

Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB November 2024

Introduction

This Report looks at activities across the organisation from mid-September to November. It also incorporates the Quarter 2 Finance, Performance and Workforce Data reports.

Items highlighted include:

- An overview of work undertaken by the Parliamentary Business Directorate
- The Presiding Officer's visit to Glasgow as part of the 25th Anniversary Regional Programme of Community Engagement
- Recent engagements undertaken by the International Relations Office

David McGill

Clerk/Chief Executive

Parliamentary Business Directorate

Chamber Office

Non-Government Bills Unit

Work continues towards the introduction of the remaining bills by the deadline of June 2025. By early December all of these bills will be at the bill drafting stage, with all draft proposal and final proposal stages complete. A number of these bills will be introduced by early in the New Year. In addition, four bills are currently being considered at Stage 1, and a fifth bill is at Stage 3.

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

The Committee has concluded consideration of the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill. Amendments at Stage 2 included governance arrangements for the Electoral Management Board which are of relevance to the SPCB. The amendments relating to the Electoral Management Board were agreed to without debate (other than the Minister's explanation of them) or division.

Official Report: new Gaelic correction process

Simultaneous interpretation is a challenging task, and live parliamentary business is a high-pressure environment. In light of these challenges, we are piloting a new process for ensuring that contributions in Parliament made in Gaelic are accurately represented in English in the *Official Report*.

When Gaelic is used in meetings of the Parliament and committee meetings, the Official Report incorporates the Gaelic text before the report of the English interpretation. This approach accurately records what was heard and understood in the meeting, but it means that any mistakes in the interpretation are reproduced in the report.

A new process follows practices used by other Parliaments and allows for the correction of errors through the use of the procedure line "*Interpretation should read:*" followed by a corrected version of the English in square brackets.

The process to identify and correct such errors will be a collaboration with Public Engagement Services Office staff and is based on existing practices. As with other corrections suggested post-publication, OR staff will retain final editorial control.

The process will initially be used during the Scottish Languages Bill process, and staff in the OR will evaluate its use based on feedback from within their teams and stakeholders as appropriate. If no adverse effects are identified, the approach will be adopted as a working practice for the future.

Scrutiny

Criminal Justice Committee

During this period, the Committee completed stages 1 and 2 of the Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill and is now considering its approach to the Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Bill. The Committee has also looked at a series of SSIs and other initiatives aimed at reducing the prison population, including early release schemes. The Committee is also in the middle of its pre-budget scrutiny.

The Committee continues to be innovative in its practices and is now leading along with two other committees (Health and Social Justice) on a People's Panel facilitated by PACT looking at asking the general public whether Scotland is on the right track to reducing deaths from drug misuse.

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

During this period, the Committee has completed its stage 1 scrutiny of the Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill and is due to publish its report shortly. This will take into account the findings of the recent Finance Committee's report on the commissioner landscape. The Committee has also been looking into the reasons for the delay in the Human Rights (Scotland) Bill and is also in the middle of its pre-budget scrutiny.

The Committee successfully managed a high-profile session with the Cabinet Secretary on the Human Rights (Scotland) Bill with the Convener convening that part of the meeting remotely whilst on a visit to Taiwan. Although successfully delivered by the team, this was not without risk and took substantial effort to pull off.

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Since September, the Committee has published three reports: pre-budget scrutiny (the focus being on the SG's culture spend); the impact of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement on trade in goods between the UK and EU (to feed into the 2026 review of the TCA); and the review of the National Outcomes and Indicators (as they relate to the SG's international work). Four of the members visited Brussels on 4 November to promote the TCA report with EU officials and parliamentarians.

The Committee also held a one-off session on the SG's Climate Justice Fund in the run up to COP29 and wrote to the Scottish Government with a summary of the issues raised with us.

The Committee has now begun work on part two of the TCA inquiry, the focus now moving onto services (in terms of mutual recognition of professional qualifications and labour mobility) and youth mobility (including Erasmus+ and other relevant schemes).

Education, Children and Young People Committee

In late September, the Committee held a successful Committee Debate in the Chamber on its Additional Support for Learning inquiry. The inquiry and its findings continue to be regularly highlighted in the media.

The Committee also began its Stage 1 scrutiny of the Education (Scotland) Bill, which will replace the current Scottish Qualifications Authority and move His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education from its current home in Education Scotland, to become a stand-alone body. The Committee is due to discuss, and hopefully agree, its report imminently, ahead of the Stage 1 deadline of 20 December.

This quarter, the Committee took evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, as part of its pre-budget scrutiny on college and university funding and subsequently wrote to the Cabinet Secretary to seek further clarification and highlight issues of concern.

Further follow up on the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment (also known as the Hayward Review) led to an interesting session in late October on the reform of the senior phase, with Professor Louise Hayward and members of the Independent Review Group.

The Committee also recently began its consideration of Liz Smith's Members' Bill, the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill, which seeks to provide all pupils in state and grant-aided schools the opportunity to experience at least four nights and five days of residential outdoor education during their school career.

Economy and Fair Work Committee

The Committee's priority has been evidence-taking to inform its pre-budget submission and finalising and publishing a report following the disability employment gap inquiry. Looking ahead it will shortly start evidence-gathering for its new inquiry.

Care was taken during the disability employment gap inquiry to ensure the voices of lived experience were brought to the table and clerks worked successfully with PACT to facilitate this. In the run up to report publication, clerks worked closely with Public Information colleagues to ensure that the report was available in accessible formats. Unfortunately, after publication and receipt of a complaint, it was discovered that the layout of our digital publications website was not ideal for screen readers. This is now being looked into as a matter of urgency.

The Committee also secured Chamber time to debate its two Just Transition inquiry reports.

The second Witness Diversity Programme, facilitated by the clerking team in collaboration with PACT, took place last month. Sixteen women participated in a programme that included panel sessions, role play and a meeting with the Presiding Officer. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Participants said they now feel more confident to submit evidence.

Finance and Public Administration Committee

The Committee published its report on [Scotland's Commissioner Landscape: A Strategic Approach](#) on 16 September. The report recommended that a dedicated committee be established to carry out a 'root and branch' review of the SPCB supported body landscape and that a moratorium on creating any new such bodies, or expanding the remits of existing bodies, be put in place while the review is undertaken. The Parliament debated the Report on 31 October and agreed with the three key recommendations, it also clarified that the moratorium would not apply to the two Bills with provisions creating new Commissioners already before Parliament, and that the review should be completed by the end of June 2025. The Committee has since written to the Parliamentary Bureau asking it to propose the creation of the new committee at the earliest opportunity given the timetable set for the review.

The Committee has completed its pre-budget 2025-26 scrutiny on [Managing Scotland's Finances: A Strategic Approach](#) and its [examination of the Scottish Government's statutory review of national outcomes](#). Reports will be published on pre-budget scrutiny on 7 November, and on national outcomes later in November. As part of its pre-budget scrutiny this year, the Committee held a fact-finding visit to Estonia to hear more about its public service reform initiatives, and particularly its digital transformation programme, with the learning gathered informing key recommendations for the Scottish Government.

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

During September/early October, the Committee undertook pre-budget scrutiny with a focus on the financial position of Integration Joint Boards as well as taking evidence on the Scottish Government's proposed National Outcomes as part of the statutory five-year review of the National Performance Framework. Reports on both of these subjects were subsequently published in October.

The Committee also took extensive further oral evidence on the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill and specifically the Scottish Government's proposed Stage 2 amendments to the Bill, in anticipation of formal Stage 2 proceedings taking place in late November/December. These were timetabled to commence on 26 November with an initial deadline for amendments of 20 November. However, subsequent correspondence from the Scottish Government has delayed the process to allow the Government to consider the views of stakeholders. The Scottish Government will work with the Committee and the Bureau to agree a revised timescale in the new year.

On 5 November, the Committee began taking oral evidence on the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill. The Committee has published details of its planned oral evidence programme on the Committee webpages.

The Committee was due to pause its scrutiny at the end of November to undertake formal Stage 2 proceedings on the National Care Service Bill before recommencing scrutiny of the Assisted Dying Bill in the New Year. With the announcement that the Stage 2 timetable for the National Care Service Bill has been further delayed, the Committee is considering how best to fill the short-term gap this has left in its work programme. However, the intention is that the timetable for scrutiny of the Assisted Dying Bill will remain unchanged.

Following additional feedback from stakeholders, the Committee plans to undertake further engagement with adults living with a terminal illness as part of its Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill, working in collaboration with organisations involved in providing frontline care and support.

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

The Committee began its work after the summer recess by concluding its evidence taking at Stage 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill. During the course of the Committee's consideration of its Stage 1 report, the Minister for Housing made a statement to Parliament setting out proposals to amend the approach to the rent cap from that set out in the Bill as introduced. In its report members expressed some disappointment in the timing of this announcement and noted its intention to return to scrutinise these proposals ahead of considering Stage 2 amendments.

The other key focus of the Committee's work in September and October was pre-budget scrutiny. This year the Committee focused its pre-budget scrutiny on the sustainability of local government budgets. The Committee published its letter on 5 November 2024. The Committee will be keen to return to the issues raised in the letter once the Scottish Government budget has been published. The Committee will be particularly keen to see what the implications of the UK Government budget will be for local government in Scotland. The Committee's budget letter also considered the proposals of the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee and recommended that funding should be made available to ensure that its recommendations on councillor pay are met.

The Committee is keen to undertake more effective scrutiny of the public bodies accountable to it. With that in mind, in September the Committee launched calls for views to inform its scrutiny of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and Scottish Housing Regulator. Further to that the Committee has agreed a programme of oral evidence in relation to both the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and Scottish Housing Regulator.

Finally, the Committee published its tracker report for this year. In that report the Committee expressed disappointment in the lack of progress made in relation to the Scottish Government's policies in relation to retrofitting and heat

in buildings as well as cladding remediation. The Committee will be following this up with Ministers in the next reporting period.

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

The Committee's pre-October recess work was dominated by the Climate Change Targets Bill, considered under an expedited timetable. Despite time pressures, the Committee was able to hear from an array of experts including the Climate Change Committee, a former UK select committee chair, and environmental stakeholders, to inform its Stage 1 report. During October recess, Committee members joined the Presiding Officer on a visit to Iceland, meeting the Althing Speaker and senior Parliamentarians, and taking part for the third year running in the Arctic Circle Assembly, where they gave a seminar on policy challenges around natural capital finance.

Public Audit Committee

During the reporting period, the Committee continued its extended scrutiny of the 2022/23 audit of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS), which found evidence of unacceptable use of public funds by senior officials at WICS. In September, the Committee took further oral evidence from WICS and the Scottish Government. Following this evidence session, the Committee wrote to the former Chief Executive of WICS and the Scottish Government to gather more information to inform its scrutiny.

In September, the Committee took evidence from Audit Scotland on its National Fraud Initiative (NFI) in Scotland 2024 report. The report highlighted that in 2022-23, fraud and error data matches worth an estimated £21.5 million was identified in Scotland, compared to £14.9 million in 2020-21. During the evidence session, the Committee raised concerns that some organisations in receipt of public money, such as universities and housing associations, are not mandated to participate in the NFI. It has therefore written to the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) to ask whether he considers there is scope to consider strengthening the legislation in this area.

At its first meeting back after October recess, the Committee took oral evidence from the Scottish Government and COSLA on the joint Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission report on Tackling digital exclusion. Following the evidence session, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government to seek further clarity on its governance arrangements for tackling digital exclusion and the processes it went through to agree and accept the recommendations in the report.

During November, the Committee will commence its scrutiny of the 2023/24 audit of the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts, which sets out key information about the Scottish Government's management of its budget, in addition to information on financial management, sustainability, governance and performance reporting. It will also take evidence from the AGS and the Accounts Commission on its joint report, Alcohol and drug services which

highlights that despite an increase in spending and better national leadership, Scotland's drug and alcohol deaths remain among the highest in Europe.

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

The Committee continued its scrutiny of the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill with detailed consideration of amendments to the Bill at Stage 2 being completed in September. On other Bill work, the Committee as a designated secondary committee, published its report on the Housing (Scotland) Bill, principally on the prevention of homelessness provisions.

During the reporting period, the Committee has considered the draft Winter Heating Assistance (Pension Age) (Scotland) Regulations 2024. There has been a lot of stakeholder and media interest on the policy approach. Prior to the Committee's consideration, a pensioner couple, supported by Govan Law Centre, lodged a judicial review against both the UK and Scottish Governments against the means testing of winter fuel payments.

Also, the Committee wrote to the Scottish Government regarding the Government's Review of National Outcomes. The letter focused specifically on the amended Reducing Poverty outcome and highlighted the information gathered from the Call for Views, as well as relevant work the Committee has undertaken in this area over the session.

Conveners Group

The Conveners Group held meetings with the First Minister and Minister for Parliamentary Business in September and November respectively. These meetings provided an opportunity for the Group to ask Scottish Ministers about the Legislative Programme and other parliamentary business issues affecting committees.

SPICe

On 24-25 October, SPICe hosted the annual conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Research and Information Network. Colleagues from the House of Commons, House of Lords, Houses of the Oireachtas, Northern Ireland Assembly, Senedd, States Assembly of Jersey and the Tynwald attended as usual and, this year, we had additional guests from POST and the London Assembly. There were thought-provoking keynote speeches from Nicola McEwan and Andy Wightman. Workshops focussed on AI; elections; diversity of evidence; how to win friends and influence people; scrutinising sensitive topics; and supporting scrutiny of cross-cutting issues. As usual it was an opportunity to share best practice and learn from each other; and to network with colleagues who really understand what we do.

On 19 September, SPICe hosted a webinar for academics on [How to engage with the Scottish Parliament](#). This is the first time SPICe has done this and it attracted 150 academics. The webinar is now available as a resource on the Scottish Parliament website.

People, Communications & Inclusion Directorate

25th Anniversary Regional Programme of Community Engagement

The third visit of the regional programme took place on Monday 30 September with the Presiding Officer and Glasgow regional and constituency Members. The Participation and Communities Team (PACT) developed events in collaboration with Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector and The Willowacre Trust. The Parliament Communications Office (PCO) supported the visits.

The visits are an opportunity for the Presiding Officer and Members to hear directly from local people about their reflections on the Parliament and their aspirations for its future. PACT is exploring ways of involving communities and is testing new and creative ways of doing this.

The day started at the Albany Centre with a Taiko Drumming workshop with Nemo Arts followed by a marketplace style event of stalls with questions and activities. A mix of people supported by local community groups, voluntary organisations, and social enterprises attended. They shared their views through activities such as an interactive timeline, and we heard about efforts to improve citizen engagement.

In the afternoon, the Presiding Officer and Members attended an interactive presentation at Barrowfield Community Centre in Shettleston. Run by the Willowacre Trust (part of the West of Scotland Housing Association). Tenants and volunteers presented their projects using visual displays with objects and community members attended. This was followed by an opportunity to hear views on the Parliament at 25 and what their priorities are for the future. PCO generated local media coverage with the Presiding Officer speaking to the Bauer network and coverage running on the likes of Clyde, Forth One and Northsound. PCO also captured still and video content for social media outputs.

The events were kindly supported by parliamentary staff volunteers, Claire Bennet, Jane Cooper and Michael Weir who generously gave their time and experience to support the day.

International Relations Office

In this period, the Presiding Officer hosted a number of diplomatic meetings in Holyrood including with the newly arrived Consul Generals from India and the United States.

Outward visits

Althingi and Arctic Circle Assembly

The Presiding Officer led a delegation consisting of Ben Macpherson MSP and Monica Lennon MSP to Iceland to visit the Althingi and attended the Arctic

Circle Assembly. Whilst at the Althingi they discussed Parliamentary business with the Speaker and members of the Althingi, as well as gender balance, security of members, the role of social media and renewable energy. The Arctic Circle Assembly is the largest annual international gathering on the Arctic, attended by more than 2,000 participants including Heads of State and Governments, Ministers, Members of Parliaments, officials, scientists, business leaders, activists, NGO's, academics and others from over 60 countries. The topics of focus included peace and security in the arctic, climate change and its effects on the Arctic region; the future of polar science diplomacy; the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the Arctic; Arctic Indigenous communities; sustainable energy; Arctic climatic changes; and collaborative research and education.

Nordic Council

Claire Baker MSP, Arianne Burgess MSP and Kenneth Gibson MSP attended the Nordic Council as observers. The Nordic Council is the official body for formal inter-parliamentary co-operation in the Nordic Region. Formed in 1952, it has 87 members from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The main aim of the Nordic Council is to make the Nordic Region one in which people want to live and work. Members take part in the different committees to bring forward ideas and recommendations which are then debated in the annual plenary. The annual session brought together over 700 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and institutions from across the Nordic region to address issues facing parliaments today. The Session offered the opportunity for Members to benefit from learning, networking, professional development and the sharing of best practice with colleagues from the Nordic parliaments and international guests.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee members Stuart McMillan MSP, Jeremy Balfour MSP and Sarah Boyack MSP attended the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Sydney, Australia from 3-8 November 2024. In addition to participation in the General Assembly, all three MSPs undertook a series of meetings and engagements relating to their roles as the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) representatives on the CPA's Executive Committee (Stuart McMillan MSP); Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (Jeremy Balfour MSP) and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (Sarah Boyack MSP). Over the course of the five full days in Sydney, in addition to the General Assembly, Members attended a total of ten meetings, eleven workshops, six networking events and one outreach activity.

Operations and Digital Directorate

Mobile Device Report

The [SPCB Mobile Device Policy](#) includes a requirement to report to the SPCB on a quarterly basis. The period covered by this report is the second quarter (July-Sept) of financial year 24/25.

Currently all Parliament SIMs are operating under the terms and tariffs put in place as part of the mobile voice and data contract which became operational in February. This includes additional technical controls including spend caps.

There were no exceptions to report during this period with the total expenditure on mobile charges for the Quarter 2 period being £5,065.49 or an average of approximately £2.46 per SIM per month.

The Quarter 2 figure compares favourably with the figure incurred under the previous contract for the same period in the last financial year (Quarter 2 financial year 23/24) which was £12,557.80 and broadly reflects the level of savings forecast under the new contract and budgeted for in this financial year.

Chamber Desk Network Provision

The Business Information and Technology (BIT) Office have now completed the work required to provide a wired network and power service for Parliament Surface devices, laptops and other mobile devices. Details on how to use the new service has been shared with Members and BIT staff in the chamber to support digital voting.

Sustainable Pathways Project – South-east External Landscaping

The landscaped area forming the south-east corner of the Parliament site has been deteriorating for a number of years due to constant pedestrian traffic wearing the grass and hindering new growth. This has been exacerbated by the cycle of wetter winters and drier summers resulting in the grass being unable to recover, in many places it has become bare earth turning to mud when wet, creating a hazard and unattractive to those visiting the site on foot.

To identify a solution to this problem, Facilities Management engaged with the Sustainability team and our Landscape Architect to come up with a design

that would improve the area in a sustainable way, which did not require excavation causing damage to tree roots. The solution chosen are recycled gravel surface paths laid and bound in place by timber edging. This material is compressible, firm and is slip-resistant.

The project was completed during late August/early September and the plan is to plant wild grass and wildflowers around the new paths in Spring 2025. This will create a pleasant first impression of the site when walking in towards the Parliament from the south-eastern side.



Stone Repair and Replacement Works – Queensberry House Traditional Wall and Bagpipes Front Elevation

Following a survey undertaken to establish the condition of stonework and historic pointing to the traditional walls to the front of Queensberry House (QBH) and Bagpipes building, essential remedial works were identified that were required to be undertaken. The works required involved raking out the existing cement mortar and repointing the wall with lime-based mortar and replacing defective stones with new stones. Without this intervention, the stonework and pointing would continue to deteriorate eventually causing a risk to the public and building users.

Due to the adjacency of these areas to public thoroughfares and the QBH entrance, works were split into 2 phases. Phase 1 consisted of the pointing works to the internal courtyard side of the traditional wall and the top section of the external traditional wall, which did not require lane closures on the Royal Mile. This work was carried out earlier in the summer.

Phase 2 focused on the front elevation of the Bagpipes building and the remaining section of external traditional wall to the public side. Due to the narrow pavement access at this section and the scaffolding required to access works at high level, a traffic management system was put in place. This required consultation with several stakeholders including City of Edinburgh Council and Lothian Buses to gain all necessary permits and permissions required. This work was completed during the October recess.

The project overall has been a success with works being completed on programme and budget. The quality of workmanship and standard of finish achieved is excellent and removes the need for any further major maintenance of the stonework for several years, although their condition will continue to be assessed periodically.

Building Energy Management System project update

The BEMS replacement project has been continuing over the course of 2024 following the successful completion of the changeovers within the Press Tower (October 2023), and the Upper and Lower basements (December 2023 to February 2024).

Phase 2 commenced with the Debating Chamber (March to April 2024), the MSP Block (June to August 2024) and the Canongate (October 2024) and these have also been successfully completed.

Phase 3 will start during the 2025 April recess period where QBH will be changed over, followed by all Towers in the Assembly Building during summer recess 2025.












The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Performance Report

2024-25 Q2: July to September 2024








Performance Overview

Our services	KPI status	Trend	Strategic change objectives	Key activity status	Trend	
	Green	→		A modern, dynamic parliamentary democracy	Green	→
	Green	→		Adapting for a sustainable future	Amber	↓
	Green	→		A values-driven culture	Green	→
	Green	→		Operational excellence	Amber	↑
	Green	↑		Working environment		

Delivering excellence in our parliamentary services

Key Performance Indicators

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
 <p>Members services & resources</p> <p>Status: Green</p>	Core Members' services operating within targets	On track	On track	→	
 <p>Scrutiny & debate</p> <p>Status: Green</p>	Parliamentary business takes place as scheduled	No disruption	No disruption	→	
	Parliamentary business services operating within targets	On track	On track	→	
 <p>Public Involvement</p> <p>Status: Green</p>	Public feedback surveys	On track	On track	→	
	Digital engagement	On track	On track	→	

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
 Corporate services & governance Status: Green	% Outturn against SPCB budget for financial year*	0-5% under budget	2.1% (YTD)	→	
	Corporate payment performance	99%	99.6%	→	
	Internal audit reports (limited or no assurance opinions)	0	0	→	
	Fulfilment of compliance obligations	Compliant	Compliant	→	
	NEW Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions compared to 2005-06 baseline*	64%	64.4% (YTD)	-	
 Working environment Status: Green	SPCB staff turnover*	10%	3.6% (YTD)	→	Note, 2% for Q2
	SPCB staff attendance rate	96%	96.2%	↑	
	SPCB staff unplanned absence rate	<4%	3.8%	↑	
	Culture of respect complaints	0	0	→	

*Cumulative year to date (YTD) figures

Strategic change objectives: key activities

Status

A red, amber, green status (RAG) sets out the overall performance against the project, programme or activities time, cost, people and change resources, and outcomes and benefits:

Indicator	RED	AMBER	GREEN
Time	Milestone(s) and/or activity completion date delayed by more than one month	Milestone(s) and/or activity completion date delayed by up to one month	Milestones and activity completion date remains on schedule
Cost/Budget	Costs exceed approved budget for current financial year and/or overall agreed activity cost by more than 5% or over £50,000. For multiyear projects, if overall budget remains unchanged, then in-year changes within the portfolio budget agreed by the Investment Advisory Group can be considered Amber.	Costs exceed approved budget for current financial year and/or overall agreed activity cost up to 5% or a maximum of £50,000	Current approved budget and overall agreed activity cost is on target
People and Change Resources	Lack of resources to deliver activity impacting ability to meet activity plan.	Risk to resources as not yet committed and is being managed	Resources committed and plans in place.
Outcomes and benefits	Significant change in outcomes and/or benefits are not or highly unlikely to be delivered.	Risk of / or minor changes in outcomes and/or delivering benefits	Outcomes and benefits will be delivered in line with business case and benefits plan
Overall	RED if one or more indicators are red OR If one or more indicators are reported as Amber for the 3 rd consecutive quarter	AMBER if one or more indicators are amber and none are red	GREEN if all indicators are green.

If there are any issues and/or risks either addressed during the reporting quarter or are currently being addressed and remedial action taken, the activity must be reported as Amber or Red.



A modern, dynamic parliamentary democracy

Overall status: **Green**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q2 completed milestones
Conveners Group Session 6 Priorities Callum Thomson SRO Irene Fleming	Green ↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By July 2024, SPICe published a series of blogs illustrating the impact of climate change on various policy areas as part of Conveners Group's strategic priority to support and enhance climate change scrutiny.
Public Engagement Strategy Review Lorna Foreman	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Activity started in August 2024.
Public Service Delivery Lorna Foreman	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Activity started in August 2024.
Scottish Parliament Elections 2026 David McGill SRO Allan Campbell	Not started	<ul style="list-style-type: none">N/a
Constitutional Issues Callum Thomson SRO Judith Morrison	Green →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Planned for the potential impacts of the July 2024 UK General election on the delivery of Parliament's functions. In July 2024, the PO was briefed on devolution issues and campaign proposals to strengthen Scottish democracy, within the context of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee's work.



Adapting for a sustainable future

Overall status: **Amber**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q2 completed milestones
Net Zero Infrastructure Programme Lynsey Hamill Installation of Building Energy Management System (BEMS) SRO Alan Durward	Amber ↓	• Completed installation of new office heating and window controls in MSP Block.
Exceptions: Amber – budget - The forecast for 2024-25 expenditure is £77,000 above budget (originally £1,416,000) due to unexpected installation changes and service costs incurred to date. However, the project remains within the overall budget of £3.6m due to savings achieved in prior years of the project.		
Strategic building infrastructure investments SRO Lynsey Hamill	Amber ↓	• Updated SET on progress on 'case for change' in September 2024.
Exceptions: Amber – timescales and budget – SET update included a re-evaluated project plan and new key milestones. Consequently, the outline business case key decision point has been moved to May 2025 rather than September 2024 to ensure the complex design options are thoroughly developed and explored. The overall Net Zero end point of 2035 remains unchanged, and the amber status reflects adjustments in near-term planning.		
Future Vision Michelle Hegarty SRO William Heigh	Green →	• SET agreed methodology and resource planning in September 2024.



A values-driven culture

Overall status: **Green**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q2 completed milestones
Power Imbalances Lorna Foreman General SRO Lorna Foreman	Green →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/a
Dignity at Work Policy Review SRO Neil Mackie	Green →	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/a
Positive Action SRO Rachel Fishlock	Not started	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The next phase of Positive Action is planned to start in December 2024.



Operational excellence

Overall status: **Amber**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q2 completed milestones
Workforce Planning Lorna Foreman		
Workforce dashboard SRO Vicky McSherry	Green →	• Structure and process for production of monthly Workforce Dashboards completed in September 2024.
Strategic workforce plan SRO Neil Mackie	Green →	• N/a
35 hour working week framework SRO Lorna Foreman	Green	• Start date for activity was September 2024.
Corporate Systems Programme Phase 1 SRO Sara Glass	Amber ↑	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed HCM/Payroll cutover plan for November 2024 go-live in July 2024. • Completed finance cutover plan for October 2024 go-live in August 2024.
Exceptions: Amber – outcomes & benefits – some issues in the finance system implementation are being addressed with support from SG and will be tracked to completion. For the Human Capital Management/Payroll system, to mitigate risks for testing and readiness for reporting in March 2025, 4 test cycles have been agreed with an external partner, including an additional test cycle for assurance.		
Corporate Systems Programme Phase 2 Lorna Foreman	Not started	• Start date for this activity is to be advised.

Key activity

Overall status & trend Q2 completed milestones

Official Report Digital Transformation Programme

Callum Thomson
SRO Tracey White

Amber



- Completed the integration of automatic speech recognition (ASR) into standard Official Report operations in August 2024.

Exceptions: Amber - timescales – the full business case will be reviewed by SET in January 2025, changed from December 2024, to allow more time to review and approve before awarding the contract.

Business Bulletin Improvements

Callum Thomson/Lynsey Hamill
SRO Catherine Fergusson

Red



2nd Qtr

- N/a

Exceptions: Overall Red for 2nd consecutive quarter – timescales, people and change resources, outcomes and benefits - timescales are Amber as resource constraints delayed the completion of the technical build and test of the Business Programme from September to October 2024. People and change resources are Red due to unresolved resource issues with plans now in place to address, including the recruitment of a Business Analyst, Project Manager and Lead Developer. Outcomes and benefits are Amber as the resource issues may reduce development improvements, potentially impacting the project's benefits - any reduction will be agreed upon by the project board.

Windows 10 Upgrade

Lynsey Hamill
SRO Alan Balharrie

RED



- N/a

Exceptions: Red – timescales - A recommendation to transition the anti-virus solution before upgrading to Windows 11 resulted in the sign-off for the updated Windows 11 implementation plan being postponed to October 2024.

Cyber Security

Lynsey Hamill
SROs Alan Balharrie & Tommy Lynch

Amber



- SET reviewed initial cyber resilience strategy paper in September 2024.
- Cyber programme budget bid submitted as part of 2025/26 budget round by September 2024.

Exceptions: Amber - timescales, budget, people and change resources - Although current projects are on track, the programme, as defined in the Delivery Plan needs to be finalised, with SET to review and approve the revised approach by January 2025. Addressing identified resource constraints may require financial resources.

Q2 2024-25 Finance Report – SPCB Executive Summary

Year to Date Outturn

SPCB P6 expenditure is £1,410k (2.3%) below the YTD current annual budget compared to a P5 underspend of £1,255k (2.4%) and a P6 underspend of £1,239k (2.2%) in 2023-24. The P06 underspend of 2.3% is within the target underspend of below 5% at this point in the financial year.

	YTD Outturn £000			
	P6 24-25	P5 24-25	P06 v P05	P6 23-24
SPS	916	803	113	727
Members	153	105	48	418
Officeholders	340	347	-7	95
Total	1,410	1,255	155	1,239

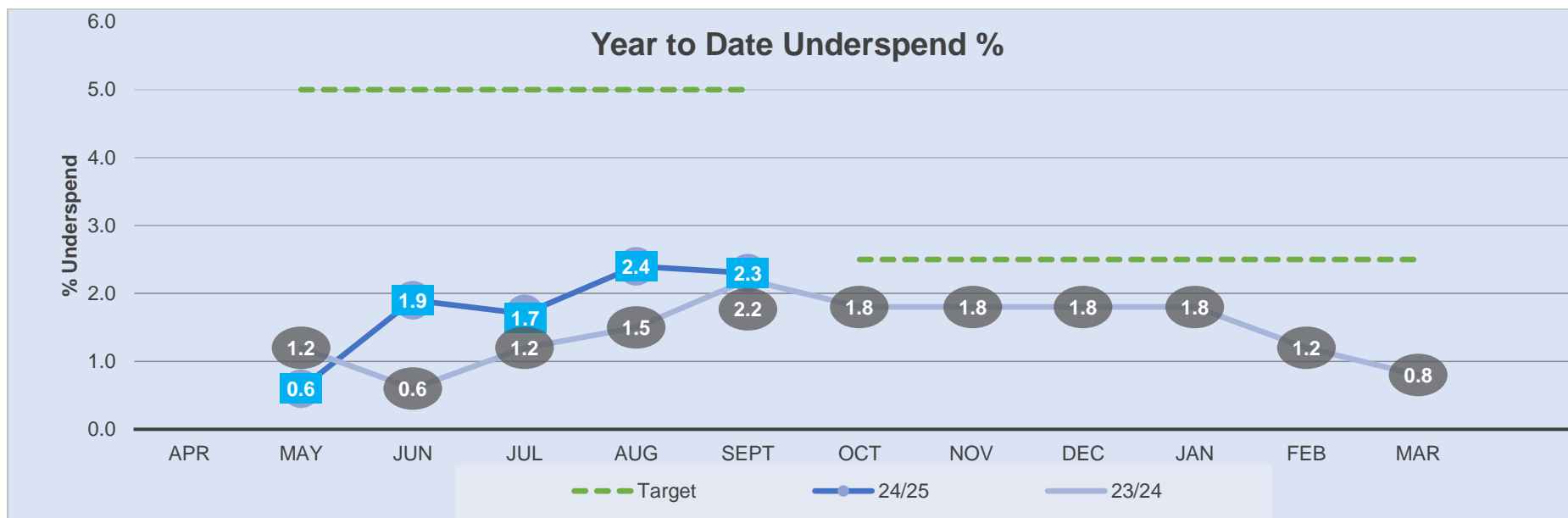
Forecast Year End Outturn

As at P6, SPCB is forecast to underspend by £354k by March 25.

Summary Outturn position year to date including forecast:

SPCB Expenditure Summary Outturn – P6:

	P6 Out-turn				Full Year Results		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance	Out-turn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000
Parliamentary Service Costs	31,085	32,000	916	2.9	64,866	(366)	64,500
Members Costs	20,397	20,551	153	0.7	43,166	203	43,369
Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs	8,776	9,117	340	3.7	17,956	340	18,296
Sub Total	60,258	61,668	1,410	2.3	125,987	178	126,165
Reserves – SPCB contingency	-	-	-	-	-	356	356
Forecast pressures against contingency	-	-	-	-	179	(179)	0
Total SPCB Expenditure	60,258	61,668	1,410	2.3	126,166	354	126,521



SPS Expenditure Summary Outturn – P6:

	P6 Out-turn				Full Year Results		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance	Out-turn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff	20,287	20,149	(138)	(0.7)	41,188	(615)	40,572
Staff Related Costs	318	379	61	16.1	786	74	860
Property Costs	4,781	4,863	82	1.7	9,908	6	9,914
Running Costs	3,843	4,015	172	4.3	7,691	61	7,753
Projects	1,855	2,594	739	28.5	5,292	109	5,401
SPS Expenditure	31,085	32,000	916	2.9	64,866	(366)	64,500

SPS Forecast Full Year Out-turn Summary.

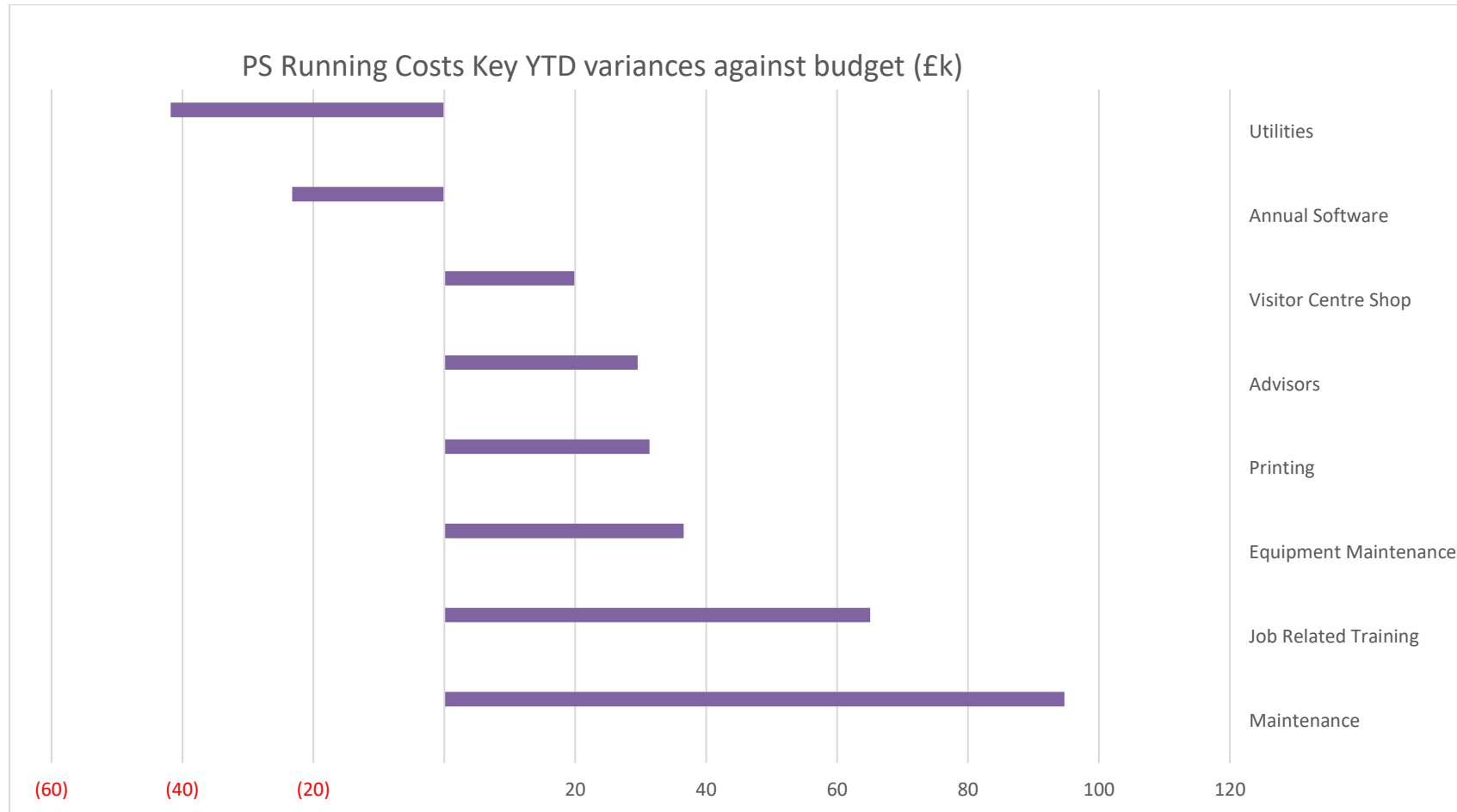
SPS year end forecast is (£366k) over budget down from (£384k) in P05. This is principally in staffing offset by forecast underspends in running costs and projects.

Staff Costs

Staff costs are showing a YTD overspend of (£138k) as at P6 which is down from a YTD overspend of (£240k) in P5.

As at P06, £833k has been recovered from the 2024-25 vacancy gap target of £2.059 million – a shortfall of £146k from target. The recovery represents 81% of the YTD target.

Non-staff costs



Commentary on significant YTD variances to the annual budget:

Utilities (£41k) YTD overspend is in electricity. The overspend is caused by estimated non-energy costs that were provided as reference at the start of the financial year and have been reconciled now the scheme costs are known.

Annual Software Licenses (£23k) YTD overspend – This is driven by a P06 £45k YTD actual in Chamber Office where the corresponding budget has been allocated to P12.

Visitor Centre Shop – £20k underspend as at P6. Expenditure on shop stock is lower to keep levels in line with sales which have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels. Income is £17k under YTD budget, but every effort is being made to reduce costs and generate a small profit.

Advisors - £30k YTD underspend This is largely due to the planned timing of expenditure being delayed in People Services and Legal (Legals Advisors), in Chief Exec and Resilience (General Advisors) and in Committee Advisors. Committee and legal advice budgets are demand led with the demand itself being uncertain.

Printing – £31k YTD underspend is predominantly in the Parliamentary Communications office. This underspend is forecast to decrease by year end.

Equipment Maintenance - £37k YTD underspend. This is in Broadcasting which forecasts to underspend by £20k at year end and in Security where planned expenditure has been delayed.

Corporate Training / Job Related Training report £16k and £65k YTD underspends respectively (total £81k) up from £74k in P05. It has not been possible to understand the causes of this underspend, but efforts will be made to do so in P07.

Maintenance – £95k YTD underspend as at P6. £84k is in Minor Works M&E maintenance where work was paused over recess and an invoicing issue with the contractor. It is expected that the budget will be fully utilised by year end.

Projects

Portfolio	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Outturn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
BIT and Digital	857	914	56	6.2		1,986	117	2,100
FM Building & Equipment	259	775	516	66.6		1,302	(1)	1,301
BEMS	500	556	56	10.2		1,493	(77)	1,416
Broadcasting	3	24	21	88.2		70	0	70
Other	237	325	89	27.2		442	73	514
Unallocated budget	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total projects	1,855	2,594	739	28.5		5,292	111	5,401

Categories:	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Outturn	Under/(Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital projects	447	619	172	27.8		1,440	102	1,550
Revenue projects	1,409	1,976	567	28.7		3,853	9	3,851
Unallocated budget	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Total projects	1,855	2,594	739	28.5		5,292	111	5,401

The original approved capital budget was £1.55 million.

BIT & Digital

BIT and Digital YTD underspend is £56k. This is in Corporate systems and Infrastructure refresh. Corporate Systems is a timing issue and is on track to spend the budget. Infrastructure refresh awaits the internal approval of business cases.

FM

The core portfolio has underspent by £516k YTD but the core portfolio is on track to spend it's allocated budget. It is planned to bid for surplus funds in P07. Space Planning has spent £26k to date out of a £200k annual budget. There are clear plans for the use of this budget, including the creation of a second rest room for Security officers and projects to make more efficient use of other space in the building.

BEMS is largely on track and budget will be utilised by the end of the year.

Broadcasting

P6 YTD underspend is £21k. Broadcasting projects have spent £3k to date out of a £70k annual budget, which is forecast to be fully utilised by year end.

Other Projects

P6 underspend: £89k. £50k that was no longer required by the Security Vetting System improvements (external IBM system) is now against the unallocated budget line. Currently £45k of underspend is in Sustainability projects, which are both predominantly comprised of staff costs and are expected to be fully utilised by year end.

Members and Officeholders

Members Costs

Members P6 YTD underspend is £153k. The engagement provision is underspent by £229k and Party Assistance (short monies) by £59k. The YTD underspend has absorbed a one-off Death in Service cost of £69k and Ministerial Ceasing to hold Office costs of £76k. The £76k will be offset by lower ministerial salary costs during the course of the year.

Officeholders:

The Officeholder (OH) YTD underspend decreased slightly to £340k in the current period from £347k in P05.

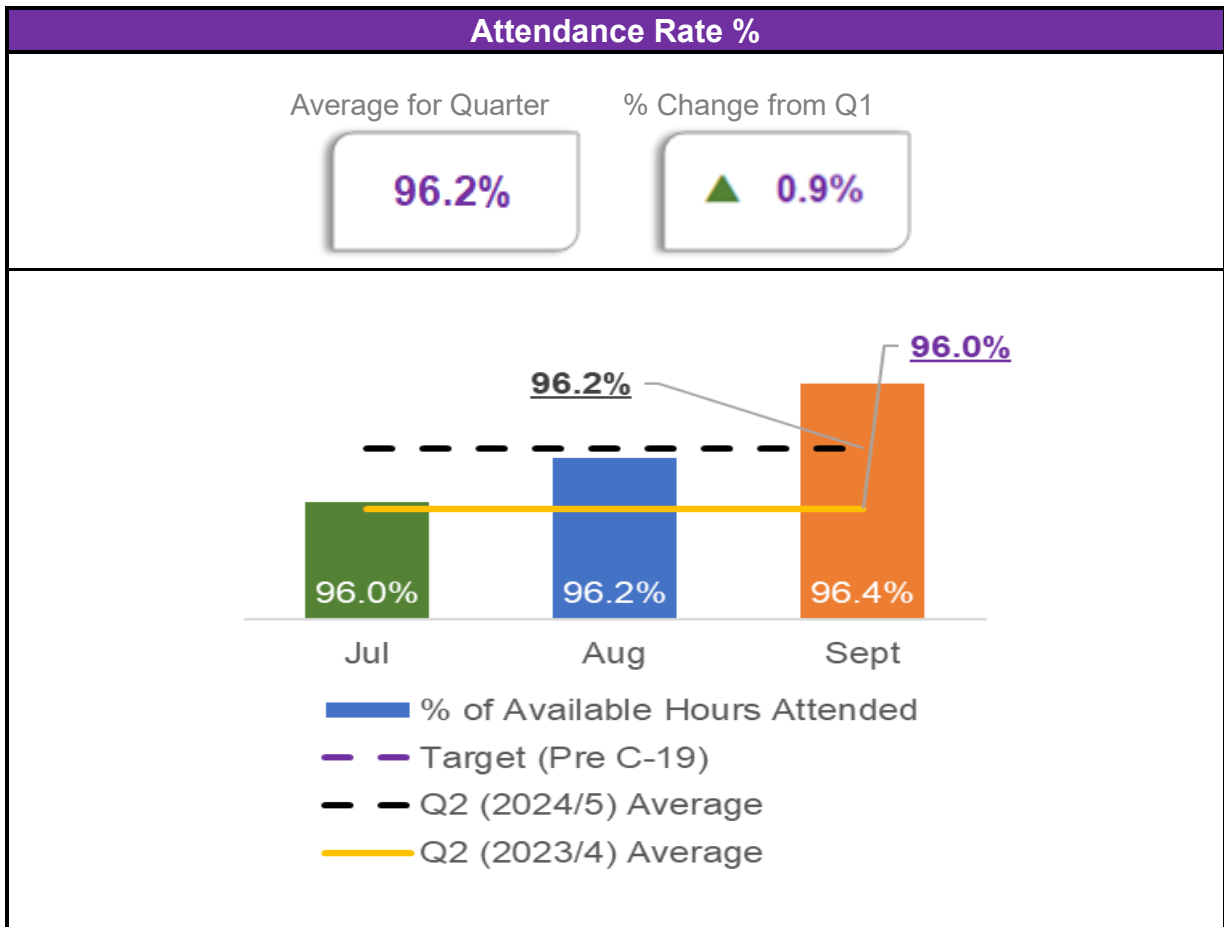
Breakdown of YTD underspends	£000k
Ethical Standards Commission	£48k
Human Rights Commission	£145k
Public Services Ombudsman	£68k
Commissioner for Children	£50k
Scottish Biometrics Commissioner	£45k
Scottish Information Commissioner	(£16k)
Total	£340k

Officeholder Contingency (OHC) remains untouched at £500k. £266k will be recovered from OH staff budgets to contingency in P07 increasing OH contingency to £766k for 2024/25.

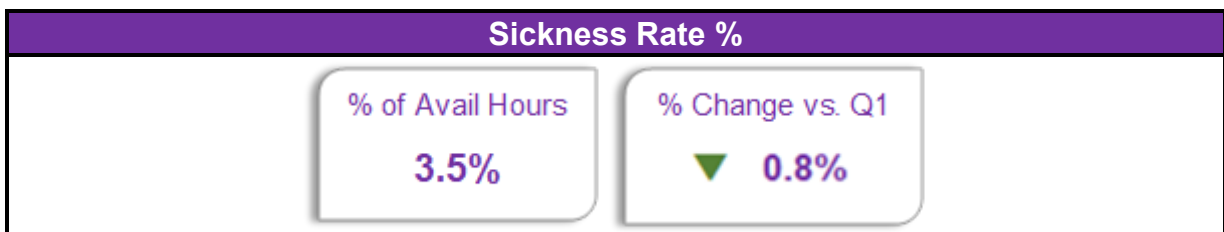
SPCB has approved £521k of expenditure against OH contingency and we are aware of a further £124k pressure from the Bridgeside House rent review which will be backdated to August 2023.

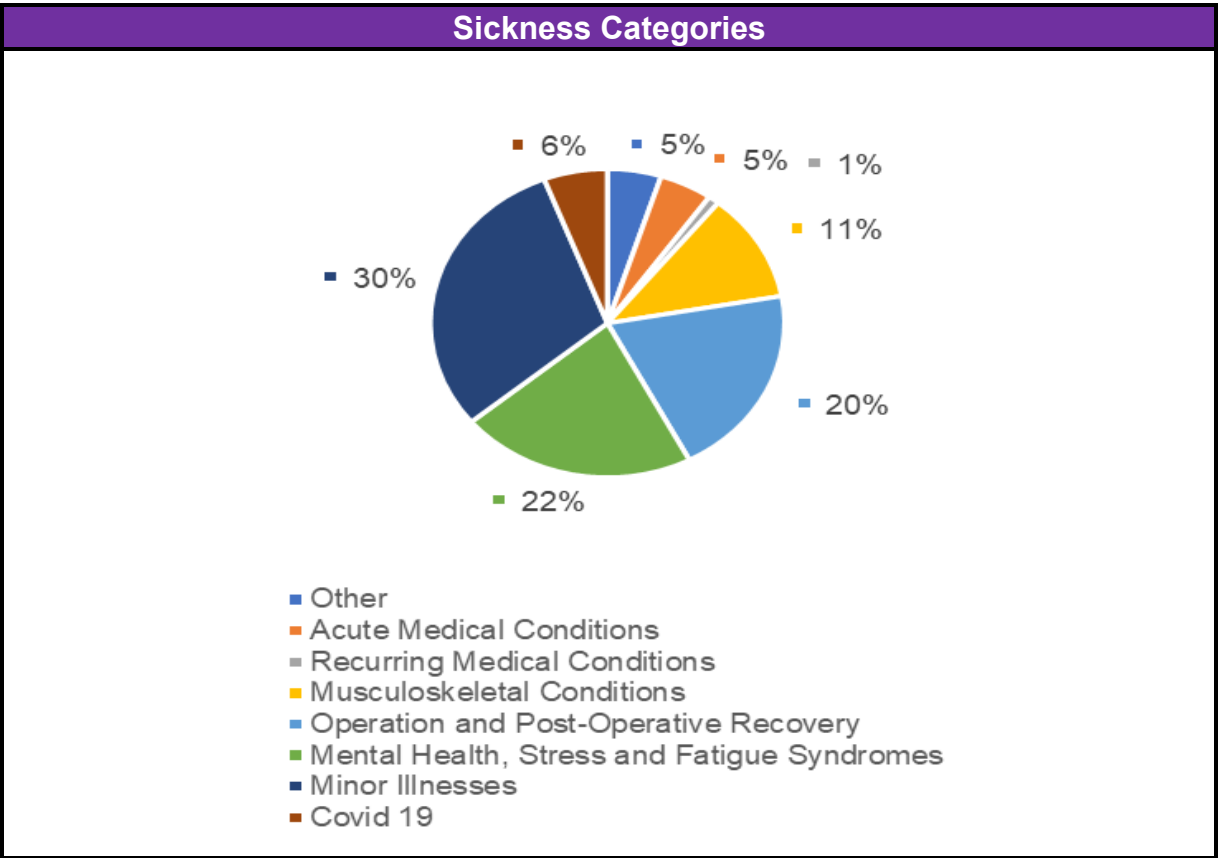
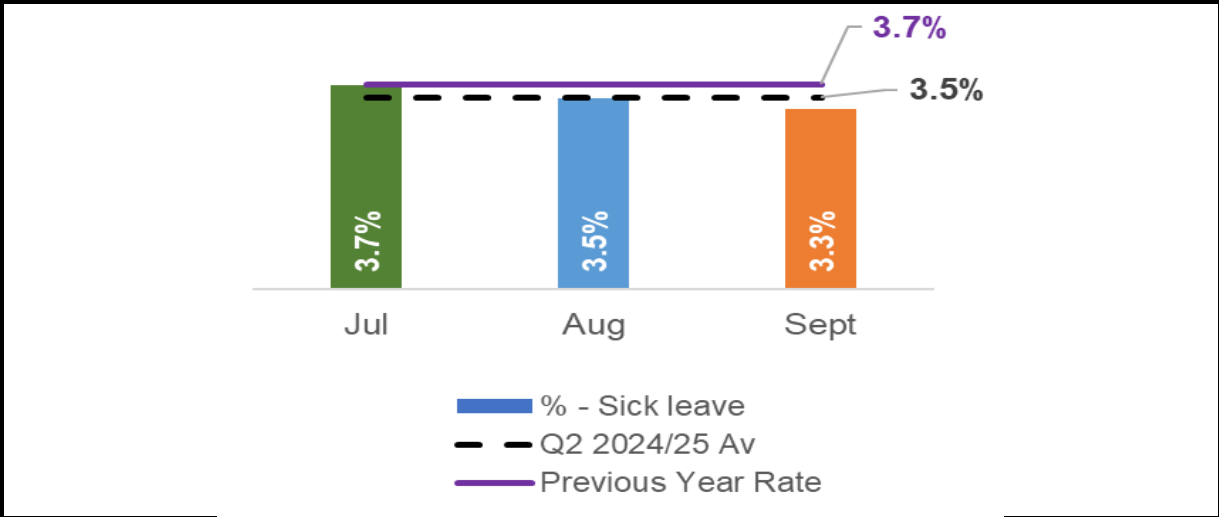
Quarter 2 2024/25 Workforce Report

Attendance



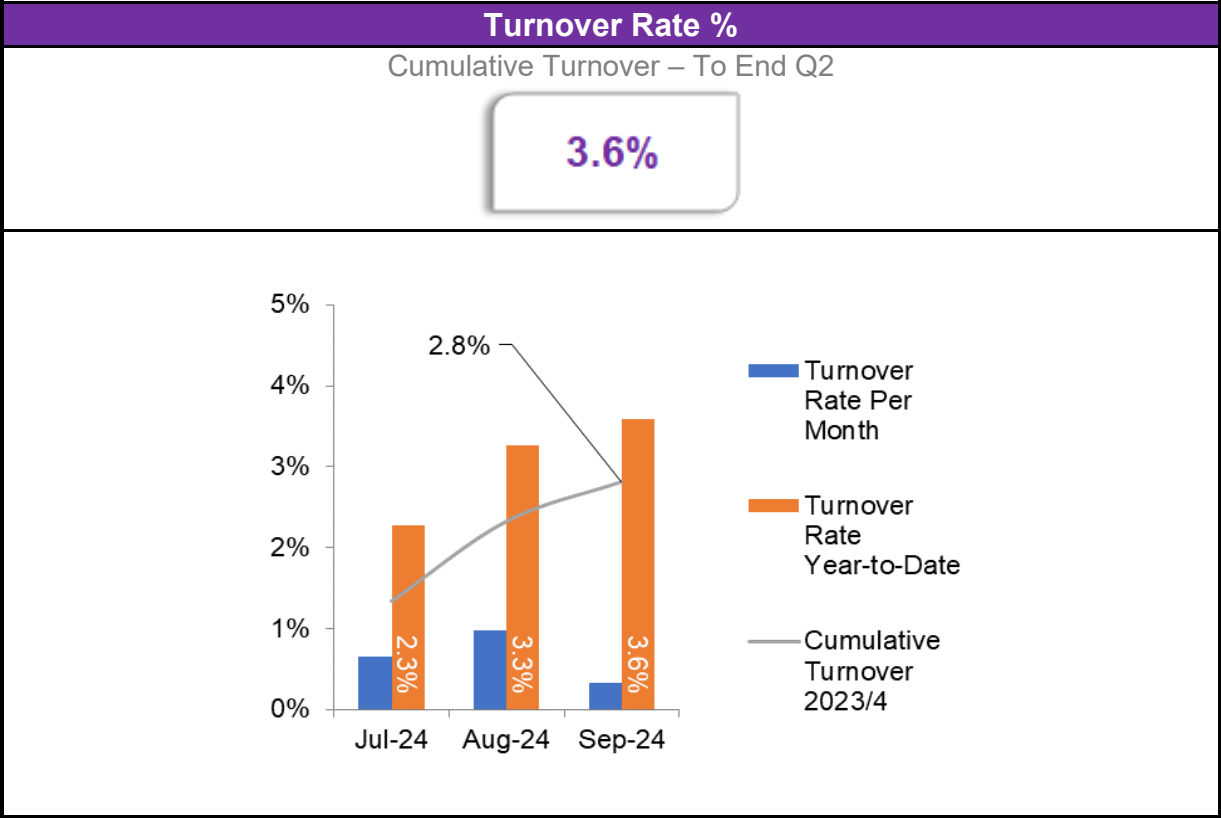
The Attendance Rate has increased 0.9% on the previous Quarter to 96.2% bringing it above the target rate of 96%.





The Sickness Absence Rate is 3.5%, a reduction of 0.8% on Quarter 1. The proportion of absence due to Minor Illnesses and Mental Health, Stress and Fatigue Syndromes are at a similar level as the previous Quarter. The proportion of absence due to Musculoskeletal conditions has reduced to 11% from 17% in Quarter 1 whilst Operation and Post-Operative Recovery has increased from 15% to 20%.

Turnover

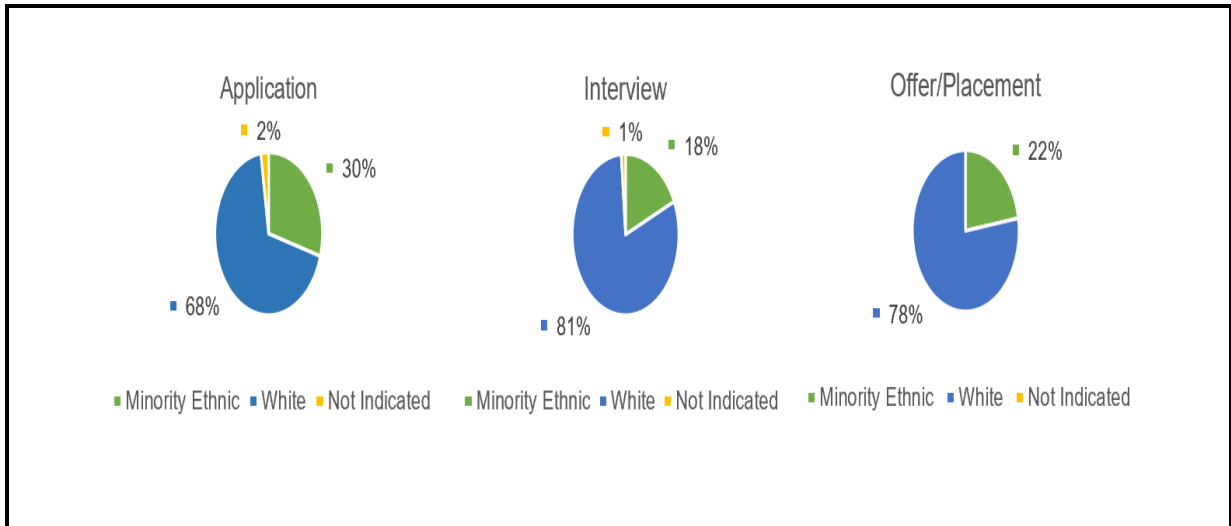


Turnover in Quarter 2 was 2% bringing the cumulative total for the year so far to 3.6%. At the same point in 2023/24, cumulative turnover was 2.8%. There were 12 Leavers in Quarter 2 and the average Headcount was 623.

Recruitment

In accordance with our commitment to increase the diversity of our organisation and our focus on increasing applications from minority ethnic backgrounds, we monitor the progress of success rates at interview and appointment stage.

Recruitment



Fourteen recruitment campaigns were carried out in Quarter 2. Of the 40 appointments made, 9 were to candidates from a minority ethnic background.