a commitment to action. It reflects both the need to address where diversity remains limited and where inclusion is experienced unevenly, and the opportunity to build a stronger, more capable forensic service for the future.

#### 1. A clear commitment to diversity and inclusion

Forensic Services in Scotland will take a deliberate and sustained approach to improving diversity and inclusion across the workforce.

This includes increasing representation, particularly where it does not currently reflect the communities served, and ensuring that inclusion is experienced consistently across all areas of the service. These two elements—diversity and inclusion—will be progressed together. Increasing diversity without improving the environment in which people work will not deliver the intended outcomes. Equally, focusing on inclusion without addressing representation will limit the breadth of perspectives and experiences within the workforce.

The direction is therefore clear: to build a more diverse workforce and to ensure that every individual within it is supported to perform at their best.

This aligns with the wider equality outcomes set across policing in Scotland, including a focus on representation, colleague voice and inclusive leadership, and translates those priorities into the forensic context.

## **2. Strengthening inclusion as a condition for excellence**

Inclusion will be strengthened as a core condition of forensic performance.

This means creating an environment in which individuals are treated fairly, supported consistently and able to contribute fully. It means ensuring that people have confidence in how decisions are made, how opportunities are accessed, and how they are supported in their roles.

In practical terms, this will be reflected in how work is designed and delivered. Laboratory environments, operational practices and established ways of working will be reviewed to ensure they support, rather than limit, inclusion. This includes consideration of accessibility, flexibility and the consistency of support provided to individuals with different needs.

It also means strengthening psychological safety. Forensic science relies on the ability to question, challenge and learn. An inclusive environment will support individuals to do this with confidence, knowing that their contribution is valued and that they will be treated fairly.

Leadership will play a defining role. Inclusive leadership will be strengthened across forensic services, ensuring that leaders consistently create the conditions in which their teams can perform.

## **3. Increasing diversity across the forensic workforce**

Forensic Services will take targeted action to increase diversity across the workforce.

This includes broadening access to forensic careers, recognising that current entry pathways may limit the diversity of applicants. New and more flexible routes into forensic roles will be further developed, enabling individuals from a wider range of backgrounds to enter the profession. This will include a focus on geographic diversity across Scotland, ensuring that opportunities are accessible beyond traditional centres.

Representation will also be addressed across all levels of the organisation. This includes improving diversity not only at entry level, but also within specialist roles, technical leadership and senior positions. Achieving this requires a sustained focus on progression, development and retention.

The aim is clear: to build a workforce that better reflects the diversity of Scotland's population, while maintaining the highest standards of scientific capability.

## **4. Removing barriers to inclusion and progression**

Improving diversity and inclusion requires a clear focus on the barriers that limit participation and progression.

Forensic Services will take a structured approach to identifying and addressing these barriers.

Access barriers will be reduced by increasing visibility of forensic careers, widening entry routes and ensuring that recruitment processes are fair, transparent and consistent.

Workplace barriers will be addressed by strengthening approaches to flexibility, improving the consistency and timeliness of reasonable adjustments, and ensuring that laboratory and operational environments support individuals with a range of needs and circumstances.

Progression barriers will be addressed by improving transparency and consistency in development and advancement. Access to specialist experience, leadership opportunities and career pathways will be strengthened to ensure that progression is based on capability and supported fairly.

These actions will ensure that individuals are not prevented from performing or progressing due to avoidable structural or cultural barriers.

## **5. Building trust, confidence and colleague voice**

An inclusive environment depends on trust.

Forensic Services will strengthen trust by ensuring that individuals feel confident to share their experiences, raise concerns and access support. This includes improving how information is gathered and used to understand workforce experience, and ensuring that this insight leads to meaningful action.

Colleague voice will be strengthened as part of this approach. Regular engagement, listening and feedback will be used to inform continuous improvement, ensuring that inclusion is shaped by the lived experience of the workforce.

Confidence in fairness and consistency will be reinforced through clear processes, transparent decision-making and visible leadership commitment.

## **6. Delivering sustained improvement**

Improvement in diversity and inclusion will be delivered through a structured and sustained programme of activity.

In the short term, the focus will be on strengthening governance, improving insight into workforce experience and addressing immediate barriers to inclusion and performance.

In the medium term, new entry pathways will be implemented, leadership capability will be strengthened, and systems for recruitment, development and progression will be refined to ensure greater consistency and fairness.

In the longer term, the focus will be on outcomes. This includes increased diversity across the workforce, improved colleague experience, and clear evidence that inclusion is supporting performance, quality and resilience.

Progress will be monitored and reviewed, ensuring that improvement is continuous and sustained.

## **7. What will be different**

The impact of this work will be tangible.

The forensic workforce in Scotland will become more diverse, reflecting a broader range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences.

Individuals will experience a more inclusive working environment—one in which they are supported, treated fairly and able to contribute fully. Barriers to participation and progression will be reduced, and opportunities will be more accessible.

Leaders will operate with greater consistency and confidence in inclusive practice, supporting high performance across their teams.

As a result, Forensic Services will be stronger, more resilient and better equipped to meet the demands of the future.

## **9. In Summary**

Over the next three years, Forensic Services will:

- Increase workforce diversity by broadening access to forensic careers and strengthening representation across all levels
- Embed inclusion in the working environment, ensuring individuals are supported, treated fairly and able to contribute fully
- Strengthen fairness in progression, with transparent access to development, specialist experience and leadership pathways
- Build inclusive leadership capability, ensuring leaders consistently enable high-performing teams
- Establish strong governance and accountability, with clear measures, reporting and continuous improvement

## **10. Delivery Approach**

Delivery will be phased to ensure sustained and measurable progress:

- 0–6 months (Foundations): establish governance, baseline insight and address immediate barriers to inclusion and performance
- 6–18 months (Embedding): implement new entry pathways, strengthen leadership capability and improve recruitment and progression systems
- 18–36 months (Outcomes): deliver measurable improvements in diversity, colleague experience and workforce resilience



Five workstreams will drive delivery: workforce diversity, inclusive environment, fair progression, leadership and culture, and governance and insight.



## 11. Measures of Success

Progress will be tracked through:

- workforce representation and recruitment outcomes
- progression and promotion data
- retention and turnover trends
- colleague experience and inclusion measures such as the staff survey leadership capability and behavioural indicators

## **12. Conclusion**

Forensic Services in Scotland will move forward with a clear commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This is a commitment to building a workforce that reflects the society it serves, and to create an environment in which every individual can perform at their best. It is also a commitment to strengthening the quality, integrity and impact of forensic science.

By embedding diversity and inclusion at the heart of how the service operates, forensic services will not only improve workforce experience, but also enhance their contribution to justice in Scotland.

This will in turn ensure that our people are empowered to provide excellent forensic services in a positive working environment.

**Fiona Douglas**

**Director of Forensic Services**

**April 2026**