

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Forensic Services Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>24 October 2022</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>N/A</b>

**PURPOSE**

To present Forensic Services Performance Report, Q2 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 Q2 2022/23.
- 1.2 This report captures activity conducted 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 components:
  - Progress updates on Forensic Service commitments laid out in the annual business plan;
  - Qualitative performance data.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 All business areas have seen a reduction in demand during Q2 in comparison with the previous quarter. A number of initiatives in Police Scotland continue to compete for available capacity, particularly in the Volume Crime Unit. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of days to turnaround this service, however overall the average of the caseload has reduced from 0.8 months to 0.7 months.
- 2.2 Recruitment and process improvement in Drugs has stabilised the capacity of the unit and has reduced the current caseload significantly - from 1,967 last quarter to 1,253 in Q2. This is a step improvement from a year ago when the caseload stood at around 3,300 and timeliness continues to improve.

Fingerprints has seen caseload fall by around a third compared with last year and Chemistry & Documents is also much improved position led by development activities over the past few months.

Forensic Services continue to focus on reducing the number of open cases with all business areas having reduced their current workload, with the exception of Biology. Due to maternity leave and a pause on required backfill, Biology is currently carrying 30% less scientists in the Scottish Crime Campus unit. Targeted improvements are

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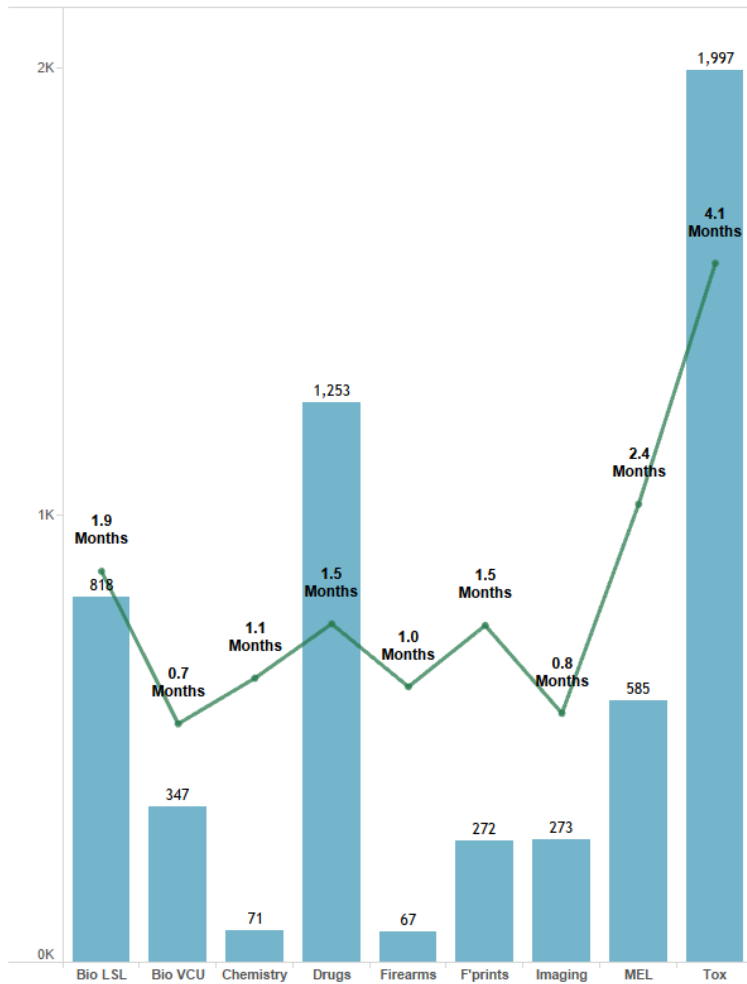
planned and monitored to ensure that the caseload in this area does not increase significantly.

Toxicology continues to be supported by Biology, Chemistry, Drugs and Business Support to increase staff resilience in this area.

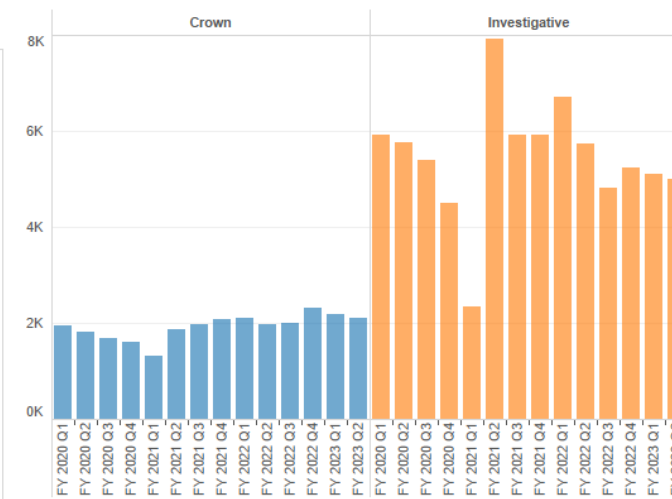
- 2.3 The impact of COVID-19 in Q2 has reduced and the absence rate in Forensic Services is on par with SPA and Police Scotland but continues to trend below the level this time last year.
- 2.7 Demand for toxicology services continues to be an area of concern but the backlog has reduced. A new outsourcing contract has been implemented and performance data is reported into the SPA Forensic Toxicology Oversight Group. A substantial amount of work has been completed to determine options for a sustainable future model for this service accounting for the current and forecast future demand levels.

### **3.1 Forensic Services – Overall position**

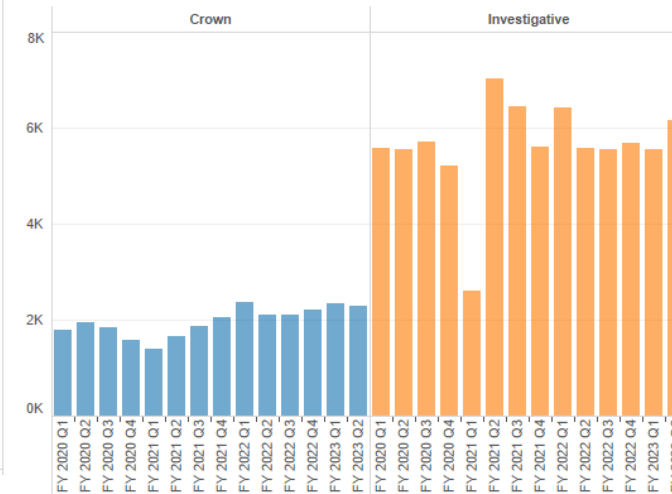
**Forensic Services - Laboratory Casework**  
Open Cases - end Q2 22-23 with average age



**Casework Demand 2019-20 onwards**



**Casework Output 2019-20 onwards**

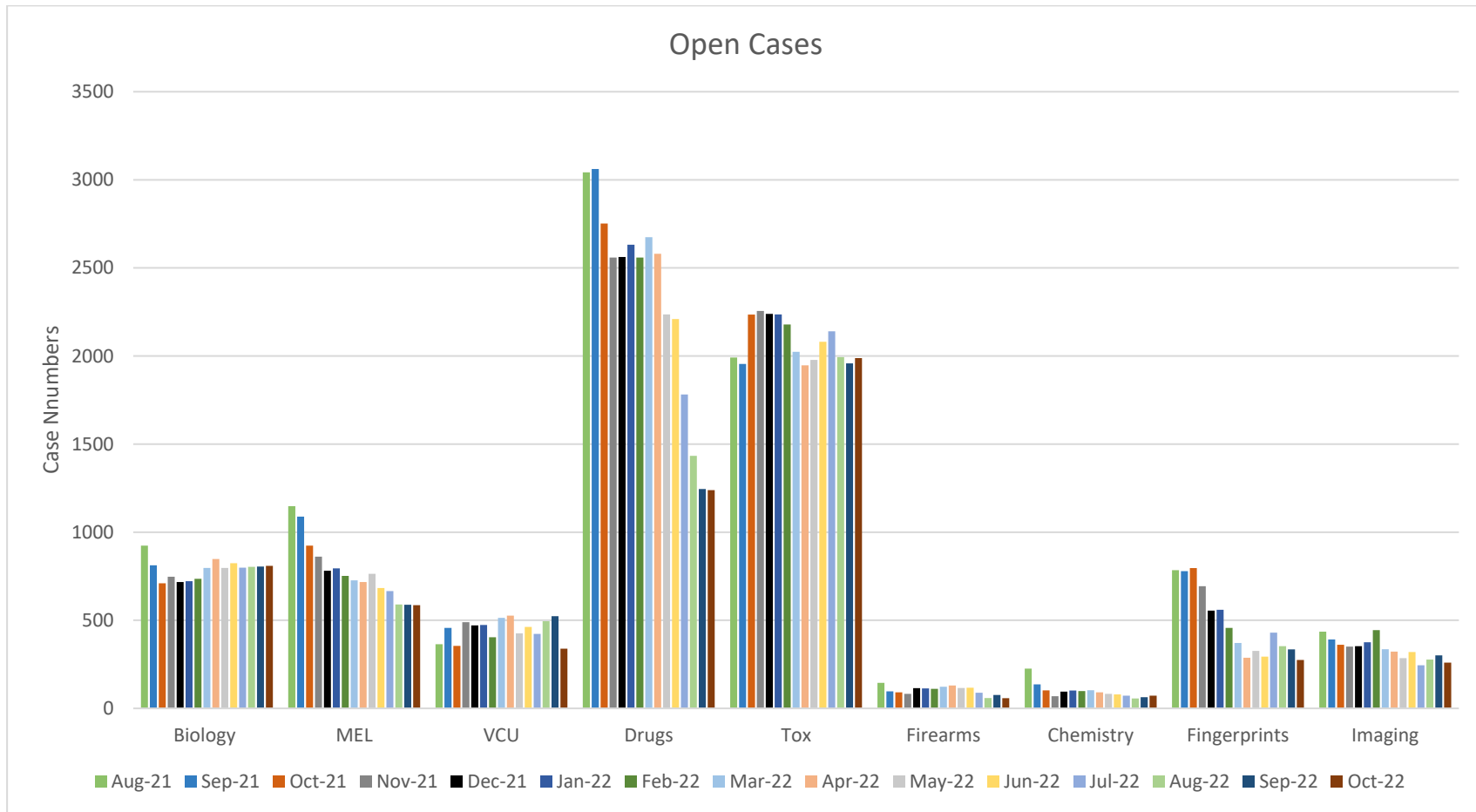


The open casework chart shows the number of open cases within each area of Forensic Services – this is represented by the blue bar in the chart. The average age of the cases within this caseload is shown by the green line.

On the right the charts show the overall casework demand and output relating to COPFS (Crown) and Police Scotland (Investigative) this data shows the trend each quarter over the previous two years.

The average age of the caseload has reduced across all areas of Forensic Services since the previous quarter with the exception of a slight increase in Fingerprints. Firearms shows a significant improvement of 1.7 months.

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

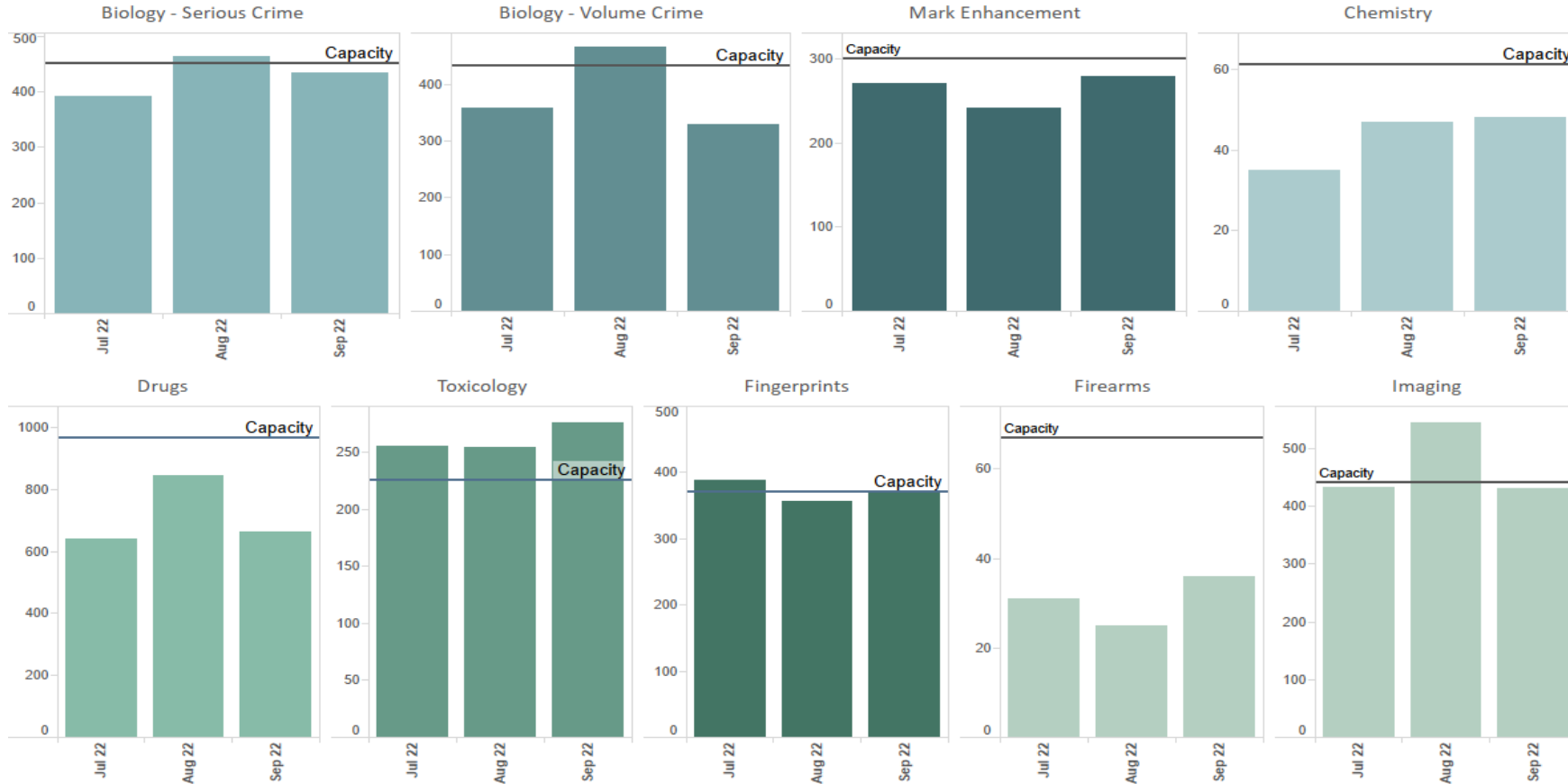


This chart shows the trend in the size of the caseload month on month in each area of Forensic Services for the previous 14 months. Significant reductions in caseload can be seen in MEL, Drugs and Fingerprints in particular. Toxicology caseload will reduce significantly over the period between now and end February 2023 due to the improvement plan activities in this area.

### 3.3 Forensic Services – Laboratory capacity

#### Forensic Services - Laboratory Capacity

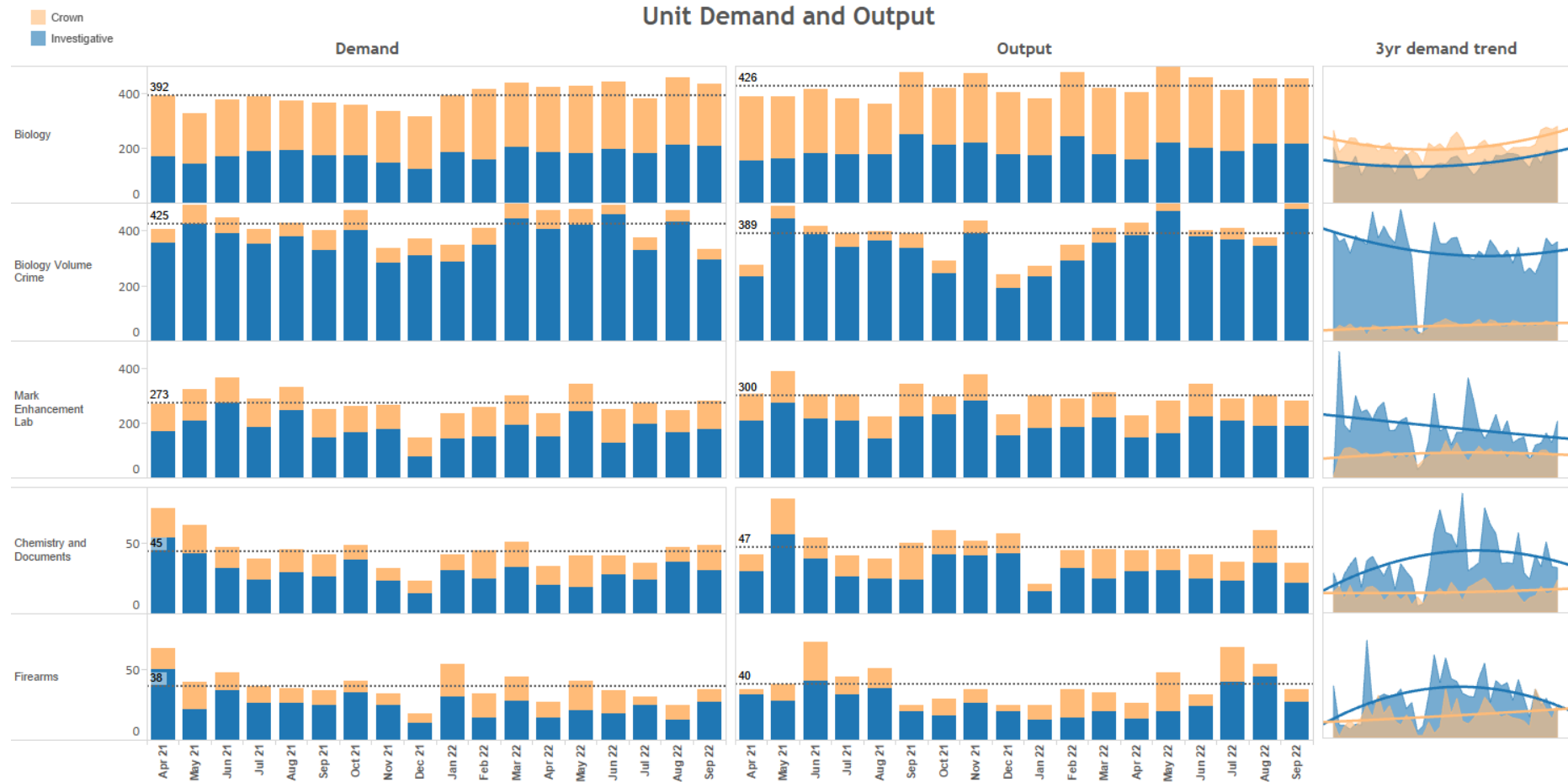
Charts illustrate new requests for casework opened per month



Forensic Services Committee  
Business Performance Q2 Report Cover  
October 2022

These charts show the demand for casework during Q2 across the different areas within Forensic Services. The estimated capacity of each unit is shown by the blue line. This demonstrates that with the exception of Toxicology all areas of the organisation have sufficient capacity to meet current levels of demand which allows for improvement in the age of the caseload.

### 3.4 Forensic Services – Unit demand and output

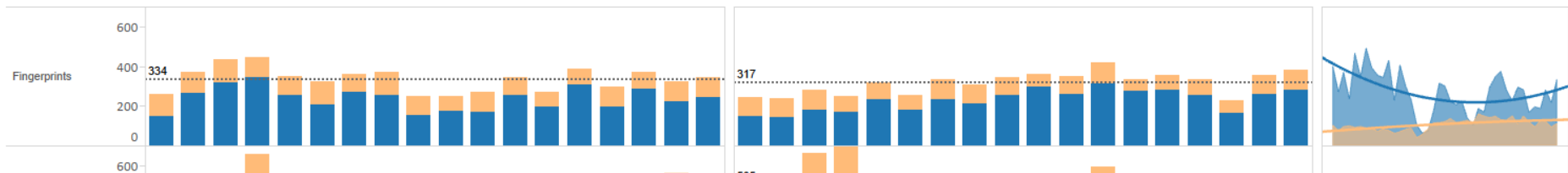






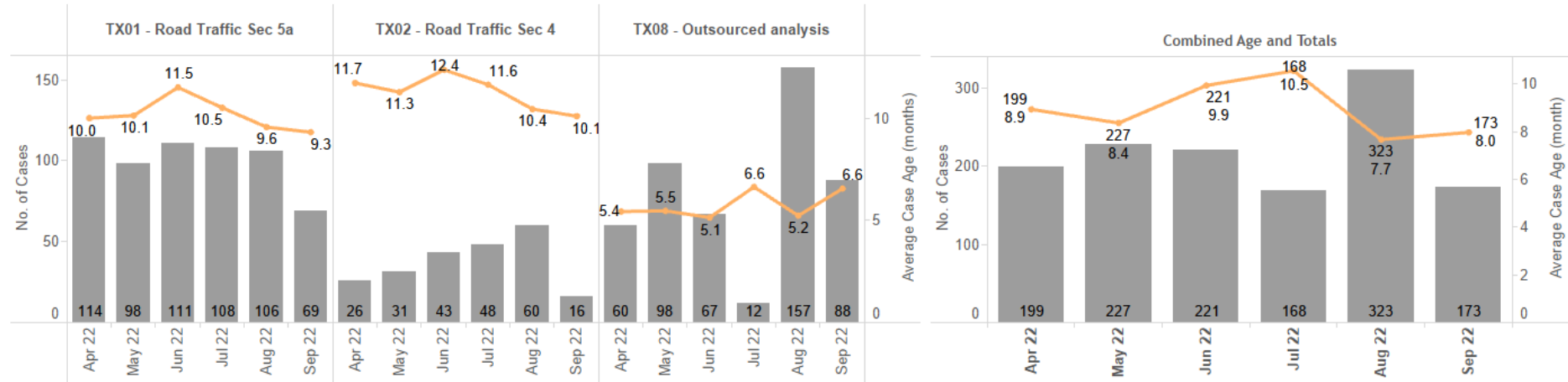
These charts show the demand for each area split between COPFS (Crown) and Police Scotland (Investigative) since April 2021. In addition the three year demand trend is shown in the charts on the right. This shows an overall increasing demand for biology services in comparison with Mark Enhancement. It would be expected that improving triage of cases will reduce demand for Mark Enhancement due to more effective decision making on the analysis required in particular cases.

Imaging data is not available for the full three year period. The demand for drugs casework over the three year period is significantly reduced and this is allowing for improvement in the timeliness of reporting analysis in this area. Toxicology demand as previously reported continues to significantly increase year on year, with further increases expected as the roll out of roadside testing continues.



### 3.5 Forensic Services – Toxicology update

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



The backlog in Toxicology has been on a downward trajectory since Nov 2021 but has seen a slight increase in June 2022, as a result of casework challenges.

As a result of these casework challenges, there has been an increase in the average age of in-house reported Section 5A casework, peaking in Jun, as illustrated above. It is anticipated that the average age of these reported cases will decrease beyond Sep 22.

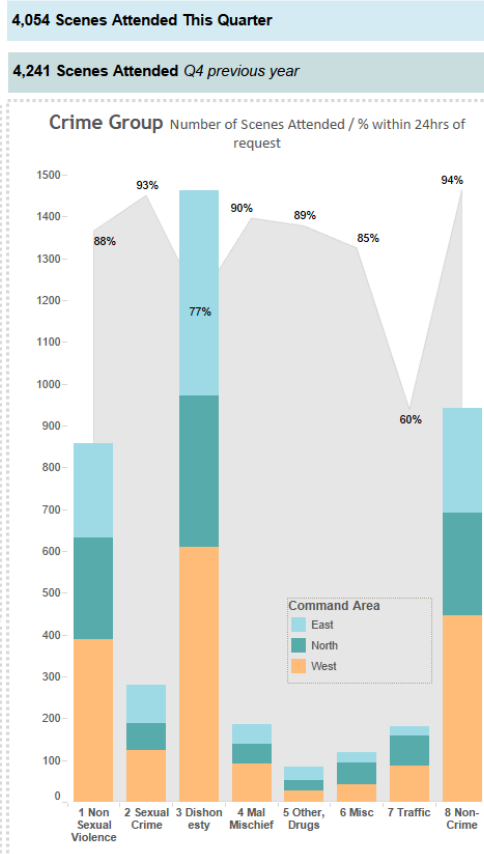
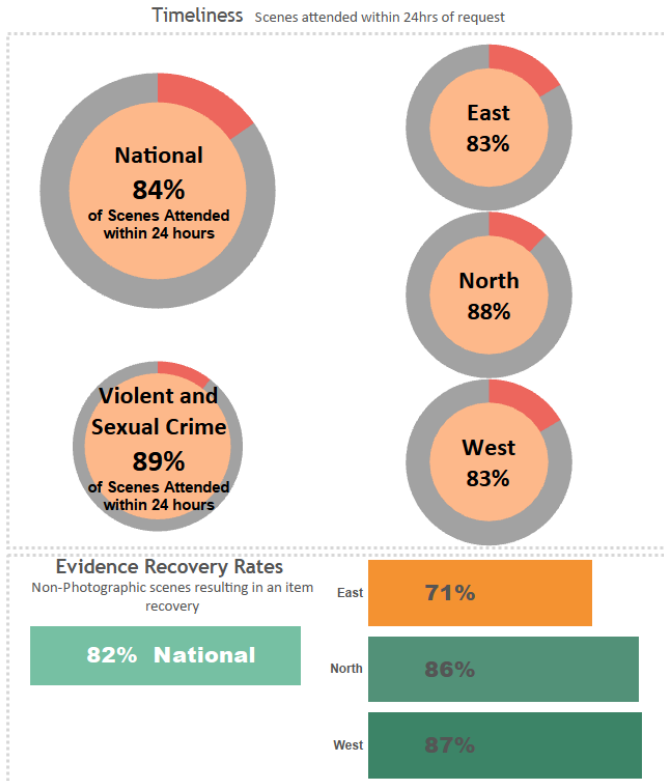
A new outsourcing contract has been implemented during Sep 22, which will allow Section 4 and Section 5A cases to be outsourced to meet customer demand.

Detailed performance information is provided to the Forensic Toxicology Oversight Group on a regular basis.

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

There has been a slight reduction in the timeliness for the National, East, North and West targets compared with the previous Q1 data. There has been a 2% increase in Violent and Sexual crime attendance. There were approx. 200 fewer scenes attended compared to Q1 and the same time last year. There was an increase in samples (8%) recovered from the West scenes attended compared to last Q1.

Forensic Services - Scene Examination Unit  
Quarterly Performance Q2 22-23



3.7 Forensic Services – Quality Management System & Accreditation

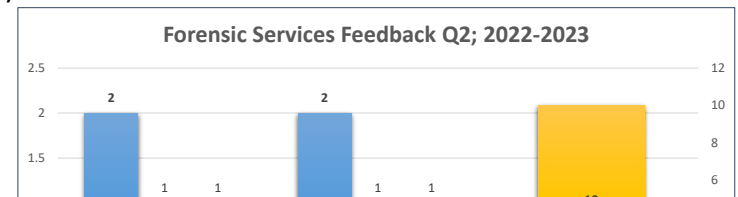
Accreditation Summary

- The 2021 UKAS accreditation assessment programme was finally completed on Wed 10 Aug 2022 with renewal of our UKAS accreditation for another 4 years. The 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of accreditation in Forensic Services.
- The annual UKAS account management meeting was held on 30 Aug 2022. This was an opportunity to discuss and plan the Business Performance Q2 Report for 2022 for the upcoming UKAS assessment programme.

- 2022 UKAS Surveillance assessments:
  - 11-13 Oct 2022: Aberdeen
  - 24-28 Oct 2022: Dundee (incl. Drugs)

Complaints and Feedback

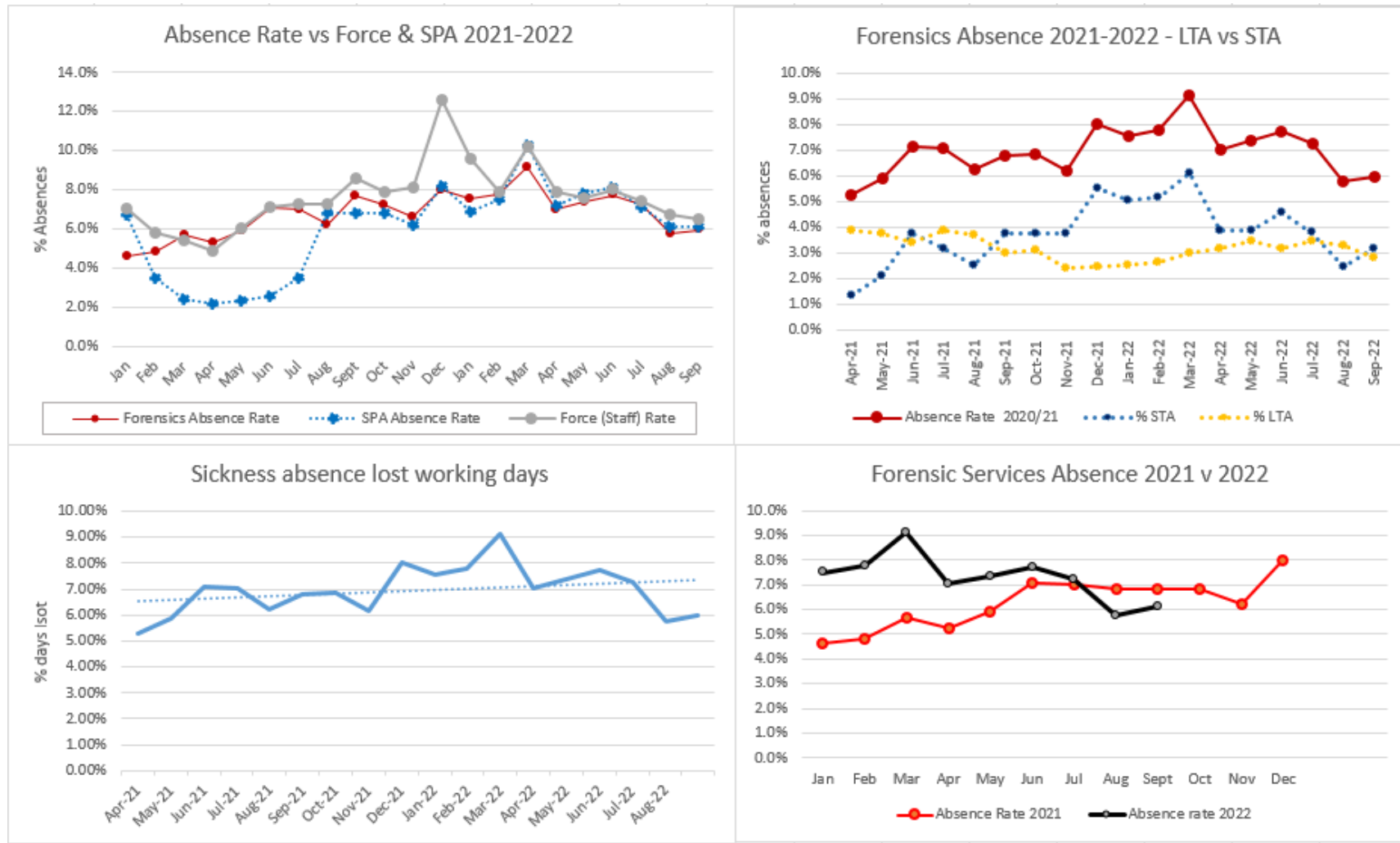
- Complaints and both positive and negative feedback are recorded in compliance with the ISO 17025 Standard.
- During this reporting period, none were reportable to the SPA Complaints & Conduct Committee, with all relating to service delivery to COPFS or PSoS.

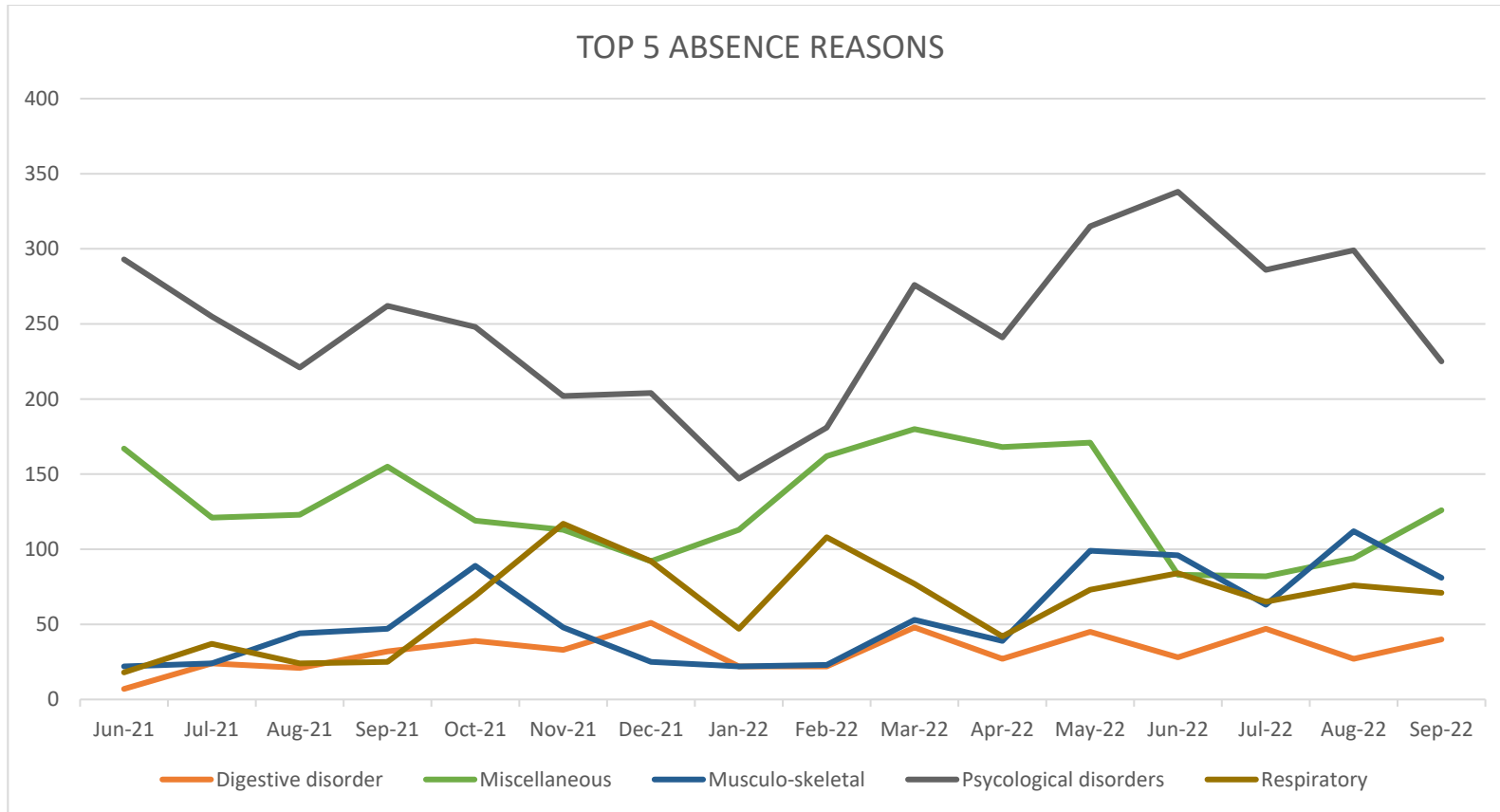


#### **Quality Improvement Plan**

- This piece of work concluded at the end of Sep 2022. Open and overdue Critical NCs, Complaints and Negative & Positive feedback received by FS was reported weekly to the FS SMT, to provide oversight and focus on key Management System areas.

**4.0 Forensic Services – Absence data** A separate report and the next steps will be managed through the FS Performance & Planning Board.







**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications in this report.

**4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no personnel implications associated with this paper.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

**6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no reputational implications associated with this paper.

**7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no social implications associated with this paper.

**8. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

There are no community impact implications associated with this paper.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

**10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to discuss the information in this report.