Chief Executive's Report to the SPCB March 2025

Introduction

This Report looks at activities across the organisation from December 2024 to March 2025. It also incorporates the Quarter 3 Finance, Performance and Workforce Data reports.

Items highlighted include:

- An overview of Chamber and Committee Office work
- The Personal Cyber Assistance Service for Members
- Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting

David McGill
Clerk/Chief Executive

Parliamentary Business Directorate

Chamber Office

Non-Government Bills Unit

The Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Bill was introduced on 17 December and the Dog Theft (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 17 February.

The team continues to work towards the delivery of the introduction of the remaining Bills to be scrutinised this session by the deadline of the start of June 2025. As of 4 March, of the Members Bills which have already been introduced, six are at Stage One. The Welfare of Dogs (Scotland) Bill passed Stage Three on 23 January and is awaiting Royal Assent.

Business Team

The Business Team organised the first test of a hybrid roll call vote in the Chamber on 17 February. This was supported by colleagues from across the Parliament who participated both online and in person. A list of learning points was collated from the test and has fed into improvements in how it could be run if required.

A test of a fully virtual sitting was conducted on the same day. This allowed Broadcasting staff and the Business Team to identify improvements and supported the development of the guidance for the future.

Both of these tests were important to ongoing work being undertaken within the Group to strengthen resilience and preparedness in relation to the continuing delivery of business in various scenarios.

The Business Team and BIT have worked together to develop and test improvements to the Digital Votes system. These improvements have been successful and will support a test of 30 second votes in the period through until the Easter recess. This will mean that the Parliament can now return to the pre-Covid position of a standard vote being open for a 30 second period.

Broadcasting

In addition to the resilience work mentioned above, the Broadcasting team has focused on its commitment to continuous improvement in service, accessibility and the preservation of parliamentary records, such as:

Enhanced Accessibility

Building on the overwhelmingly positive response to our subtitling pilot in the Chamber, with 72% of users rating the service as good or excellent, this service is now being extended to all committee room feeds. This expansion

will significantly increase accessibility, enabling greater participation in parliamentary proceedings.

Improved Audience Experience

In response to user feedback, a new audio-only service has been launched on the SPTV website. This allows users to conveniently follow debates while commuting, expanding access to parliamentary proceedings.

Archive Preservation and Digitization

The three-year project to transfer over 15,000 video archives from an obsolete file type using in-house resources was successfully completed in February. This cost-effective solution has ensured the long-term preservation of these valuable records.

To further safeguard our parliamentary history, a project plan is being developed to digitize the remaining 4,000 video tapes from the Parliament's early years within the next financial year. This initiative will ensure the physical integrity of these records for future generations.

Scrutiny

Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

The Committee has continued with part 2 of its Review of the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement inquiry, focusing on trade in services, youth mobility, AI, and touring artists; and including an engagement event (working with PACT colleagues) to hear from young people on their experience of youth mobility under the TCA.

The Committee completed this year's budget scrutiny, taking evidence from the culture sector, Creative Scotland, and the Scottish Government.

It also had its annual session with the BBC, including on this occasion the Director General. A follow-up letter to Mr Davie addressed BBC Scotland's coverage of the Scottish Parliament and the lack of coverage of the work of committees; clarification of the network spend in Scotland; progress with coverage of the Scotland men's teams international matches; and concerns relating to Scottish production quotas.

In the week of the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and in light of recent geo-political developments, the Committee received an update from the Consul of Ukraine, covering among other matters the support for displaced Ukrainians living in Scotland.

Criminal Justice Committee

During the reporting period, the Committee commenced scrutiny of the Criminal Justice Modernisation and Abusive Domestic Behaviour Reviews (Scotland) Bill and held further evidence sessions in relation to improving the

way that Police Scotland looks after people in the community with mental health needs.

The Committee also heard from representatives of the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner on their work programme as part of the regular scrutiny of such bodies by the Committee.

The Committee also met informally and privately with two survivors of rape who briefed Members on proposed amendments to the Victims, Witnesses and Justice Reform Bill. This is part of the Committee's efforts to engage in a sensitive way with victims and survivors of such crimes.

Education and Fair Work Committee

The Committee held the concluding evidence sessions of its inquiry looking at Scotland's City Region and Growth Deals. It took evidence from the Secretary of State for Scotland, the first member of the new UK Government to give evidence to this Parliament. Conclusions and recommendations will be considered in due course. The Committee also held a business planning session to map work and agree scrutiny priorities for the remainder of the session. New scrutiny work commenced includes evidence-taking on the Scottish Government's New Deal for Business, to be followed by sessions on Scotland's skills development landscape. On skills scrutiny, the clerking team has been central in liaising with the Education, Children and Young People Committee to propose a co-ordinated and complementary approach to skills scrutiny that both committees were able to sign up to.

In addition to inquiry work, the Committee has continued its budget scrutiny and consideration of LCMs and secondary legislation. Recently during consideration of a suite of SSIs, it took the unusual step of inviting the Minister and officials back to the Committee as it had not been satisfied with responses to its questions. High quality briefing material, provided by SPICe colleagues, enabled Members to engage effectively with the key issues.

Towards the end of March, the Committee anticipates being referred primary legislation.

Education, Children and Young People Committee

The Committee has had an extremely busy quarter, balancing a range of proactive and reactive work. A series of scrutiny sessions are being undertaken on the Promise, looking at workforce issues, including the recruitment and retention of social workers and other matters impacting on local authorities' abilities to fulfil the Promise, as well as hearing from whole family support practitioners, examining the role that preventative services can play in avoiding families reaching crisis point. A further informal session on voice is planned for the coming weeks, which will seek the views of care experienced young people involved in boards/steering groups linked to the Promise.

Concerns about the 2024 Higher History exam, led to several high-profile evidence sessions this quarter, attracting widespread media coverage.

The Committee's work programme continues to be legislation-heavy, with the Committee completing its Stage 2 scrutiny of the Scottish Languages Bill and agreeing its Stage 1 report for a Member's Bill, the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill this quarter. In relation to the Outdoor Education legislation, Members could not reach agreement about the General Principles, so this was voted upon, with the Convener using his casting vote to recommend that the General Principles be agreed to.

The Committee also scrutinised a large number of SSIs this quarter, mainly focused on the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020.

Pre-budget scrutiny this year focused on college and university funding, looking at the current funding settlements, but also considering the sustainability of funding in the years ahead, taking into account the impact of tightening public spending and potential upcoming reforms.

The Scottish Youth Parliament joined the Committee for a wide-ranging session in late January, covering topics including youth work, mental health and gender-based violence.

At the end of February, the Committee began a mini-inquiry into Widening Access, looking at progress against targets to ensure that by 2030, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of full-time, first-degree entrants to Higher Education. The output of this work will be agreed post-Easter recess.

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

During the reporting period, the Committee successfully completed stage 2 of the Regulation of Legal Services (Scotland) Bill, which saw it dispose of around 700 amendments, a significant number of which were Scottish Government amendments.

The Committee also heard from representatives of the Scottish Human Rights Commission on their work programme as part of the regular scrutiny of officeholders by this Committee.

Finance and Public Administration Committee

The Committee undertook scrutiny of the Scottish Budget during December 2024 to February 2025. Key conclusions included continued concern regarding a lack of medium-term and longer-term financial planning, repeated delays to publishing key strategic financial documents, and the quality of Scottish Government responses to FPAC's reports. Additional information is also being sought from the SPCB in its future budget bids.

The Committee has just begun a focussed inquiry into how the budget process has worked in practice this parliamentary session, including whether its four core objectives are being met. It also wants to hear from Committees on whether the guidance, support and briefings provided to support them in their budget scrutiny remain fit for purpose. A call for views closes towards the end of March and the Committee expects to take evidence in April/May and publish its report in June 2025.

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

The Committee began 2025 by hearing from the Minister for Housing and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government on the Budget. The Minister for Housing's evidence session included questions on the ongoing housing emergency, contributing to the Committee's ongoing housing inquiry. A Committee report will be published during Quarter 2.

The Committee also heard from the Acting Minister for Climate Action on heat in buildings, including on Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) reform and progress of a Heat in Buildings Bill. The Committee's work on heat in buildings, including the anticipated Climate Change Plan, supports the Conveners Group strategic priority of cross committee working to progress issues such as delivery of net zero targets.

In anticipation of Stage 2 of the Housing Bill, the Committee took evidence on amendments the Scottish Government committed to making at Stage 1 on rent controls. The Committee anticipates considering the Bill at Stage 2 following the Easter recess.

The Committee initiated a short inquiry on council tax. It agreed an initial focus of reform of the current system and revaluation. It has heard from various stakeholders over two meetings and concluded with a session with the Scottish Government and COSLA.

The end of 2024 saw the Committee consider the work of the Ethical Standards Commissioner, the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman and the Scottish Housing Regulator. It has written to all three with its conclusions from this work in the early part of 2025.

Public Audit Committee

During the reporting period, the Committee took evidence from the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) on its 2023/24 audit of the Water Industry Commission for Scotland (WICS). This built on scrutiny undertaken on the 2022/23 audit which found evidence of unacceptable use of public funds by senior officials at WICS. In February, the Committee heard from WICS and the Scottish Government. It has previously agreed to draft a report with its findings which it intends to publish following conclusion of its evidence taking.

In November and January, the Committee also undertook scrutiny of the AGS report, NHS in Scotland 2024 where it heard from the AGS and thereafter from the Scottish Government.

In December, the Committee took evidence from AGS on its 2023/24 audit of Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow (Holdings) Limited (FMPG). The report highlighted uncertainty around FMPG's longer term financial sustainability, significant changes in senior staff and raised concerns around internal governance arrangements. In January, the Committee took evidence from FMPG, and the Scottish Government then wrote to FMPG for further information to inform its scrutiny. The Committee plans to draft a report on its findings.

During December and January, the Committee undertook scrutiny of the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts. It also undertook scrutiny on the Government's approach to fiscal sustainability and reform.

After February recess, the Committee will take evidence from the AGS and National Audit Office (NAO) on their joint report on Administration of Scottish Income Tax 2023/24. It has agreed to hold an informal briefing with HMRC and the Scottish Government ahead of its formal session with them in March. Later in February, it will take evidence on the AGS report Sustainable Transport – reducing car use.

SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee

The Committee began taking evidence in January 2025. During this reporting period, the Committee has heard from each of the SPCB supported bodies, focusing on the five themes of:

- Role of SPCB Supported Bodies
- Criteria for creating new supported bodies
- SPCB supported bodies model
- Effective functioning
- Accountability and scrutiny mechanisms

The Committee also ran a call for views that closed on 24 February. The Committee will continue to take evidence through March and April.

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

During the reporting period, the Committee concluded its budget scrutiny. The Committee also heard from representatives from Social Security Scotland.

In January, the Committee agreed its approach to taking evidence from victims of domestic abuse for its upcoming inquiry into the financial considerations of leaving an abusive relationship. The Committee also agreed its report on its post-legislative scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. In February, the Committee held a roundtable discussion on the reasons for pensioner poverty and how these could be addressed, and

scheduled an evidence session in March on how digital exclusion impacts on pensioner poverty.

The Committee undertook cross-committee work on tackling drug deaths and drug harm in February. Members made a request to the Bureau to schedule a Chamber debate on the recommendations made by the People's Panel.

In March, the Committee expects to consider stage 2 amendments to the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

SPICe

In the run up to the Scottish budget, the SPICe Financial Scrutiny Unit published a range of blogs exploring issues relevant to the budget. An "initial reaction" blog was published on the day of the budget, followed by a more detailed briefing two days later and a visual "Budget in 10 charts" ahead of the Stage 1 debate. A blog summarising the Scottish Government responses to committee pre-budget scrutiny was also published ahead of the committee debate. These resources were widely used in the Parliamentary debates and by SPICe colleagues in supporting committee scrutiny.

On 22 and 23 January, two new researchers from the Research and Information Service at the Northern Ireland Assembly visited SPICe to learn more about SPICe services, to meet their subject counterparts (education, EU and international affairs) and to share experiences.

International Relations Office

During the reporting period, the Presiding Officer hosted a number of diplomatic meetings in Holyrood including with the newly arrived Consuls from Türkiye and Spain. The Presiding Officer also hosted the Speaker of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha). This was the first such visit to Holyrood by a Speaker from India's Federal Parliament.

Operations and Digital Directorate

Events and Exhibitions

The 11th annual **Scottish Public Service Awards** organised by Holyrood Communications and co-hosted by the Presiding Officer and the Deputy First Minister was held on Tuesday 10 December 2024. The event celebrated the rich and unique diversity of public life in Scotland and the vital relationships that cut across departmental, geographic and institutional boundaries.

The Scottish Parliament's annual **Christmas Carol Service** hosted by the Presiding Officer took place on Wednesday 18 December 2024. The event included carols and readings from Members and Scottish Parliament staff. This was the first year to include a reading in BSL from our partners DeafAction. The evening also included performances from the Scottish

Parliament Choir, Royal Mile Primary School, Calton Consort and Newtongrange Silver Band.

The annual **Consular Corps' Burns Supper** hosted by the Presiding Officer took place on Wednesday 22 January. Members along with members of the Scottish Consular Corps came together to celebrate Scotland's National Bard in an evening that featured traditional Scottish music and poetry from two Young Burnsian 2024 winners and featured traditional songs performed by Susie and Jim Malcolm.

The Presiding Officer chaired the Debating Chamber session as part of the Scottish Parliament celebrating **International Women's Day** on Saturday 8 March. Held in partnership with the Scottish Women's Convention it brough together women from across Scotland to celebrate and discuss this year's conference theme, Women and Peace – past and future, as it applies to their personal life at home, at work, in the community, and women's lives globally.

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 third quarter (October – December) of financial year 2024/25.

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 2024. This contract 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 3 period being £5,047.91, or an average of approximately £2.47 per SIM per month.

Like previous quarters, the Quarter 3 cost compares favourably with the cost incurred under the previous contract for the same period in last financial year (Quarter 3 Financial Year 2023/24 which was £12,376.33).

Personal Cyber Assistance Service

To coincide with Scottish Cyber Week (24 February - 2 March), the Business Information Technology Office, working with the UK Government's Defending Democracy Task Force, launched the Personal Cyber Assistance Service for Members of the Scottish Parliament.

The service provides hands on support for parliamentarians' personal devices and personal accounts on a one-to-one basis, and offers Members practical, impartial advice and guidance on how to improve cyber hygiene.

The service will continue to run until the end of March with uptake and feedback from Members being very positive.

Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting Duties

The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 requires certain public sector bodies, including the Scottish Parliament to report specific information relating to climate change mitigation, carbon footprint data, climate change governance and climate change adaptation. Inputs from various offices, such as Facilities Management, Procurement, SPICe, People and Culture and Visitor Services are required to complete the submission to the Scottish Government, co-ordinated by the Sustainability Team. Thank you to all those who provided information.

The latest reports for all those required to submit are now available online.

Performance Report

2024-25 Q3: October to December 2024

Performance Overview

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

Delivering excellence in our parliamentary services

Key Performance Indicators

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
Members services and resources Status: **Amber**	Core Members' services operating within targets	On track	**Not on track**	↓	Total number of major IT incidents declared that impacted service (target 0) – amber - Two major incidents in November 2024 disrupted internet connectivity at Holyrood due to a firewall software bug. The issue was quickly resolved with a software patch, ensuring no further disruptions. Parliamentary business continued with minimal delay. Members' expenses paid within 10 working days (target 95%) – red – achieved 83% - due to a planned payment pause during the Oracle Fusion transition in October 2024, with 52% of payments made within 10 working days. Performance improved to 97% in November and 100% in December 2024. No further action required. Note, overall status is reported as Amber as the Members' expenses KPI was red due to a planned payment pause due to the system implementation which was a necessity.
Scrutiny and debate Status: **Green**	Parliamentary business takes place as scheduled	No disruption	**Business disrupted**	→	Level of disruption to Chamber or Committee business - amber – On 19 November 2024, chamber business experienced a brief disruption with a minor delay in the start time due to the firewall issues affecting internet connectivity for network users at Holyrood. Despite this, all parliamentary business took place as scheduled.
	Parliamentary business services operating within targets	On track	**On track**	→	

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
Public Involvement Status: **Green**	Public feedback surveys	On track	**Amber**	↓	People feel their views will be valued by the committee (5-point scale) – amber – achieved 3.5 - Most responses related to the people's panel on tackling Scotland's drug deaths and harm. At this stage, the panel had not met the cross-committee and has heard significant evidence about recommendations on drug harm not being implemented.
	Digital engagement	On track	**On track**	→	
Corporate services & governance Status: **Amber**	% Outturn against SPCB budget for financial year* (year to date)	0-2.5% under budget	**3.6%**	↓	As at end of Q3, the SPCB budget outturn shows a £3.3m (3.6%) underspend for the year-to-date, against a target of 0-2.5%. A review found that P9 costs are understated due to issues with the new financial system and delays in implementing the Enterprise Performance Management (budget management and reporting system) have impeded financial performance reviews and masked issues in the purchase-to-pay process. This will be addressed urgently in preparation for year-end. The full year out-turn remains forecast as within target. Please refer to the finance report for further details. Due to the significance of this KPI, the overall status for corporate services & governance is Amber.
	Corporate payment performance	99%	**99.8%**	→	
	Internal audit reports (limited or no assurance opinions)	0	**0**	→	
	Fulfilment of compliance obligations	Compliant	**Compliant**	→	

Our service	Measure	Target	Result	Trend	Exceptions
	Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions compared to 2005-06 baseline*	64%	68.1% (YTD)	→	
Working environment Status: **Amber**	SPCB staff turnover*	10%	5.7% (YTD)	→	Note, 2.1% for Q3
	SPCB staff attendance rate	96%	95.0%	↓	Attendance Amber - decreased to 95% in Q3, falling below target each month (96.2% Q2). A slight recovery was noted in December 2024. The decline is mainly due to an organisation wide increase in sickness absence, primarily from minor illnesses and not specific to any individual business area. Please refer to the workforce report for further details. Note, attendance and amber was reported as overall red in Q1 – as the KPI was amber for 3 consecutive quarters.
	SPCB staff unplanned absence rate	<4%	5.0%	↓	
	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 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	Q3 completed milestones
Conveners Group Session 6 Priorities Callum Thomson SRO Irene Fleming	**Green** →	• N/a
Public Engagement Strategy Review Lorna Foreman	**Green** →	• The Public Engagement Group approved the Public Engagement Strategy Review remit and methodology.
Public Service Delivery Lorna Foreman	**Green** →	• Agreed scope of work with relevant Office Heads.
Scottish Parliament Elections 2026 David McGill SRO Allan Campbell	Not started	• Programme to start in January 2025.
Constitutional Issues Callum Thomson SRO Judith Morrison	**Red** ↓	• N/a
Exceptions: Red – timescales – Review opportunities to strengthen Parliament's scrutiny of devolved legislation in light of the UK Government's manifesto commitments - the milestone timeframe has been extended from December 2024 to April 2025 due to external delays. The Board noted little progress on the new devolution agenda, making a December 2024 review unproductive. The review period is extended for evidence collection, with the analysis report expected by June 2025.		

Adapting for a sustainable future

Overall status: **Green**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q3 completed milestones
Net Zero Infrastructure Programme Lynsey Hamill		
Installation of Building Energy Management System (BEMS) SRO Alan Durward	**Green** ↑	• Completed phase 2 including MSP Block and Canongate/Bagpipes.
Strategic building infrastructure investments SRO Lynsey Hamill	**Amber** → 2nd quarter	• SET updated on outline project governance and scope - reduce/enable/transition in December 2024.
Exceptions: Amber – timescales and budget – the report on the heating solution to SET has been delayed from March to May 2025 due to other priority work taking precedence as we approach year end. This work is proactive and can be delayed. The consultancy will assess technical solutions for a net-zero option by March 2025, with their findings reviewed and reported to SET by May 2025. This minor delay does not affect the overall target date of 2035. Additionally, the interim investment decision date has been brought forward to March 2026 from May 2026. There is a 2024-25 budget change, with funds brought forward from 2025-26. While the overall budget may change, there is currently insufficient information to determine the full impact over the project's lifespan.		
Parliament of the Future Michelle Hegarty SRO William Heigh	**Green** →	• SET updated on engagement plan with SPS, Members & their staff and the public in October 2024. • SPCB updated on approach in November 2024. • Launched Parliament of the Future at SPS staff event in December 2024.

A values-driven culture

Overall status: **Amber**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q3 completed milestones
Power Imbalances Lorna Foreman		
General SRO Lorna Foreman	**Red** ↓	• N/a
Exceptions: Red - timescales – An initial discussion on power imbalances and an update on the Speaker's Conference took place at the SPCB planning day in September 2024. However, the timescale for the Reflections paper and detailed discussion has been extended from December 2024 to June 2025. The deadline was extended due to other pressing priorities.		
Dignity at work policy review SRO Neil Mackie	**Green** →	• Completed the review of the Dignity at Work Policy in December 2024.
Positive Action Lorna Foreman SRO Rachel Fishlock	**Green** NEW	• N/a

Operational excellence

Overall status: **Red**

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q3 completed milestones
Workforce Planning Lorna Foreman		
Strategic workforce plan SRO Neil Mackie	**Green** →	• SET discussion on succession planning in December 2024.
Shorter Working Hours SRO Neil Mackie	**Green** →	• Developed the framework in partnership with TUS, Office Heads, and Team Leaders. The workplace consultancy was procured in October 2024 with the framework agreed as part of the contract. • SET workshop facilitated by workplace consultancy in November 2024.
Corporate Systems Programme Phase 1 Lead & SRO Sara Glass	**Red** ↓	• Finance System live on 1 October 2024. • HCM/Payroll live on 1 November 2024.
Exceptions: Red – timescales and outcomes & benefits – with two issues still requiring resolution - The EPM of the finance system is yet to be delivered with no clear timeline (delayed by Scottish Government). This conflicts with the planned programme closure at the end of March 2025. To address this, discussions are underway to decouple the EPM project from the main programme, allowing it to continue post programme closure. This would be managed alongside other follow-on actions outlined in the closure report. In addition, for the Human Capital Management/Payroll system - testing continues for MyCSP for reporting in March 2025. The programme will remain red until the next steps and required actions are agreed upon.		
Corporate Systems Programme Phase 2 Lead & SRO Lorna Foreman	Not started	• Programme to start in April 2025.

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q3 completed milestones
Official Report Digital Transformation Programme Callum Thomson SRO Tracey White	**Red** ↓	• N/a
Exceptions: Red - timescales and budget and amber - outcomes and benefits - The procurement tender and system provider identification has been delayed from November 2024 to March 2025. Negotiations with a suitable supplier are ongoing to fit requirements within budget. As a result, the business case and contract award are postponed from January to March 2025. The go live date remains unchanged. An underspend of £88,000 is expected for 2024-25, with the 2025-26 budget increased by £110,000 to £386,000. The overall programme cost is estimated at £480,000. SRO and Chief Information Officer have been notified to reallocate funds from 2025-26.		
Business Bulletin Improvements Callum Thomson/Lynsey Hamill SRO Catherine Fergusson	**Red** → 3rd qtr	• Completed Business Programme (Project Phase 1) technical build and initial testing in December 2024 • Completed phase 2 project road map & project plan in December 2024.
Exceptions: Red – timescales – the resource issues are now resolved and the Business Bulletin is on track to go live by October 2025. However, as a result of replanning, key milestones have been adjusted and the overall project end date revised from November to December 2025. Key decision points will be monitored to ensure progress. Business Managers have been advised of the upcoming minor changes which Members will see – no concerns raised. The project is expected to return to green in Q4.		
Windows 10 Upgrade Lynsey Hamill SRO Alan Balharrie	**Amber** ↑	• Project board agreed initial Windows 11 transition plan in October 2024.
Exceptions: Amber - timescales - The completion of Windows 11 testing and approval of the build and deployment plan were delayed from December 2024 to January 2025 due to the switch from Trend Anti-Virus to Microsoft Defender. This delay is not expected to impact the overall deployment timeline. User testing will run until the end of January 2025 with daily communications established to quickly address any issues.		
Cyber Security Lynsey Hamill SROs Alan Balharrie & Tommy Lynch	**Red**	• N/a
Exceptions: Red - timescales & resources - The revised approach to the Cyber Resilience Improvement Plan has been delayed from January to April 2025, whilst an approach on how to approach the business continuity response was developed. This does not affect		

Key activity	Overall status & trend	Q3 completed milestones
technical work but impacts how we would respond to a cyber-attack. A governance proposal will be shared with SET ahead of April 2025.		
Lobbying Register David McGill SRO Billy McLaren	**Green** NEW	• N/a

Q3 2024-25 Finance Report – SPCB
Executive Summary

Year to Date Budget Variance

	YTD Budget Variance £000 2024-25			YTD Budget Variance £000 2023-24	
	Q3	Q2	Movement (Quarterly)	Q3	Movement (Year on Year)
SPS	2,597	916	1,681	566	2,031
Members	475	153	322	975	(500)
Officeholders	261	340	(79)	(26)	287
Total	**3,333**	**1,410**	**1,924**	**1,515**	**1,818**

SPCB expenditure is £3.3million (3.6%) below budget as at Q3. The underspend has increased by £1.9million from the end of Q2, is higher than the 2.5% target and is £1.8million higher than this time last year.

Processing issues associated with the transition to the new financial system have however resulted in an understatement of the reported P9 costs for SPS Running Costs, Property costs and Projects so the *actual* underspend is likely to be less than the amount reported by the system. All other categories of spend - SPS Staff, Members & Officeholders costs - which account for around 80% of the budget - are unaffected by the system issue and are accurate.

The Finance team, together with the business areas have been able to manually prepare a year-end forecast and are confident that the total SPCB full year underspend should be within the 2.5% performance target by the end of March.

Forecast Year End Outturn

We are forecasting a year-end underspend of £1,311k which at 1.05% of budget would be within the performance target of 2.5%. We have identified budget surpluses sufficiently early enough to reallocate over £500k to additional project work, mainly in FM.

2024/25 Forecast Out-turn	£000
SPS	212
Projects	122
Members	475
Officeholders	261
Central contingency	241
Total	**1,311**

SPCB Expenditure Summary Forecast Outturn at Q3:

	Q3 Results					Full Year Forecast		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Out-turn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
Parliamentary Service Costs	*	*	*	*		64,151	334	64,485
Members Costs	30,899	31,374	475	1.5		42,894	475	43,369
Commissioners & Ombudsman Costs	13,212	13,473	261	1.9		18,035	261	18,296
Sub Total	*	*	*	*		**125,080**	**1,070**	**126,150**
Reserves – SPCB contingency	*	*	*	*		-	372	372
Forecast pressures against contingency	*	*	*	*		-	(131)	-
Total SPCB Expenditure	*	*	*	*		**125,080**	**1,311**	**126,521**

We have excluded SPS YTD figures from this table due to the transitional system issues noted above.

SPS Expenditure Q3 Summary Forecast Outturn at Q3:

	Q 3 Results					Full Year Forecast		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Variance		Out-turn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%		£'000	£'000	£'000
Staff costs	30,429	30,315	(114)	(0.4)		40,789	(133)	40,656
Staff Related Costs	*	*	*	*		895	(10)	885
Property Costs	*	*	*	*		9,781	133	9,914
Running Costs	*	*	*	*		7,149	222	7,371
Projects	*	*	*	*		5,537	122	5,659
SPS Expenditure	*	*	*	*		**64,151**	**334**	**64,484**

We have excluded SPS YTD non-staff costs from this table due to the transitional system issues noted above.

SPS Forecast Full Year Out-turn:
SPS year end forecast is £334k underspend compared to a forecasted overspend of (£366k) as at Q2. This is a movement of £700k in the quarter.

	Year-end out-turn as at		Change	
	Q2	**Q3**		
Staff Costs	(615)	(133)	482	Increased movement in staff turnover and increasing vacancy gap recoveries
Staff related costs	74	(10)	(84)	Training underspends are expected to be recover towards the year-end
Property	6	133	127	Prudent forecast due to data uncertainties
Running costs	61	222	161	Prudent forecast due to data uncertainties
Projects	109	122	13	
Total	**(365)**	**334**	**699**	

Staff Costs
The forecast overspend for the year has decreased by £482k from an expected (£615k) in P06 to (£133k) at the end of Q3. This is due to the improvement in recovery of the vacancy gap with staff turnover maintaining a higher rate (compared to 23-24) and other staff changes releasing budget. The projected staffing cost overspend of (£133k) includes (£89k) in the parental leave budget and (£35k) in overtime. This suggests that the core SPS staff budget is on track to recover the full year vacancy gap.

Property Costs
We forecast an underspend of £133k (1.3%) in property costs at the year-end.

Running Costs
Overall, we are forecasting running costs to be around £222k (3%) below the current budget of £7,371k.
Year-end under/over forecasts are:

- **Visitor Centre Shop (£26k)** year-end loss due to a sustained reduction in footfall leading sales being lower than forecast.

- **Payroll Contract £65k** year-end underspend due to the new HR/payroll system costs absorbed into the Corporate systems project and being lower than the old system. This has resulted in lower costs in 25-26 and future years.

- **Mail Services (£45k)** year-end overspend mostly due to mail redirection services for MSP's experiencing higher demand in the current year.

- **Catering and Hospitality (£48k)** overspend principally due to demand from late Chamber sittings.

- **Restaurant Services (£25k)** forecast overspend at year end is a slight improvement on 23-24 which posted a (£39k) overspend.

- **Printing and Design** services forecast a **£39k** underspend at year end related to reduced costs associated with Corporate events and the continuing impact of bringing some of the design service in-house.

There a number of less significant underspends which offset the overspends noted above.

Projects

Portfolio		Outturn	Under/ (Over)	Current Annual Budget
		£'000	**£'000**	**£'000**
BIT & Digital		1,776	324	2,100
FM Building & Equipment		1,625	-104	1,521
BEMS		1,536	-120	1,416
Broadcasting		69	1	70
Other		472	29	501
Unallocated budget		59	-9	50
Total projects		**5,537**	**122**	**5,659**

Categories:		Outturn	Under/(Over)	Current Annual Budget
		£'000	**£'000**	**£'000**
Capital projects		1,563	-13	1,550
Revenue projects		3,915	135	4,050
Unallocated budget		59	0	59
Total projects		**5,537**	**122**	**5,659**

BIT & Digital

BIT is projected to underspend by c£300k due to:

- Delays to the Business Bulletin project related to staff resource gaps. £70-£80k expenditure has been pushed back to 25-26. Overall, the project will cost less than expected.
- £93k in the Official report system project. The procurement has been delayed to allow time to evaluate a product which has significant potential to streamline our Parliamentary Business systems.
- This underspend has created Budget headroom to fund an additional work in FM of £166k.

FM Building & Equipment

FM figures include a forecast of £166k for additional work indicating a portfolio overspend of (£104k) which will offset the underspend in BIT.

BEMS

BEMS is forecast to overspend by (£120k). This is due to the maintenance costs of the outgoing system being higher than expected however we expect this to reduce by the end of 24-25.

Members and Officeholders

Members Costs
Members P9 YTD underspend is £475k which is an increase of £322k from the P06 figure of £153k.The comparable YTD underspend was £975k at P09 in 23-24. The main areas of increase in underspend in quarter 3 for 24-25 relate to Edinburgh Accommodation Provision (£55k), Office Cost Provision (£67k) and Engagement provision (£155k).

Officeholders:

The Officeholder YTD underspend decreased by £79k to £261k from £340k in P06 with the largest negative movements in the Public Service Ombudsman and the Biometrics Commissioner being offset by positive movements in the Ethical Standards Commission and the Scottish Information Commissioner as per the table below:

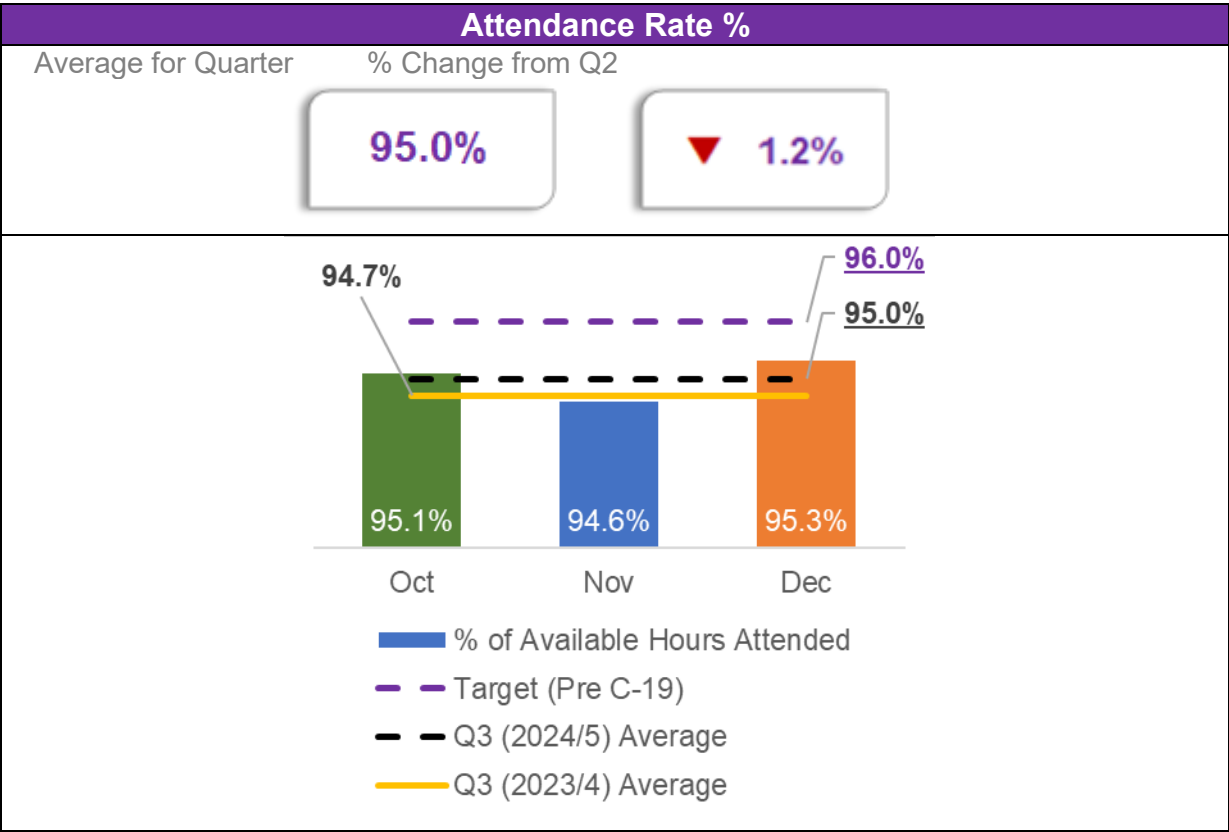|	Q3	Q2	Change
Breakdown of YTD underspends	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Ethical Standards Commission	117	48	69
Human Rights Commission	139	145	(6)
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)	(96)	68	(164)
Commissioner for Children	50	50	-
Scottish Biometrics Commissioner	(7)	45	(52)
Scottish Information Commissioner	46	(16)	62
Electoral Commission	14	-	14
Standards Commission	3	-	3
OH Contingency	(6)	-	(6)
Patient Safety Commissioner (new)			
Total	**261**	**340**	**(79)**

Officeholders budgets will increase by £201k in respect of additional responsibilities/work from the Scottish Government arising from an application made within the Spring Budget Revision (SBR). These will be reflected in the P10 budget figures.

Officeholders Contingency remains at £500k in Q3. Budget surrenders in P10 will increase this to £716k.
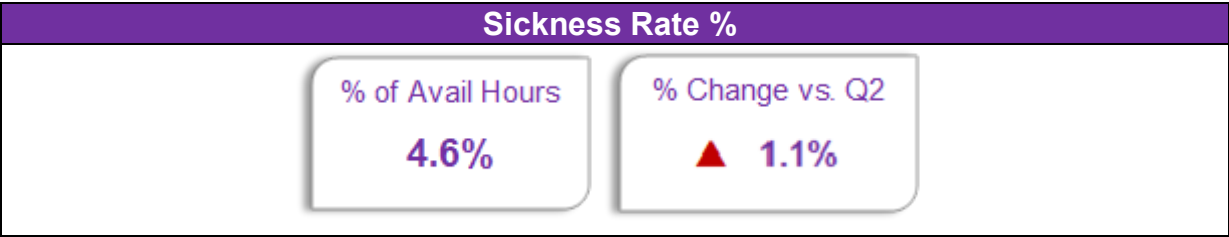
SPCB has approved further £362k of expenditure against OH contingency. However, there is significant uncertainty in both the value and likelihood of these bids going ahead. Should these not materialise, the forecast underspend for both Officeholders and total SPCB will increase.
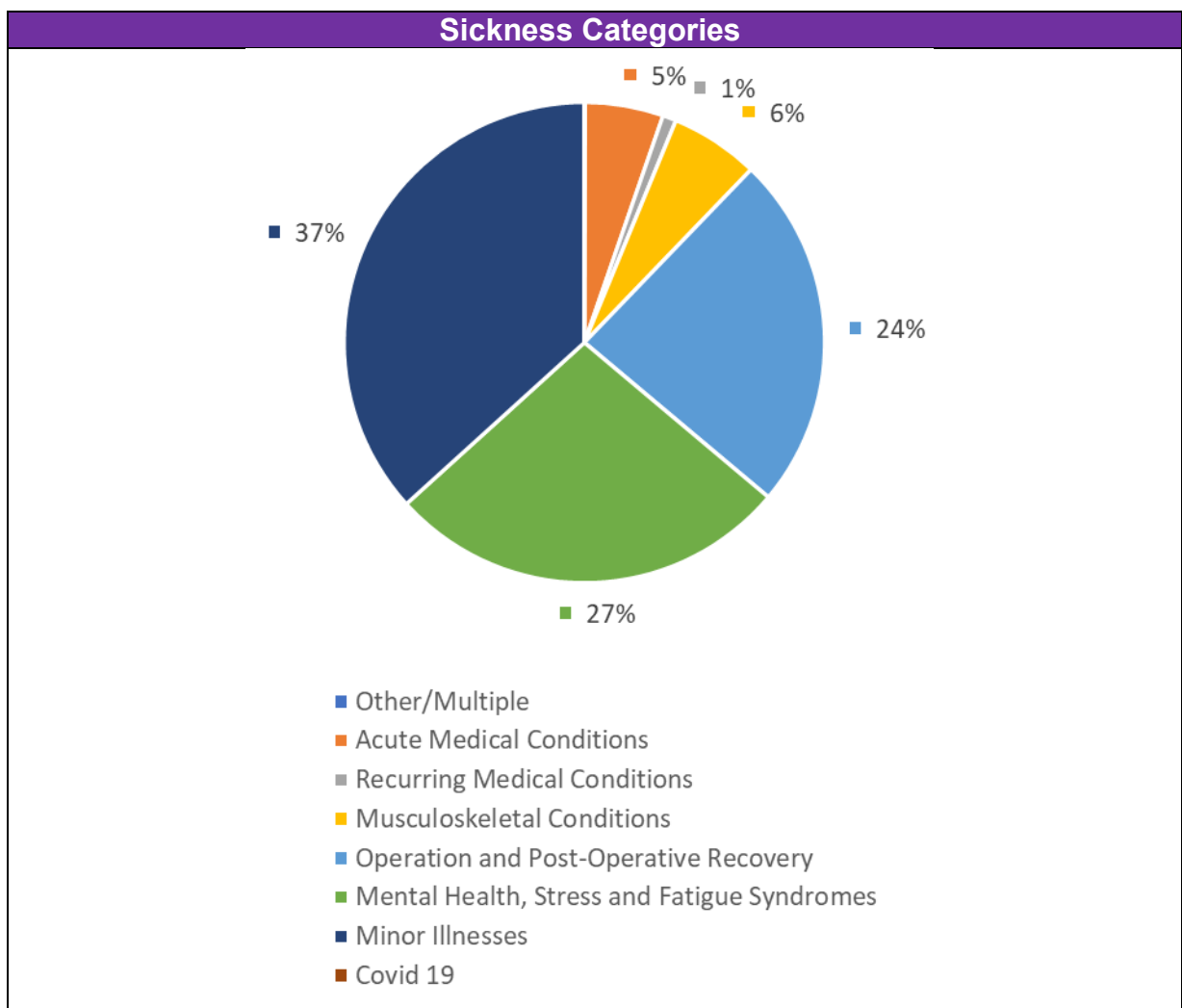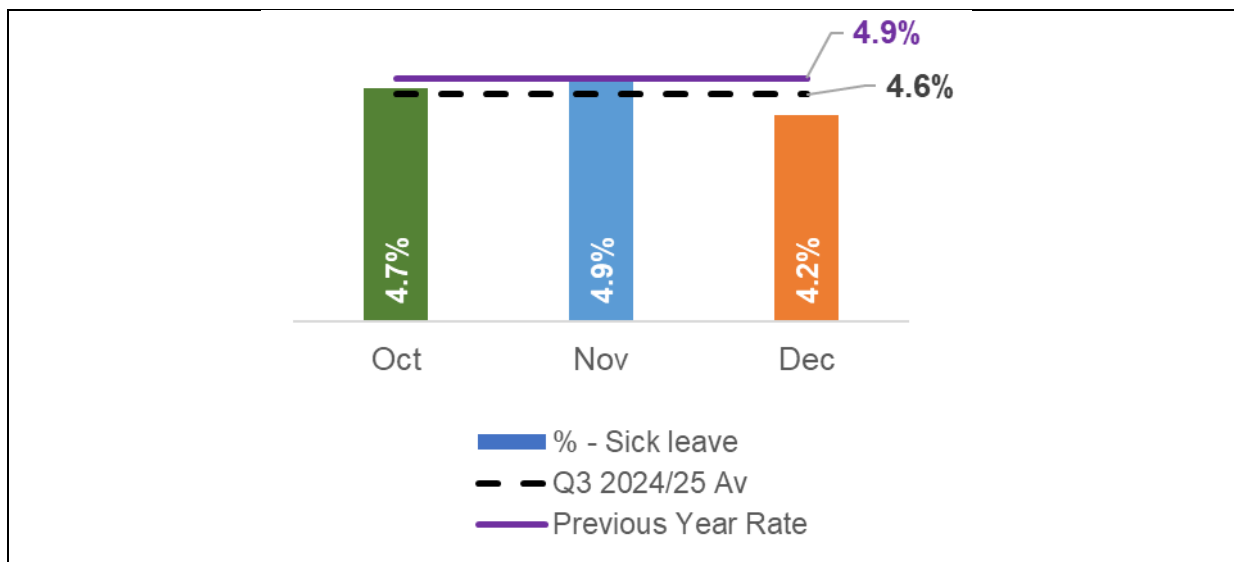
Quarter 3 2024/25 Workforce Report

Attendance

Attendance Rate %		
Average for Quarter	% Change from Q2	
95.0%	▼ **1.2%**	

Legend:
- ▬ % of Available Hours Attended
- ▬ ▬ Target (Pre C-19)
- ▬ ▬ Q3 (2024/5) Average
- ▬ Q3 (2023/4) Average

Chart values: Oct 95.1% (94.7% annotation), Nov 94.6%, Dec 95.3%; Target 96.0%; Average 95.0%

The Attendance Rate was 95%, a decrease of 1.2 percentage points on the previous Quarter and bringing it below the target rate of 96%.

Sickness Rate %	
% of Avail Hours	% Change vs. Q2
4.6%	▲ **1.1%**

Sickness Categories

- 37%
- 5%
- 1%
- 6%
- 24%
- 27%

Legend:
- ■ Other/Multiple
- ■ Acute Medical Conditions
- ■ Recurring Medical Conditions
- ■ Musculoskeletal Conditions
- ■ Operation and Post-Operative Recovery
- ■ Mental Health, Stress and Fatigue Syndromes
- ■ Minor Illnesses
- ■ Covid 19

The Sickness Absence Rate was 4.6%, up from 3.5% in Quarter 2. The proportion of absence due to Minor Illness has seen the largest increase compared to the previous Quarter when it accounted for 30% of sickness absence.

Turnover

Turnover Rate %
Cumulative Turnover – To End Q3
5.6%
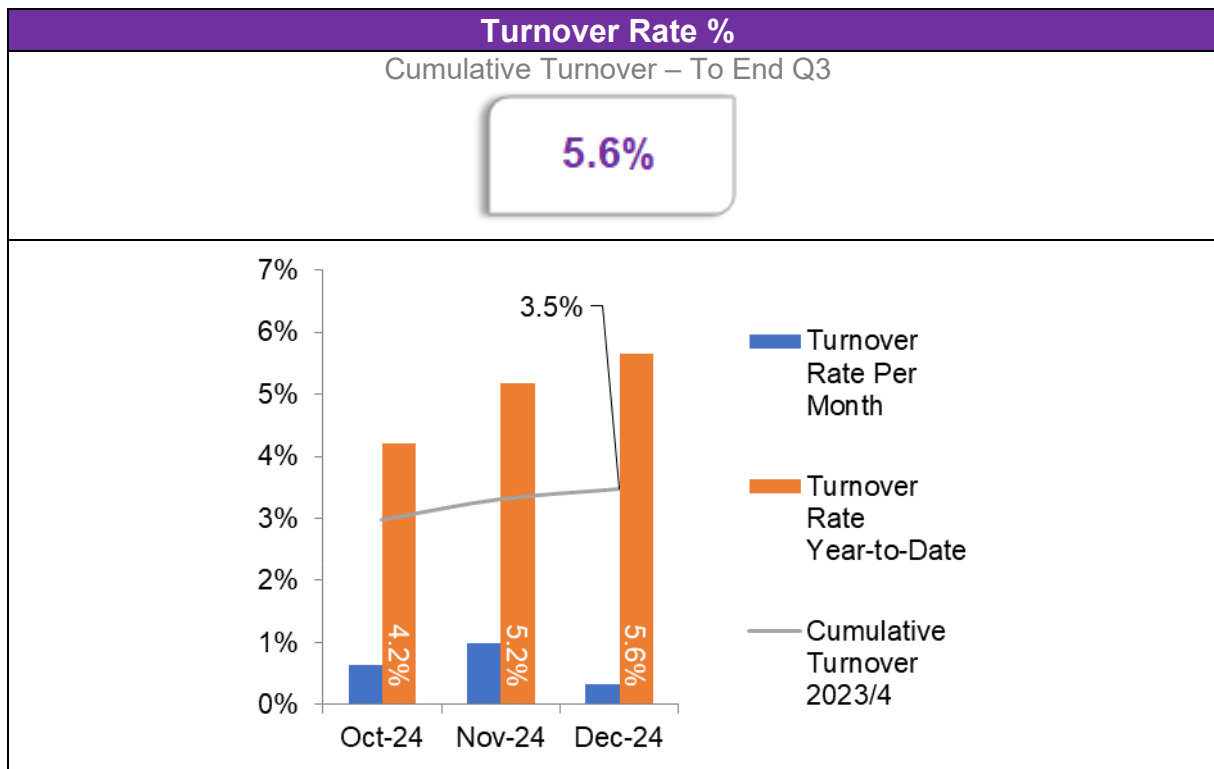
Turnover at the end of Quarter 3 was 5.6%. At the same point in the previous year cumulative turnover was 3.5%. There were 13 Leavers in Quarter 3 and the average Headcount was 632.

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.
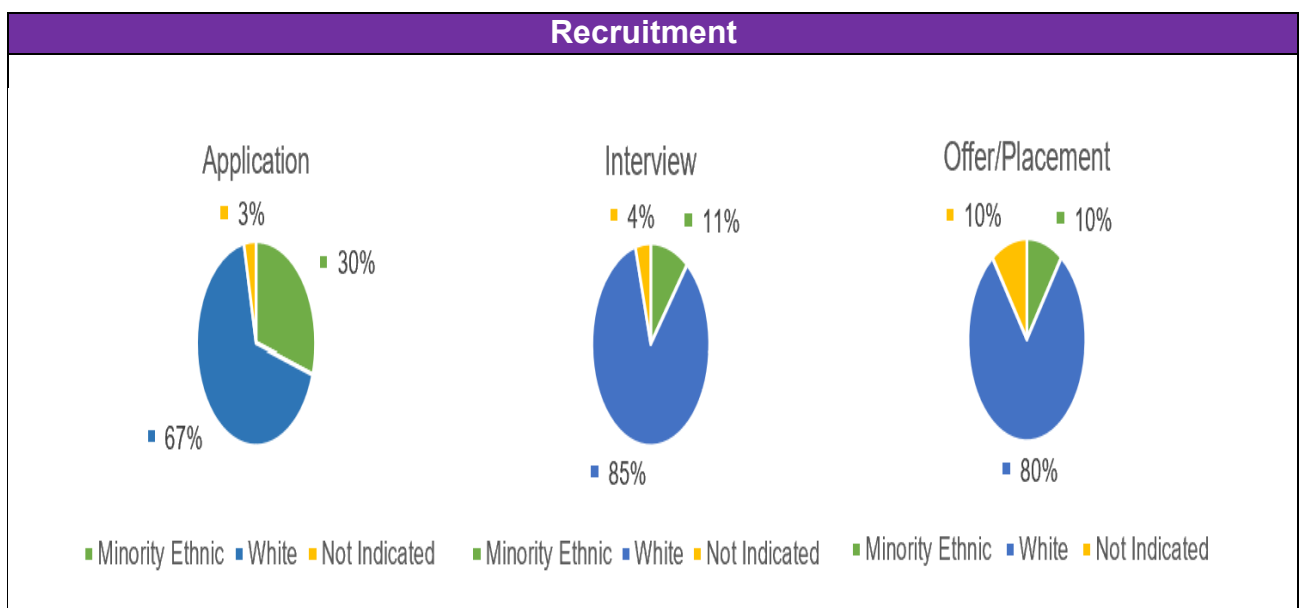
Recruitment

Ten recruitment campaigns were carried out in Quarter 3. Of the 10 appointments made, 1 was to a candidate from a minority ethnic background.