Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB June 2025

Introduction

This Report looks at activities across the organisation from March to June 2025. It also incorporates the Quarter 4 Finance, Performance and Workforce Data reports.

Items highlighted include:

- An overview of work undertaken by the Parliamentary Business Directorate
- Recent engagements undertaken by the International Relations Office
- An update on the Social Media Monitoring Service

David McGill
Clerk/Chief Executive

Parliamentary Business Directorate
Scrutiny

Non-Government Bills Unit update

As of the end of May, all Members Bills for this session have been introduced (deadline for introduction is early June 2025). It is not anticipated that there will be a requirement under the Standing Orders for the Bureau to consider any proposals for bills, by exception, to be introduced by September 2025.

In terms of progress of bills that have been introduced, the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill has had its general principles approved but cannot proceed to Stage 2 in advance of the Scottish Government lodging a financial resolution for agreement by the Parliament. The Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill has also had its general principles agreed and awaits referral at Stage 2. The Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill has now received Royal Assent. All other 'live' members bills are at Stage 1.

Government Bills update

The Legislation Team continues to support the scrutiny of bills. 14 Scottish Government bills (at various stages) are currently being considered by the Parliaments and, following the recent Programme for Government statement, it is anticipated that a further 8 Scottish Government bills will be introduced before the end of the session.

Legislation Team clerks work closely with government officials and committee clerks on the scheduling of Government and Members bills.

Parliamentary Business levels

The Parliamentary Business directorate has been experiencing higher levels of business than usual in this quarter. At the start of March, the weekly hours of public business was at just over 35 hours. The average since March has been just under 40 hours per week, with more than 50 hours of public business predicted for the coming weeks.

The increase occurs in both chamber and committee business. It arises because of later decision times and longer committee meetings, including some meetings taking place in the evening and with some happening concurrently with meetings of the Chamber. The whole directorate is affected, especially those teams which serve both committee and chamber. These longer sitting times also impact on a range of other departments which support parliamentary business.

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

The Committee's main focus in this period has been its inquiry into committee effectiveness and its scrutiny of the Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Bill.

As part of its inquiry into committee effectiveness, the Committee has gathered evidence from a range of stakeholders including academics, think tanks, former senior officials from both the Scottish Parliament and the House of Commons, Audit Scotland, and a senior journalist. The Committee has also sought to capture information from other legislatures, both UK and international. The Committee ran an anonymous survey which enabled Members to submit their own views in relation to committee effectiveness and also sought views from Scottish Parliament committees. Both oral and written evidence has also been received from all political parties currently represented in the Parliament.

The Committee's consideration of the Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Bill has, so far, seen two evidence sessions at which the Committee has heard from electoral administrators, regulatory bodies, academics and advocacy groups. The Committee's evidence will continue with the Scottish Government appearing prior to a final evidence session with the member in charge, Graham Simpson MSP.

The Committee expects to publish its reports on both items during autumn 2025.

Constitution Europe and External Affairs Committee

The Committee's focus in this period has been on two main pieces of work: a continuation of and completion of the evidence taking for part 2 of its Review of the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement inquiry (with sessions on AI and also touring artists); and a short inquiry to feed into the UK Government's consultation on the UK Internal Market Act. The latter involved taking evidence from sectoral representative groups (such as NFU Scotland), academics (constitutional experts), business representative bodies (such as CBI Scotland), and the Scottish Government.

Work up until the summer will include follow-up work with the BBC (including a session with Ofcom and also some industry witnesses on the decision to end the lease on the Dumbarton Studio, connected to the decision over River City), a session on Scotland's humanitarian response to Gaza (with the Disaster Emergency Committee), and a session on Creative Europe and the merits of Scotland/the UK rejoining that Europe-wide programme.

Criminal Justice Committee

The Committee completed its Stage 1 scrutiny of the Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Bill and published a Stage 1 report. It also considered the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform Bill at Stage 2 over the course of four meetings.

The Committee held an evidence session on research it had commissioned on the impact of the UK's exit from membership of the EU on law enforcement and judicial cooperation in Scotland.

The Committee considered a paper on the recommendations of the People's Panel on drug deaths and drugs harm. As a result of this work, the Committee is now taking forward the People's Panel's recommendation for an inquiry into drug use in prisons.

Economy and Fair Work Committee

Delivery of the work programme has included inquiry work to scrutinise the Scottish Government's New Deal for Business initiative and also Scotland's skills delivery landscape. Skills delivery engages the remits of both the Economy and Fair Work Committee and the Education, Children and Young People Committee. Discussions took place between both clerking teams and committees to agree their respective approaches and to ensure work was complementary.

The Committee's inquiry into City Region and Regional Growth Deals recently reported with recommendations for both the Scottish and UK Governments. Inquiry work also continues in respect of Grangemouth's industrial future, including an evidence session with the UK Government. Over the coming weeks, the Committee will turn its attention to scrutiny of the Community Wealth Building Bill.

In addition to this, a significant time commitment for the clerking team was the culmination and delivery of the April Business in the Parliament Conference. This was organised by a Scottish Parliament/Scottish Government joint working group, which included business organisations and two members of the clerking team. The focus of this year's event was Workforce for the Future. Over two days at Holyrood, this involved networking, workshop discussions and participation by more than 225 invited guests from business and industry.

Education, Children and Young People Committee

The Committee has undertaken a mix of legislative, inquiry-based and proactive scrutiny. In March, it concluded its evidence-gathering on its Widening Access Inquiry, which focused on improving access to Higher Education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Its inquiry report was published on 15 May 2025.

On 19 March the Committee heard from the senior leadership team at the University of Dundee and the Scottish Funding Council regarding the university's significant funding shortfall. Further scrutiny of this issue is planned to be done ahead of summer recess and will take place once an independent investigation has concluded.

The Committee also continued its ongoing scrutiny of the Promise, with a session with the Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise. This

allowed the Committee to highlight issues gleaned from earlier evidence sessions/informal engagement on workforce recruitment and retention, whole family wellbeing and voice (looking at care-experienced young people's experiences of participating in public body boards which are designed to steer the implementation of the Promise).

In April, the Committee heard from the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (CYPCS), gaining her perspectives on restraint and seclusion, secure accommodation capacity and the implementation of the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Act 2024.

Finance and Public Administration Committee

The Committee's main focus was its inquiry into the budget process this parliamentary session, which aims to put in place any improvements required in time for Session 7. Themes arising so far include the need for more certainty around publication of key strategic financial planning documents, greater transparency, better medium- and longer-term planning, and more influence on budget formulation. The Committee is due to report in June 2025.

It has also begun to take evidence in relation to its inquiry into the cost-effectiveness of public inquiries, a high profile and complex area. It is due to report its findings on this inquiry in September 2025.

To inform its pre-budget 2026-27 scrutiny this year, the Committee has taken evidence from the Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC) on its latest fiscal sustainability report on demography and health. It has also held its last annual evidence session on public administration with the outgoing Permanent Secretary and held sessions with the OECD on its independent review of the SFC as part of its ongoing governance of the SFC.

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

During March 2025, the Committee took oral evidence on the Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill. It is due to conclude taking oral evidence on the Bill at Stage 1 at the end of May.

It also considered, agreed and published a Stage 1 report on the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill in advance of a Stage 1 debate and vote on the Bill on Tuesday 13 May. The Committee agreed to make no overall recommendation on the general principles of the Bill on the basis that the Stage 1 vote should be treated as a matter of conscience by individual Members.

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

In March, members of the Committee visited the Park Ecovillage at Findhorn to see examples of different heating technologies for housing, including the use of heat pumps.

Written responses were received from 18 organisations on its inquiry into building safety, specifically on damp and mould and Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). In April, the Committee held its annual evidence session on building safety and maintenance with the Minister for Housing. This followed the publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report: Scottish Government response and the Scottish Cladding Remediation: Plan of Action.

The Committee published a report on its housing inquiry on 15 May 2025, the anniversary of the declaration of the national housing emergency. Whilst recognising the complex causes of the emergency, the Committee's report highlights the need for a national action plan for tackling the emergency to avoid it drifting on indefinitely.

Throughout May, the Committee has considered the Housing (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2. Over 560 amendments were lodged and the Committee's work on the Bill included an additional meeting in early May.

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

The Committee undertook stage 2 scrutiny of parts 5 and 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill, which relate to homelessness prevention and other housing matters.

The Committee began taking evidence for its inquiry into the financial considerations when leaving an abusive relationship. Members attended an evening meeting to hear lived experience evidence from Scottish Women's Aid's survivor reference group and visited Financially Included in Glasgow. As a follow-up to the Committee's roundtable evidence session on the reasons for pensioner poverty, the Committee held a one-off evidence session on how digital exclusion is impacting on the level of poverty amongst pensioners, and how those issues might be addressed.

The Committee also held a roundtable evidence session on the UK Government's welfare reforms and hear from the Scottish Government on the measures it is taking to eradicate child poverty.

SPICe

In this reporting period, SPICe has actively supported Senior Executive Team 'Deep Dives' in preparation for the Parliament's Session 7 Strategic Plan. This has included SPICe subject specialists delivering written and oral briefings to support interdisciplinary discussion on complex and systemic issues including sustainable development, workforce planning, constitution, public sector finance and reforms, operational efficiency and effectiveness, leveraging AI and technology, and public participation and engagement.

There were four SPICe Breakfast Seminars during this period:

- International response to Russia's illegal invasion of the Ukraine (50 attendees – best attendance ever)
- Dark oxygen discovery: implications for marine science, the origins of life and deep seabed mining
- Scottish Fiscal Commission seminar: Annual Fiscal Sustainability Report, with focus on health
- Links between health, social care and climate change – this seminar supports delivery of one of the asks from the Conveners Group strategic priority on climate change and net zero.

In addition, we supported delivery of an internal 'snippets' on the Parliament's own Sustainable Development Impact Assessment tool. This links to the training of staff facilitators, delivering against another of the asks from the Conveners Group's strategic priority on climate change and net zero.

Working across Parliaments, in this period, SPICe has:

- Shared information about publishing research briefings with colleagues in House of Commons library
- Attended an Inter-Parliamentary Research and Information Network session on enquiry/request services to share best practice
- Hosted visit of three Thematic Research Leads from UK Parliament to discuss how SPICe and academic engagement works and explore the potential for collaboration across subject areas.

International Relations Office

The current reporting period has been a particularly busy one for the International Relations Office team. In addition to hosting four diplomatic visits by Ambassadors and Consuls, Speakers representing three Australian Parliaments (Victoria, Queensland and the Federal Parliament in Canberra) also visited Holyrood.

In March, the Parliament hosted the 11th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Conference. Attended by 40 parliamentarians and officials from 12 branches of the BIMR, sessions covered topics such as promoting inclusiveness in parliaments, overcoming the barriers faced by women standing for election and how to retain women working in politics.

Over the April recess period, both Deputy Presiding Officers led outward, cross-party visits to other legislatures. Deputy Presiding Officer Liam McArthur MSP, accompanied by Audrey Nicoll MSP and Rhoda Grant MSP, visited the Løgting (Parliament) of the Faroe Islands. There, they met with the Speaker, Ms Bjørt Samuelsen, two parliamentary committees, and several local organisations. Discussion focussed on parliamentary procedure as well as policy issues which fell under Members' respective committee remits.

Deputy Presiding Officer Annabelle Ewing MSP, accompanied by Michelle Thomson MSP and Alexander Stewart MSP travelled to New York for the annual Tartan Week events and celebrations. Whilst in New York, they also

undertook a series of meetings with key stakeholders in the New York City Government and its partner agencies. From there, the delegation travelled on to Edmonton for meetings in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. This was the first official visit to the Legislative Assembly and the delegation were warmly received by the Speaker, the Hon Nathan Cooper MLA, and all with whom they met. A very busy two-day programme of engagements included meetings with four Government Ministers, a committee chair as well as external stakeholders.

Operations and Digital Directorate

Events and Exhibitions

On Wednesday 23 April, I chaired the **Armed Forces Parliamentary Visit Defence Roundtable**. Senior Armed Forces leaders in Scotland updated Members on the dynamic security and defence landscape and what is being done to deliver security at home and strength abroad. The session was well attended by MSPs who engaged in an informative question and answer session after the briefing.

The **16th Business in the Parliament Conference**, themed *Workforce for the Future*, took place on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 April. The Conference included panel sessions that discussed AI and a workforce for the future; Today's young people, tomorrow's workforce; and Skills shortage in Global Trade. The Conference also included keynote speeches from the First Minister, the Convener of the Economy and Fair Work Committee and Dr Hina Khan, Head of Commercial at Craft Prospect and a Q&A with cross-party panel of Members.

The Scottish Parliament marked the **80th Anniversary of VE Day**, with a special performance on Wednesday 7 May from the Military Wives Choir who connect nearly 1,800 women in the military community and create a support network through the power of singing. Singers from Inverness, Leuchars, Lossiemouth and the West of Scotland choirs came together to perform a medley of songs.

Security

Social Media Monitoring Service Update

During Quarter 4, the Security Office was informed that the existing software provider of the social media monitoring service for Members would be withdrawing their product from the market, effective 30 March. This development prompted a swiftly arranged procurement exercise to identify and appoint a replacement provider. With the support of the Procurement Office, a new supplier was successfully identified and appointed, ensuring there was no disruption to the monitoring service available to Members.

Our two Security Analysts have been fully onboarded to the new system and are already identifying efficiencies in monitoring for threat and risk. The

contract with the new supplier will run until March 2027, which means the service will continue to form a key part of the Parliament's security offering for newly elected Members following next year's election.

The service continues to deliver early warning of potential online threats for the 69 Members currently signed up, and works closely with partner organisations, including Police Scotland, to escalate content that may breach criminal thresholds. The gender split between Members currently using the service is 33 females and 36 males, and each party is well-represented in these figures.

The data below provides the annual overview of activity under this service from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2024/25 Annual Overview – Social Media Monitoring:

Category	2023/2024	2024/2025
Total posts reviewed	245,420	348,041
Total posts referred to Police Scotland for potentially breaching criminal thresholds	461	257
Cases proceeding to court action	2	1
Total number of prosecutions	0	2 (1 in progress)

Data by party on posts received which are abusive but have not passed criminal thresholds:

Party	2023/2024	2024/2025
SNP	6,621	15,749
Scottish Conservatives	592	1,888
Scottish Labour	282	4,150
Scottish Greens	501	939
Scottish Liberal Democrats	114	729
Independent Members	0	52

Data by Members' gender on posts received which are abusive but have not passed criminal thresholds:

Gender	2023/2024	2024/2025
Male	7,542	19,511
Female	568	3,996

Data by characteristics on posts received which are abusive but have not passed criminal thresholds:

Racism	Sexual Orientation	Gender-based abuse
477	48	886

Data by theme on posts received which are abusive but have not passed criminal thresholds:

Theme	2023/2024	2024/2025
Racism	452	477
Sexual Orientation	18	48
Gender base abuse	7	886*

All this data must be viewed in context. Senior positions in a Party or in Government do attract a higher level of commentary, and therefore abuse, than others. It is also evident that reactions to geopolitical factors and discussion of emotive issues bring an increased amount of abuse.

Whilst it is too early to draw any firm conclusions on trends and success of the scheme when comparing data from the pilot year and year 1, we can see that the scale of online abuse of Members is now readily apparent and is growing. This chimes with the feedback we have had from Members for some time now.

*This large increase is due to improved recognition of misogynistic content directed at female Members.

Business Information Technology

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 fourth and final quarter (Jan-Mar) of financial year 24/25.

All Parliament SIMs continue to operate under the terms and tariffs put in place as part of the mobile voice and data contract which became operational in February 2024. This includes additional technical controls including spend caps set on each SIM.

There were no cost exceptions to report during this period with the total expenditure on mobile charges for the Q4 period being £4,873.86 or an average of approximately £2.37 per SIM per month.

When compared with financial year 23/24, the change in contractual arrangements (February 2024) have resulted in a saving of approximately £23k with a total expenditure of approximately £20k being incurred in financial year 24/25.

Personal Cyber Assistance Service

The BIT Office, working with the Defending Democracy Task Force, launched the Personal Cyber Assistance Service for Members of the Scottish Parliament at the start of March.

During the period the service was running, 31 Members were engaged or made use of the service to receive hands on support for their personal devices and personal accounts. The support was provided on a one-to-one basis, and provided Members with practical, impartial advice and guidance on how to improve cyber hygiene.

Due to the popularity of the service, and the importance of raising cyber awareness, BIT is engaging with the Defending Democracy Task Force to arrange further sessions later in the year.

Windows 10 Update Programme

The BIT Office is currently working to update approximately 1700 SPCB devices running Windows 10. This work will see the devices updated to Windows 11 before Microsoft removes support for Windows 10 in October. The work will also replace our antivirus software resulting in operating efficiencies and cost savings. As at the end of May, we have updated 41% of the devices.

Facilities Management

Self-service Meeting Room (SSMR) platform launch

As part of the Directorate's drive to enhance and elevate its customer offering, Facilities and BIT have jointly procured, configured and rolled out a new SSMR platform.

After carrying out extensive market research and looking in detail at more than 30 different potential platforms, a solution offered by providers OfficeRnD was ultimately selected. This platform offered not only value-for-money but also provided the best user interface most likely to gain the largest take-up rate by building users when launched. The system was tested as a proof of concept, packaged as a pilot deployment and rolled out to users alongside new room booking screens on.

The initial roll-out consists of all primary meeting and committee rooms with phase two scheduled to include desk booking and additional meeting.

User feedback, to date, has been extremely positive and FM hope that future enhancements will continue to add additional value to all users for many years to come.

Building Energy Management System (BEMS) Project - completion of Phase 2

Phase 2 of the BEMS replacement was completed during the April recess period. This phase saw the Debating Chamber, the Assembly Building and Lower Basement, the MSP Block, Canongate including Bagpipes with all

boiler rooms, chillers and plantrooms in these areas successfully changed over to the new SSE Distech BEMS.

The Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) system which was scheduled to be changed over as part of Phase 3, was brought forward and delivered successfully during the April recess.

During April recess, Phase 3 started with Queensberry House being successfully changed over. Planning for the remainder of Phase 3 implementation in Towers 1, 2, 3 and 4 over the summer recess has begun.

Wildflower meadow seed sowing – Staff and community engagement

On 24 April, representatives from local community groups joined staff from the Facilities Management team and TRAC for this year's annual wildflower meadow seed planting event.

For the first time we were joined by staff and volunteers from external organisations; Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, pupils and teachers from Royal Mile Primary School Nurture Group and two members of staff from the Learning Team at Dynamic Earth.

The event was a great success and contributes to making the area a pleasant environment for people to be in. It also reflects a continued dedication on the part of the Scottish Parliament to support and encourage local biodiversity. We look forward to collaborating further with our local neighbours on future volunteering opportunities.

Performance Report

2024-25 Q4: January to March 2025

Performance Overview

Our services		KPI status	Trend	Strategic change objectives		Key activity status	Trend
	Members support and resources	**Green**	↑		A modern, dynamic parliamentary democracy	**Amber**	→ 2nd quarter
	Scrutiny and debate	**Green**	→		Adapting for a sustainable future	**Green**	→
	Public involvement	**Amber**	↓		A values-driven culture	**Amber**	→ 2nd quarter
	Corporate services and governance	**Green**	↑		Operational excellence	**Amber**	↑
	Working environment	**Amber** 2nd quarter	→				

Delivering excellence in our parliamentary services

Key Performance Indicators

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
Members services and resources Status: **Green**	Members satisfaction with services and resources[1]	85% of Members interviewed were satisfied or very satisfied	**86%**	↑	[1] Annual Members feedback interview exercise took place over February and March 2025, where 42 Members participated.
	Core Members' services operating within targets	On track	**Green**	↑	
Scrutiny and debate Status: **Green**[2] [2] For reasons noted in exceptions	Members' satisfaction with services and facilities[1]	85% of Members interviewed were satisfied or very satisfied	**91%**	→	[1] Annual Members feedback interview exercise.
	Parliamentary business takes place as scheduled	No disruption	**Business disrupted**	→ 2nd qtr	Level of disruption to chamber or committee business (target no disruption) – Amber for 2nd consecutive quarter – On 14 January 2025, chamber business experienced a brief disruption with a minor delay in the start time due to technical issues with the hybrid parliament platform, where the vision mixer device failed requiring replacement. Despite this, all parliamentary business took place. Technical work was carried out to ensure there were no further issues.

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
	Parliamentary business services operating within targets	On track	**On track**	→	Legislation documents produced in accordance with agreed timescales (target 100%) – Amber – achieved 97.7% - Although the Scottish Government provided two draft Supplementary Financial Memorandums on time, the Legislation Team required further information to ensure compliance with Standing Orders and the memorandums were lodged late - Scottish Languages Bill by 2 days in January and Care Reform (Scotland) Bill - by 5 days in March 2025. No formal action is required. As the delay was beyond the SPS control, the overall status for Parliamentary business services operating within targets is reported as on track.
Public Involvement Status: **Amber**	Members' satisfaction with SPS in driving effective public engagement & participation in Parliament's work[1]	85% of Members interviewed were satisfied or very satisfied	**90%**	→	[1] Annual Members feedback interview exercise
	Public feedback surveys	On track	**Not on track**	↓	People feel their views will be valued by the committee (5-point scale – target 4) – Amber for 2nd consecutive quarter – achieved a score of 3.8. A single cause was not identified, due to high and low ratings across several activities e.g. Youth Mobility, Peoples Panel tackling Drug Harms and Drug Deaths and Assisted Dying (Scotland) Bill. Anecdotal feedback provided more detailed reasons for lower scores. The overall pattern will be reviewed for the 2024-25 annual report in May 2025 and any necessary actions considered.
	Digital engagement	On track	**Not on track**	↓	Social media channels meet bespoke engagement rates (target 68%) – Amber – achieved 53%. While engagement rates remain strong on other channels, they have declined on X. This trend reflects a general shift in usage patterns on X, including users treating it more as a news source than a conversational platform. This shift affects our KPI results, as we have significantly more accounts on X (committees etc) compared to other channels. The KPI will be kept under review as part of the new public engagement strategy and a refresh of the social media strategy.

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
Corporate services & governance Status: **Green**	% Outturn against SPCB budget for financial year[3] (year to date)	0-2.5% under budget	**1.3%** (YTD)	↑	
	Corporate payment performance	99%	**99.7%**	→	
	Internal audit reports (limited or no assurance opinions)	0	**0**	→	
	Fulfilment of compliance obligations	Compliant	**Compliant**	→	
	Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions compared to 2005-06 baseline[3]	64%	**66%** (YTD)	→	
	SPCB staff turnover[3]	10%	**7.1%** (YTD)	→	Note, 1.4% for Q4

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
  Working environment Status: **Amber** 2nd quarter	SPCB staff attendance rate	96%	**95.8%**	→ 2nd qtr	SPCB staff attendance and absence rates – (targets 96% & 4% respectively) – Amber for 2nd consecutive quarter – The attendance rate is slightly below the target, primarily due to unplanned absence at 4.2% (3.8% due to sickness and special leave at 0.4%). The leading cause of sickness absence is minor illness, accounting for 46% of cases, followed by mental health, stress and fatigue syndromes at 26%. There was a slight improvement in attendance in the final month of Q4. This will continue to be monitored. Please refer to the Workforce Analytics Report for further details.
	SPCB staff unplanned absence rate	<4%	**4.2%**	2nd qtr →	
	Culture of respect complaints	0	**0**	→	

[3] 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 IAG 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 3rd 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: **Amber**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q4 completed milestones
Conveners Group Session 6 Priorities Callum Thomson SRO Irene Fleming	**Green** →	• Conveners Group considered options for embedding participative activity for Session 7 evaluation in March 2025 during an update on the Public Participation Blueprint.
Public Engagement Strategy Review Lead/SRO Lorna Foreman	**Green** →	• SET discussion on future public engagement strategy in March 2025.
Public Service Delivery Lead/SRO Lorna Foreman	**Red** ↓	• N/a
Exceptions: Red – timescales – The delivery plan milestone to identify opportunities to improve public service delivery, including different methods of delivery, has been delayed from March to October 2025. The identified changes will be discussed at the SPCB planning day in August 2025 as agreed with the Deputy Chief Executive.		
Scottish Parliament Elections 2026 David McGill SRO Allan Campbell	**Green** **NEW**	• Initial engagement with SET and SPCB in March 2025.
Constitutional Issues Callum Thomson SRO Judith Morrison	**Green** ↑	• Note, during Q1 2025-26, the Constitutional Issues Board will be stood down, with its remit and responsibilities transferred to the Parliamentary Business Directorate Leadership Team.

Adapting for a sustainable future

Overall status: **Green**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q4 completed milestones
Net Zero Infrastructure Programme Lynsey Hamill		
Installation of Building Energy Management System SRO Alan Durward	**Green** →	• N/a
Strategic building infrastructure investments SRO Lynsey Hamill	**Green** ↑	• N/a
Parliament of the Future Michelle Hegarty SRO William Heigh	**Green** →	• N/a

A values-driven culture

Overall status: **Amber**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q4 completed milestones
Power Imbalances Lead/SRO Lorna Foreman	**Red** ⟶ 2nd quarter	• N/a
Exceptions: Red – timescales – External factors have impacted the completion of this work and the milestone "Following the Speaker's Conference, a "Reflections' paper including cultural issues that perpetuate power imbalance and inequity to be presented to SPCB by June 2025" (originally June then December 2024) has been amended in the delivery plan as work is underway to scope a revised programme of work which will include this activity. The programme of work will be confirmed once agreed with the SPCB in June 2025.		
Positive Action Lorna Foreman SRO Rachel Fishlock	**Green** ⟶	• N/a

Operational excellence

Overall status: **Amber**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q4 completed milestones
Workforce Planning Lorna Foreman		
Strategic Workforce Plan SRO Neil Mackie	**Green** (completed)	• Strategic Workforce Plan developed including an approach to succession planning and talent development in March 2025.
Shorter Working Hours SRO Neil Mackie	**Green** ⟶	• N/a
Corporate Systems Programme Phase 1 Lead & SRO Sara Glass	**RED** ⟶ 2nd quarter	• Programme board reviewed Phase 1a Closure Report in March 2025.
Exceptions: Red for 2nd consecutive quarter – timescales are red and people/change resources and outcomes and benefits are amber. The Phase 1a Programme Closure Report was completed as planned in March 2025. However, delays by the Scottish Government team have extended the overall completion date for the programme from March to September 2025. This extension is required to allow completion of the EPM implementation, Phase 1b. Note, Enterprise Performance Management is the module which enables our budgeting and reporting processes. The delay in EPM implementation has resulted in increased workload for those involved in our finance processes, including manual collation of data. Despite these challenges budgets were effectively controlled and managed. The planning for Phase 1b is due to be completed in April 2025.		
Corporate Systems Programme Phase 2 Lead & SRO Lorna Foreman	Not started	• N/a

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q4 completed milestones
Official Report Digital Transformation Programme Callum Thomson SRO Tracey White	**Green** ↑	• Completed the procurement exercise and identified the system provider for the OR Production System in March 2025. • OR Digital Transformation full Business Case was approved and the contract awarded in March 2025.
Business Bulletin Improvements Callum Thomson/ Lynsey Hamill SRO Catherine Fergusson	**Amber** ↑	N/a
Exceptions: Amber – timescales – Overall the Business Bulletin project is progressing well, with the Legislation Hub on track to be built by May 2025, however, completion of testing has been amended from May to June 2025 to manage user workloads during a busy parliamentary period. Note, the replacement business bulletin is scheduled to go live by October 2025 and is currently on track.		
Windows 10 Upgrade Lynsey Hamill SRO Alan Balharrie	**Red** ↓	• Windows 11 testing with selected business users and Business IT was successfully completed in March, and the Project Board approved the build and deployment plan enabling progression to rollout also in March 2025.
Exceptions: Red – timescales - Although the end date of the project is not felt to be at risk, the target dates for Windows 11 testing and project board approval of the build and deployment plan were delayed from January (originally December) to March 2025. In early January, an issue was identified during testing where Windows 11 devices were receiving updates directly from Microsoft, bypassing our controlled environment, posing a risk during critical business operations. The project team implemented a fix and once stable, user testing restarted mid-February concluding in March with no significant issues reported. The project board agreed the recommendation to proceed to the production deployment phase, subject to no new issues emerging. With the build and deployment plan approved, the rollout to other users began, with the deployment phase adjusted to compensate for testing delays. Despite this issue, the rollout remains on track to complete in July as planned.		

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q4 completed milestones
Cyber Security & Resilience Lynsey Hamill SROs Alan Balharrie & Tommy Lynch	Amber ↑	• N/a
Exceptions: Amber – people and change resources were amber as at end of March 2025. The revised approach to the Cyber Resilience Improvement Plan was subsequently discussed with SET in April 2025. SET agreed the priorities for business continuity (BC) plans which will be overseen by relevant Directors. A progress update to SET is planned for June 2025 prior to an update at the Advisory Audit Board. The BC plans are expected to be completed by December 2025.		
Lobbying Register David McGill SRO Billy McLaren	Amber ↓	• Investment Advisory Group reviewed and approved the outline business case in January 2025. • SET reviewed and approved the outline business case in February 2025.
Exceptions: Amber – Timescales - The approval of the final business case has been delayed from June to September 2025 due to suppliers requesting additional time to work on bids and managing leave arrangements for various project team members. The project end date remains October 2026.		

Q4 2024-25 Finance Report – SPCB
Executive Summary

Budget Variance for the year

Total SPCB expenditure is £1.9million (1.5%) below budget for the year which is within the 2.5% target. This is subject to any changes that may arise from year end audit adjustments. The underspend is £0.9million higher than the £915k (0.8%) reported at the end of financial year 23-24.

	2024-25 Budget Variance £000				2023-24 Budget Variance £000	
	Q4	Q3	Q4 v Q3		Q4	YOY Move
SPS	344	2,597	(2,253)		(621)	965
Members	648	475	173		498	150
Officeholders	776	261	515		364	412
Contingency	93	-	93		674	(581)
Total	**1,861**	**3,333**	**(1,472)**		**915**	**946**

Summary Outturn position for the year:

	P12			
	Actual	**Budget**	**Variance**	**Variance**
	£'000	**£'000**	**£'000**	**%**
Parliamentary Service Costs	64,419	64,763	344	0.5
Members Costs	42,721	43,369	648	1.5
Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs	17,721	18,497	776	4.2
Sub Total	**124,861**	**126,629**	1,768	**1.4**
Reserves – SPCB contingency	-	93	93	-
Total SPCB Expenditure	**124,861**	**126,722**	**1,861**	**1.5**

SPS Expenditure for the year:

	P12 Results

	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Staff costs	40,354	40,733	379	0.9%
Staff Related Costs	894	918	24	2.6%
Property Costs	9,916	9,939	23	0.2%
Running Costs	7,356	7,514	158	2.1%
Projects	5,898	5,659	(239)	(4.2%)
SPS Expenditure	**64,419**	**64,763**	**345**	**0.5%**

Staff Costs

Staff costs within the parliamentary service are £379k underspent for the year on a budget of over £40.7million which is a variance of less than 1%. A review of the methodology used to calculate the staff holiday accrual resulted in a late adjustment, reducing the balance (and increasing the reported underspend) by £340k. This is purely an accounting adjustment and has no cash impact. Vacancies continue to be managed carefully in order to ensure that staff costs are kept within target.

Staff Related Costs

Staff-related costs are £24k below budget for the year with travel and subsistence costs underspending by £46k despite the budgets being held at 2023/24 levels. In-person attendance at external training and conferences has reduced, partly due to staff capacity and partly due to the availability of training content on the new Reed learning platform.

Property Costs

Property costs underspent by £23k for the year which is 0.2% under budget with underspends in cleaning costs and consultancy offsetting a small, planned maintenance overspend.

Running Costs

Other running costs were £158k (2.1%) below budget with underspends in postage charges, consultancy costs, publications, print & design and equipment maintenance offsetting overspends relating to the ongoing Visitor Centre Shop losses, stationery and the increasing cost of software licences which continue to rise at above inflation levels.

Projects

Projects overspent by (£239k) in 2024-25 compared to an underspend of £287k at the end of 2023-24. This was a planned overspend, with approvals from the project pipeline made late in the year in order to help manage expected underspends in other areas. This has created headroom in 2025-26 to fund the slippage in the Business Bulletin and Official Report projects.

Portfolio	Actual	Current Budget	Variance	Variance	Original Budget	Budget Virements
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000
BIT and Digital	1,915	1,937	22	1.1%	2,034	(97)
FM Building & Equipment	1,761	1,637	(124)	(7.6%)	1,206	431
BEMS	1,437	1,439	2	(0.1%)	1,416	23
Broadcasting	255	70	(185)	(264.1%)	60	10
Other	530	576	45	(7.9%)	510	66
Unallocated budget	-	-	-	-	66	(66)
Total projects	**5,898**	**5,659**	**(239)**	**(4.2%)**	**5,292**	**367**

Categories:	Actual	Current Budget	Variance	Variance	Original Budget	Budget virements
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	£'000
Capital projects	1,695	1,618	(77)	(4.8%)	1,550	68
Revenue projects	4,203	4,041	(163)	(4.0%)	3,742	299
Total projects	**5,898**	**5,659**	**(239)**	**(4.2%)**	**5,292**	**367**

BIT & Digital

The early recognition of slippage causing underspends in the OR and Business Bulletin project, and Corporate Systems coming in at cost, allowed £97k (net) to be returned to IAG for reallocation and for other smaller BIT projects to be funded.

FM & BEMS

FM, as in previous years, identified additional projects from the planning pipeline which could be delivered in Q3 and Q4, thus helping to manage the overall underspend and create headroom in the 2025/26 budget.

Members and Officeholders

Members Costs

Members underspent by £648k at year-end an increase of £150k from the 2023/24 underspend of £498k. The main areas of under/overspend are:

Provision (underspends)	£000k		Provision (overspends)	£000k
Office Cost Provision	212		MSP Staff Death in Service	(69)
Staff Cost Provision	204		MSP Security improvements	(56)
Engagement Provision	70		Winding up/Starting up	(26)
Edinburgh Accommodation Provision	69		Members' Salaries	(19)
MSP Staff ERNIC/Pension	69			
Temporary Staff provision	63			
IEC Provision	58			
Party Assistance	53			
MSP Travel Provision	20			
Other	-			
Total	**818**			**-170**

Officeholders

| Year-end Underspend	24-25	23-24	YOY Movement
	£000	£000	£000
OH Contingency (including Patient Safety Commissioner)	398	225	173
Scottish Human Rights Commission	130	0	130
Scottish Information Commissioner	119	71	48
Scottish Biometrics Commissioner	53	0	53
Ethical Standards Commissioner for Scotland	33	52	(19)
Commissioner for Children and Young People	19	12	7
Electoral Commission	14	0	14
Standards Commission for Scotland	10	2	8
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	0	2	(2)
Total	**776**	**364**	**412**

As part of the Spring Budget Revision Officeholders budgets were increased by £0.2 million for transfers for additional responsibilities/work from the Scottish Government. (£90k for the SPSO, £51k for the SHRC and £60k for the new Patient Safety Commissioner).

Quarter 4 2024/25 Workforce Report

Attendance

Attendance Rate %

Average for Quarter	% Change from Q3
95.8%	▲ **0.8%**

95.1%   95.8%   96.0%

95.3% (Jan)   96.2% (Feb)   95.9% (Mar)

- ■ % of Available Hours Attended
- – – Target (Pre C-19)
- – – Q4 (2024/5) Average
- — Q4 (2023/4) Average
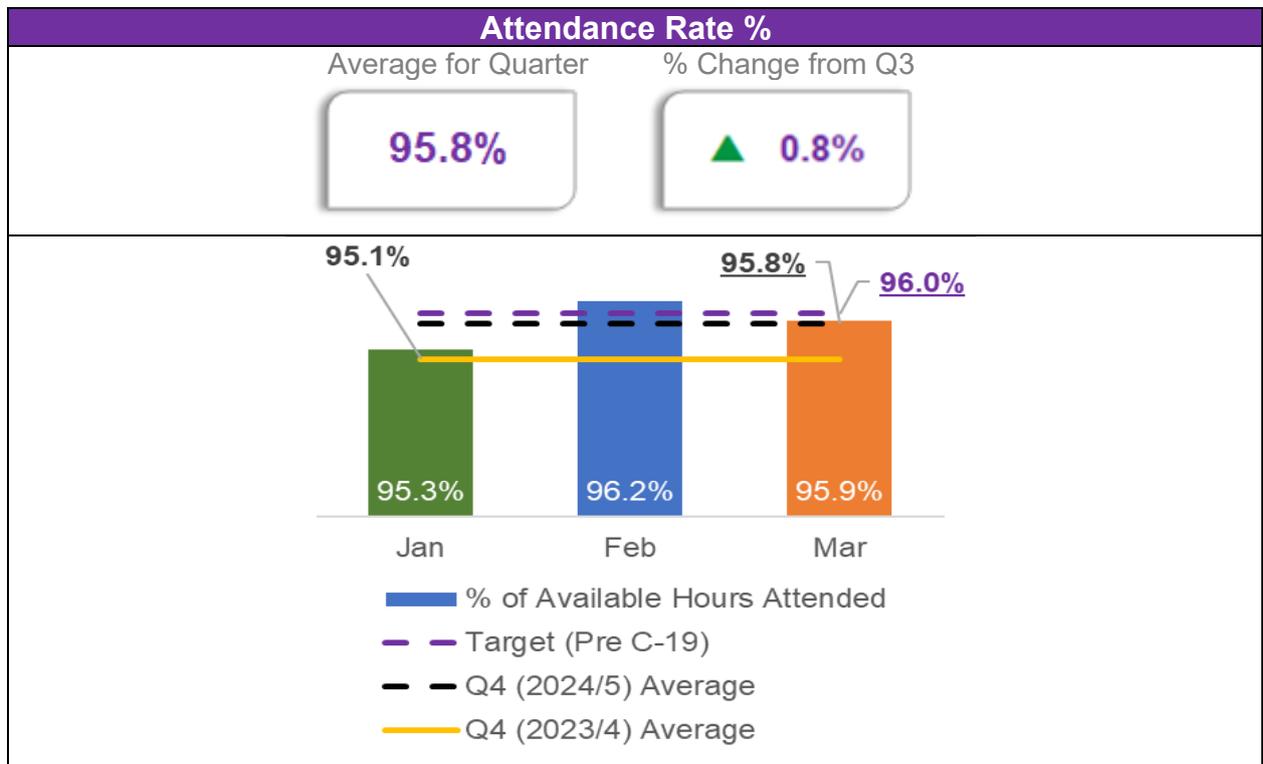
The Attendance Rate was 95.8% which was an increase of 0.8 percentage points on the previous Quarter. This compares favourably against the Attendance Rate for the same period in 2023/24 which was 95.1%.

Sickness Rate %

% of Avail Hours	% Change vs. Q3
3.8%	▼ **0.8%**

4.5%   3.8%

4.2% (Jan)   3.2% (Feb)   3.9% (Mar)

- ■ % - Sick leave
- – – Q4 2024/25 Av
- — Previous Year Rate

Sickness Categories

| GP Fit Note **44.6%** | Self Cert **55.4%** |

- Minor Illnesses: 46%
- Mental Health, Stress and Fatigue Syndromes: 26%
- Acute Medical Conditions: 14%
- Operation and Post-Operative Recovery: 6%
- Musculoskeletal Conditions: 4%
- Other: 4%
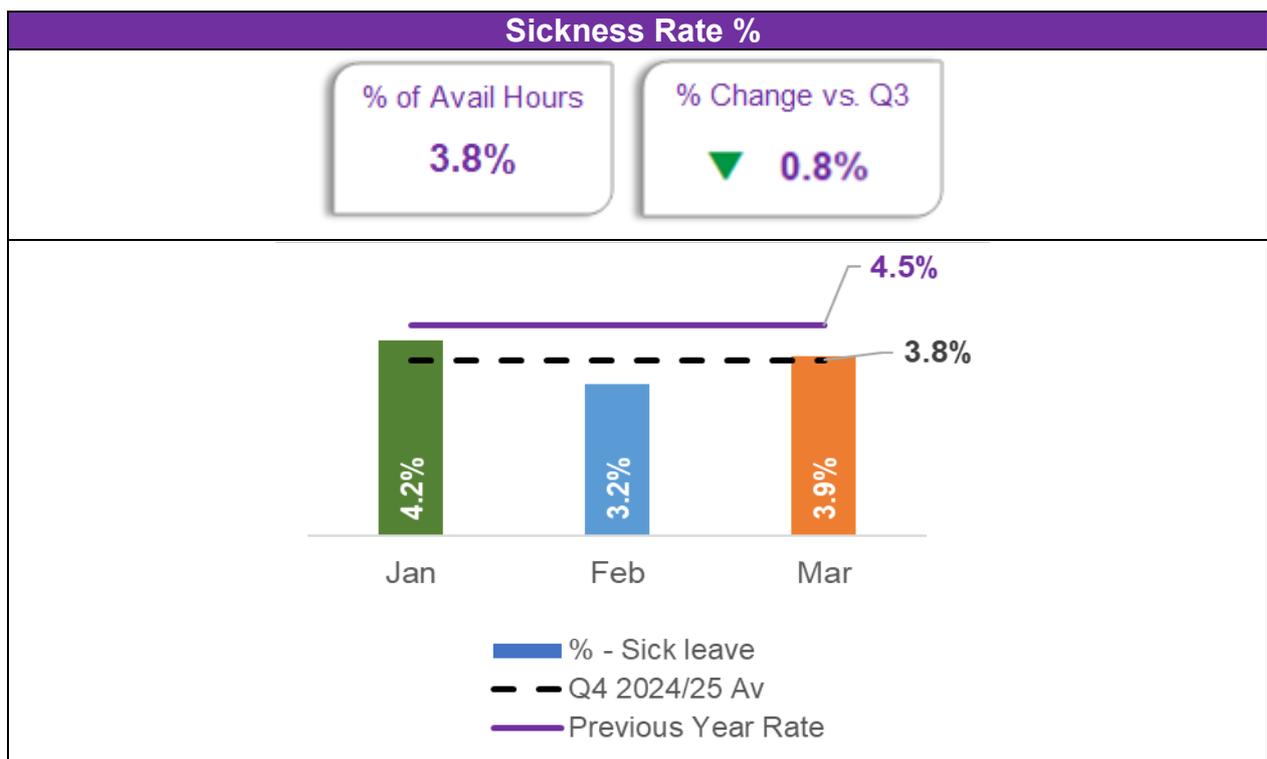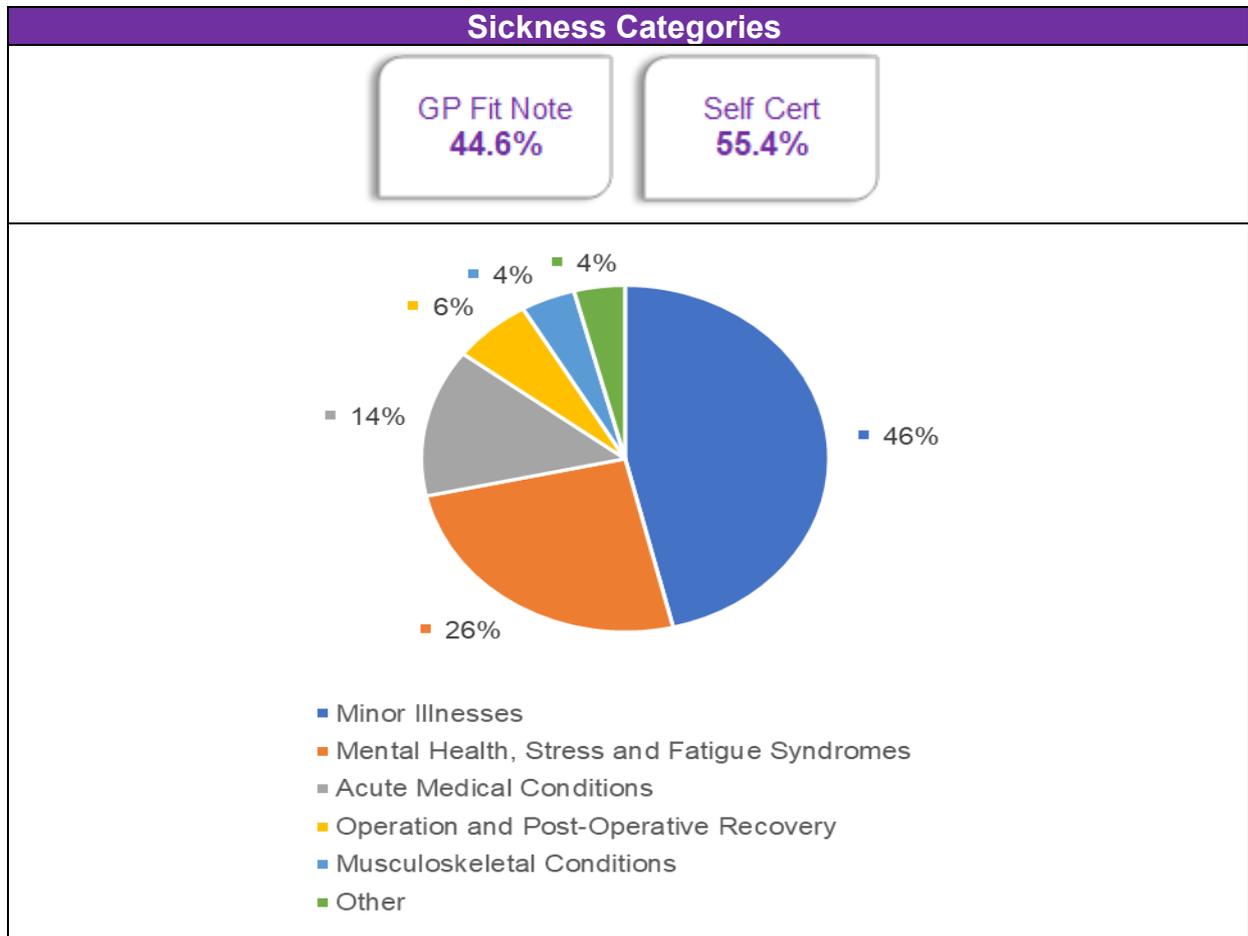
The Sickness Absence rate has reduced to 3.8%, down from 4.6% in Quarter 3. The largest proportion of sickness absence continues to be due to Minor Illness. The proportion of absence due to Operation/Post-operative Recovery has reduced to 6% from 24% in Quarter 3.

Turnover

Turnover Rate %
Cumulative Turnover – To End Q4
7.1%
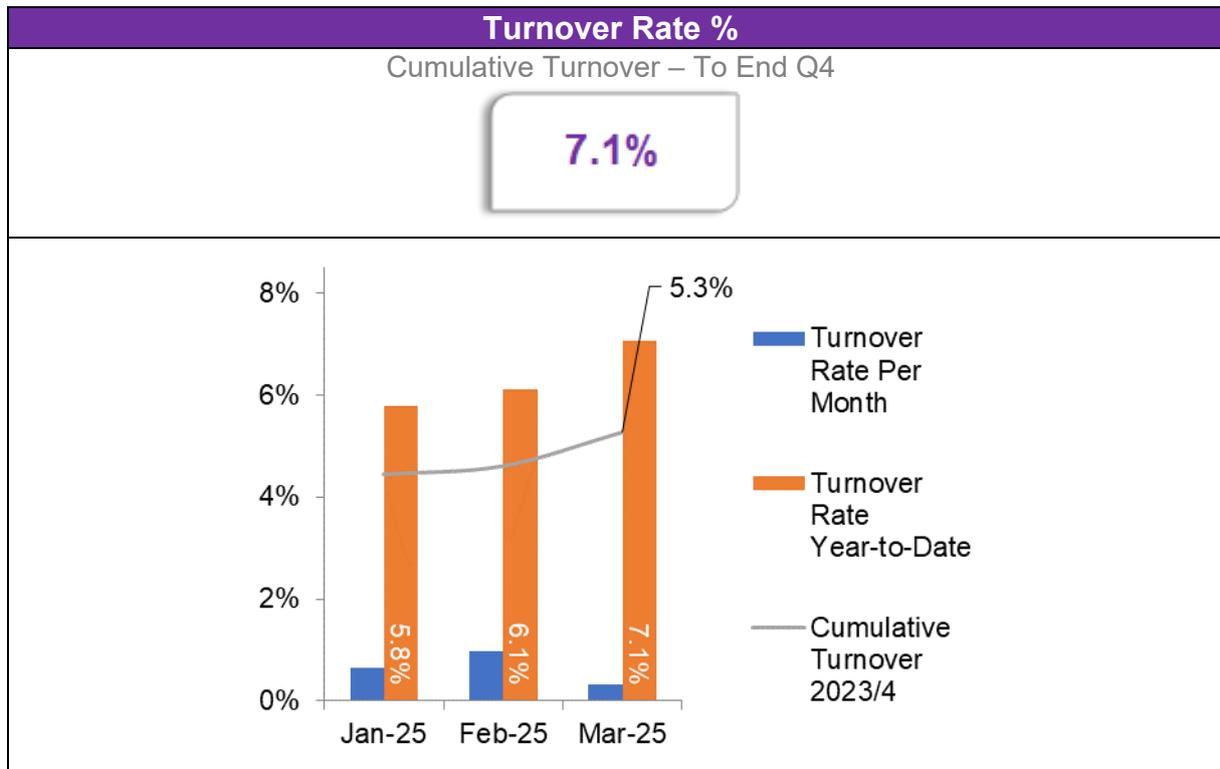
The cumulative Turnover Rate for the year was 7.1% compared to the previous year which was 5.3%. There were 9 Leavers in Quarter 4 and the average headcount across the period was 633.

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.
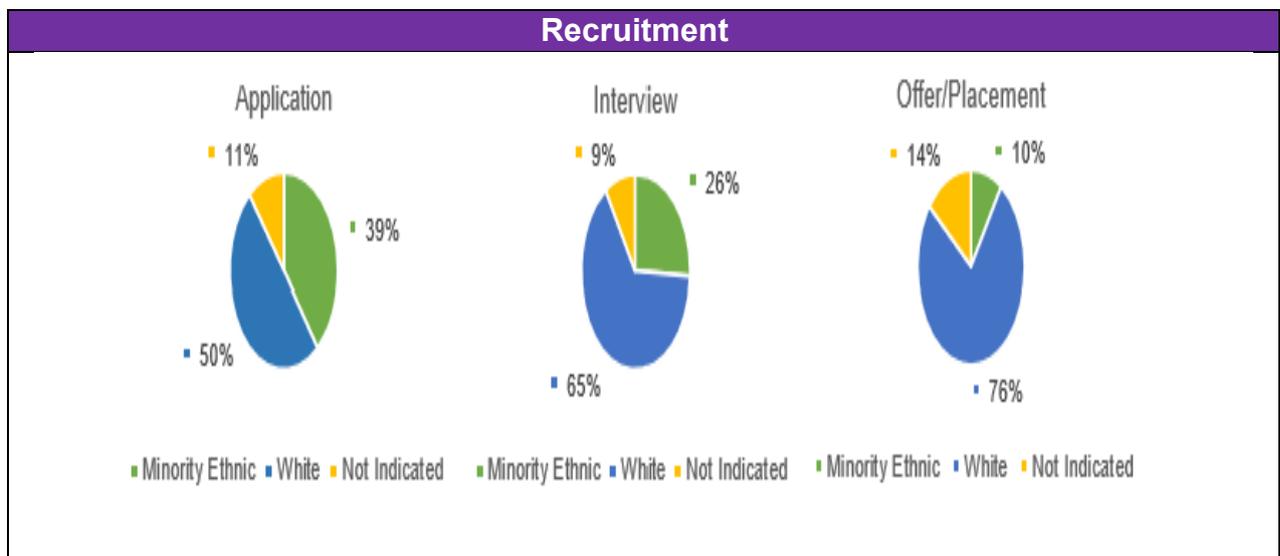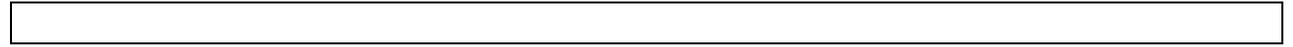
Fifteen recruitment campaigns were carried out in Quarter 4. Of the 21
appointments made, 2 were to a candidate from a minority ethnic background.