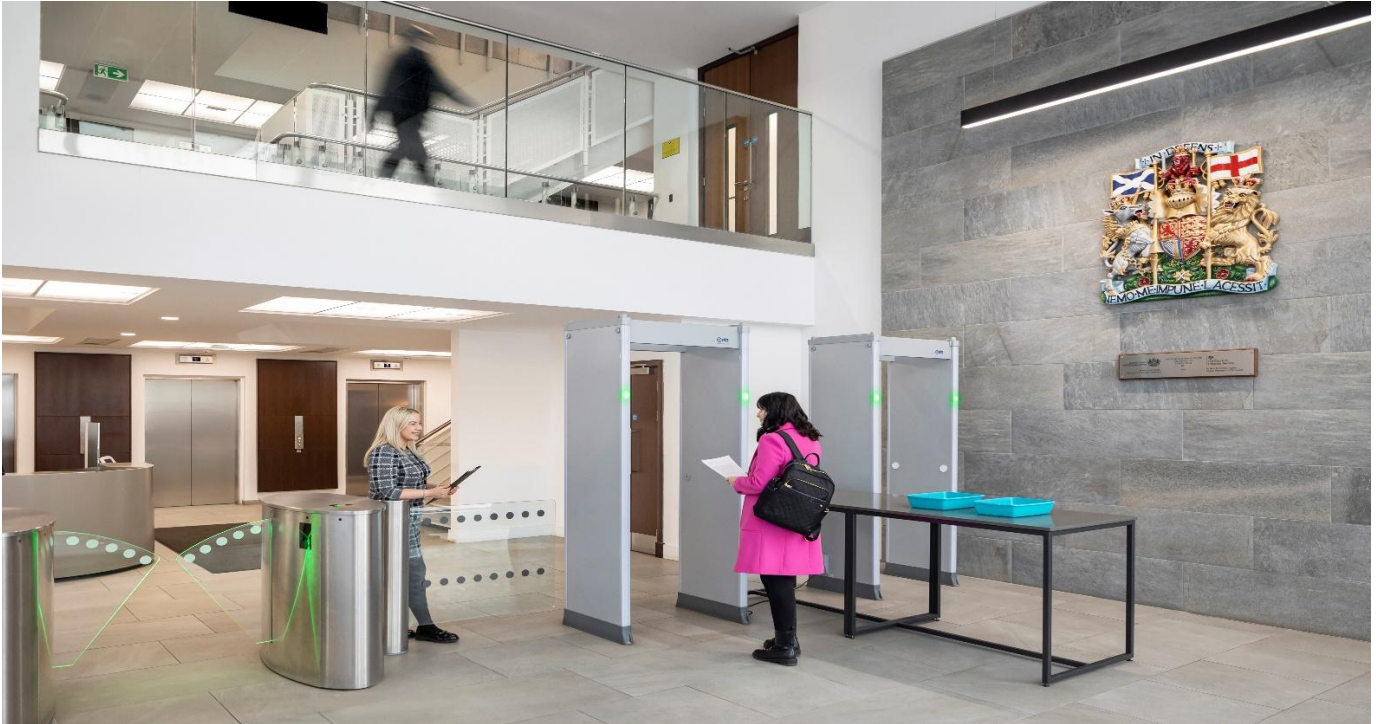


ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS



2024-25

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25

Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service in pursuance of section 67 of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008 and section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

August 2025

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Lord President's foreword

Rt. Hon. Lord Pentland

Lord President, Chairman of the SCTS Board

I am pleased to present the Annual Report and Accounts of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) for 2024-25.

A key operating challenge for SCTS over the past 3 years has been to address criminal case backlogs generated by the pandemic. This work has been successful – scheduled trials have reduced by over 23,000 from their peak level and now sit at 19,499 as at the end of March 2025.



While we have been successful in tackling the backlog of cases, the level of solemn cases (the most serious criminal cases, decided by a jury) has continued to rise (27% higher than they were in 2021-22). SCTS has finite resources making it increasingly difficult to manage this level of cases. A consequence is that the number of pending scheduled trials in solemn cases is increasing, meaning waiting times for those cases are growing. Over the coming year, further increases are expected. We are working closely with other justice organisations and engaging with the Scottish Government to minimise the potential impact on victims, witnesses and accused.

A key recommendation from Lady Dorrian's review into "Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases" relates to the pre-recording of evidence for victims and witnesses. In support of this recommendation, SCTS opened a fifth Evidence by Commissioner suite in Dundee in August 2024. These suites enable the most vulnerable to have their evidence pre-recorded, minimising further trauma and obtaining the best evidence as early as possible. SCTS continues to work closely with the Scottish Government as the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill progresses through the Scottish Parliament. This Bill contains the legislative changes required to support the implementation of recommendations from Lady Dorrian's review, including the creation of a Sexual Offences court.

With the public embracing technology to an ever greater extent, the ways in which we can open up the courts must also evolve. The principle of open justice is of fundamental importance. We want to strengthen its practical application.

We have introduced livestreaming of significant appellate hearings in the Court of Session, which have been livestreamed since June 2023. Livestreaming will soon be extended to the Criminal Appeal Court, enhancing both the accessibility and understanding of the court system and its processes. In addition, we published a Reporters' Guide which sets out the rights and obligations of reporters, supported a variety of broadcasters to film court hearings for documentary purposes and encouraged more Sheriff Court judgments to be published. By making the processes of our courts and tribunals open, accessible and understandable the public can have confidence that they are supporting a well-functioning democracy.

The civil justice system and tribunals system play a crucial role in our society. Prompt and effective systems for resolving disputes and asserting rights boost business confidence and investment – supporting a stable economy. We have supported further expansion of tribunal business over the past year. We continue to expand multi-jurisdictional ways of working, improving efficiencies and user satisfaction. Within the Office of the Public Guardian, we completed Phase 1 of a new case management system. This enables faster processing of Power of Attorney applications and will help tackle case backlogs.

I record my thanks to all the staff of SCTS. Their dedication, knowledge and expertise are vital to all those using the justice system. I also wish to record my gratitude to my fellow Board members who have been a great support since I took on the role as SCTS Board Chairman. Their commitment and guidance have been essential as the organisation continues to manage an ambitious reform agenda. That work will continue to respond to the changing needs of those we serve, while also ensuring that we protect the most vulnerable members of society when involved in the justice system.

1. Performance report

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Chief Executive's statement

Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive, SCTS



The purpose of this performance report is to provide an overview of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) and its performance during 2024-25. This section of the Annual Report and Accounts sets out the purpose, structures, activities and functions of SCTS. It provides a summary of our operational and financial performance for the year and describes the key issues, risks and trends which influence our work.

The criminal justice system has faced significant challenges over the past few years. I believe we are rising to those challenges by working in collaboration with other organisations to improve the justice system. The judicially-led Summary Case Management pilot, which involves early disclosure of evidence, early engagement between the defence and the Crown and pro-active judicial case management, concluded in September 2024. The objective was to improve both efficiency and the experience of all those using the system. The final evaluation [report](#) details a significant reduction in trials fixed and a reduction in the number of witnesses having to be cited for trial. Earlier case resolution benefits everyone, freeing up resources and minimising trauma, inconvenience and delay for victims and witnesses. The initiative is now being rolled out nationally, which is a significant undertaking for all the court users involved. Through continued collaboration and engagement, the full potential of this new approach can be realised.

Investment in our civil case management system has transformed the way in which civil court business is managed and heard. In August 2024, a new Ordinary Actions Case Tracker was launched in the sheriff court. It was extended to cover the Court of Session in February 2025. Online case tracking offers real-time updates on case activity, ensuring that solicitors have the most up to date information about their cases, whilst improving the efficiency of the court process by freeing up staff time from dealing with queries about case status.

Investment in our estate is critical if we are to meet the Scottish Government's ambitious target of becoming Net Zero by 2045. During 2024 we completed a range of upgrades to our estate to reduce our carbon output, such as the installation of solar panels, LED lighting upgrades and utilising technology to control heating and ventilation to reduce gas and electricity usage. These changes contributed to a reduction in carbon output of 14.2% this past year when compared to 2023-24.

Over the past year SCTS has taken further steps to become a trauma-informed organisation. Adopting trauma-informed approaches is essential to enhance the experience of the justice system for vulnerable individuals. We have worked closely with NHS Education for Scotland and other justice organisations to develop and launch our trauma-informed practice strategy in 2024 and commenced both online and face to face training for all staff.

Our newly published [People Strategy for 2024-28](#) reflects our commitment to building a supportive and inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive. We continue to celebrate diversity and achieved the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) Gold award in 2024. We introduced a 35-hour working week in October 2024. This is a real investment in employee wellbeing that combines reduced working hours with increased efficiency. A full evaluation of the new working model will be conducted in 2025.

Our purpose is supporting justice. Managing the day-to-day business of our courts, devolved tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian is our top priority. The range of work we do is vast, complex and challenging to deliver. I would like to sincerely thank all the staff of SCTS who make the system work on a daily basis. The years ahead will be equally, if not more, challenging in terms of constrained resource and rising expectations. SCTS has a proven track record of delivering excellent services and system improvements that provide a firm foundation for the necessary further investment required to sustain services.

1.1.2 Purpose and activities of SCTS

Business model and environment

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) was established on 1 April 2015, following the merger of the Scottish Court Service (a Non-Ministerial Office established on 1 April 2010 by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008) with the Scottish Tribunals Service (previously a delivery arm of the Scottish Government)¹.

SCTS has a presence in many of Scotland's communities where court and tribunal business is conducted daily. We operate from 51 distinct locations across Scotland's [six sheriffdoms](#), together with 13 remote video witness sites. In total, our estate comprises 71 buildings made up of courts, vulnerable witness suites, tribunals and offices. Tribunals also make use of some 70 further venues across Scotland for hearings.

Our court locations, the [Office of the Public Guardian \(OPG\)](#), and our [Tribunals](#) administrative centres in Glasgow, Hamilton and Edinburgh are shown at Annex 3.

The function of SCTS is to provide or ensure the provision of the resources to support:

- **the Scottish courts, devolved tribunals and their judiciary;**
- **the Lord President or his delegates in respect of his functions as Head of the Judiciary;**

- **the Sheriffs Principal in respect of their functions under the relevant provisions of the Courts Reform (Scotland) Act 2014;**
- **the Office of the Public Guardian and Accountant of Court; and**
- **the Scottish Sentencing Council, Scottish Civil Justice Council and Criminal Courts Rules Council².**

A three-year [Corporate Plan 2023-26](#) and our annual [SCTS Business Plan 2024-25](#) were published in April 2024.

This report details how SCTS carried out its functions in 2024-25 as required by section 67 of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008 and section 22(5) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

The Lord President's foreword (page 4), also forms part of this performance report.

Purpose and values

The purpose of SCTS is **supporting justice**. SCTS fulfils this purpose by providing the people, buildings and services needed to support the work of Scotland's courts, devolved tribunals and their judiciary and the OPG and Accountant of Court.

In delivering its purpose, SCTS must take account of the needs of the judiciary, of the people involved in proceedings and the wider public.³

Our work focuses on improving access to justice, reducing delay and cost within the justice system and maximising the use of technology to improve our services.

The core values we observe as an organisation and seek to promote in others are **respect, service and excellence**.

Structure of SCTS

SCTS is led by its Board. It has a judicial majority and oversees the administrative arrangements that support the judiciary in the delivery of justice. The SCTS Board meets at least six times per year⁴. Day-to-day management of the organisation rests with the Chief Executive and the Executive Team. Further information on the SCTS Board and Executive Team can be found in the Directors' Report, on pages 34-41.

Our purpose and strategic priorities are illustrated in our strategy map overleaf. It sets out how our priorities align with delivery of our purpose – supporting justice.

¹ Section 130 of the Courts Reform (S) Act 2014 facilitated the merger by extending the functions of the Scottish Court Service established under the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008 to include the administration of devolved tribunals.

As such the 2008 Act remains the founding legislation for the SCTS.

² Sections 61 and 62 of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008.

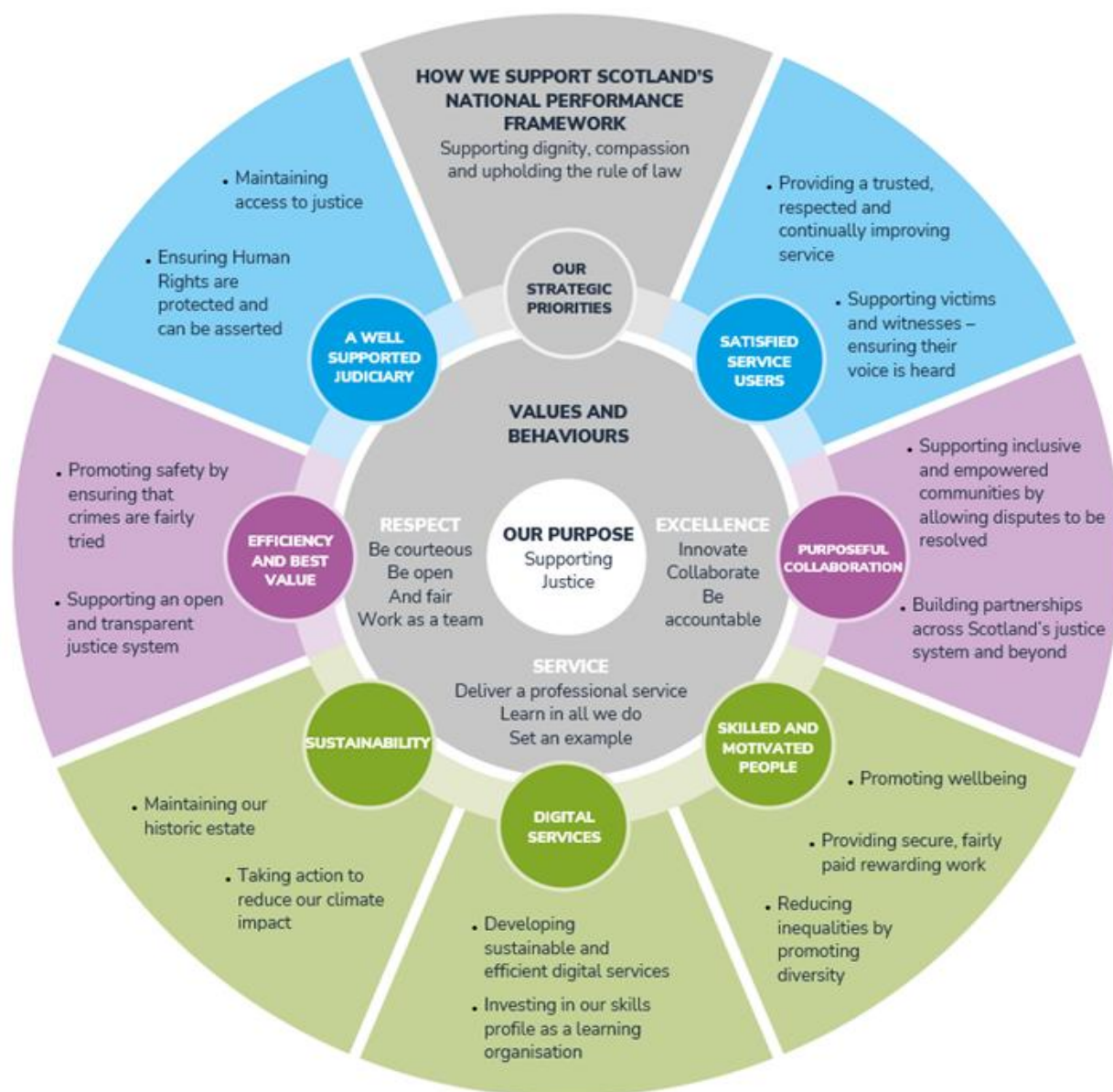
³ Section 61(2) of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008.

⁴ Further information on the SCTS Board and its committees, including membership, standing orders, framework document and minutes of meetings can be accessed at www.scotcourts.gov.uk.

Our strategy

Our **Strategy Map** sets out our purpose, values and key behaviours that guide our priorities and work as we support Scotland's justice system. Our seven **strategic priorities** help us organise the work we do in the most effective way. They also demonstrate how that work contributes to a significant number of the outcomes and goals set out in Scotland's [National Performance Framework](#).

SCTS Strategy Map



Whilst independent, we work collaboratively with the Scottish Government, the Justice Board for Scotland, and a broad range of justice agencies. The [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#), published in 2022, provides a common focus for all involved in the delivery of criminal and civil justice. Our work supports the delivery of its outcomes and goals.

The Vision was accompanied by a Year One Delivery Plan setting out the existing commitments, at that time, from justice agencies. A three year delivery plan was published in November 2023.

Reform activity

Our [Corporate Plan for 2023-26](#) details the strategic objectives we are seeking to implement over this three year period. In support of achieving these objectives we set detailed outcomes in our Annual Business Plan. Our performance against the outcomes we set in our [Annual Business Plan for 2024-25](#) is summarised on pages 9 to 11 and full detail is included at [section 1.2.2](#).

Our business outcomes are organised under four key reform areas: Criminal Justice; Civil Justice; Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian; and Corporate.

Reform Areas	Vision Statement
Criminal justice	<i>Supporting the judiciary in delivering a world class service for criminal court users – providing optimum, trauma informed, user focused solutions to support staff, the Judiciary and partners, which improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system, inspiring confidence in all who use it</i>
Civil justice	<i>To support the Judiciary in the delivery of world class civil justice by leading and inspiring user-centred change to create more efficient and accessible services for all</i>
Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian	<i>To provide high quality access to administrative justice for Tribunal's users and protection for vulnerable people and their families through the power of attorney and guardianship systems – by developing efficient, fair, user-friendly and responsive services</i>
Corporate	<i>To give our people the systems, processes, facilities and skills to deliver the best possible service</i>

There are five dedicated 'Change Labs', governed by Executive Action Boards (EABs), which exist to direct the delivery of projects in support of our business outcomes. Each EAB is chaired by an [Executive Director](#).

The services we deliver provides access to justice. We utilise technology to improve the service we offer and take a trauma informed approach to service design. To help us achieve the outcomes we set over the past year, each business unit within SCTS produces its own annual plan, setting out more detailed priorities and activities on which they will focus. All our work is underpinned by our core values of **respect, service and excellence**:

Our values and behaviours

RESPECT	SERVICE	EXCELLENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be courteous• Be open and fair• Work as one team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver a professional service• Learn in all we do• Set an example	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovate• Collaborate• Be accountable

1.1.3 Performance summary

Throughout the year, the SCTS Board monitored ongoing delivery of its 2024-25 Business Plan Outcomes (page 12 details all outcomes set). Twenty-one outcomes were set in the plan. Sixteen were fully completed. Five were partially delivered, with completion scheduled during 2025-26.

A more detailed year-end report on all 21 outcomes is available on the [SCTS website](#). Commentary on a range of the outcomes delivered during the year is available in the [Development and Performance](#) section of this report.

SCTS has operated an increased number of criminal courts since September 2021. Initially this was to address backlogs that were generated by the pandemic. Our goal was to return to a position where the number of scheduled trials across all criminal business levels was below 20,000 – as this represented a manageable workload for the system.

This work has been successful – scheduled trials have reduced by over 23,000 from their peak. At the end of March 2025 there were 19,499 scheduled trials. This has been achieved alongside a sustained increase in solemn business (the most serious criminal cases, heard before a jury), which were over 27% higher in 2024-25 compared to 2021-22 (pending scheduled trials reached their highest level in January

2022 when they sat at just over 43,000). Over the coming year, SCTS is facing exceptional business pressures in relation to those more serious criminal cases. A general and sustained rise in case levels has been apparent since before the pandemic. This reflects an increased focus by police and prosecutors in recent years on proactive investigation of historical sexual and domestic abuse cases, leading to complex and time-consuming prosecutions. These, in turn, have increased confidence in the system, leading to greater numbers of victims having confidence that their complaints will be properly managed and choosing to proceed with action.

We believe that these levels will increase further in the coming years, driven by changes in the law on corroboration which are likely to increase the number of prosecutions for serious sexual offences in particular. Whilst these are welcome developments in terms of public safety (and the role that the justice system can play) their full effect on court business levels is yet to be felt and could be very significant.

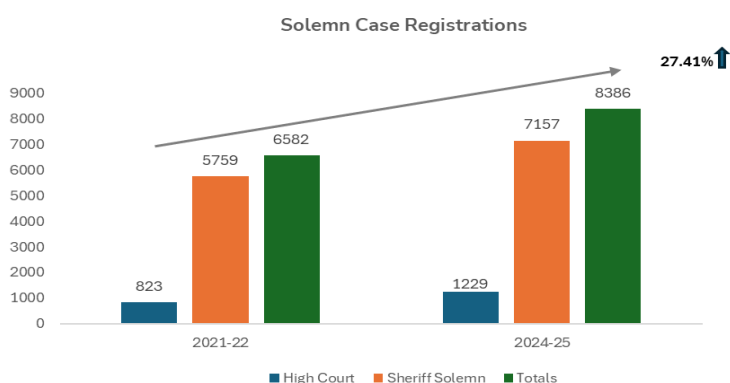
Innovation and funding will be required to meet these pressures, as set out in our Business Plan for 2025-26, to avoid the level of scheduled trials in these most serious of cases reaching unacceptable levels, resulting in significant and adverse effects on victims, witnesses

and accused. This would run counter to the justice sector's ambition to manage business in a trauma informed way.

Within the sheriff summary courts the pilot of an improved model for the management of criminal cases has concluded. The final [Summary Case Management Evaluation Report](#) was published on 20 September 2024. The report highlights that approximately 530 summary trials did not require to have a trial hearing fixed as a result of the pilot; the volume of outstanding trials in pilot courts reduced by 31% and 18,000 who would normally have been cited to attend court did not need to be cited (11,000 of whom were Police witnesses). The success of the pilot led to the [announcement](#), on 14 January 2025, that SCM would be rolled out across all of Scotland's Sheriff Courts.

Alongside new procedures to improve case management in the sheriff courts, SCTS has been working closely with justice partners to transform how evidence is managed across the justice system. The Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC), was extended to Falkirk, Stirling and Alloa in July 2024. The service enables police officers, prosecutors and defence agents to access and present digital evidence such as CCTV, photographs and 999/101 recordings in an efficient and secure way.

Remote Provision of Evidence (RPE), which is currently in place within our High Courts, enables police and expert witnesses (mainly medical and forensic) to give evidence remotely – helping to avoid costs of travelling to court and reducing time spent away from professional duties. Over the period January 2024 to January 2025, the utilisation of RPE averaged 59%.



SCTS opened a fifth Evidence by Commissioner (EbyC) suite in Dundee in August 2024. The suite is located in the new Dundee Justice Hub. EbyC suites enable the most vulnerable to have their evidence and cross examination pre-recorded, minimising further trauma and obtaining the best evidence as early as possible. Approximately 1,000 witnesses gave evidence this way during 2024-25.

SCTS is also taking further steps to become a trauma informed organisation. Adopting trauma-informed approaches is essential to enhance the experience of the justice system for vulnerable individuals.

We formally launched our trauma-informed practice strategy in 2024 and we rolled out level 1 trauma training to all our staff. This is an e-learning module, which was produced in conjunction with NHS Education for Scotland and a group of justice organisations. Level 2 training, which is a mixture of e-learning and in-person training, was rolled out from February 2025

Good progress has been made to transform the Civil justice system – developing a fully digital end-to-end service across all civil business types. In August 2024, a new Ordinary Actions Case Tracker was launched for sheriff court business and extended to cover the Court of Session in February 2025. Online case tracking offers real time updates on case activity, ensuring that solicitors have the most up to date information about their cases whilst, improving the efficiency of the court process by freeing up staff time from dealing with queries about the status of cases.

During 2024 we migrated all active case files from the legacy civil case management system (CMS) in the Court of Session and moved them over to our new system. This change

removed the need for court staff to navigate two case management systems, improving efficiency.

With the public embracing technology in an ever-increasing way, the ways in which we can open up the courts are evolving. Between June 2023 and February 2025, 61 hearings of significant civil appeals heard in the Court of Session were livestreamed, attracting over 323,000 viewers to the SCTS livestream website pages. In 2025-26 livestreaming will be extended to include significant criminal appeals.

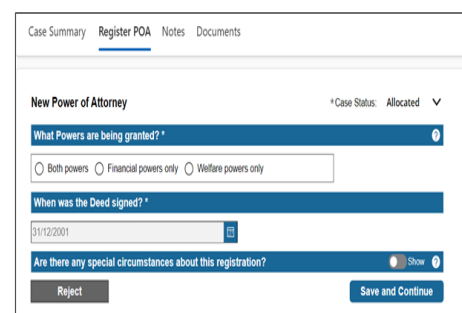
There was significant expansion of jurisdictions and business volumes across Scottish Tribunals over the past year - the number of appeals registered increased by 32%, placing strain on the system. Managing this increase has proved extremely challenging due to the limited availability of fee-paid tribunal members. Opportunities to increase the pool of available legal and specialist members through JABS recruitment are infrequent and recent recruitment rounds have not yielded the numbers required.

Retention of existing members is also challenging. Ensuring that the judiciary, staff, systems and resources are in place to manage future expansion and increasing case volumes is an ongoing priority for SCTS and we will continue to engage with the Scottish Government on these matters over the coming year.

In collaboration with the tribunals' judiciary, we continued to increase the number of in-person hearings where appropriate, while maintaining a hybrid hearing model across several jurisdictions – aiming to meet user need by providing the type of hearing most suited to the parties in a case.

Throughout 2024-25 a key focus for the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) has been the development and deployment of a new case management system for processing all areas of OPG business. The aim is to deliver a digital-first, responsive service that is efficient and easily accessible – which will improve the user experience and reduce outstanding case levels in OPG. The project is being delivered in three phases.

The first phase went live on 28 January 2025, after the successful migration of around 10 million records from the old system. All new Power of Attorney (PoA) registrations, as well as amendments to existing PoA cases are now carried out on the new system.



The screenshot shows a web-based form titled 'New Power of Attorney'. At the top, there are tabs for 'Case Summary', 'Register POA' (which is active), 'Notes', and 'Documents'. Below the tabs, the form has a header 'New Power of Attorney' and a dropdown for '* Case Status: Allocated'. The main form area contains several sections: 'What Powers are being granted? *' with radio buttons for 'Both powers', 'Financial powers only', and 'Welfare powers only'; 'When was the Deed signed? *' with a date input field showing '31/12/2001'; and 'Are there any special circumstances about this registration?' with a 'Show' button. At the bottom, there are 'Reject' and 'Save and Continue' buttons.

It is estimated that the project, once fully delivered, will provide significant savings, alongside service improvements, and a more stable, resilient system.

In addition to the development of the new case management system, OPG has implemented a tailored approach to managing guardianship account reviews. Guardianships are granted by way of a court order which authorises a person to act and make decisions on behalf of an adult with incapacity. All guardianship account reviews are now assessed using specific risk criterion – enhancing the protection provided through these reviews.

Our newly published [People Strategy for 2024-28](#) reflects our commitment to building a supportive and inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive. By fostering a culture of collaboration, respect, and continuous development, we aim to attract and retain talented individuals who contribute to our shared success.



SCTS achieved the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) Gold award in the 2024 Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmarking exercise. [Enei](#) is the leading employer network promoting equality and inclusion in the workplace. Our [Mainstreaming Equality Report](#) and revised Equality Outcomes detail the work we are taking forward to promote the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, raising awareness and embedding our EDI aims and objectives across the organisation.

Over the last year we have made good progress in enhancing our wellbeing initiatives. This has included training over 50 employees as mental health first aiders. We have also taken steps to increase awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme and actively promoted a range of wellbeing resources.

To further support our employees, we also implemented a new process that allows individuals whose caring duties are significantly affecting their work-life balance to request interim inclusion on the Carers' Register while their formal application is under review.

The level of technical and procedural knowledge required by our staff to manage business is significant. During the year we launched a range of revised Scottish Courts Knowledge and Information Manuals (SCKIM) for Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Court staff – providing comprehensive guidance in a single, easily accessible source.

The third iteration of the SCTS Talent programme launched on 31 October 2024. Over 30 of our people have now completed the training. Our Administration Officer Development Programme (AODP) is another key initiative, aimed at developing leaders of the future. The programme provides accelerated learning to give participants experience of working and performing duties across all aspects of civil business.

SCTS has undergone rapid digital transformation in recent years. The rise in the use of new tools, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), is set to continue. A new 'Automated Transcription Service' pilot, using AI to support the production of transcriptions for use by the judiciary in Evidence by Commissioner hearings concluded in January 2025. The accuracy rate of the transcriptions was greater than 99% in test cases and turnaround times were measured in minutes.

SCTS is committed to making it as easy as possible for our people to access the tools and resources they need to manage their career, recruitment and time and attendance. To support this, we have invested in our People and Pay system "iTrent". During 2023-24, we migrated from a number of legacy systems to include modules in iTrent for staff to support performance management, payslip access, recruitment support, expense claims, and other essential resources. Work to create a new time and attendance module on iTrent was

completed during the reporting year and went live on 1 April 2025, meaning our staff can now access all these services on a single system. Oracle Fusion Cloud (OFC) is our new system for managing finance and procurement functions. The development of the new system was led by the Scottish Government as it was introduced across a range of public bodies.

There have been some challenges with the introduction of the new system, which has meant that our finance and procurement functions have had to temporarily implement some manual processes. This has placed considerable additional pressure on a number of staff, but they have risen to the occasion, developing approaches to effectively manage challenges while the new system beds in. Engagement between SCTS and the Scottish Government is ongoing to manage difficulties and also to share perspectives and expertise.

The new [SCTS Corporate Website](#) was launched in July 2024. It was designed in response to extensive research and engagement with users – providing more accessible information on who we are and what we do, with links to a range of services and activities that can now be carried out online.

Since 2016-17 SCTS has had a target to reduce energy consumption by 2.5% year on year, following on from 5% year on year reductions that were achieved between 2010 and 2015-16. This year we have reduced our carbon output by 14.2% when compared to 2023-24. Detailed climate change reports for SCTS are [published](#) on the Sustainable Scotland Network website.

Performance against business outcomes 2024-25

Business Outcomes 2024-25				Complete
				Part complete
				Not complete
Criminal Reform Outcomes	Civil Reform Outcomes	Tribunals and OPG Outcomes	Corporate Outcomes	
Through the court recovery programme we will continue to deliver additional court capacity to reduce scheduled criminal trials, while managing increasing indictment levels. Progress will be measured against modelling and publishing monthly data reports.	We will enable ordinary cause cases in the Sheriff Courts to be raised and tracked via Civil Online, increasing the proportion of cases in which electronic submission is available from the commencement of proceedings.	We will support the continued expansion of Scottish Tribunals and the continued increase in business volumes across a number of chambers, supporting the judiciary and working collaboratively with the Scottish Government.	We will work with the Scottish Government to implement their new finance system for public bodies – automating recurring tasks, improving analysis and insight.	
We will implement the judicially led Summary Case Management pilot evaluation recommendations to minimise the number of trials unnecessarily scheduled, securing early pleas and decisions on discontinuation of cases through judicial case management and early disclosure of evidence.	We will provide solicitors in the Court of Session with access to their cases electronically via Civil Online, giving them the ability to track cases electronically, submit non-initiating case documents, and complete the migration of active cases from our legacy case management system - providing consistency of process for solicitor firms and improving efficiency for administrative staff.	We will continue developing the tribunals hearing strategy to make best use of digital initiatives, expanding in-person proceedings and the hybrid hearing model to ensure our service users and judiciary have access to the right hearing modality and technology with sufficient flexibility to support accessible, efficient and effective outcomes.	We will continue to invest in our estate as resources allow, utilising new technology to monitor our buildings, to help us take informed decisions around energy usage in support of efficiency and sustainability.	
We will create a further two evidence by commission suites, building capacity for commission hearings to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation and allow the best possible evidence to be captured earlier – in line with the recommendations of the “Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases” review.	We will improve the openness of the courts by increasing the number and type of cases that can be live streamed.	We will launch phase 1 of the new OPG case management system, enabling faster processing of Power of Attorney applications; and providing a platform for the future development of an improved electronic submission system and the ability for members of the public to amend existing powers of attorney online, improving speed and quality of service.	We will continue to develop and implement flexible workforce and succession planning policies, processes and tools so SCTS can adapt to internal and external changes – including the move towards a 35-hour working week	
We will create a further two evidence by commission suites, building capacity for commission hearings to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation and allow the best possible evidence to be captured earlier – in line with the recommendations of the “Improving the Management of Sexual Offence Cases” review.	We will continue to gather information from users that enables us to adapt our civil online systems, considering both service accessibility and support in its use – allowing those services to be accessible to everyone.	We will implement a tailored approach to managing guardianship account reviews, improving performance and enhancing the protection of those with incapacity.	We will work in collaboration with the Victims Taskforce and NHS Education for Scotland to implement the Knowledge and Skills Framework for Trauma Informed Justice across the organisation, delivering trauma training according to needs and developing processes to address the risk of vicarious trauma.	
We will continue to build our digital capability to increase flexibility and resilience in the management of criminal business, specifically – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working towards deploying a specialist, trauma informed, domestic abuse virtual court model (TIDAMs) in the sheriffdom of Grampian Highland and Islands. Supporting the judicially led project to establish virtual custody courts. Expanding our capacity to host remote evidence by Police and Expert witnesses in our sheriff and Jury courts. Commencing development of new digital systems to streamline and improve the jury process – delivering efficiencies and improved service. 	We will ensure that our case management systems and processes keep pace with changes in law or procedure promoted by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Civil Justice Council (SCJC).	We will work collaboratively with the Scottish Government to ensure that our systems and processes keep pace with changes in law, supporting the judiciary to ensure our tribunals are accessible, efficient and effective and the Public Guardian can ensure the protection of the most vulnerable.	We will invest in technology to improve the services we provide, rolling out enhanced Wi-Fi and upgrades to court and tribunal hearing technology that will support secure and effective virtual, hybrid and physical business.	
			We will explore and test the potential for Artificial Intelligence to improve the quality and efficiency of our work, with an initial focus on transcription, summarisation, and translation services.	

Financial performance 2024-25

The original budget allocated to SCTS in the 2024-25 Budget Bill was £163.4m. During the year, budgets are subject to revision and adjustment via the Scottish Government Autumn Budget Revision (ABR) and Spring Budget Revision (SBR) processes (the high proportion of funding received by way of in-year budget revisions increases the budget management challenge). The total budget, including Annually Managed Expenditure (AME), was £204.7m.

The Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) overspend of £0.1m (FY 2023-24: £1.1m underspend) comprised a cash balanced budget and non-cash deficit of £0.1m. This overspend position (which represents 0.05% of the allocated budget) was delivered in a complex year with uncertainty around funding of the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) case management system, increased pressures on building maintenance costs and rising case volumes, particularly for solemn cases. SCTS was only able to manage these significant pressures in 2024-25 through delaying recruitment of staff to enable the pay bill to be reduced by 6.45%; receiving a non-domestic rates rebate; increased civil fees income and timely reprioritisation of emerging underspends.

Total revenue expenditure is £2.8m over budget reflecting the permitted overspend on the OPG Case Management system (£2.3m). However, largely due to favourable civil fees income, receipts are £3.5m ahead of budget. This has resulted in a net revenue resource underspend of £0.7m. Capital spend is £0.7m over budget mainly due to a late accrual for IT equipment (£0.3m) and £0.4m in buildings due to recoverable VAT at year end being lower than planned/expected.

Financial performance summary (£000's)

Budget Classification	2024-25					2023-24
	Budget Bill	ABR/SBR	Total Revised Budget	Outturn	Variance (Outturn v Budget)	Outturn
Fiscal Resource	111,692	43,134	154,826	154,099	(727)	140,041
Capital	17,589	(573)	17,016	17,718	702	17,729
Non-Cash	34,071	(1,828)	32,243	32,370	127	33,306
DEL Total	163,352	40,733	204,085	204,187	102	191,076
CAME (Capital)		50	50	31	(19)	61
RAME (Resource)		434	434	474	40	(28)
HMT Total	163,352	41,217	204,569	204,692	123	191,109

The AME outturn position is mainly due to provision movements. These budget lines were restricted for specific activities only, did not have a cash element associated with them and could not be repurposed.

With respect to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE), the net operating expenditure is £185m. In comparison to the above outturn, summary capital additions are not included in the SoCNE and these reconciling items are detailed within Notes 6a, 8a and 9 (see table below).

Reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure (£000's)	Outturn
Net Outturn per SoCNE	185,398
Add: PPE additions (note 6a)	15,764
Add: Intangible additions (note 8a)	2,685
Add: ROU lease additions (note 9a)	845
Capital Additions	19,294*
Outturn	204,692

*Capital grant (£1,545k) is treated as capital DEL income within the outturn statement.

1.1.4 Key issues, risks and future trends

The statutory functions of SCTS are multi-faceted and complex. The system relies on a number of independent organisations working together to ensure that people can assert their rights and settle disputes. Our work is significant in volume, increasingly complex in nature and subject to a high degree of political, public and media scrutiny.

For these reasons, SCTS places a strong emphasis on planning, identifying and managing risk, and making improvements through sound performance and change management. Predicting future changes both in justice sector and society generally is important so we can manage and react effectively.

The SCTS Board, supported by its Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and the Executive Team, consider the **key risk areas that must be managed** to support the business, deliver our priorities, and maintain sound controls – based on recognised standards of good governance.

Corporate risks are kept under regular review by the Executive Team, and are formally reviewed by the ARC. The Board sets the overall approach to risk and holds an annual workshop involving members of all its Committees and the Executive Team – at which the major risks facing the organisation are reviewed.

The SCTS risk heat map and our approach to risk scoring is detailed at the bottom of page 16. A summary of strategic risks is provided at page 17. Finally, our risk appetite statement and levels are detailed on page on page 18.

Much of our work is demand-led.

Predicting **business volumes** helps us match capacity to demand, and adapt to shifting trends.⁵

Operational performance is monitored at both the local management level and through **organisational Key Performance Indicators**, reviewed by the SCTS Board (full details are available in [section 1.2.1](#)).

In their ongoing planning, oversight and assessment of future demand, the Board has identified a number of key risks and trends that may impact on future performance.

1. Service resilience

Through the criminal court recovery programme, which commenced in September 2021, the number of scheduled trials has reduced from over 43,000 in January 2022 to 19,499 as at the end of March 2025.

While we have made great strides to reduce the number of scheduled trials and waiting periods, we have also had to deal with a substantial increase in solemn court business, in particular High Court cases (up 15.5% since 2023-24), which has placed significant pressure on a system with finite resources. This pressure is likely to only increase in the year ahead, due to changes in the law and practice. It will be essential for SCTS to achieve a level of baseline funding that is adequate to address the demand.

In 2023 the majority of Airdrie Sheriff Court had to be closed due to concerns relating to the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). In order to maintain business a range of contingency measures were introduced, which included: all procedural civil business

being moved online; sheriff solemn trials being dealt with at Lanark Sheriff Court; and all Justice of the Peace business being dealt with at Hamilton Sheriff Court.

Airdrie Sheriff Court is a five court complex. Four of the court rooms were initially closed as a precaution. One of the four closed courtrooms was remediated and was back in use by the end of March 2024. Temporary staff accommodation, which is located in the car park, was put in place and all other court rooms were safely brought back into operation by September 2024 – at which point the court was fully operational again. Work is currently ongoing to remediate the first floor of the court building – which will negate the need for temporary accommodation and allow the building to return to full operations, while also benefitting from some additional refurbishment.

2. Wellbeing and skills

The most common cause of staff absence over the past year continued to be stress related conditions. As part of an initiative to provide additional support to our staff, by April 2024 SCTS had trained over 50 employees to become Mental Health First Aiders. They are all volunteers who have attended an accredited course (Scotland's Mental Health First Aid) and are willing to have confidential and non-judgmental conversations regarding mental health. Our Human Resources Unit are reviewing how we can ensure supportive measures are in place to support both managers and employees. Working with our occupational health provider, we are exploring options for specialised fast track trauma referrals, improving the quality of standard referrals and making referrals to specialist mental

⁵ Detailed data on business volumes is available at Annex 1 of this report

health practitioners where appropriate. Our Wellbeing team are also using feedback from our employee led networks to develop tools and resources on our Wellbeing Hub for managing stress.

Ensuring our employees have the right skills to manage in an ever-changing environment is crucial. The second cohort of our annual 12-month Talent programme graduated in October 2024 – over 30 of our people have now completed the training with many already securing promotions and filling key positions across the organisation. A third cohort commenced the programme in the Autumn of 2024.

SCTS is also taking steps to become a trauma informed organisation. Adopting trauma informed approaches is essential to enhance the experience of the justice system for vulnerable individuals. By so doing we can improve the quality and quantity of evidence collected, whilst supporting the wellbeing and resilience of our workforce. We formally launched our trauma informed practice strategy in 2024. Our approach involves leadership, training, workforce wellbeing initiatives and detailed assessment of how we design and deliver our services to improve users' experience.

During the autumn of 2024 we rolled out Level 1 trauma training to all our staff. This is an e-learning module, which was produced in conjunction with NHS Education for Scotland and in a group of justice organisations. Level 2 training, which is a mixture of e-learning and in-person training, was rolled out from February 2025.

3. Financial Resourcing

Managing effective service delivery within our budget allocation remains a significant challenge. A large proportion of our budget is funded in-year and is reliant on fee-income. This has material implications around

efficiency and effective planning, which are directly at odds with wider public service reform ambitions. While a number of significant change initiatives have been successfully delivered, critical reforms to the criminal justice system had to be put on hold, in part due to a lack of funding. In addition, ongoing management of increased caseloads across the courts and tribunals has added financial pressures and SCTS has had to absorb unexpected costs associated with building maintenance – these pressures were mitigated for through effective in-year budget management and alleviated to an extent through favourable civil fee income levels, delaying recruitment of staff and timely reprioritisation of emerging underspends.

4. Meeting our users' needs

During the year SCTS created a fifth Evidence by Commissioner (EbyC) suite in Dundee (the other four are located in Edinburgh, Inverness, Glasgow and Aberdeen) enabling the most vulnerable to have their evidence and cross examination pre-recorded, minimising further trauma and obtaining the best evidence as early as possible. Approximately 1,000 witnesses gave evidence this way during 2024-25. A further two suites are due to be rolled out during 2025-26, covering North Strathclyde and South Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway Sheriffdoms. The creation of these suites supports a key recommendation from Lady Dorrian's review into improving the management of sexual offence cases – that a national sexual offences court should be created and a core feature of cases heard in that court should be the pre-recording of the evidence of all complainers.

The Summary Case Management (SCM) Pilot that commenced at Dundee, Hamilton & Paisley Sheriff Courts in September 2022, was extended to cover domestic abuse cases in Glasgow Sheriff Court and, in May 2024, to domestic abuse cases

in Perth Sheriff Court. The final evaluation of the pilot was published on 20 September 2024. In the 19 months of the pilot, approximately 530 summary trials did not require to be fixed; SCM mitigated the impact of higher levels of summary complaints registered in 2023-24 (14% increase when compared to the previous year); and 18,000 witnesses did not require to be cited or recited due to the practice followed under SCM. Of this, approximately 11,000 were police witnesses- who were freed up from court appearances. In January 2025, SCTS announced that arrangements were being put in place for the roll-out of SCM across Scotland over the coming year.

5. Data and cyber security

A report on Information Security is contained at page 40 of this report. As an organisation SCTS recognises the value of information and the importance of strong information governance and controls. A range of work to improve our management of information has been undertaken over the past year. This has included data breach awareness sessions, to help ensure staff know how to recognise, report and understand the impact data breaches can have; and completing phase 1 of a records management review to support the migration of corporate records from our shared drives onto SharePoint.

As we increasingly make use of digital platforms to deliver our business, and the risk of cyber attacks is on the rise, our security must continually evolve to meet the challenge. Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus re-accreditation were achieved for the fourth successive year. SCTS also carries out annual independent security testing on a sample of its infrastructure and systems, with findings being addressed to improve overall security. A recent Internal Audit on data and cyber resilience was carried out during March 2025. The report

noted significant improvements since the previous security audit in 2021. Recommendations from the Audit are currently being addressed.

6. Sustainability

The SCTS [Sustainability Strategy 2024-2027](#) was published in April 2024. The Strategy sets out how our work to support justice can be done in a way that uses resources most efficiently and makes a substantial contribution to tackling climate change and protecting Scotland's environment.

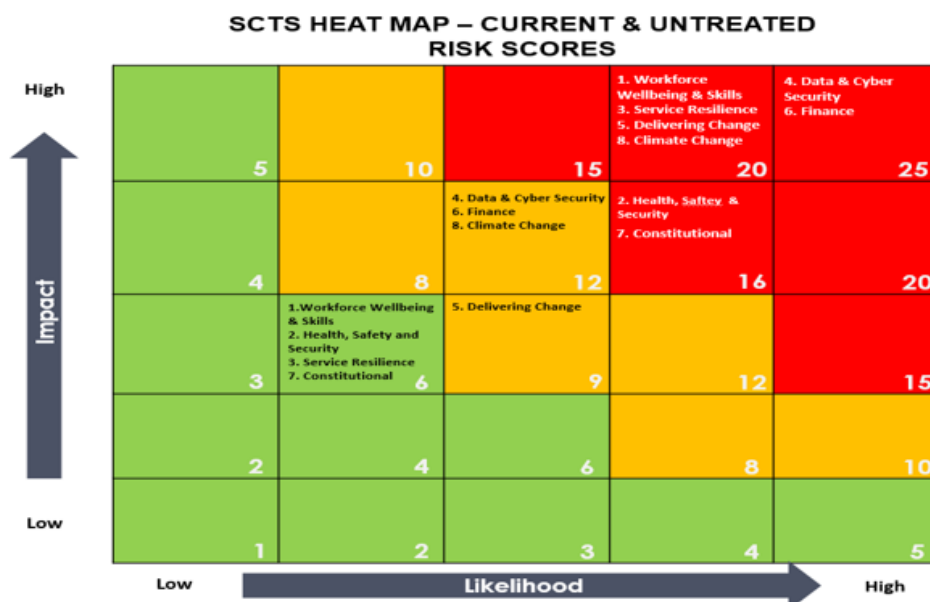
The organisation continues to invest in its estate to make continued progress in reducing emissions – and achieved [Carbon Reduce certification](#) in 2024, an internationally recognised carbon reduction programme.

During the past year, SCTS secured a £2.1 million grant from the Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme for energy efficiency upgrades at Edinburgh High Court. Improvements include: window upgrades; LED lighting that is 70% more efficient; 112 solar panels generating 36,000 kWh annually; and new meters and CO₂

monitoring to optimize energy use. We deliver our business from a range of locations across Scotland, many of which are historic and listed buildings. This makes sustained progress towards the net-zero target challenging, particularly when public finances are constrained.

SCTS risk scoring key

This heat map is a graphical representation of the key strategic risks the SCTS is managing. The 8 top-level risks (set out in more detail overleaf) are scored for their likelihood (will they happen?) and impact (how significant would their effects be?). The white text shows the “untreated” risk score – e.g. how significant a particular risk would be if no action had been taken to mitigate the risk and the black text shows the “treated” risk score – the assessment of current likelihood and impact in view of the mitigating actions taken by the organisation.



Risk scoring key		
Impact scores		
	Insignificant	1
	Minor	2
	Moderate	3
	Major	4
	Catastrophic	5
Likelihood scores		
	Rare	1
	Unlikely	2
	Possible	3
	Likely	4
	Almost certain	5
Risk score	Impact x likelihood	
Current risk score: Definition of levels		
Unlikely to occur and / or is fully manageable by SCTS		Low (1-6)
May or may not occur and / or SCTS has influence in managing risk, but cannot control it completely		Medium (8-12)
Very likely to occur and / or SCTS' ability to actively manage risk is limited		High (15-25)

Strategic categories and key corporate risks – Identified and mapped by the SCTS Board (at 6 April 2025)

Risk No	Risk Descriptor	Untreated Score	Treated Score	Target Score	Key Comments
1	Workforce Wellbeing & Skills	20	6	6	On 1 April 2025, the new 'My Time' module in Iltrent was launched to record employee time and attendance. Staff now only have to navigate one system for managing time and attendance, recruitment and performance management. Compliance training saw the highest ever certification levels at 87% as at end of March. Treated score at target.
2	Health, Safety & Security	16	6	6	Radon monitoring at Inverness Justice Centre revealed elevated concentrations in two areas - measures in place to ensure staff safety and longer terms options to reduce Radon gas levels are being investigated. SCTS has also put in place monitoring of a further 20 sites across the SCTS estate is now taking place. A final evaluation report for the Policing Pilot will be shared with the Judicial and Welfare Committee during Q1. The estate security audit program commenced in January 2025 and our facilities management contractors are conducting weekly audits until June 2025. Treated score at target.
3	Service Resilience & Continuity	20	12	6	Work is ongoing to manage business levels expected to come into the High Court, when set against the capacity of the justice system to manage increased case levels. Current estimates are increases of circa 470 extra indictments in 2025-26 compared to 2024-25. The medium-term plan to remediate Airdrie Sheriff court was agreed. A Business Continuity session at the Senior Managers Conference on 2 April raised awareness of evolving cyber security threats and scoped activities to improve overall organisational resilience. Treated score remains above target due to anticipated rising solemn business volumes and limited options for managing such an increase.
4	Data & Cyber Security	25	12	6	A recent Internal Audit on Data and Cyber Security was carried out in March 2025, with a 'reasonable assurance' rating given. Two Cyber Response exercises facilitated by Cyber Fraud Centre Scotland took place in March with our Cyber Security Team. An integrity data breach was identified relating to data held on COPII (Criminal CMS). The impact was assessed as minimal and work is ongoing to manage the risk. A business case to provide a new records management system in SharePoint was approved by the ECB. Treated score remains static and above target.
5	Delivering Change & Service Reform	20	9	9	Finalised budget plans and prioritised change activity agreed by the Executive Change Board. National roll-out of the SCM Pilot commenced 14 January. A lessons learned review of OPG CMS Phase 1 implementation was carried out. Work to identify areas for improvement for SCTS' change delivery model is progressing well following workshops with Directors and all senior managers. Treated score at target.
6	Finance & Resources	25	12	12	Full year 2024-25 financial forecast is projected at £0.9m over budget (as at end of February), but this is within SG overspend limits set at £2.4m - supporting OPG case management completion. Following 2025-26 business and budget planning activities, the SCTS baseline budget was balanced, with priority change activities / projects approved by the Executive Team. The business plan and budget were approved by the SCTS Board on 24 March, with members noting that resources will be tight next year.
7	Constitutional & Legislative Change	16	6	6	Ongoing monitoring of regulatory impacts across reform areas will continue during 2025-26 to gauge impacts on SCTS resources and operations. Treated score at target.
8	Climate Change	20	12	9	The Sustainability Action Plan is progression with further exploration carried out to agree responsibilities and training requirements. SCTS secured a £2.1 million grant from the Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme for energy efficiency upgrades at Edinburgh High Court. Treated score remains above target reflecting the scale of the longer-term Net Zero challenge.

SCTS corporate risk appetite statement and levels

The SCTS Board has agreed a strategic Risk Appetite Statement to convey the organisation's current approach to risk management. This is based on a high level corporate statement plus five appetite levels that are assigned to each corporate risk.

SCTS Risk Appetite Statement

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service approach to risk is founded on the importance of maintaining public trust and confidence in the justice system, in line with our purpose – 'Supporting Justice'.

Our approach to risk is based on the need to deliver our essential services in an effective, resilient, innovative and compassionate way. We manage risk to ensure that we provide a safe environment for all service users and staff – minimising exposure to reputational, operational, technical, security and compliance (or statutory) risks. At the same time, we recognise the need to accept and encourage higher levels of risk in some areas – to support innovation, to pilot new approaches and to maintain or improve levels in service the face of future challenges, including an uncertain economic and environmental outlook.

Our risk appetite is kept under review to ensure it is flexible, proportionate and fit-for-purpose. It supports sound decision-making and helps our people to be creative in their work to deliver the best experience for service users.

Acceptance of any risk is based on ensuring that the potential impacts and benefits are fully understood, with appropriate controls put in place.

This statement will be reviewed at least annually by the SCTS Board and its Committees, as part of their overall review of Corporate Risk.

Risk Appetite Statements

Appetite Levels	Statements
Very Low (adverse)	SCTS is very reluctant to accept risks at this level. Avoidance of risk is essential in achievement of our core strategic or statutory objectives and priorities.
Low (minimalist)	SCTS aims to take decisions/undertake activities that are considered safe in achieving objectives at this level. This means the pursuit of opportunity is not a key driver.
Medium (cautious)	SCTS is willing to accept a degree of risk in order to deliver objectives at this level. Risks are deemed controllable and can be considered if resources exist to absorb potential increased costs, without impacting on key services or operational performance.
High (open)	SCTS aims to undertake activities that have a high degree of VFM, with stretching targets and the likelihood of success being a determining factor at this level. Failure in specific projects may be viable provided core ambitions/strategic priorities are not threatened.
Very High (hungry)	SCTS is keen to take risks and to innovate to maximise opportunities at this level – provided these are in keeping with our legal obligations, values and policies.

Risk Appetite aligned to corporate risks

	SCTS RISK	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
1	Workforce, Wellbeing & Skills		X			
2	Health, Safety & Security	X				
3	Service Resilience & Continuity		X			
4	Data & Cyber Security		X			
5	Delivering Change & Post-Pandemic Reform				X	
6	Finance & Resources			X		
7	Constitutional & Regulatory Change			X		
8	Climate Change			X		

1.2 Performance analysis

1.2.1 Performance measures – Business Plan outcomes and KPIs


In addition to reviewing progress against business plan outcomes, the SCTS Board appraises the organisation's performance on a quarterly basis through its **key performance indicators (KPIs)** scorecard. The KPIs are subject to annual review to ensure they remain relevant and sufficiently stretching. A summary of the KPI measures is on page 21. The full-year scorecard for 2024-25 is [published](#) on our website along with a descriptions and definitions document that describes the 18 KPIs contained in the scorecard – explaining what is measured, the performance

thresholds, how the data is used to drive decision making and how and why it helps provide assurance.

The KPI measures are aligned to our strategic priorities. This allows the SCTS Board to maintain oversight of core service delivery, key operational and corporate processes and wider performance. In addition to providing an exception-based report on performance, the KPIs provide the SCTS Board with a means of assuring that the organisation is carrying out its activities as planned, **to mitigate key**

risks and manage uncertainty so far as possible.

Throughout the past year, overall performance has been strong with 12 out of 18 indicators reporting as green in all quarters. Only measure 6(g): Office of the Public Guardian Recovery was in exception for the full year. The remaining 5 measures, reported as Red or Amber for one or more quarters of the reporting year. An extract from the Board Scorecard is detailed below, highlighting those measures which were in exception at any point during the year. Commentary on these is also provided below.

SCTS Board Scorecard 2024/25 Q4						Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service 			
Strategic Priority	Measure	RAG Criteria							
		R	A	G	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25	Q3 2024/25	Q4 2024/25	
2. Satisfied Service Users	2b. Delivering our Change Programme	Overall summary of programme delivery status			G	A	A	A	
3. Skilled and Motivated People	3a. Employee engagement	More than 4 indicators Amber or 2 at Red	3-4 indicators Amber or 1 at Red	All indicators Green or 1-2 at Amber	A	G	G	A	
4. Sustainable Buildings and Business	4a. Maintaining the estate	More than 5% below required expenditure level	Between 5% above & 5% below required expenditure level	More than 5% above required expenditure level	R	R	R	G	
6. Efficiency and Best Value	6a. High Court Business Recovery	At least two at Amber and one at Red or two at Red	Two or more indicators at Amber or one at Red	All indicators at Green or one at Amber but no Red	A	G	G	G	
	6g. Office of the Public Guardian Recovery	At least two at Amber and one at Red or two at Red	Two or more indicators at Amber or one at Red	All indicators at Green or one at Amber but no Red	R	R	R	R	
8. Financial Performance	8a. Expenditure profile	Outwith green and amber	Between minus 2.5% & minus 5.0% of forecast	Between forecast & minus 2.5% of forecast	R	R	G	G	

1. Measure 2(b): Delivering our Change Programme

This measure reported as Amber in quarters 2-4. While good progress has been made on the delivery of the majority of planned reforms, some key initiatives in the Criminal Justice Reform area have been delayed. These delays have largely been due to the capacity for other justice partners to drive forward elements of these reforms. For

example work to support delivery of a Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse Court Model and the implementation of Virtual Custodies has stalled due to challenges including the provision of facilities in custody suites and the willingness of the legal profession to support some new initiatives due to an ongoing dispute in relation to levels of criminal legal aid payments. In addition, due to a

lack of funding, work to renew the Jury Process, which has the potential to deliver significant improvement and efficiency gains, did not commence during the year.

2. Measures 3(a): Employee engagement.

This measure reported as Amber in Q1 and Q4. In Q1 two sub-measures, which related to short-term absences and issues raised

with the Employee Assistance Programme, reported as Amber. Short term absence figures for that quarter were 4.9 days against a target of 4.5 and 17 issues were raised with the EAP against a target of 16 or less. In Q4, the short term absence sub measure reported as Red at 6.1 days. Higher levels of short-term absence do tend to arise in the winter quarters of the year. In relation to stress related absence SCTS is taking forward a range of activities to support its staff, for example, having trained over 50 employees to become Mental Health First Aiders – who are willing to have confidential and non-judgmental conversations regarding mental health.

3. Measure 4(a): Maintaining the estate

The target spend on building maintenance in 2024-25 was set at £5.3m. In the first three quarters of the financial year, it was not possible to dedicate sufficient budget to meet the target spend. The maintenance budget was increased in-year as budgets were reprofiled and the measure reported as Green in Q4. Actual spend for the year was £6.61m.

4. Measure 6(a): High Court business recovery

This measure reported as Amber in the first quarter of the year and Green for the remainder of the year. The Amber rating in Q1 was because trial delay, and the number of outstanding scheduled trials, which were 14% and 10% above modelling projections respectively. However, this was based on the modelling projections published in December 2023 which had not yet accounted for the higher number of indictments being registered in 2024-25 (15.5% increase on 2023-24). We anticipate significant further pressures relating to High

Court business in 2025-26 and will be reviewing performance measures to ensure these can be reported quickly and accurately.

5. Measure 6(g): Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) Recovery

This is a new measure that was introduced at the start of 2024-25. This measure is similar to the others under section 6 in which a “basket” of operational targets are monitored to provide assurance in respect of effective business operation. The measure consists of 6 key operational targets used by OPG to monitor performance recovery.

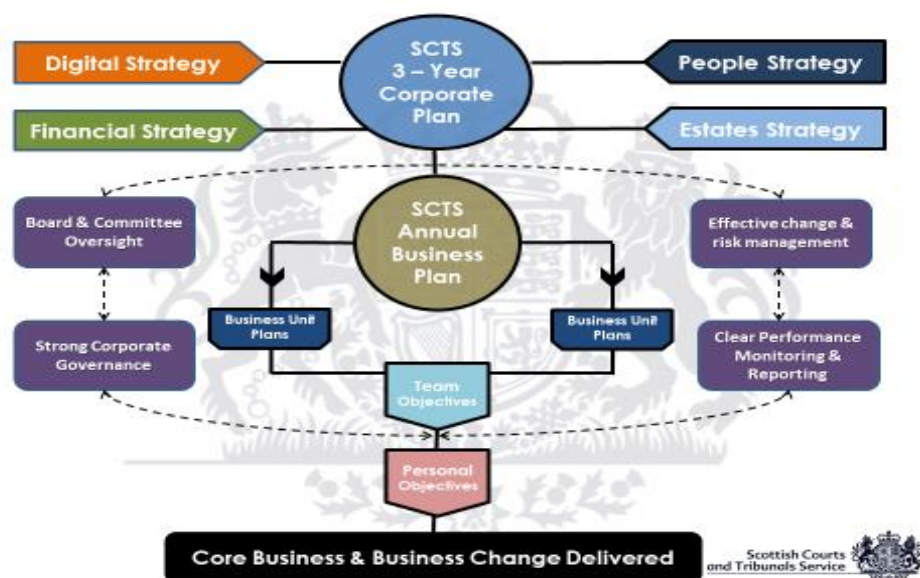
The measure has reported as red throughout the year. This is largely due to performance issues with OPG’s legacy Case Management System (SIGMA). The system for Powers of Attorney was replaced in January 2025 and performance improvements are already being achieved, with the percentage of electronic Power of Attorney Applications registered within 30 days having risen 4 percentage points to 23% against a target of 30% or more. It is anticipated that, as the new system beds in, performance and efficiency gains will be achieved.

6. Measure 8(a): Expenditure Profile

In Q1 and Q2, the provisional outturn for the year was estimated to be between £0.5m and £0.8m above profile. A permitted overspend on the delivery of the replacement system for OPG, coupled with improved fee levels and careful financial management, enabled SCTS to project and ultimately deliver a largely balanced budget – meaning that this measure reported as Green in the final two quarters of the year.

Longer-term objectives and strategies

The annual performance reporting provided by our Business Plan Delivery Report and Board KPI Scorecard sit within a broader framework of the 21 strategic objectives set out in our Corporate Plan 2023-26. In addition to our annual work programme, the delivery of these longer-term elements is informed by our corporate strategies – these set out both the context and our medium-term agenda across the key enabling areas of people, estates, digital and finance, as set out in the diagram below.



Summary of SCTS Key Performance Indicators at March 2025

Performance against the KPI measures is monitored quarterly by the SCTS Board, using its Performance Scorecard published on our website, assessing a range of measures relating to delivery of our seven Strategic Priorities. These are summarised below:

1 A well supported judiciary	
1a	Judicial satisfaction levels (Assessment of most recent judicial attitudes survey plus qualitative assessment by SCTS Executive Team)
2. Satisfied service users	
2a	User satisfaction levels (based on quantitative survey and assessment data, including SCTS Court User Survey data)
2b	Delivery our Change Programme
3 Skilled and motivated people	
3a	Employee engagement levels (based on staff turnover, absence levels, complaints and grievance monitoring and survey data)
3b	Delivery of development activities (based on proportion of staff who have engaged in and completed key learning and development activities)
4 Sustainability	
4a	Maintaining the estate (assessment of investment levels to ensure backlog maintenance is being managed effectively)
4b	Sustainability and carbon reduction (assessment of the extent to which the organisation is meeting agreed carbon reduction targets)
5 Digital services	
5a	Automated and online transactions (assessment of the proportion of online fines transactions and payments made via automated systems)
5b	IT resilience and service (assessment of the resilience of core SCTS systems available for use when required)
6 Efficiency and best value	
6a	High Court business recovery (assessment of measures aligned to Criminal Court Recovery Modelling)
6b	Sheriff Court solemn business recovery (assessment of measures aligned to Sheriff solemn Criminal Court Recovery Modelling)
6c	Sheriff court summary business recovery (assessment of measures aligned to Sheriff summary Criminal Court Recovery Modelling)
6d	Justice of the Peace Court business recovery (assessment of three operational indicators aligned to business recovery)
6e	Civil and miscellaneous business waiting times (assessment of 10 indicators measuring waiting times for civil and appellate business and guardianship orders administered by Office of the Public Guardian)
6f	Effective Tribunals Operations (assessment of 21 key operational indicators measuring effective administration)
6g	Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) operations - (assessment of 6 target based measures to monitor recovery of OPG performance)
7 Purposeful collaborations	
7a	Sufficient and effective collaboration (analysis of the overall quality and quantity of collaboration between the SCTS and key partner agencies)
8 Financial indicators	
8a	Expenditure profile (comparison of actual expenditure with profiled expenditure to the year end to ensure robust budgeting)
8b	Fines and fees income (comparison of actual fines and fees income received with profiled income to the year end to ensure robust profiling)

1.2.2 Development and performance 2024-25

Criminal Reform

Supporting the judiciary in delivering a world class service for criminal court users – providing optimum, trauma informed, user focused solutions to support staff, the Judiciary and partners, which improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system, inspiring confidence in all who use it

SCTS has operated an increased number of criminal courts since September 2021. Initially this was to address backlogs that were generated by the pandemic. Our goal was to return to a position where the number of scheduled trials across all criminal business levels was below 20,000 – as this represented a manageable workload for the system.

This work has been successful – scheduled trials have reduced by over 23,000 from their peak level and now sit at 19,499 as at the end of March 2025 – reducing the waiting times that victims, witnesses and accused need to manage ahead of any trial. This has been achieved alongside a sustained increase in solemn business (the most serious criminal cases, heard before a jury), which were over 27% higher in 2024-25 compared to 2021-22 (22 pending scheduled trials reached their highest level in January 2022 when they sat at just over 43,000).

that this trend is set to continue. Changes to law, policy, court rulings, practices in the justice system and wider culture have all led to this growth. This is positive for society as a whole and for victims of crimes that are now being prosecuted, but it places significant pressure on a system with finite capacity.

Innovation and funding will be required to meet these pressures, as set out in our Business Plan for 2025-26, to avoid the level of scheduled trials in these most serious of cases reaching unacceptable levels, resulting in significant and adverse effects on victims, witnesses and accused. This would run counter to the justice sector’s ambition to manage business in a trauma informed way.

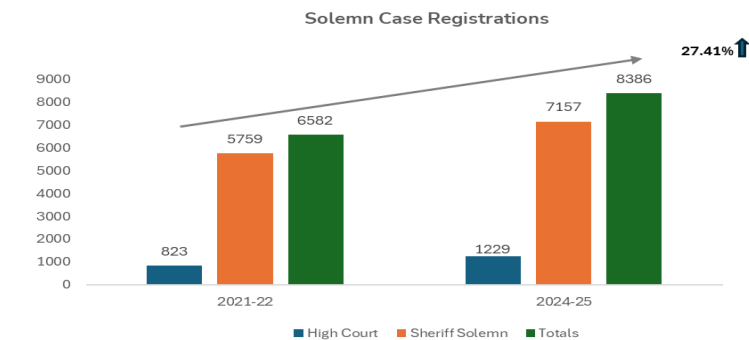
Within the sheriff summary courts the pilot of an improved model for the management of criminal cases has concluded. This involved early disclosure of evidence, early

Abuse cases in its first 12 months. This led to the extension into Glasgow and Perth Sheriff Courts in 2024 to cover domestic abuse cases.

The final [SCM Evaluation Report](#) was published on 20 September 2024. The report highlights that approximately 530 summary trials did not require to have a hearing fixed during the pilot; the volume of outstanding trials in pilot courts reduced by 31% and 18,000 witnesses were not required to be cited to attend court (11,000 of whom were Police witnesses). The success of the pilot led to the [announcement](#), on 14 January 2025, that SCM would be rolled out across all of Scotland’s Sheriff Courts.

SCTS has been working closely with justice partners to transform how evidence is managed across the justice system. The **Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC)** service enables police officers, prosecutors and defence agents to access and present digital evidence such as CCTV and video doorbell footage, photographs and 999/101 recordings in an efficient and secure way. It supports the SCM initiative as it allows for earlier consideration and disclosure of evidence.

The use of DESC was first tested in Dundee, Perth and Forfar sheriff courts and then rolled out in Falkirk, Strirling and Alloa in July 2024. As a result of the DESC pilot: over 19,500 pieces of evidence have been ingested; the time taken for footage to be edited and downloaded has reduced from 5 hours to 10 minutes on average; and 549 police officer hours have been saved due to reduced time spent collecting



Over the coming year, SCTS is facing exceptional business pressures in relation to those more serious criminal cases. Projected increases in High Court business stem from a substantial increase in the number of serious sexual offences brought to court. A focus on redress for historic offences, coupled with improved reporting and detection rates mean

engagement between the defence and the Crown, and pro-active judicial case management.

An [interim evaluation report](#), published in November 2023, noted the Summary Case Management (SCM) model was having a positive impact with 1/3rd fewer police witnesses being cited in Domestic

evidence. A national rollout of DESC across Scotland's Sheriff Summary courts was announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on 1 August 2024.

Remote Provision of Evidence (RPE), which is currently in place within our High Courts, is a further digital initiative that is improving service whilst freeing up valuable time for our partners. The new system enables police and expert witnesses (mainly medical and forensic) to give evidence remotely – helping to avoid costs of travelling to court and reducing time spent away from professional duties.

Over the period January 2024 to January 2025, the utilisation of RPE averaged 59%. This initiative is of particular benefit to Police Scotland, as it supports their commitment to strengthening the frontline and maintaining trust and confidence in policing.

Due to funding constraints, SCTS was unable to expand the use of RPE to sheriff solemn or summary courts over the past year. It remains an ambition of SCTS to complete the rollout across all of our courts to make the most of new technology whilst helping those who support the system.

SCTS opened a fifth Evidence by Commissioner (EbyC) suite in Dundee in August 2024. The suite is located in the new Dundee Justice Hub. EbyC suites enable the most vulnerable to have their evidence and cross examination pre-recorded, minimising further trauma and obtaining the best evidence as early as possible. Approximately 1,000 witnesses gave evidence this way during 2024-25.



SCTS has received funding from the Scottish Government to create a further two suites and these are due to open during 2025-26, covering the sheriffdoms of North Strathclyde and South Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway. The creation of these suites supports a key recommendation from Lady Dorrian's review into improving the management of sexual offence cases. Many of the recommendations from the review require new legislation, including the creation of a national sexual offences court. We continue to work closely with the Scottish Government as the Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform (Scotland) Bill progressed through the Scottish Parliament this year, whilst preparing the measures that will need to be in place to support the law once enacted.

SCTS is also taking further steps to become a trauma informed organisation. Adopting trauma-informed approaches is essential to enhance the experience of the justice system for vulnerable individuals. By so doing we can improve the quality and quantity of evidence collected, whilst supporting the well-being and resilience of our workforce. We formally launched our trauma-informed practice strategy in 2024. Our approach involves leadership, training, workforce wellbeing initiatives and detailed assessment of how we design and deliver services to improve use' experience.

During the autumn of 2024 we rolled out level 1 trauma training to all our staff. This is an e-learning module,

which was produced in conjunction with NHS Education for Scotland and a group of justice organisations. Level 2 training, which is a mixture of e-learning and in-person training, was rolled out from February 2025.

Our work to establish a **Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse court model** progressed only partially this year, in Grampian, Highland and Islands. This was in part due to capacity constraints experienced by other justice organisations and an ongoing dispute between the Scottish Government and the defence community in respect of legal aid fees. SCTS aims to roll-out the model in 2025-26 if these issues can be addressed. It will involve the use of increased judicial case management by designated specially trained sheriffs, specialist prosecutors, and solicitors to undertake trauma informed training. The approach would enable focussed use of community justice resources, with benefits for both victims and the accused (particularly those subject to stringent bail conditions).

By far our largest interaction with the Scottish public is citing people to take part in a jury. Solemn trials require juries comprising of 15 people. Around 700,000 jury citations were issued in 2024. Following detailed assessment we have identified a number of improvements that could be made to the jury citation process to enhance the experience for those involved whilst realising efficiencies. In 2024, we developed a detailed business case to modernise and improve the efficiency of the jury process. Work was unable to commence in 2024 due to funding constraints. We await the outcome of a bid for funding from the Scottish Government to enable us to deliver this reform activity during 2025-26.

Civil Reform

To support the Judiciary in the delivery of world class civil justice by leading and inspiring user-centred change to create more efficient and accessible services for all

2024-25 saw significant progress in the ongoing journey to transform the Civil justice system – developing a fully digital end-to-end service across all civil business types. As we continue to enhance our integrated case management system (ICMS) we have ensured that new services are delivered in line with [Digital Scotland Service Standards](#). A key element of meeting those standards is providing a service that everyone can use. This includes those with disabilities, those who have no access to the internet and those who may lack the skills or confidence to use it.

In August 2024, a new Ordinary Actions Case Tracker was launched for sheriff court business. This service was extended to cover the Court of Session in February 2025. This innovative tool is designed to enhance the management and tracking of civil cases, significantly improving the efficiency of legal proceedings in Scotland.

In the sheriff court this means that two thirds of all civil business can now be tracked online. In the Court of Session this is the first fully digital service available to solicitors, and enables 90% of case types to be tracked online. Online case tracking offers real time updates on case activity, ensuring that solicitors have the most up to date information about their cases whilst, improving the efficiency of the court process by freeing up staff time from dealing with queries about the status of cases.

In August 2024, the Digital Inventory of Process was introduced in the Court of Session, improving efficiency

by enabling court staff to organise and access case documents in ICMS. This also enabled the roll out of ICMS to Senators which took place in November 2024. This change enables judges working to easily access papers and view the full contents of a digital case file, as well as being able to review and digitally authenticate interlocutors.

During 2024 we also migrated all active case files from the legacy case management system (CMS) in the Court of Session and moved them over to ICMS. This change removed the need for court staff to navigate two case management systems, improving efficiency. It also supports the future decommissioning of legacy servers which will eliminate data security risks and remove license and support costs.

Significant progress has been made to allow solicitors to raise and defend ordinary actions through our case portal, Civil Online. The ability to raise and defend ordinary actions via Civil Online is expected to go live in the summer of 2025. This will automate case registration and remove the need for manual data entry, significantly improving the efficiency for both the courts and solicitors.

With the public embracing technology in an ever-increasing way, the ways in which we can open up the courts are evolving. Between June 2023 and February 2025, 61 hearings of significant civil appeals heard in the Court of Session were livestreamed, attracting over 323,000 viewers to the SCTS livestream website pages.



In order to explore further opportunities and gather views on the further developments in open justice in Scotland, a judicially led event was held in April 2024. The event was part of an ongoing dialogue with those who have an interest in shaping future open justice policy and practice. A report of the event was [published](#) in July 2024, capturing key themes and an outlining next steps.

Over the course of the past year SCTS has continued to make changes to its digital systems, processes and procedures to ensure they keep pace with new government legislation or rules of court that the Scottish Civil Justice Council have produced. As processes become increasingly digital this can require quite significant development to – and investment in – systems to ensure they provide the services required.

Full details of new rules of court the SCJC have produced can be found on their [website](#).

Tribunals and the Office of the Public Guardian Reform

To provide high quality access to justice for Tribunals users and protection for vulnerable people and their families through the Power of Attorney and guardianship systems - by developing efficient, fair, user-friendly and responsive services

SCTS provides the administration for the devolved tribunals in Scotland. This includes all tribunals that have transferred into the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, and the Upper Tribunal (where appeals from the First-tier are heard).

SCTS also provides the administration for the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (MHTS) and the Pensions Appeal Tribunal Scotland (PATs), both of which currently sit out with the Tribunals (Scotland) Act structure (see the diagram below). It was anticipated that the transfer of MHTS into the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland would take place in 2024. This has been delayed, and a prospective date of transfer is awaited from the Scottish Government.

contraventions covering Glasgow began in January 2025.

With the addition of these new jurisdictions, the number of appeals registered increased by 32% in 2024-25. It is projected that business volumes in the GRC will rise from around 1,700 cases to over 3,000 in 2025-26 (an increase of approximately 75%). Throughout the year the GRC's case management system was updated as new jurisdictions were added and the system was amended to encourage the use of video hearings, the preferred hearing modality for those appealing LEZ and parking enforcement charges.

The Social Security Chamber (SSC) also experienced a significant rise in case volumes over the past year. In

Pension Age Disability payment, Social Security Scotland are estimating a reduction in the number of appeals being lodged (circa 1,000 fewer in 2025-26). This is because there is an expectation that new applications for both Child and Adult Disability Payments will reduce.

Across nearly all devolved tribunal jurisdictions there have been increases in case volumes over the past year which have placed strain on the system. These have been compounded by difficulties in scheduling cases arising from the limited availability of fee-paid tribunal members. Opportunities to increase the pool of available legal and specialist members through JABS recruitment are infrequent and recent recruitment rounds have not yielded the numbers required.

Retention of existing members is also challenging. Ensuring that the judiciary, staff, systems and resources are in place to manage future expansion and increasing case volumes is an ongoing priority for SCTS and we will continue to engage with the Scottish Government on these matters over the coming year.

Details on caseloads for all Tribunals can be found at Annex 1, page 87. For future projections, see the [SCTS Business Plan 2025-26](#).

Throughout 2024-25, in collaboration with the tribunals' judiciary, we continued to increase the number of in-person hearings where appropriate, while maintaining a hybrid hearing model across several jurisdictions – aiming to meet user need by providing the



There was significant expansion of jurisdictions and business volumes across Scottish Tribunals over the past year. The General Regulatory Chamber (GRC) saw the addition of new jurisdictions for Transport Appeals in 2023 when Low Emission Zone (LEZ) appeals were added. That jurisdiction has expanded due to the introduction of such zones in Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh during 2024. The expansion of appeals against Penalty Charge Notices for decriminalised parking

2024-25, the SSC received a total of 7,154 appeals, a rise of 4,539 on 2023-24. The increase is mainly attributable to appeals from individuals seeking to make a claim for the Adult Disability Payment benefit (all claims are processed first by Social Security Scotland and appeals against their decision are considered by the SSC).

While further benefit types are anticipated to be launched in 2025-26, including the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment and the

type of hearing most suited to the parties in a case. In-person and teleconference hearings have been the preferred hearing modality within the two largest jurisdictions - MHTS and SSC. Within the Housing and Property Chamber – the third largest jurisdiction in terms of case volume, the majority of hearings are dealt with by teleconference.



This flexible approach - offering a mix of digital (video and teleconference) and in-person hearings - continues to deliver significant benefits, both for our users and in supporting the most efficient and effective disposal of tribunal business.

Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)

Throughout 2024-25 a key focus for OPG has been the development and deployment of a new case management system for processing all areas of OPG business. The aim is to deliver a digital-first, responsive service that is efficient and easily accessible – which will improve the

user experience and also reduce outstanding case levels in OPG. The project is being delivered in three phases.

The first phase went live on 28 January 2025, after the successful migration of around 10 million records from the old system. All new Power of Attorney (PoA) registrations, as well as amendments to existing PoA cases are now carried out on the new system.

Phases 2 and 3 will bring online guardianship, Intervention Orders and Access to Funds workflows into the system. This will support the creation of an online, secure, 24/7 Public Register in future, through which members of the public and stakeholders will be able to access information on orders made under Adults with Incapacity legislation.

The new platform will allow online amendment of existing POAs, online submission of guardianship documents and accounts through a web portal, the introduction of

verification codes and increased safeguards across the business. It is estimated that the project, once fully delivered, will provide significant savings, alongside service improvements, and a more stable, resilient system.

In addition to the development of a new case management system, OPG has implemented a tailored approach to managing guardianship account reviews. Guardianships are granted by way of a court order which authorises a person to act and make decision on behalf of an adult with incapacity. All guardianship account reviews are now assessed using specific risk criterion – enhancing the protection of those with incapacity.

In 2024-25, OPG received in excess of 90,000 PoA applications for the second successive year. This is a rise of over 18% when compared to 2022-23. Over the same period, new guardianship orders and associated work has increased by 22% on pre covid figures (2019-20) and the volume of accounts received over the same period has increased by 26%. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure we have the appropriate resource in place to manage the increased demand.

Corporate Reform

To give our people the systems, processes, facilities and skills to deliver the best possible service, allowing justice to be done fairly, effectively and efficiently

Our newly published [People Strategy for 2024-28](#) reflects our commitment to building a supportive and inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive. By fostering a culture of collaboration, respect, and continuous development, we aim to attract and retain talented individuals who contribute to our shared success. The strategy details our four key people goals over the period which include: attracting and retaining great people; building agile, diverse and high performing teams; providing the skills to succeed in a changing environment; and realising potential by building leadership skills. A range of activities and performance measures are set out in the strategy to ensure that progress can be monitored and outcomes measured.

PEOPLE STRATEGY



2024-28

Scottish Courts
and Tribunals Service

SCTS continues to promote collaboration, celebrate diversity, and actively support personal growth and work-life balance.

SCTS achieved the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) Gold award in the 2024 Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmarking exercise. [Enei](#) is the leading employer network promoting equality and inclusion in the workplace. Our [Mainstreaming Equality Report](#) and revised Equality Outcomes detail the work we are taking forward to promote the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, raising awareness and

embedding our EDI aims and objectives across the organisation.

Over the last year we have made good progress in enhancing our wellbeing initiatives including: training over 50 employees as mental health first aiders. We have also taken steps to increase awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme and actively promoted a range of wellbeing resources – through resilience training, engagement events, virtual cafes, and revamped induction sessions.

Launched in 2023, the Wellbeing Hour pilot provided employees with one hour of paid time each week to focus on wellbeing activities. This initiative concluded in September 2024, following the introduction of a 35-hour working week, from October 2024. The shift to a 35-hour working week aims to offer long-term benefits to employee wellbeing through reduced working hours and, in some business areas, increased flexibility. A full evaluation of the new working model will be conducted in 2025.

5 Ways to Wellbeing



Building on the work of the National Wellbeing Group established in 2023, we launched our refreshed Wellbeing Hub, offering a comprehensive range of resources across four key areas: mental, physical, social, and financial wellbeing. In 2024, we

introduced a dedicated Carers' Hub, providing tailored information, support, and resources for staff with caring responsibilities. To further support our employees, we also implemented a new process that allows individuals whose caring duties are significantly affecting their work-life balance to request interim inclusion on the Carers' Register while their formal application is under review. These initiatives reflect our commitment to creating an inclusive and compassionate workplace.

The level of technical and procedural knowledge required by our staff to effectively manage business is significant and growing. During the year we launched a range of revised Scottish Courts Knowledge and Information Manuals (SCKIM) for Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Court staff. These manuals provide court staff with direct access to comprehensive and best practice guidance on procedure and legislation, supporting them in carrying out their roles effectively whilst ensuring consistency of practice.

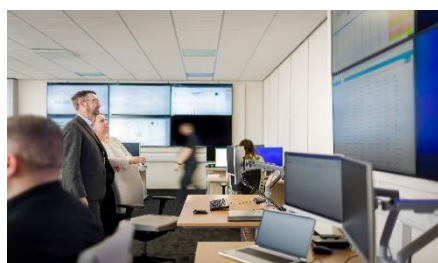
Our leadership programmes, coupled with our flexible workforce and succession planning policies, assist us in maintaining a skilled workforce and in developing future leaders who can succeed in an ever changing system.

The third iteration of the SCTS Talent programme launched on 31 October 2024 following graduation of cohort 2. Over 30 of our people have now completed the training with many already securing promotions and filling key positions across the organisation.

Our Administration Officer Development Programme (AODP) is another key initiative aimed at developing leaders of the future. The programme provides accelerated learning to gain experience of working and performing duties across all aspects of civil business. Eighteen employees successfully graduated from the programme in January this year. Some graduates from the prior year's cohort have already secured promotions and are carrying out Executive Officer roles in our courts.

Work to embed strategic workforce planning remains at a relatively early stage. An annual assessment of critical posts at senior manager level has been conducted. Further work to embed the tools and practices across the organisation will take place over the coming year, ensuring we are well prepared to meet long-term objectives and navigate unexpected challenges.

SCTS has undergone rapid digital transformation in recent years. The rise in the use of new tools, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), is set to continue. Over the past year we have continued to modernise the tools our workforce have at their disposal to improve efficiency and ultimately the service we offer to those using the courts, devolved tribunals and the OPG.



A new 'Automated Transcription Service' pilot, using AI to support the production of transcriptions for use by the judiciary in Evidence by Commissioner hearings concluded in January 2025. The accuracy rate

of the transcriptions was greater than 99% in test cases and transcription turnaround times were measured in minutes. Following the success of the pilot, we will explore the use of AI technology to transcribe the charge to the jury and verdict, and transcripts under section 21 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 (sexual offence cases, which, in the opinion of the court, disclose a significant sexual aspect to the accused's behaviour).

SCTS is committed to making it as easy as possible for our people to access the tools and resources they need to manage their career, recruitment and time and attendance. To support this, we have invested in our People and Pay system "iTrent". During 2023-24, we migrated from a number of legacy systems to include modules in iTrent for staff to support performance management, payslip access, recruitment support, expense claims, and other essential resources. Work to create a new time and attendance module on iTrent was completed during the reporting year and went live on 1 April 2025, meaning our staff can now access all these services on a single system.

Oracle Fusion Cloud (OFC) is our new system for managing finance and procurement functions. The development of the new system was led by the Scottish Government as it was introduced across a range of public bodies.

There have been some challenges with the introduction of the new system, which has meant that our finance and procurement functions have had to implement manual processes. This has placed considerable additional pressure on a number of staff, but they have risen to the occasion, developing approaches to effectively manage

challenges while the new system beds in. Engagement between SCTS and the Scottish Government has been maintained throughout the project –both to manage difficulties but also to share perspectives and expertise. We hope, in the course of the coming year, to be able to realise the full benefits from the system - reducing pressure on staff by automating recurring tasks and providing real-time reports to assist in decision making.

The new [SCTS Corporate Website](#) was launched in July 2024. It was designed in response to research and feedback from users – providing more accessible information on who we are and what we do, with links to a range of services and activities that can now be carried out online.



Over the course of this business year we have continued to upgrade our network connectivity, Wi-Fi provision and courtroom technology to support the delivery of new initiatives and the continued expansion of digital services. As those who use the court increasingly rely on access to their own digital systems to work we have sought to improve the service available to them – while also improving our core infrastructure to support key projects such as digital evidence sharing and the livestreaming of cases to support open justice.

Sustainability Reporting

Using available resources to embed sustainable practices in all our activities to support justice and achieve our Net Zero ambition

SCTS recognises and welcomes the critical leadership role that public sector bodies must take in reducing carbon emissions and meeting the challenge of climate change.

We report on the requirements of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) - governance, strategy, risk management, metrics and targets below and signpost disclosures made in other sections of this Annual Report and Accounts or externally.

Further work is currently ongoing to provide additional disclosures in respect of our strategy on sustainability, including new metrics and targets.

Governance – the SCTS Board has committed to becoming a net zero organisation by 2045. Sustainability is one of the organisation's seven strategic priorities and managing the impact of climate change is also recognised as one of our eight corporate risks. To manage this risk, the Board is supported by three committees.

- the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) in relation to issues of risk, control, governance and best value;
- the Estates Committee holds principal responsibility for oversight of climate related issues and receives quarterly reports on the organisation's performance on reducing carbon output and work to enhance our buildings to make them more resilient and energy efficient; and
- the People Committee scrutinises and advises the

Executive in the discharge of people-related functions, considering and advising on proposals with significant implications for SCTS as an employer.

Strategy - in order to deliver progress and mitigate the risk impacts the SCTS Board approved and published the SCTS [Sustainability Strategy 2024-2027](#). This Strategy sets out how our work to support justice can be done in a way that uses our resources most efficiently and makes a substantial contribution to tackling climate change and protecting Scotland's environment.

The strategy has four main goals (detailed below). Goals 1 and 2 are the main means by which we collect data to measure our progress. Goal 3 is essential to embedding sustainability across SCTS and goal 4 is helping us plan for the future.



A great deal of work is ongoing to support the delivery of the strategy. Five priority areas of work have been identified as critical to the overall delivery of the identified goals. Those are:

- Business Travel – enhancing data collection to underpin

policy changes to reduce the need for an impact on our CO2 emissions.

- Waste and recycling – improving recycling facilities across the SCTS estate. Collecting additional data, which is required for us to maintain Carbon Reduce certification (see p.30 for further details)
- Estates Strategy – ensuring our approach to sustainability is embedded within the developing plans, particularly with respect to net zero, the circular economy and adapting to a changing climate (future-proofing).
- Decision making – ensuring sustainability, carbon management and recognition of climate risks is embedded in all decision making processes in particular in respect of new change initiatives.
- Training, guidance and policies – all existing materials need reviewed and updated, alongside bespoke training for staff.

Risk Management - climate related risk features amongst the corporate risks identified by SCTS. It is identified, assessed and managed in line with the provisions of the SCTS risk management framework – ensuring the approach taken is consistent and integrated with our

general risk management arrangements.

The corporate risk register is made available to and monitored at Board, Committee and Executive Team level. Specific actions to manage and reduce risks are allocated to Executive Directors and Directors ([see section 1.2.4](#) for full detail on our approach to risk management).

Climate-related responsibilities are assigned to specific senior managers that coordinate activity across SCTS business units:

- SCTS's Chief Executive, Malcolm Graham, has overall responsibility for climate-related risks & opportunities and for ensuring that climate issues are appropriately considered at Board level.
- SCTS's Chief Finance Officer, Alice Wallace, identifies available funding for projects to align with the SCTS climate reduction plan.
- Executive Director Tim Barraclough is sustainability lead and has responsibility for monitoring and reporting on progress in delivering the goals detailed in our Sustainability Strategy, alongside joint ownership of the climate change corporate risk.
- Director of Property Services Unit, Kate Leer, has joint ownership of the climate change corporate risk and manages development of the new carbon monitoring and reduction accreditation scheme as well as the development of specific SCTS climate related staff policies.
- SCTS Executive Directors and Directors adapt SCTS policies and identify climate-related risks within their specific business units and include them in local risk registers.

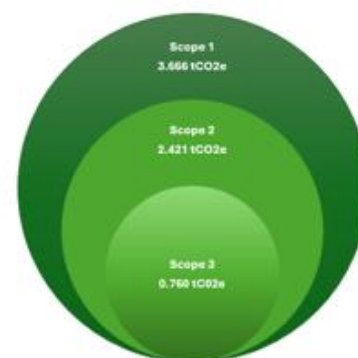
Metrics and Targets - metrics for carbon, energy and water consumption are tracked on a monthly basis through reports submitted by the Facilities Management contractor, OCS. A sustainability report is submitted to the Estates Committee, and a quarterly Key Performance Indicator report is submitted to the SCTS Board via the SCTS Board Scorecard – measure 4b of that scorecard relates to sustainability and carbon reduction (See [section 1.2.1](#), pages 19 to 21 for further details).

The SCTS is required to report annually on compliance with climate change duties established under s44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015. Our progress, is set out in a detailed report which is [published](#) each year on the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) website.

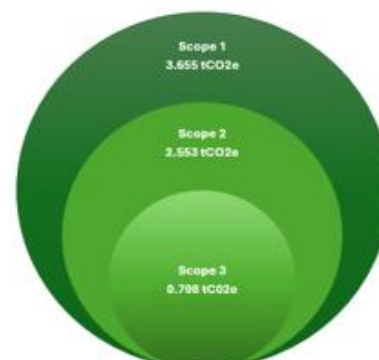
Included within our compliance report are details of Scope 1 - direct emissions from natural gas, refrigerants, diesel, coal, gas oil, LPG. Scope 2 - indirect emissions covering electricity and scope 3 - indirect emissions covering Business travel, waste and recycling, water and wastewater.

Scope 1 to 3 emissions data is available on the SSN website covering each year from 2009-10 to 2023-24. The 2024-25 data is expected to be published in September 2025. A comparison of emission data for 2022-23 and 2023-24 is provided.

SCTS Reported Emissions
2022-23



SCTS Reported Emissions
2023-24



While the full suite of data to enable a full report on emissions, covering scopes 1 to 3, is expected to be published in September 2025, SCTS does obtain quarterly reports on Gas and Electricity usage, enabling us to report on our annual carbon reduction targets.

Since 2016-17, SCTS has had in place a target to reduce energy consumption by 2.5% year on year. In 2024-25, SCTS reduced its energy consumption by 14.2% when compared to 2023-24. Our annual target will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended to ensure it remains appropriate and will support us in achieving our goal of achieving Net Zero by 2045.

SCTS has achieved [Carbon Reduce](#) certification, which is an internationally recognised carbon reduction programme developed in New Zealand by climate scientists. To achieve the Carbon Reduce

certification we calculated our carbon footprint with the help of a tool called *emanage*. The data was verified by an auditor and then submitted for certification.

The *emanage* tool allowed us to input data related to our activities such as electricity, gas, other fuels, business travel (air, train, ferry, car, taxi and bus) as well as our use of water and how we manage waste and recycling.

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing sustainability across our estate, we continue to invest in our infrastructure and promote smarter ways of working. The potential for energy efficiency or emissions reduction is considered as part of the initial development approach of relevant programmes and projects.

During the past year, SCTS secured a £2.1 million grant from the Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme for energy efficiency upgrades at Edinburgh High Court. Improvements include: window upgrades; LED lighting that is 70% more efficient; 112 solar panels generating 36,000 kWh annually; and new meters and CO₂ monitoring to optimize energy use.

Other enhancements to improve energy efficiency include a number of LED lighting upgrades which were completed during the financial year at Falkirk, Alloa, Perth, Stirling, Glasgow and Aberdeen Sheriff Courts. Similar upgrades were made to the Office of the Public Guardian in Falkirk. Taken together these represent 105,000 kWh and £36k of savings annually.

Our 10 largest buildings use Grid Edge analytics, integrated with Building Energy Management Systems, to ensure continuous efficiency monitoring. BEMS detects inefficiencies such as off-hours consumption, schedule deviations, and early temperature spikes while leveraging predictive weather insights. The software enables strategic improvements to be trialled, optimising the efficiency of the buildings and reducing energy waste.

We are also taking steps to evaluate the services we provide to determine if they can be conducted in ways that further reduce our carbon footprint. Earlier this year our Education and Learning Unit team (ELU) decided to look at what they could do to support further emission reductions. One of ELU's challenges is that they do not know

what their carbon footprint is for delivery of in-person training. Over the next twelve months, ELU will be asking all the delegates and staff attending our AO development and Talent programme how they are travelling to the venues. This will enable us to start to quantify the travel methods and how much CO₂ each programme generates. We will then assess if there are any steps we should take in how we run our courses, while maintaining the same level of service.



Supplementary statutory reporting

The SCTS is committed to open and transparent reporting of its statutory duties. Where not already covered updates are provided in this section

Bribery Act 2010 – Dealing with bribery or corruption

SCTS has proportionate and effective systems and processes in place to prevent, control and, if necessary, deal with allegations or incidences of bribery and corruption.

The structures established within the Scottish justice system are designed to minimise the potential for acts of bribery or corruption. Parties to a case are separate. They seek legal advice and representation independently. Court administrators are independent of parties, and the judiciary are independent of both the parties and SCTS.

Bribery or corruption identified in the justice process is taken very seriously. There are clear and robust legal processes to investigate any allegations, with significant penalties available to the judiciary should it be established. Such cases are very rare.

SCTS has in place a well-developed control environment. It aims to prevent and minimise the impact of any incidences of bribery or corruption. These are set out below.

A register of staff interests

ensures that any connections between staff (or their immediate family members) and companies, charities or other bodies that may have an actual or potential interest in, or connection with, SCTS are declared and appropriately managed.

Robust procurement policies

ensure that those staff involved in goods or services procurement with potential suppliers do so with

honesty, fairness and impartiality. Suitable due diligence is carried out in respect of those with whom we contract, and relationships with suppliers are managed professionally, transparently, and with due regard to ethics and propriety.

A well-established second jobs policy

ensures that individuals do not take on roles that may lead to actual or perceived conflicts with their SCTS duties.

A rigorous gift registration policy

ensures that external parties cannot seek to gain privilege or differential treatment by offering members of staff incentives beyond the formal system.

A Counter-Fraud policy which sets out a zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption, with a full Fraud Risk assessment. Our Conduct and Discipline Policy states that all instances of fraud and bribery will be treated as gross misconduct.

A whistleblowing policy which explains clearly how concerns can be raised, and provides direct reporting lines to both an identified SCTS Director and Board member. The policy and any instances of whistleblowing are reviewed annually by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Clear separation of roles, responsibilities, system and software privileges and approval levels – designed to minimise the potential for misuse of finances.

The [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires Scottish public

bodies, including SCTS, to prepare a [Procurement Strategy](#) setting out how we intend to ensure our regulated procurements will deliver value for money and contribute to the achievement of our broader aims and objectives, in line with Scotland's National Outcomes. The Act also requires SCTS to prepare an [Annual Procurement Report](#) on our Regulated procurement activity and compliance with our Procurement Strategy.

Equalities Act 2010 – The Fairer Scotland Duty

The duty came into force in Scotland in April 2018, contained in part 1 of the 2010 Act. It is one of several duties placed on the public sector to tackle socioeconomic disadvantage – which can be defined as living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. The duty requires that public authorities ensure their strategic decision making takes into account those who may experience such disadvantage; to ensure that, where possible, the actions of public authorities minimise both the incidence and impact of such disadvantage.

As a public body with a significant presence in communities across Scotland, SCTS adopts a progressive stance, seeking to tackle inequality both for its people and its surrounding communities where possible, within the statutory duties placed upon it as an independent non-ministerial office by the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008. Our founding legislation limits our functions to the provision of the property, services, officers and other staff

necessary for the administration of justice in Scotland's courts and devolved tribunals; the judiciary of those courts and tribunals, and the Office of the Public Guardian. Our services are for all those who seek redress before the law. We have no control over those who use or access our services. The Crown determines the participants in criminal cases, based on reports submitted to them. Civil and tribunal business is initiated by the parties to the dispute.

The scope for SCTS to interact with defined socio-economic groupings is, therefore, limited: compared to organisations with universal service delivery duties. For the majority of our activities, it is not possible to give precedence to the Fairer Scotland Duty as our focus must be the provision of a fair and impartial court and tribunal environment. In delivering that, we ensure that Scotland can demonstrate its compliance with certain key ECHR rights – such as the Article 6 right to a fair trial.

Over the course of the year, SCTS has maintained consideration of the Duty in strategic decision making processes, where it can. We have maintained Living Wage Employer accreditation from the Poverty Alliance. This ensures both SCTS staff and those with whom we contract receive the Scottish Living Wage. In addition to paying our employees rates above the Living Wage, we also promote Fair Work practices through our tender activities. Whilst we cannot mandate the payment of the Living Wage by our suppliers we do evaluate as part of the tender process suppliers approach to Fair Work Practices in their organisation.

This is monitored as part of our Contract and Supplier Management processes.

Community Empowerment Act 2015

Under s.95, each year the SCTS is obliged to publish an asset transfer report, setting out the number of requests we have received, and where such a request has been made – the number granted and refused. In 2024-25 there have been no requests received in year requesting transfer of ownership.

Island Communities Act 2018

Under s.7 of the Act, SCTS is obliged to have regard to island communities in the delivery of its functions. SCTS is present in five island locations across Scotland – part of a long heritage of supporting justice in the Scottish Islands, and providing local people with access to justice without having to travel to the mainland. Investments made in improved technology extend to our Island locations. This ensures that these communities benefit from remote access, video links and remote hearing technology, and reduces the need to travel to give evidence, improving accessibility.

Over the past 12-months there have been no policy, strategic or service developments pursued by SCTS which would have required SCTS to prepare an island communities impact assessment, the effect of which would be significantly different for island communities.

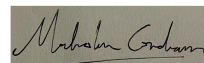
The Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Act 2018

Part 3 of this Act came in to force on 30 January 2019. SCTS has

responsibility for appointment of new staff to the offices of the Auditor of the Court of Session, Auditor of the Sheriff Appeal Court, and Auditors of the Sheriff Courts. The Report on taxation and the fees charged by the auditors SCTS employs can be found in the business volumes section of this report (Annex 1).

Our work continues to support key elements of [Scotland's National Performance Framework](#). The framework promotes a "society which treats all people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respecting the rule of law and acting in an open and transparent way". A number of cases in recent years have highlighted the importance of the courts' role in safeguarding human rights in society. [Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights](#) enshrines the right to a fair hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal. The work of the SCTS promotes observance of other key rights, including:

- The right to recognition as a person before the law;
- The right to be treated as equal before the law;
- The right to an effective remedy from acts violating a person's human rights; and
- The right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.



Malcolm Graham
Chief Executive

11 August 2025

2. Accountability report

2.1 Corporate governance report

2.1.1 Directors' report

Membership of the SCTS Board

The Lord President of the Court of Session, the Rt. Hon. Lord Pentland, is Chairman of the SCTS Board. The Board includes 13 other members – seven members selected from the judiciary and six non-judicial members.

Members of the SCTS Board 2024-25

Judicial members

- The Rt. Hon. Lord Pentland
Lord President
(appointed 3 February 2025)
- The Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway
(appointment ended 3 February 2025)
- The Rt. Hon. Lord Beckett
Lord Justice Clerk
(appointed 4 February 2025)
- The Rt. Hon. Lady Dorrian
(appointment ended 3 February 2025)
- The Rt. Hon. Lady Wise
- Sheriff Principal Aisha Anwar
- Sheriff Jillian Martin-Brown
(appointment ended 4 February 2025)
- Summary Sheriff Frank Gill
(appointed 1 March 2025)
- Sheriff Olga Pasportnikov
- Mrs Anne Scott
- Dr David Caddick MBE, JP

Non-judicial members

SCTS Chief Executive

Mr Malcolm Graham
(appointed 29 July 2024)

Mr Eric McQueen
(demitted office 28 July 2024)

Advocate Member

Ruth Innes KC

Solicitor Member

Lynsey Walker

Members external to the justice system

- Steven Dickson
- Maggie Craig
- Dr Sophie Flemig

At the end of 2024-25, all 14 SCTS Board positions were filled. The gender split of the Board is eight women and six men.

During the year 2024-25, the appointments of the Lord President – the Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway, the Lord Justice Clerk – the Rt. Hon. Lady Dorrian, Sheriff Jillian Martin-Brown and Eric McQueen had ended and were succeeded by the Rt. Hon. Lord Pentland, the Rt. Hon. Lord Beckett, Summary Sheriff Frank Gill and Malcolm Graham.

Board meetings and operations

SCTS has made Standing Orders⁶ under which it conducts its business and has established Standing Committees to provide specific assurance and scrutiny of performance and advice to the SCTS Board. Over the course of 2024-25 these committees were:

- **People Committee**
- **Estates, Health and Safety, Fire and Security Committee**
- **Audit and Risk Committee**
- **Remuneration Committee**

The SCTS Board met on six occasions during 2024-25. Five of these were in-person meetings in Parliament House, Edinburgh, and one included a visit to the Tribunals Offices in Hamilton, on 7 October 2024. Committees met quarterly, with the exception of the Remuneration Committee which met once to review the remuneration of SCTS members who are not salaried public servants. Copies of the minutes of Board and Committee meetings can be found at: www.scotcourts.gov.uk

⁶ SCTS Standing Orders are available [here](#)

The SCTS Board at 31 March 2025



Top row (left to right) – Dr. David Caddick, Summary Sheriff Frank Gill, Malcolm Graham, Rt. Hon. Lord Beckett, Dr. Sophie Flemig, Steven Dickson, Sheriff Olga Pasportnikov,

Bottom row (left to right) – Rt. Hon. Lady Wise, Sheriff Principal Aisha Anwar, Margaret Craig, Rt. Hon. Lord Pentland (Chair), Anne Scott, Ruth Innes KC, Lynsey Walker

Name	Directorship	Appointments <i>ex officio</i>	Trusteeships	Other appointments and interests
Lord President – The Rt. Hon. Lord Pentland <i>(appointed 3 February 2025)</i>	None	Chair of the Scottish Civil Justice Council	Cullen Discretionary Trust	None
The Rt. Hon. Lord Carloway <i>(appointment ended 3 February 2025)</i>	None	Trustee, Faculty of Advocates Abbotsford Collection Trust President, The Royal Society for Home Relief to Incurables	None	None
Lord Justice Clerk – The Rt. Hon. Lord Beckett <i>(appointed 4 February 2025)</i>	None	Commissioner of the Honours of Scotland Senior Commissioner, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane	None	None

Name	Directorship	Appointments <i>ex officio</i>	Trusteeships	Other appointments and interests
The Rt. Hon. Lady Dorrian (appointment ended 3 February 2025)	Glenside Court Ltd. Franco-British Lawyers Society Ltd.	Commissioner of the Honours of Scotland Senior Commissioner, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane	Faculty of Advocates 1985 Trust Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Trusts Scottish Arts Trust	None
President of Scottish Tribunals – Rt. Hon. Lady Wise	Fettes College Limited	None	None	Chair of the Board of Governors of Fettes College
Sheriff Principal Aisha Anwar	None	None	None	None
Sheriff Jillian Martin-Brown (appointment ended 4 February 2025)	None	None	None	Member, Scottish Civil Justice Council Vice President - Sheriffs and Summary Sheriffs Association Committee Member, Monikie Primary Parent Teacher Partnership External Examiner, Dundee University Diploma in Legal Practice External Examiner, Edinburgh University Diploma in Legal Practice
Summary Sheriff Frank Gill (appointed 1 March 2025)	None	None	None	None
Sheriff Olga Pasportnikov	None	None	None	None

Name	Directorship	Appointments <i>ex officio</i>	Trusteeships	Other appointments and interests
Dr David Caddick MBE, JP	None	None	None	<p>Wing Commander Royal Air Force Reserve</p> <p>Chair Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association</p> <p>Chair Justices Training and Appraisal Committee, Sherifffdom of Grampian Highland and Islands</p> <p>Board Member, Council of UK Reserve Forces and Cadets Association</p>
Anne Scott	None	None	Roland Sutton Academic Radiology Trust	<p>President, First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, Tax Chamber</p> <p>Legally Qualified Member, Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland</p> <p>Judge, United Kingdom First-tier Tribunal Tax Chamber</p>
Eric McQueen (appointment ended 29 July 2024)	None	Member, Scottish Civil Justice Council	None	None
Malcolm Graham (appointed 29 July 2024)	None	Member, Scottish Civil Justice Council	Board Member Children 1st	Honorary Fellow University of Edinburgh, School of Law
Lynsey Walker	None	None	None	<p>Member, Addleshaw Goddard LLP</p> <p>Member, LawScot Tech Advisory Board (LSS)</p>
Ruth Innes KC	None	None	None	<p>Member, Faculty of Advocates</p> <p>Member, Church of Scotland</p> <p>Fellow, International Academy of Family Lawyers</p> <p>Governor and Vice Chair, Highlands and Islands Educational Trust</p>

Name	Directorship	Appointments <i>ex officio</i>	Trusteeships	Other appointments and interests
Dr Sophie Flemig	None.	None	None	Chief Executive Officer, Cattanach Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Steven Dickson	<p>Scottish Water – Non-Executive Director</p> <p>Scottish Water Horizons Holdings – Director</p> <p>Scottish Water Business Stream Holdings – Director</p> <p>BT Pension Scheme Trustees Limited - Director</p>	<p>Armed Forces Pay Review Body - Member</p>	None	<p>Institute of Directors – Member</p> <p>Pensions Management Institute – Member</p> <p>Prospect, Health & Safety Advisory Committee,</p> <p>Prospect Scotland Regional Branch - Executive Committee Member</p>
Maggie Craig	<p>Non-Executive Director to the Phoenix Group, Independent Governance Committee for workplace-based pensions</p> <p>Board of Glasgow Credit Union</p>	None	None	<p>Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries</p> <p>Scottish Government's Ministerial Advisory Group on the Scottish National Investment Bank</p>

The SCTS Executive Team

The SCTS Board has responsibility for directing and controlling the major activities of SCTS. Business delivery in accordance with agreed plans is delegated to the Chief Executive and the SCTS Executive Team. The membership as at 31 March 2025, was:

- **Chief Executive** – Malcolm Graham
- **Executive Director Court Operations** – David Fraser
- **Executive Director Tribunals and OPG Operations** – Tim Barraclough
- **Executive Director Judicial Office** – Riley Power
- **Chief Finance Officer** – Alice Wallace
- **Deputy Chief Executive** – Noel Rehfisch
- **Executive Director Change and Digital Innovation** – Mike Milligan

Executive Team at 31 March 2025



CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Malcolm Graham

Human Resources
Communications
Corporate governance



CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
Alice Wallace

Finance and procurement
Property services



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COURT OPERATIONS
David Fraser

Court operations
Education and learning
National fines



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JUDICIAL OFFICE
Riley Power

Judicial Office for Scotland



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRIBUNALS and OPG
Tim Barraclough

Tribunals operations
OPG operations



DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Noel Rehfisch

Strategy and planning
Policy and legislation
Management information
Data protection
Freedom of information



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Change and Digital Innovation
Mike Milligan

Digital Services
Innovation
Change labs

Information Security

The proper management of information remains a key focus for the SCTS. Data Protection and Security are key corporate risks managed and overseen by the SCTS Board and the Audit and Risk Committee. The Chief Finance Officer, who is also the Senior Information Risk Officer, is the owner of these risks at Executive Team level. Corporate policies and guidance are in place to ensure SCTS meets its legislative and compliance obligations to protect information assets and minimise the likelihood of personal data breaches.

The risks associated with information management are mitigated proportionately through appropriate certification of key systems and regular reviews of current and emerging issues. The Executive Team receives regular updates on information management risks and potential breaches are reported to them timeously.

As at the end of March 2025, 83% of our people had completed our annual mandatory data protection training, this is up from 69.5% in 2024.

Data Breaches 2024-25

A total of 416 data incidents were recorded internally during 2024-2025. After investigation 93 incidents were confirmed as not being incidents or were 'not at fault' incidents, where for example incorrect information was supplied to us. The remaining 323 incidents were confirmed as personal data breaches caused by internal errors due to human error or technical failures.

We take every data breach seriously – reporting, reviewing and seeking to learn lessons to reduce the risk of recurrence. To set the level of breaches in context, across all areas of our business in 2024-25 over 300,000 cases were registered – each requiring a range of personal information to be carefully managed in support of those using our services.

The SCTS reported 23 personal data breaches to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). This is down from 25 reportable breaches in 2023-24. A total of 17 breaches remain under investigation by the ICO. Eight breaches were reviewed and closed by the ICO. A significant number of these breaches were due to the errors in relation to the recording of bail and special bail conditions, resulting in data subjects being arrested and unlawfully detained.

To mitigate reoccurrence of such incidents, SCTS has prioritised guidance and desk instructions relating to bail as part of a wider project which aims to provide court staff with direct access to comprehensive legislative and best practice guidance in one place. SCTS has also agreed to a consensual auditing of its handling of personal data by the ICO, which is due to be completed during August 2025. The output from this audit will help guide SCTS in the steps in needs to take to continually improve arrangements for the handling of personal data.

<i>Breach Incident</i>	<i>Number of Breaches</i>	<i>Information</i>
Unlawful detention of data subject due human error by: incorrectly recording bail or special bail conditions; recording incorrect outcome in criminal proceedings; and providing incomplete or incorrect paperwork to external justice partners.	15	Personal, special category and criminal conviction data.
Unlawful disclosure of personal data to a third party: serial number adoption case; criminal case involving a community pay back order.	2	Personal data, criminal conviction data

Records error resulting in inaccurate criminal offence data being held on the SCTS Criminal Case Management System and disclosed to third parties.	3	Personal Information, Criminal Conviction data
Copy of a sensitive report from an internal investigation was lost in transit meaning it could potentially be in the public domain	1	Personal, Special Category data
A records error resulted in a warrant being issued for a data subject at a fines enforcement hearing. They had to pay the fine to avoid being arrested and this led to financial hardship for the data subject.	1	Personal, Criminal Conviction data
A set of productions are missing from a production store and unable to be located	1	Personal, Special Category and Criminal Conviction data

2.1.2 Statement of Accountable Officer's responsibilities

Statement of the disclosure of information to auditors

So far as the Accountable Officer is aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which SCTS' auditors are unaware.
- The Accountable Officer has taken all steps that he ought to have taken to make himself aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of this information.

Statement of corporate body's and Chief Executive's responsibilities

Under section 19(4) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, the Scottish Ministers have directed SCTS to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis set out in the direction on page 92 at the end of these accounts.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of SCTS' state of affairs at the year-end and of its income and expenditure, recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing accounts, the Accountable Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the UK Government Financial Reporting Manual and the Scottish Public Finance Manual and in particular to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Scottish Ministers, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis.
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and

explain any material departures in the financial statements.

- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.
- Confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal Responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Principal Accountable Officer of the Scottish Administration has designated the Chief Executive of SCTS as the Accountable Officer for SCTS. The relevant responsibilities as Accountable Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for the keeping of proper records and safeguarding SCTS' assets, are set out in the Accountable Officers' Memorandum issued by the Principal Accountable Officer of the Scottish Administration.

2.1.3 Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

As Accountable Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of governance that supports the achievement of SCTS policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me.

The corporate body is referred to less formally as the Board of the SCTS and is chaired by the Lord President, who is also Head of the Scottish Judiciary. SCTS is established as a part of the Scottish Administration but outside of Scottish Government.

A [Framework Agreement](#) exists between SCTS and the Scottish Ministers. This makes clear the requirement that SCTS is to follow the principles contained in the Scottish Public Finance Manual. The Framework Agreement was updated in December 2024.

As Accountable Officer, I can confirm that the frameworks, systems and controls identified in this statement have been in place across SCTS for the full year ending 31 March 2025, and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

Governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which SCTS is directed and controlled. It enables SCTS to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework. It is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance

of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of SCTS' policies, aims and objectives to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised, and to control and manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Details of the overarching governance arrangements are in the [Directors' report](#). These structures are supported by the Risk Management framework in place across the organisation.

Risk framework

The Executive Team reviews corporate risks. The Audit and Risk Committee independently reviews the latest Corporate Risk Register at least quarterly, including the appropriateness of the risk control arrangements, and reports to the SCTS Board at least annually. The SCTS Board and the Audit and Risk Committee jointly review and assess corporate risks and controls annually at a workshop session (the most recent session took place in January 2025). Further detail on key issues and risks including a summary and mapping of the corporate risk profile is detailed at [section 1.1.4](#).

Risk management is embedded in our operational activities as follows:

Risk owners identify risks relating to their functions / business plan objectives and manage their risks through the use of the risk

management framework. Risk registers are reviewed regularly through agreed corporate processes to ensure that assessments and mitigations are current and appropriate. Part of this regular review entails identifying risks that should be escalated to corporate level. Business Unit risks are provided to the Planning, Governance and Risk team quarterly, and are collectively reviewed.

Change management and risk framework

SCTS has a dedicated change resource housed within the Change, Digital and Innovation (CDi) unit. Change initiatives are delivered by one of five dedicated change labs (Criminal, Tribunals and OPG, Civil, Corporate and Next Generation). The work of each Lab is governed by an Executive Action Board (EAB), chaired by an Executive Director.

The Executive Change Board (ECB) is the overarching change authority. The ECB is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes each of the EAB chairs. The ECB provides strategic direction and approves the change initiatives to be delivered. This assures alignment to SCTS' strategic priorities and objectives.

All risks associated with change initiatives are managed within each change lab. Risks are reviewed by the relevant EABs. Project risks are also considered by the ECB at each of their meetings.

Assurance framework

As Accountable Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the governance system. My review is informed by:

- **Executive Directors and Directors**, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance system. They provide me with a certificate of assurance covering risk management and control, business planning, financial management, procurement, people management, security and health and safety. Executive Directors have provided me with assurance that controls were operating effectively.
- **Corporate Systems**, which are in place relating to financial management, risk management, performance management and people management. These systems

provide ongoing assurance of risk management and internal controls.

- **The Audit and Risk Committee**, which provides an annual report to the Accountable Officer and the SCTS Board summarising its evaluation of SCTS's risk management, governance and internal control arrangements. The Committee has submitted its annual report based on the work it conducted during 2024-25 and is of the opinion that SCTS has effective risk management, governance and internal control arrangements in place that are sufficient to give me, as the Accountable Officer, the necessary assurance in relation to the preparation of this governance statement.
- **Internal Audit** attend all SCTS Audit and Risk Committee meetings. They provide regular reports including the Head of Internal Audit's independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's systems of internal control together with recommendations for improvement. On the basis of the work completed and the related management responses, they provided reasonable assurance in overall terms.
- **External Audit** report to the Audit and Risk Committee on significant matters relating to risk and internal control as part of their work.

The above review provides assurance of the effectiveness of SCTS' system of governance and internal control arrangements and compliance with generally accepted best practice principles and relevant guidance. That guidance includes the Scottish Public

Finance Manual and the Scottish Government 'On Board' guidance for Board Members of Public Bodies in Scotland. This is provided to all Board and Committee members as part of their induction and is used by the organisation to ensure that the principles of good governance are observed.

Whistleblowing arrangements

SCTS has arrangements in place that set out the way in which employees can raise any concerns they have about fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by employees and / or management of SCTS – and how those concerns will be dealt with. SCTS maintains an annually reviewed whistleblowing policy which is accessible to all staff.

There was one whistleblowing case raised in 2024-25. The matter related to concerns raised by an individual with their MSP around the lack of a risk assessment for the Policing pilot at Edinburgh Sheriff Court. SCTS had carried out a professional risk assessment. This assessment had been shared with all Edinburgh Sheriff Court staff, trade unions and justice organisations. There was a slight cross over with the correspondence to the individual and the date on which the risk assessment was carried out and subsequent communication with staff

Information security framework

SCTS has effective governance arrangements in place for the security of information. The Executive Team has overall responsibility for SCTS' response to legislation and for oversight of SCTS policies, staff awareness and training. SCTS has an agreed Information Security framework and keeps its

policies under review to ensure they comply with the General Data Protection Regulations. Data breaches reported to the Information Commissioner's Office during the year are detailed in the table on pages 40 and 41.

Implementation of New Accounting System

The accounting system used by the SCTS is part of a Shared Service provided by the Scottish Government. On 1 October 2024 a new Oracle accounting system was implemented. Regular updates on implementation and risks were provided to the SCTS Executive Team and the Audit & Risk Committee. The initial data migration was successful, however contingency arrangements were put in place early on for purchasing during the first 6 months due to concerns around accounting implications. Reporting on the SCTS financial position to the Executive Team and Board continued using alternative applications and manual intervention, supporting effective financial decision making. While full implementation and configuration of the system to the satisfaction of the Finance & Procurement Unit continues to be sought from the SG, there have been no significant financial control issues identified.

Significant control issues

There have been no significant control issues identified during the year in relation to the overall governance framework. Medium risks were identified in 5 areas (change management, business continuity, purchasing and procurement, information governance, and cyber security) and these are being addressed.

2.2 Remuneration and staff report

The tables on pages 46-51 in the Remuneration and Staff Report have been subject to audit by the SCTS external auditor. Other sections in Remuneration and Staff Report are reviewed by the External Auditor to ensure that they are consistent with the financial statements.

Remuneration report

Remuneration policy

The remuneration of senior civil servants is set in accordance with the Civil Service Management Code (available at www.civilservice.gov.uk) and with independent advice from the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB)⁷.

In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body has regard to the following considerations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities;
- regional and local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- government policies for improving the public services, including the requirement on departments to meet the output targets for the delivery of departmental services;
- the funds available to departments as set out in the Government's departmental expenditure limits, and the Government's inflation target.

The Review Body takes account of the evidence it receives about wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations⁸.

The remuneration of staff below senior civil service level is determined by SCTS. In determining policy, account is taken of the need for pay to be set at a level which will ensure the recruitment, retention and motivation of staff. Also taken into account are the Government's policies on the Civil Service and public sector pay and the need to observe public spending controls.

Performance is managed through the MyCareer process on iTrent. The process is designed to ensure an individual's objectives and behaviours are linked to those of SCTS as a whole. Progression within SCTS pay framework is dependent on successfully meeting the requirements of the MyCareer Lifecycle process.

Policy on the remuneration of Non-Executive Directors is set by the Scottish Ministers, taking into account their roles and responsibilities and remuneration levels for comparable public appointments. Final decisions on the remuneration of Non-Executive members of SCTS,

including those SCTS Board members and Committee members who are not otherwise salaried public servants, are taken by the SCTS Remuneration Sub-Committee.

Service Contracts

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The recruitment principles published by the Civil Service Commission specify the circumstances when appointments may be made otherwise.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission can be found at <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/>.

Appointments to the SCTS Board and Sub-Committees, other than for the ex officio members (the Lord President, Lord Justice Clerk, President of the Scottish Tribunals and SCTS Chief Executive) are for a time limited period, as set out within each individual's appointment letter.

⁷<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/review-body-on-senior-salaries>

⁸ Further information on Senior Civil Service pay and performance can be found at

<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment/working/pay-and-reward/scs-pay>

Remuneration (Salary and Pension Benefits)

Board Members	Salary		Pension Benefits ⁹		Total	
	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	Restated 2023-24	2024-25	Restated 2023-24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mr Malcolm Graham (started 29/07/2024)	75-80 (115-120 full year equivalent)	-	12	-	85-90 (125-130 full year equivalent)	-
Mr Eric McQueen (left 28/07/2024)	50-55 (115-120 full year equivalent)	110-115	167	31	215-220 (280-285 full year equivalent)	140-145
David Caddick (started 20/07/2023)	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Dr Sophie Flemig	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Mrs Anne Scott	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Lynsey Walker	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Ruth Innes KC	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Maggie Craig	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Steven Dickson	0-5	0-5	-	-	0-5	0-5
Jillian Martin-Brown (started 04/02/2025)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mrs Morna Rae JP (left 30/04/2025)	-	0-5	-	-	-	0-5

* Eric McQueen demitted office as Chief Executive Officer on 28 July 2024. Malcolm Graham was appointed as Chief Executive Officer on 29 July 2024.

** Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgement. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the Alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022..

www.gov.uk/government/collections/how-the-public-service-pension-remedy-affects-your-pension

⁹ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

Executive Directors	Salary		Pension Benefits		Total	
	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	Restated 2023-24	2024-25	Restated 2023-24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mr David Fraser	90-95	85-90	20	24	110-115	110-115
Mr Tim Barraclough	90-95	85-90	24	27	115-120	110-115
Mr Noel Rehfisch	95-100	95-100	27	40	120-125	135-140
Mr Mike Milligan	95-100	90-95	43	33	140-145	120-125
Mrs Alice Wallace	90-95	85-90	36	34	125-130	115-120
Mr Riley Power (started 04/09/2023)	90-95	50-55 (85-90 full year equivalent)	36	20	125-130	70-75 (105-110 full year equivalent)
Mrs Kay McCorquodale (left 04/09/2023)	-	35-40 (85-90 full year equivalent)	-	14	-	50-55 (100-105 full year equivalent)

Salary

Salaries in the above tables relate to SCTS employment only and do not include any other earnings from positions elsewhere in the Civil Service. Salary includes gross salary and any allowances.

There were seven members of Committees including the Board who each received remuneration of £3,440 in 2024-25 (£3,400 in 2023-24).

The judicial Board members are remunerated by Scottish Government.

Bonus payments and benefits in kind

No bonus payments or benefits in kind were paid during the year.

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/25 & related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age
	£'000	£'000
Mr Malcom Graham	-	-
Mr David Fraser	50-55 plus a lump sum of 130-135	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0
Mr Tim Barraclough	35-40 plus a lump sum of 95-100	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0
Mr Noel Rehfisch	30-35 plus a lump sum of 75-80	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0
Mr Mike Milligan	10-15 plus a lump sum of 0	2.5-5 plus a lump sum of 0
Mrs Alice Wallace	15-20 plus a lump sum of 0	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0
Mr Riley Power	0-5 plus a lump sum of 0	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0
Mr Eric McQueen	75-80 plus a lump sum of 165-170	7.5-10 plus a lump sum of 17.5-20
Mrs Kay McCorquodale	-	-

	CETV at 31/03/25	CETV at 31/03/24	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mr Malcolm Graham	-	-	-
Mr David Fraser	1,212	1,198	11
Mr Tim Barraclough	947	908	15
Mr Noel Rehfish	669	625	14
Mr Mike Milligan	198	145	34
Mrs Alice Wallace	249	197	28
Mr Riley Power	39	13	18
Mr Eric McQueen	1,781	1,571	179
Mrs Kay McCorquodale	-	165	-

The Civil Service Pension Scheme

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme (CSOPS) or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher).

From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined alpha. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: three providing benefits on a final salary basis (classic, premium or classic plus) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (nuvos) with a normal pension age of 65.

Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes.) Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a 'money purchase' stakeholder pension with an employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6% and 8.05% of pensionable earnings for

members. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years initial pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum. Classic plus is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 worked out as in premium.

In nuvos, a member builds up a pension based on his pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member's earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation.

Benefits in alpha build up in a similar way to nuvos, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee from a panel of providers.

The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary from 1 October 2015 to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill-health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age.

Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages.)

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements are available at the [website](#).

The PCSPS and CSOPS are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but SCTS is unable to

identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The scheme actuary valued the scheme as at 31 March 2020. Details can be found in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation [here](#).

For 2024-25, employers' contributions of £18,576k were payable to the PCSPS (2023-24 £16,364k) at one of four rates in the range 26.6% to 30.3% of pensionable earnings, based on salary bands. The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions, usually every four years, following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2024-25 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners. Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution.

Employers' contributions of £124k (2023-24 £95k) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% of pensionable earnings. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings. In addition, employer contributions of 0.5% of pensionable pay, £3.6k (2023-24 £2.8k) were payable to PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service or ill health retirement of these employees.

When the Government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements which treated existing scheme members differently based on their age. Older members of the PCSPS remained in that scheme, rather than moving to **alpha**. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that

the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members.

As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The public service pensions remedy is made up of two parts. The first part closed the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of **alpha** from 1 April 2022. The second part removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023. This is known as "rollback".

For members who are in scope of the public service pension remedy, the calculation of their benefits for the purpose of calculating their Cash Equivalent Transfer Value and their single total figure of remuneration, as of 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024, reflects the fact that membership between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 has been rolled back into the PCSPS. Although members will in due course get an option to decide whether that period should count towards PCSPS or **alpha** benefits, the figures show the rolled back position i.e., PCSPS benefits for that period

Cash equivalent transfer values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme

and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost.

CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses Common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Fair pay disclosure (subject to audit)

Public sector bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid director in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance

payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

between 2024-25 and 2023-24 was 4.61%.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid Director in SCTS in the financial year 2024-25 was £115,000– £120,000 (2023-24, £110,000– £115,000), 5.00% change between 2023-24 and 2024-25.

In 2024-25, remuneration (excluding the highest paid director) ranged from £25,555 to £99,775 (2023-24: £23,605 to £95,307).

In 2024-25, remuneration (including the highest paid director's midpoint of banded range) ranged from £25,555 to £117,500 (2023-24: £23,605 to £111,741).

The average percentage change in remuneration for employees (excluding the highest paid director),

In 2024-25, nil employees (2023-24: nil) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director.

Pay ratios

Year	2024-25 £	2023-24 £
Highest paid Director banded range midpoint	117,500	112,500
Median total remuneration Ratio	28,746 4.08	27,246 4.13
Highest paid Director banded range midpoint	117,500	112,500
25 th percentile pay remuneration Ratio	25,555 4.59	24,055 4.68
Highest paid Director banded range midpoint	117,500	112,500

75 th percentile pay remuneration Ratio	35,678 3.29	34,639 3.25
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For the above calculations only staff paid through SCTS payroll were included. Any agency staff were excluded. The reduction in the median ratio of 0.05 in 2024-25 (0.09, 2023-24) is the result of increasing employee's remuneration reflecting changes in pay, rewards and progression.

Staff Report

As at 31 March 2025 there were 2,062 Staff in post and 13 Non-Executive Directors. The split across grades, gender and business areas is detailed in the tables below.

Headcount by Grade	Number of Staff	Female	Male
CEO and Executive Directors	7	1	6
Director	15	7	8
Senior Manager	68	38	30
Senior Executive Officer	161	111	50
Higher Executive Officer	232	151	81
Executive Officer	530	371	159
Administrative Officer and Clerk/Typist	717	531	186
Administrative Assistants and Support Grades	329	185	144
Auditor of Court*	3	2	1
Agency Staff	8	4	4
Sub-total	2,070	1,401	669
Non-Executive Director ¹⁰	13	8	5
Total	2,083	1,401	674
Percentage of total	100%	68%	32%

Area of Business	2024-25 Ave WTE	Restated 2023-24 Ave WTE
Headquarters and support units	329	288
Supreme Courts	182	174
Judicial Office	58	53
Office of the Public Guardian and Accountant of Court	98	95
Sheriff, JP Courts and Tribunals	1,235	1,233
Total	1,902	1,843

¹⁰Definition of non-executive directors (board and committee members) as set down in the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 and associated regulations

* Auditor of Court staff transferred to SCTS and who are not on SCTS terms and conditions of service.

Staffing costs	2024-25 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Wages and salaries	67,405	62,050
Social security costs	6,796	6,190
Other pension costs	18,689	16,161
Sub-total	92,890	84,401
Inward secondments	848	907
Agency, temporary and contract staff	10,911	8,664
Other staff costs	284	447
Total	104,933	94,419
Less recoveries of outward secondments	-	-
Total Staff Costs reported in the SOCNE	104,933	94,419
Agency, temporary and contract staff included in non-current assets	2,613	3,138
Total Staff Costs at 31 March 2025	107,546	97,557

Employer Contributions	2024-25 £'000	2023-24 £'000
Contributions paid to PCSPS	18,576	16,266
Contributions paid to partnership pensions	124	98
Contributions paid to Judicial pensions ¹¹	24,135	17,890

The following information is not subject to audit but are reviewed by the External Auditor to ensure that they are consistent with the financial statements.

Off-payroll appointments

Off-payroll appointments include all agency, temporary and contract staff engaged by SCTS. Details on the length of these contracts and their status under IR35 legislation are set out in the tables below:

Highly paid off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March, earning £245 or more per day	
Number of existing engagements as of 31 March 2025	86
Of which, no that existed:	
less than one year	3
for between 1 and 2 years	40
for between 2 and 3 years	14
for between 3 and 4 years	14
for 4 or more years	15

All highly paid off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2025, earning £245 or more per day.	
Number of temporary off-payroll workers engaged during the year 31 March 2025	121
Of which:	
Not subject to off-payroll legislation	-
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as in scope of IR35	1
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as out of scope of IR35	120
No of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	80
Of which: No of engagements that saw a change in IR35 status following review	-

¹¹ SCTS was responsible for making employer contributions to the Judicial Pension Scheme with effect from 1 April 2016.

Sickness absence data

In 2024-25 a total of 31,990 days (2023-24: 30,093 days) were lost through absence equating to a lost time rate of 4.63% (2023-24: 4.52%).

Exit packages/ill-health retirement

There were no exit packages and no early retirements due to ill-health grounds in 2024-25 (Prior year: nil).

Staff turnover percentage

The staff turnover percentage for the year ended 31 March 2025 was 8.72%

SCTS employment policies

Scotland's courts, tribunals and the OPG have continued to experience significant growth and development over the past year and we continue to develop and deliver new practices and digital solutions to continue to deliver our essential business.

All the work we do is underpinned by our core values of Respect, Service and Excellence. Across the justice sector everyone is having to deal with a challenging economic and fiscal outlook. The scale of the challenge is growing – requiring us to deliver our services in the most efficient way.

One of our key goals is to enhance the services we provide by becoming a trauma informed organisation. Adopting trauma-informed approaches is essential to enhancing the justice system experience for vulnerable individuals, improving the quantity of evidence collected, and supporting the wellbeing and resilience of our own workforce.

We have worked with partners, including the Scottish Government, members of the Victims Taskforce and NHS Education for Scotland, to

produce a Knowledge and Skills Framework for Trauma informed justice that we have used to develop training for our employees to support trauma informed practice.

Hybrid Working is available for those roles that can be carried out in a blended way allowing our staff more choice to work flexibly where this meets business needs encouraging a better work-life balance. Our “Working in a Flexible Way” policy sets out employees’ rights to request flexible working. In October 2024 we reduced our full time working week from 37 hours to 35 hours per week. The move was driven by our desire to strengthen our people’s wellbeing and work-life balance. We have ensured that everyone regardless of their previous working pattern arrangements, benefited from a reduction in working time.

As an equal opportunities employer when we develop new policies to support new ways of working Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to analyse our policies and practices to make sure they do not discriminate or disadvantage our people and to provide an opportunity to improve or promote equality within our organisation.

We promote, collaborate and celebrate the successes of a diverse workforce and we want to make sure that we are doing all we can to be inclusive and employ a workforce representative of the Scottish population across all of the equality protected characteristics. We have an internal Equality Employee Group and an External Advisory Group (EAG) which is made up of external equality and diversity experts.

The groups were established to support SCTS in its statutory responsibility to mainstream equality, as required by the Equality

Act (2010) and latterly the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and other equality, diversity and inclusion legislation and best practice. SCTS aims to exceed legislative requirements where it can so that it can achieve its equality outcomes.

Excelling at mainstreaming equality is a high priority for us and we want to go beyond compliance and statutory requirement to achieve this. Our Mainstreaming Equality Report sets out the Equalities Outcomes for the period 2023 – 2027.

These reaffirm our commitment to fully embed equality, diversity and inclusion in order to continue to improve our services and ensure as an employer we are a great place to work, learn and develop. We are committed to making SCTS a diverse and inclusive place for staff and service users and these focus on promoting awareness and understanding of equality and diversity; reviewing and refreshing our employment policies; improving the accessibility of our services and improving accessibility to our employment.

Our Employee Resourcing Policy and recruitment practices are compliant with the requirements of the Civil Service Commissioners. We continue to be a Disability Confident Employer and we promote the guaranteed interview scheme for candidates who meet the minimum essential criteria for an advertised vacancy. We have worked with Disability Inclusion Scotland to support our continued development as an inclusive employer.

SCTS is also an Age positive employer Champion and member of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei). Enei is the

leading employer network promoting equality and inclusion is the workplace. SCTS received the enei Gold Award in the 2024 Talent, Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) Report.

We have a designated centralised recruitment service providing a great experience for applicants and candidates.

We are continuously improving our recruitment processes, addressing any recruitment challenges for applicants and developing innovative recruitment solutions.

The aim is to ensure we continue to attract and retain a diverse workforce so we have the right people in the right place, at the right time with the skills and behaviours to succeed.

SCTS is a Carer Positive Exemplary Employer. We recognise that a substantial number of our people have significant caring responsibilities, and that their role as a carer may make a work/life balance difficult to achieve. To assist those colleagues we have established a National Carers Group which provides a supportive network for those with a caring role, in addition to our established Carers Register and a Carers Policy which enhances the right to statutory carers leave.

We offer family friendly policies, including maternity and paternity leave, adoption leave, shared parental leave and compassionate care leave as our aim is to create a work environment that enables our employees to balance work and family commitments effectively.

SCTS continues to be an accredited real living wage employer (initial accreditation was received in March 2017) which reflects our work to ensure that not only SCTS staff

receive the living wage, but that contract staff we engage under a range of contracts also pay employees working for SCTS the real living wage.

Our Pay Award date is 1 April. Our principles of fairness, transparency, consistency and motivation underpin our pay and reward strategies acknowledging that we will operate in accordance with, the Scottish Government's Public Sector Pay Policy to deliver an affordable and appropriate total reward package for our employees.

As required by the Equality Act 2010 we publish our gender pay gap annually. Our 2024 mean gender pay gap was 4.7% and the median gender pay gap was 8.2%. We have published our Equal Pay Statement which sets out actions to address any occupational segregation issues and challenges and we remain committed to:

- Empowering our people to work flexibly and to support work life/ balance
- Continuing to support our people with caring responsibilities through our Carer Positive policies
- Continuing to promote fair work practices and assess performance against the principles set out in the Fair Work agreement
- Ensuring our ways of working include visible leadership that prioritises diversity and inclusion.

Our People Strategy 2024 – 2028 supports and enhances our commitment to wellbeing, creating a more open and supportive culture. Our ultimate goal is to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees and to prevent ill health, for the overall benefit of our employees and the

organisation as a whole. This encompasses the physical, mental and social health of employees.

We know that having a good work life balance has a positive impact on our physical and mental health and we have a “right to disconnect” policy so our employees are able to switch off outside normal working hours and enjoy free time without being disturbed by work – unless there is an emergency or prior agreement to do so.

Our Menopause Policy aims to break any stigma that might exist surrounding the menopause at work and create an inclusive menopause friendly working environment, where employees and managers feel supported to discuss any symptoms and potential adjustments that might be needed.

SCTS is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all our employees as well as those who use our services. We have our own dedicated Health and Safety Team incorporating health and safety, fire and security.

Our policies and procedures for occupational health mean that for staff with a disability we carry out workplace assessments and make reasonable and practicable adjustments to enable individuals to make a full contribution at work.

We also provide our employees with access to a free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme.

We remain committed to working in partnership to deliver the Fair Work Agreement which we signed in 2018 and which confirms fair work principles around five key themes of effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect enhancing our working environment further. We

believe partnership is a way of building and maintaining trust in relationships and agreeing together changes that best support our organisation and our people, recognising inclusion as the best way to achieve agreed outcomes. We have an agreed Partnership Agreement in place which provides a framework for partnership between SCTS and PCS that will secure the best possible outcome on matters of mutual concern. Our partnership approach is based on transparency in decision making, honesty, mutual respect, equality, integrity, accountability and trust.

Trade Union Facility Time

During the year there were 19 employees (WTE 18.06) (2023-24, 20 WTE 18.8) who were relevant union officials. The total cost of facility time was £126k (2023-24, £134k) from a total pay bill of £92,890k (2023-24 £84,293k) which equates to 0.14% (2023-24, 0.15%).

Percentage of time spent on facility time - number of employees who were relevant union officials employed during the year and the percentage of their working hours spent on facility time:

Percentage of time	Number of employees
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0%	1
1-50%	16
51-99%	-
100%	2

Paid trade union activities: As a percentage of total paid facility time hours, the number of hours spent by employees who were relevant union officials during the year on paid trade union activities.

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	5.2%
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2.3 Parliamentary accountability report

The expenditure and income in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers, the Budget (Scotland) Act covering the financial year and sections 4 to 7 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000; and the sums paid out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund for the purpose of meeting the expenditure shown in the financial statements were applied in accordance with section 65 of the Scotland Act 1998.

Losses and special payments

There were no material losses or special payments made during the year.

Remote contingent liabilities

There are no remote contingent liabilities to disclose.

Gifts

No gifts were made during the year.

Fees and charges

It is a legislative requirement for SCTS to charge court fees at various stages of proceedings including, but not exclusively, registration, lodgement of motions, legal debates and proofs in the Court of Session and the Sheriff Court as well as Commissary lodgements.

Fees are also charged for work undertaken by the Office of the Public Guardian which includes, but

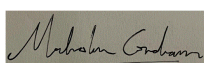
not exclusively, issuing of Powers of Attorney and Guardianship and by the Accountant of Court. Fees are also charged by the Lands Tribunal for appeals.

Scottish Government policy is to set fees so as to move towards full cost recovery (including judicial costs).

The Fee Memorandum Trading Account shows the cost of delivering business in the Civil Courts. Full details of all chargeable fees are found at www.scotcourts.gov.uk/taking-action/court-fees

Fees memorandum trading account

	Sheriff Courts	Supreme Courts	OPG	2024-25 Total	2023-24 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Net Fee Income	29,928	5,624	8,820	44,372	39,259
Net Costs to be recovered	41,916	21,809	11,166	74,891	68,448
Shortfall from full cost Recovery	11,988	16,185	2,346	30,519	29,189
% Cost Recovery				59%	57%
<i>(Gross Fees Raised divided by Net Recoverable Costs)</i>					



Malcolm Graham
Chief Executive

11 August 2025

2.4 Independent Auditor's Report to the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, the Auditor General for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements in the annual report and accounts of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals service for the year ended 31 March 2025 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. The financial statements comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, the Statement of Financial Position, the Cash Flow Statement, the Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2024/25 Government Financial Reporting Manual (the 2024/25 FReM).

In my opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the body's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2024/25 FReM; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Auditor General for Scotland. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I was appointed by the Auditor General on 3 April 2023. My period of appointment is five years, covering 2022/23 to 2026/27. I am independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the body. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

These conclusions are not intended to, nor do they, provide assurance on the body's current or future financial sustainability. However, I report on the body's arrangements for financial sustainability in a separate Annual Audit Report available from the Audit Scotland website.

Risks of material misstatement

I report in my Annual Audit Report the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that I identified and my judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Accountable Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accountable Officer's Responsibilities, the Accountable Officer is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Accountable Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Accountable Officer is responsible for using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention to discontinue the body's operations.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities outlined above to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Procedures include:

- using my understanding of the central government sector to identify that the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers are significant in the context of the body;
- inquiring of the Accountable Officer as to other laws or regulations that may be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the body;
- inquiring of the Accountable Officer concerning the body's policies and procedures regarding compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework;
- discussions among my audit team on the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the body's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Reporting on regularity of expenditure and income

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion in all material respects:

- the expenditure and income in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers, the Budget (Scotland) Act covering the financial year and sections 4 to 7 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000; and
- the sums paid out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund for the purpose of meeting the expenditure shown in the financial statements were applied in accordance with section 65 of the Scotland Act 1998.

Responsibilities for regularity

The Accountable Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of expenditure and income. In addition to my responsibilities in respect of irregularities explained in the audit of the financial statements section of my report, I am responsible for expressing an opinion on the regularity of expenditure and income in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000.

Reporting on other requirements

Opinion prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report

I have audited the parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report described as audited. In my opinion, the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report have been properly prepared in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Other information

The Accountable Officer is responsible for the other information in the annual report and accounts. The other information comprises the Performance Report and the Accountability Report excluding the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report.

My responsibility is to read all the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Performance Report and Governance Statement to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland.

Opinions prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland on Performance Report and Governance Statement

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Performance Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers; and
- the information given in the Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Ministers.

Matters on which I am required to report by exception

I am required by the Auditor General for Scotland to report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the audited parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to my responsibilities for the annual report and accounts, my conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice are set out in my Annual Audit Report.

Use of my report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 108 of the Code of Audit Practice, I do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Michael Oliphant

Michael Oliphant FCPFA
Audit Director
Audit Scotland
102 West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN
11 August 2025

3. Financial statements

The Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows and Changes in Taxpayers Equity, as well as details of accounting policies and supporting notes.

The outturn against the DEL and AME budget is at page 13.

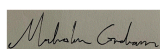
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure
For the year ended 31 March 2025

		2024-25	2023-24
Expenditure	Note	£'000	£'000
Staff costs	3	104,933	94,419
Other administration costs	4	53,239	53,360
Depreciation and amortisation	6,8,9	32,370	33,258
Impairment	6	2	48
Operational costs	4	52,409	42,955
Total Expenditure		242,953	224,040
Income			
Operating Income	5	9,761	9,114
Income from fees and retained fines	5	47,794	42,939
Total Income		57,555	52,053
Net outturn		185,398	171,987
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss			
(Loss)/Gains on property revaluation	6	13,892	12,896
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax		13,892	12,896
Total comprehensive net expenditure for the year		171,506	159,091

The notes on pages 66 to 84 form part of these accounts.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 March 2025

	Note	31 March 2025 £'000	31 March 2024 £'000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6	565,998	560,379
Intangible assets	8	18,905	20,178
Right of Use Assets	9	49,740	53,272
Trade and other assets due in more than one year	10	272	844
Total non-current assets		634,915	634,673
Current assets			
Receivables and other current assets	10	11,761	12,992
Cash and cash equivalents	11	19,399	22,777
Assets classified as held for sale	7	-	-
Total current assets		31,160	35,769
Total assets		666,075	670,442
Current liabilities			
Payables and other current liabilities	12	(17,543)	(14,689)
Lease Liabilities	9	(3,879)	(3,656)
Provisions for liabilities and charges due within one year	13	(187)	(438)
Total current liabilities		(21,609)	(18,783)
Total assets less current liabilities		644,466	651,659
Non-current liabilities			
Payables and other liabilities	12	(151)	(166)
Lease Liabilities	9	(46,904)	(50,151)
Provisions for liabilities and charges due in more than one year	13	(6,255)	(5,523)
Total non-current liabilities		(53,310)	(55,840)
Assets less liabilities		591,156	595,819
Taxpayers' equity			
General fund	SOCTE	347,328	355,218
Revaluation reserve	SOCTE	243,828	240,601
Total taxpayers' equity		591,156	595,819



Malcolm Graham

Chief Executive

The Accountable Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 11 August 2025.

The notes on pages 66 to 84 form part of these accounts.

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2025

		2024-25	2023-24
	Note	£'000	£'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net outturn	SCNE	(185,398)	(171,987)
<i>Adjustments for non-cash transactions:</i>			
Depreciation and amortisation	SCNE	32,370	33,258
Impairment	SCNE	2	48
Notional audit fee	4	101	99
Other general fund adjustment	SCNE	1,242	-
Loss/(Profit) on disposal of property, plant and equipment and asset held for sale	4,5,6	(4)	-
<i>Movements in working capital:</i>			
(Increase)/decrease in receivables and other current assets		1,803	(5,118)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables		3,191	(2,700)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions		481	(41)
Increase/(decrease) in lease liabilities		(3,024)	(3,161)
Net cash flow from operating activities		(149,236)	(149,602)
<i>Adjustments for non-cash investment activities</i>			
New Lease/enhancement of right of use asset	9	(492)	(1,327)
Lease re-measurement	9	(353)	702
<i>Cash flows from investment activities</i>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	6	(15,923)	(13,792)
Purchase of intangible assets	8	(2,878)	(4,556)
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant and equipment	4,5,6	4	-
Proceeds of disposal of assets held for sale	7	-	-
Net cash flow from investment activities		(19,642)	(18,973)
Cash flows from financing activities			
From Scottish Consolidated Fund	SOCTE	165,500	173,000
Cash flows from financing activities		165,500	173,000
Net Increase in cash and cash equivalents		(3,378)	4,425
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	11	22,777	18,352
Net increase on cash and cash equivalents		(3,378)	4,425
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	11	19,399	22,777

The notes on pages 66 to 84 form part of these accounts.

Scottish Court and Tribunals Service
Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	General Fund £'000	Revaluation Reserve £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 April 2024		355,218	240,601	595,819
Total comprehensive expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025		(185,398)	13,892	(171,506)
Non-cash charges				
Non-cash charges - auditor's remuneration	4	101	-	101
Total non-cash charges - auditor's remuneration	4	101	-	101
Other reserve movements				
Other adjustments		1,242	-	1,242
Transfers between reserves		10,665	(10,665)	-
Total other reserve movements/adjustments		11,907	(10,665)	1,242
Funding				
Parliamentary funding		165,500	-	165,500
Net parliamentary funding drawn down		165,500	-	165,500
Balance at 31 March 2025		347,328	243,828	591,156
Net increase/ (decrease) during the year		(7,890)	3,227	(4,663)

The notes on pages 66 to 84 form part of these accounts.

Scottish Court and Tribunals Service
Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	General Fund £'000	Revaluation Reserve £'000	Total £'000
Restated balance at 1 April 2023		344,466	237,345	581,811
Total comprehensive expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024		(171,987)	12,896	(159,091)
Non-cash charges				
Non-cash charges - auditor's remuneration	4	99	-	99
Total non-cash charges - auditor's remuneration	4	99	-	99
Other reserve movements				
Transfers between reserves		9,640	(9,640)	-
Total other reserve movements/adjustments		9,640	(9,640)	-
Funding				
Parliamentary funding		173,000	-	173,000
Net parliamentary funding drawn down		173,000	-	173,000
Balance at 31 March 2024		355,218	240,601	595,819
Net increase/ (decrease) during the year		10,752	3,256	14,008

The notes on pages 66 to 84 form part of these accounts.

1. Notes to the Accounts

Basis of accounts

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted and interpreted by the 2024-25 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury and the Accounts Direction issued by Scottish Ministers (Annex 4). These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial reporting framework applicable to Government bodies, derived from the HMT Government Financial Reporting Manual, defines that the anticipated continued provision of the entity's services in the public sector is normally sufficient evidence of going concern. The SCTS Board have a reasonable expectation that this will continue to be the case. An assessment of liquidity risk is shown in Note 16 and the budget allocation for 2025-26 can be seen [here](#). These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment.

2. Accounting policies

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of SCTS for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by SCTS are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

2.1 Property, plant and equipment

The threshold for capitalising assets is £5,000 for all categories apart from information technology equipment (networked and grouped), where the threshold for capitalisation is £500.

Initial recognition

On initial recognition, property, plant and equipment are measured at cost including any costs such as installation directly attributable to bring them into working condition. All property, plant and equipment is carried at fair value.

Specialised SCTS land, buildings, equipment, installations and fittings are stated at Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC), as a proxy for Fair Value as specified in the SPFM (Scottish Public Financial Manual). DRC assessments are subject to an assumption of ongoing future use by SCTS for operational purposes.

Non-specialised land and buildings are stated at Fair Value which is broadly correlated with Market Value. The assessment of Fair Value for operational non-specialised assets is subject to an assumption of ongoing use for the existing purposes thereby reflective of Market Value for Existing Use.

Valuations of all land and building assets are revalued and relived by our values (currently Avison Young), on a five-year cycle of professional valuations (one fifth of buildings valued each year). In the intervening years indexation is applied. Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) indices are used for cost based assessments (DRC) otherwise for market based elements indexation figures will reflect observed movements in the property market over the relevant period. The valuations are carried out in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Valuation Standards insofar as these terms are consistent with the agreed requirements of the SPFM.

Where significant redevelopment or damage of a property has been completed out with the valuation cycle, the relevant property will be subject to a specific valuation at the appropriate point in accordance with SPFM guidance.

Land held in association with specialised operational sites has been valued to Market Value for Existing Use as part of the wider DRC calculations.

Non specialised operational assets have also been valued to Market Value for Existing Use with surplus/non-operational properties valued on a Market Value basis. Market related assessments have been prepared through the

use of comparable market transaction evidence. DRC valuations are subject to an assumption of future ongoing use by SCTS for operational purposes.

Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis on all property, plant and equipment (other than freehold land) at rates calculated to write down the cost or valuation of each asset over its estimated useful life. Buildings have been categorised by their constituent components and the estimated useful life determined in relation to each component as set out below:

Buildings:

Structure	76 - 80 years
Internal Finishes	40 - 45 years
Fittings and Fixtures	20 - 30 years
Services	24 - 30 years
External Works	17- 25 years
Vehicles	3 years
IT Hardware	3 years
IT Software	3 - 10 years
Equipment	not exceeding 10 years
Fixtures and Fittings	not exceeding 10 years

Assets under construction are carried at the costs directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management. Assets under construction are transferred to the appropriate property, plant and equipment category when completed and ready for use. No depreciation is charged until the asset is operational.

2.2 Right of use assets

In accordance with IFRS 16 Leases, contracts, or parts of contracts, that convey the right to control the use of an asset for a period of time are accounted for as leases.

At inception of a contract, SCTS assesses whether a contract is, or contains a lease. A contract is, or contains a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time. This includes assets for which there is no consideration. To assess whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, SCTS assesses whether:

- the contract involves the use of an identified asset
- SCTS has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefit from the use of the asset throughout the period of use
- SCTS has the right to direct the use of the asset

SCTS defines the lease term as the non-cancellable period for which a lessee has the right to use an underlying asset, together with both:

- periods covered by an option to extend the lease if the lessee is reasonably certain to exercise that option
- periods covered by an option to terminate the lease if the lessee is reasonably certain not to exercise that option

In the event that a lease contract has expired, but SCTS remains in occupation pending negotiations for a renewed term, the lease term has been measured as the estimated time until the new contract will be agreed.

At inception or on reassessment of a contract that contains a lease component, SCTS assesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise break options or extension options at the lease commencement date. SCTS reassesses this if there are significant events or changes in circumstances that were not anticipated.

When making the above assessments, SCTS excludes two types of leases:

- leases that have a value of less than £5,000
- contracts whose term is less than twelve months

SCTS as Lessee

At the commencement of a lease, SCTS recognises a right-of-use asset and an associated lease liability.

Right of Use Asset

The right-of-use asset is measured at the value of the lease liability, adjusted for:

- any lease payments made before the commencement date
- any lease incentives received
- any incremental costs of obtaining the lease and;
- any costs of removing the asset and restoring the site at the end of the lease

Enhancements to leased assets, such as alterations to a leased building, are not classified within right-of-use assets, but remain classified as property, plant and equipment in accordance with the FReM.

After initial recognition, the right-of-use asset is measured using the fair value model. In determining the fair value, SCTS applies:

- the cost model (measurement by reference to the lease liability) as a reasonable proxy for fair value for non-property leases, and for property leases of less than five years or with regular rent reviews or;
- the revalued amount for other leases

The value of the asset is adjusted for subsequent depreciation and impairment and for reassessments and modifications of the lease liability as described below. Where the amount of a reduction to the asset exceeds the carrying value of the asset, the excess amount is recognised in expenditure.

Lease Liability

The Lease Liability is measured at the value of the remaining lease payments discounted over the lease term, either by the interest rate implicit in the lease or by the rate is advised annually by HMT (4.72% for 2024).

The measurement of lease payments excludes any VAT payable, and irrecoverable VAT is expensed at the point it falls due in line with IFRIC 21 Levies.

After initial measurement the lease liability is adjusted for the accrual of interest, repayments, reassessments and modifications. Reassessments are reappraisals of the probability of the options given by the existing lease contract, for example where SCTS no longer expects to exercise an option. Modifications are changes to the lease contract. Reassessments and modifications are accounted for either by:

- recalculating the lease term under any new contract terms, taking account of the reasonable certainty or otherwise of exercising an option or;
- applying a new discount rate where applicable

Expenditure for each financial year includes interest on the lease liability and a straight-line depreciation charge on the right-of-use asset over the life of the lease, together with any impairment of the right-of-use asset and any change in variable lease payments, that was not included in the measurement of the lease payments during the period in which the triggering event occurred. Rental payments in respect of leases of low value items, or with a term under twelve months are also expensed.

SCTS as a Lessor

Where SCTS acts as a lessor, the arrangement is assessed to determine whether it constitutes a finance lease, this being where the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an underlying asset are substantially transferred to the lessee. For these leases, the asset is derecognised and a receivable is recognised with accrued interest being treated as income over its life. All other leases are treated as operating leases and rental income is recognised on a straight-line basis.

2.3 Non-current assets classified as held for sale

The SCTS classify a non-current asset as held for sale if its carrying amount will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. This condition is met when the asset is being actively marketed by management, it is available for immediate sale in its present condition, and the sale is considered to be highly probable and is expected to qualify for recognition as a completed sale within one year from the date of classification. Assets classified as held for sale are measured at the lower of their carrying amount immediately prior to their classification as held for sale and their fair value less costs to sell. Depreciation or amortisation for such assets is not charged from the date they are classified as an asset held for sale.

2.4 Intangible assets

Both purchased software licenses and internally generated software are valued at depreciated replacement cost. Amortisation is applied at rates calculated to write off the value of the software by equal instalments over the shorter of the term of the license and their estimated useful life. Software and main intangible systems (e.g. Integrated Case Management System, ICMS) are amortised over a 3 to 10 year life. Due to the lack of active market our software systems are shown at amortised replacement cost as a proxy for fair value. A management review of bespoke systems was undertaken and confirmed that the useful life and valuation is appropriate. No impairment was necessary following this assessment.

2.5 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash represents cash in hand, cash held with the Government Banking Service and cash in commercial bank accounts.

2.6 Financial instruments

SCTS does not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments included in the accounts are receivables, cash and cash equivalents and payables (notes 10, 11 and 12).

Trade and other receivables are recognised at fair value less any impairment for any amounts assessed as irrecoverable. An impairment of debt for irrecoverable amounts is made where there is evidence that SCTS will be unable to collect an amount due in accordance with agreed terms. SCTS have adopted IFRS 9 in its treatment on the impairment of trade receivables. During 2024-25, a review of impairment based on a lifetime Expected Credit Losses was completed. Trade and other payables are recognised at fair value.

2.7 Income and Expenditure recognition

SCTS is not a trading organisation. Income primarily comprises court fees for civil cases. SCTS collects fines on an agency basis. Sheriff Court fines are paid over to the Scottish Consolidated Fund and are not accounted for as part of the income of SCTS. An element of Justice of the Peace Court fines, Police and Fiscal fixed penalty fines are retained by SCTS in line with The Scotland Act 1998 (Designation of Receipts) Order issued by HM Treasury. The remainder is paid over to the Scottish Consolidated Fund. Income and expenditure is accounted for in the year to which it

relates and not when cash payments are made or received. Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a receivable or payable for the corresponding amount is recorded in the Statement of Financial Position.

2.8 Value added tax (VAT)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of VAT except where the VAT incurred on a purchase of assets or services is not recoverable from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), in which case the VAT is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expenses item as applicable. The net amount of VAT recoverable from, or payable to, HMRC is included as part of receivables or payables in the Statement of Financial Position.

2.9 External auditor remuneration

External auditor's remuneration for non-audit services is charged on a notional basis to the SCTS. It is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and credited as a movement on the general fund.

2.10 Provisions

Provisions are recognised when SCTS has a present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. The expense relating to any provisions is presented in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure net of any reimbursement.

2.11 Employee benefits pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and the Civil Service and Other Pension Scheme (CSOPS). These defined benefit schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependant's benefits. SCTS accounts for these schemes as defined contribution plans and recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employee's services by payment to the PCSPS/CSOPS of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS/CSOPS. In respect of the defined contribution schemes, SCTS recognises the contributions payable for the year. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that a cash refund or a reduction in the future payments is available.

2.12 Judicial Pension Scheme JPS

Members of the judiciary are covered by a different Judicial Pension Schemes (JPS). This includes the 1981 Scheme, 1993 JUPRA, 2015 Judicial Pensions Scheme and 2017 Fee-Paid Judicial Pension Scheme. The JPS is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme which prepares its own Accounts. Effective from 1 April 2016, SCTS became responsible for the employer contributions to the JPS. Contributions from 2016 to 31 March 2019 were paid at a rate of 38.45%. From April 2019 that rate increased to 51.35% and from April 2024 that rate increased to 62.55%. The amount of these contributions is included in the Staff Report from page 44.

Although the JPS is a defined benefit scheme, in accordance with FReM 6.2, SCTS accounts for the scheme as a defined contribution scheme and recognises employer contributions payable as an expense in the year they are incurred. As part of the changes to judicial pension arrangements, a new governance framework was established to secure the confidence in the Judicial Pension Schemes of both the scheme members and the tax payers. The Lord Chancellor is the Responsible Authority and Scheme Manager for the Schemes. Furthermore, there is an established Judicial Pensions Board. Further information on the Judicial Pensions Board and relevant publications, such as judicial; pension scheme accounts, scheme guidance and valuation reports can be found [here](#)

2.13 Other employee benefits

A liability and an expense are recognised for untaken holidays and flexi balances at 31 March 2025. As a result an accrual has been made for time earned but not taken.

2.14 Accounting estimates and assumptions

SCTS makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the actual results. Other than estimates and assumptions relating to Property Plant and Equipment, Intangibles, Right of Use Assets and Provisions, stated in accounting policies at 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.10 above, there are no material estimates or assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Estimates and judgments are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

2.15 Disclosure of accounting standards not yet applied

A number of new accounting standards have been issued or amendments made to existing standards but have not yet been applied to these financial statements. The standards that are considered relevant and the anticipated impact are as follows:

IFRS 17 (Insurance Contracts) effective from 1 April 2025

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has issued IFRS 17 (Insurance Contracts), which replaces IFRS 4 (Insurance Contracts). It is expected to be effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2025, following IASB decisions to defer the effective date. The Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) has yet to adopt this standard. There is no expected impact for SCTS.

IFRS 18 (Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements) effective from 1 April 2027

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has issued IFRS 18 (Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements). It is expected to be effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2027. The Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) has yet to adopt this standard. The impact is not yet known for SCTS.

3. Staff Numbers and costs

Due to changes in the required reporting format all relevant disclosures relating to staff are included in the Remuneration and Staff Report (pages 45 to 54).

4. Non-staff expenditure

4a Other administration expenditure	2024-25	2023-24
	£'000	£'000
Rent and Rates	7,507	8,673
Accommodation	17,330	16,946
Building maintenance and impairment	10,565	10,933
Computer Maintenance	5,873	5,993
Office running costs	2,283	1,988
Other	2,708	2,508
Postage	1,860	1,601
Publications – Sheriff Courts	1,493	1,457
Contracted Services	1,672	1,915
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	850	725
Provision movements	448	(52)
External auditor remuneration - Audit fee	101	99
Finance costs	549	574
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	-	-
Total	53,239	53,360

During the year, SCTS purchased no non-audit services from its external auditor. (2023-24: Nil).

4b Operational costs	2024-25	2023-24
	£'000	£'000
Judicial costs	18,595	16,071
Judicial pension costs	24,135	17,890
Payments to jurors	3,848	4,141
Interpreters' costs	2,391	2,030
Other	3,440	2,823
Total	52,409	42,955

5. Income

5a Operating income

	2024-25	2023-24
	£'000	£'000
Shared service income from other government departments	7,552	7,117
Recharges	546	544
Profits on disposal of non-current assets	4	-
Income from rent receivable and court hire	14	63
Other income	1,645	1,390
Total	9,761	9,114

5b Income from fees and retained fines

	2024-25	2023-24
	£'000	£'000
Fees charged	44,374	39,232
Retained fines	3,420	3,707
Total	47,794	42,939

6. Property, plant and equipment

6a Property, plant and equipment current year

Purchases of total property, plant and equipment in the schedule of £15,764k (2023-24: £13,297k) appear in the cash flow statement as £15,923k (2023-24: £13,792k) after adjustment for opening and closing property, plant and equipment accruals in trade and other payables.

Cost or valuation	Land £'000	Buildings £'000	Vehicles £'000	Equipment £'000	ICT systems £'000	Fixtures and fittings £'000	Assets under construction £'000	2024-25 Total £'000
Opening balance at 1 April 2024	31,130	798,390	353	1,559	17,798	1,230	7,959	858,419
Additions	-	-	-	24	3,086	-	12,654	15,764
Transfer	-	5,751	-	-	-	-	(5,751)	-
Disposals	-	-	(29)	(51)	(2,925)	(961)	-	(3,966)
Revaluation	(2)	(14,044)	-	-	-	-	-	(14,046)
Downward Revaluation to Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2)
As at 31 March 2025	31,126	790,097	324	1,532	17,959	269	14,862	856,169
Depreciation								
Opening balance at 1 April 2024	-	285,728	353	374	10,619	966	-	298,040
Charged in year	-	19,816	-	149	3,972	98	-	24,035
Transfer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(29)	(51)	(2,925)	(961)	-	(3,966)
Revaluation	-	(27,938)	-	-	-	-	-	(27,938)
Balance as at 31 March 2025	-	277,606	324	472	11,666	103	-	290,171
Net book value current year	31,126	512,491	-	1,060	6,293	166	14,862	565,998
Net book value prior year	31,130	512,662	-	1,185	7,179	264	7,959	560,379

All assets are owned by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service Corporate Body. All land and buildings are held freehold. No assets are held under finance leases or PFI/PPP contracts.

6b Property, plant and equipment prior year

Cost or valuation	Land £'000	Buildings £'000	Vehicles £'000	Equipment £'000	ICT systems £'000	Fixtures and fittings £'000	Assets under construction £'000	2023-24 Total £'000
Opening balance at 1 April 2023	31,322	916,739	353	1,460	14,031	1,213	4,743	969,861
Additions	-	27	-	56	3,767	-	9,447	13,297
Transfer	-	6,171	-	43	-	17	(6,231)	-
Disposals	-	(1,846)	-	-	-	-	-	(1,846)
Revaluation	(181)	(122,664)	-	-	-	-	-	(122,845)
Downward Revaluation to Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(11)	(37)	-	-	-	-	-	(48)
As at 31 March 2024	31,130	798,390	353	1,559	17,798	1,230	7,959	858,419
Depreciation								
Opening balance at 1 April 2023	-	402,224	235	215	6,207	761	-	409,642
Charged in year	-	21,091	118	158	4,412	206	-	25,985
Transfer	-	-	-	1	-	(1)	-	-
Disposals	-	(1,846)	-	-	-	-	-	(1,846)
Revaluation	-	(135,741)	-	-	-	-	-	(135,741)
Balance as at 31 March 2024	-	285,728	353	374	10,619	966	-	298,040
Net book value current year	31,130	512,662	-	1,185	7,179	264	7,959	560,379
Net book value prior year	31,322	514,515	118	1,245	7,824	452	4,743	560,219

All assets are owned by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service Corporate Body. All land and buildings are held freehold. No assets are held under finance leases or PFI/PPP contracts.

7. Assets classified as Held for Sale

The following assets have been presented for sale by SCTS. The completion date for sale is expected to be within 12-months. Assets classified as held for sale are measured at the lower of their carrying amount immediately prior to their classification as held for sale and their fair value less costs to sell. Assets classified as held for sale are not subject to depreciation or amortisation.

There is one asset held for sale with a value less than £500.

8. Intangible assets

8a Intangible assets current year

Purchases of total intangible assets below of £2,685k (2023-24: £4,498k) appear in the cash flow statement as £2,878k after adjustment for opening and closing intangible asset accruals in trade and other payables.

	Software licences £'000	ICT software £'000	Assets under development £'000	2024-25 Total £'000
Cost or valuation				
Balance at 1 April 2024	2,184	33,936	267	36,387
Additions	-	2,685	-	2,685
Disposals	(59)	-	-	(59)
As at 31 March 2025	2,125	36,621	267	39,013
Amortisation				
Balance at 1 April 2024	867	15,342	-	16,209
Charged in year	604	3,354	-	3,958
Disposals	(59)	-	-	(59)
As at 31 March 2025	1,412	18,696	-	20,108
Net book value as at 31 March 2025	713	17,925	267	18,905
Net book value as at 31 March 2024	1,317	18,594	267	20,178

The intangible assets include the ICMS system, an internally generated case management system with a carrying amount of £12,534k and a remaining amortisation period of 96 months.

8b Intangible assets prior year

Purchases of total intangible assets below of £4,498k (2022-23: £4,540k) appear in the cash flow statement as £4,556k after adjustment for opening and closing intangible asset accruals in trade and other payables

	Software licences £'000	ICT software £'000	Assets under development £'000	2023-24 Total £'000
Cost or valuation				
Balance at 1 April 2023	1,344	30,550	-	31,894
Additions	845	3,386	267	4,498
Disposals	(5)	-	-	(5)
As at 31 March 2024	2,184	33,936	267	36,387
Amortisation				
Balance at 1 April 2023	481	12,672	-	13,153
Charged in year	391	2,670	-	3,061
Disposals	(5)	-	-	(5)
As at 31 March 2024	867	15,342	-	16,209
Net book value as at 31 March 2024	1,317	18,594	267	20,178
Net book value as at 31 March 2023	863	17,878	-	18,741

The intangible assets include the ICMS system, an internally generated case management system with a carrying amount of £11,625k and a remaining amortisation period of 108 months.

9. Leases

9a Right of use assets	Land and Buildings £'000	Capitalised Provision £'000	2024-25 Total £'000
Cost or valuation			
Balance at 1 April 2024	61,570	61	61,631
Additions	462	30	492
Re-measurement	352	1	353
As at 31 March 2025	62,384	92	62,476
Amortisation			
Balance at 1 April 2024	8,355	4	8,359
Charged in year	4,365	12	4,377
As at 31 March 2025	12,720	16	12,736
Net book value as at 31 March 2025	49,664	76	49,740
Assets valued at net present value of future lease payments			49,740

9b Right of use assets prior year	Land and Buildings £'000	Other £'000	2023-24 Total £'000
Cost or valuation			
Balance at 1 April 2023	61,006	-	61,006
Additions	1,266	61	1,327
Re-measurement	(702)	-	(702)
As at 31 March 2024	61,570	61	61,631
Amortisation			
Balance at 1 April 2023	4,147	-	4,147
Charged in year	4,208	4	4,212
As at 31 March 2024	8,355	4	8,359
Net book value as at 31 March 2024	53,215	57	53,272
Assets valued at net present value of future lease payments			53,272

9c Commitments under lease liabilities

As at 31 March, total contractual undiscounted cash flows relating to lease liabilities are given in the table below:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Buildings		
Not later than one year	4,390	4,192
later than one year and not later than five years	17,722	15,527
later than five years	32,942	38,874
Less interest element	(4,271)	(4,786)
Total	50,783	53,807

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Current	3,879	3,656
Non-current	46,904	50,151
Total lease liabilities	50,783	53,807

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2024-25	2023-24
	£'000	£'000
Depreciation	4,377	4,212
Interest expense	549	574
Low value and short term leases	28	82
Irrecoverable VAT on right of use leases	790	825
Income from sub-leasing right of use assets	(3,574)	(3,546)
Expense relating to variable lease payments	1,393	1,408
Total	3,563	3,555

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Cash Flows

	2024-25	2023-24
	£'000	£'000
Interest expense	549	574
Repayments of principal on leases	-	-
Total	549	574

9d Commitments under operating leases

Buildings	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Within one year	22	50
Between two and five years (inclusive)	-	-
After five years	-	-
Total	22	50

10. Trade receivables and other assets

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade receivables	3,049	5,957
VAT	2,401	1,991
Other receivables	99	115
Prepayments	4,093	3,421
Accrued income	2,119	1,508
Total receivables due within one year	11,761	12,992
Amounts falling due in more than one year		
Prepayments	272	844
Total receivables due in more than one year	272	844
Total at 31 March	12,033	13,836

11. Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £'000	Restated 2024 £'000
Balance at 1 April	22,777	18,352
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(3,378)	4,425
Balance as at 31 March	19,399	22,777
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Commercial banks and cash in hand	16,425	14,064
Government Banking Service	2,974	8,713
Balance as at 31 March	19,399	22,777

*Restated due to re-categorisation of Digital Expenses bank account into Government Banking Service.

12. Payables and other current liabilities

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade payables	118	-
Other payables	4,317	4,247
Accruals	10,305	9,911
Deferred income	14	14
Corporate balance with the Scottish Government	2,789	517
Total payables due within one year	17,543	14,689
Amounts falling due in more than one year		
Other payables	-	-
Deferred income and accruals	151	166
Total payables due in more than one year	151	166
Total at 31 March	17,694	14,855

13. Provisions for liabilities and charges

13a Provisions for liabilities and charges current year

	Property and dilapidations	President's pension costs	Compensation costs	2024-25 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance as at 1 April 2024	4,567	872	84	5,523
Add: element reported as due within one year	284	56	98	438
Total as at 1 April 2024	4,851	928	182	5,961
Provided for in year	813	-	173	986
Provisions not required written back	(130)	(144)	(71)	(345)
Provisions utilised in year	-	(55)	(105)	(160)
Total as at 31 March 2025	5,534	729	179	6,442
Payable within one year	(67)	(56)	(64)	(187)
As at 31 March 2025	5,467	673	115	6,255

Analysis of expected timing of any resulting outflows of economic benefits:

	Property and dilapidations	President's pension costs	Compensation costs	2024-25 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Payable in 1 year	67	56	64	187
Payable between 2 and 5 years	1,291	226	115	1,632
Payable between 6 and 10 years	103	284	-	387
Thereafter	4,073	163	-	4,236
Total as at 31 March 2025	5,534	729	179	6,442

13b Provisions for liabilities and charges prior year

	Property and dilapidations	President's pension costs	Compensation costs	2023-24 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance as at 1 April 2023	4,312	933	15	5,260
Add: element reported as due within one year	465	47	230	742
Total as at 1 April 2023	4,777	980	245	6,002
Provided for in year	516	-	93	609
Provisions not required written back	(442)	-	(68)	(510)
Provisions utilised in year	-	(52)	(88)	(140)
Total as at 31 March 2024	4,851	928	182	5,961
Payable within one year	(284)	(56)	(98)	(438)
As at 31 March 2024	4,567	872	84	5,523

Analysis of expected timing of any resulting outflows of economic benefits:

	Property and dilapidations	President's pension costs	Compensation costs	2023-24 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Payable in 1 year	284	56	98	438
Payable between 2 and 5 years	523	222	84	829
Payable between 6 and 10 years	420	278	-	698
Thereafter	3,624	372	-	3,996
Total as at 31 March 2024	4,851	928	182	5,961

13c Details of Provisions

Property and dilapidations

This represents the impact of the periodic revaluation exercises along with estimated amounts due on the expiry of property leaseholds held by SCTS, to return the properties to their original condition. The amounts due and the timing of payments depends on the terms and conditions of each lease, reinstatement works covers, general wear and tear and the extent of alternations carried out by SCTS over the period of the lease.

President Pension

This relates to the pension arrangement for the past Presidents' of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland.

Compensation

Amounts have been provided for material claims for compensation against SCTS from service users. The amounts provided are based on an assessment of the amounts claimed and the likelihood of a payment being required. Where a settlement is considered unlikely to be required no provision is made.

14. Capital commitments

As at 31 March, contracted capital commitments for which no provision has been made were as follows:

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Property, plant and equipment	2,033	2,325
Tangible assets	383	81
Intangible assets	-	696
Total	2,416	3,102

As at 31 March, authorised but not contracted capital commitments for which no provision has been made were as follows:

	2025	2024
	£'000	£'000
Property, plant and equipment	-	475
Tangible assets	-	431
Total	-	906

15. Related Party Transactions

SCTS, established by section 60(1) of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008, is a non-Ministerial Office, which is part of the Scottish Administration but not part of the Scottish Government. During the year, SCTS has had various material transactions with the Scottish Government and the Crown Office.

SCTS has also had a number of transactions with other government departments, central government bodies, local government and other non-departmental public bodies.

Ms Lynsey Walker, solicitor member of the SCTS Board (Board Member from 17 January 2022), was a Member of Addleshaw Goddard LLP during the financial year.

All transactions involving organisations in which a member of the SCTS Board may have an interest are conducted arm's length and in accordance with SCTS's financial regulations. During the year, SCTS received £184,677 in respect of payments for services rendered to Addleshaw Goddard.

Mr Steven Dickson, non-executive member of the SCTS Board (Board Member from 1 June 2022), was a Director of Scottish Water Business Stream Holdings, Scottish Water and BT Pension Scheme Trustees Limited during the financial year.

All transactions involving organisations in which a member of the SCTS Board have an interest are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with SCTS's financial regulations. SCTS paid £1,260,624 in respect of services received from Scottish Water Business Stream and Scottish Water.

All transactions involving organisations in which a member of the SCTS Board have an interest are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with SCTS's financial regulations. SCTS paid £20,352 in respect of services received from BT Conferencing and £41,486 in respect of services received from British Telecommunications.

Remuneration paid to Board and Executive Team members is given in the Remuneration Report given above.

No other Board or Executive Team members have undertaken any material transactions with SCTS.

16. Financial Instruments

SCTS resource requirements are met from Scottish Government via the annual grant-in-aid provision and from other income generated from activities. SCTS has no power to borrow funds and any surplus funds are held in interest bearing deposit accounts. Other than financial assets and liabilities which are generated by day-to-day operational activities, SCTS holds no financial instruments. Because of the nature of its activities and the way in which SCTS is financed, the SCTS is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities.

Liquidity risk

Scottish Ministers make provision for SCTS' use of resources, for revenue and capital purposes, in its budget for each financial year. Resources and accruing resources may be used only for the purposes specified and up to the amounts specified in the budget. SCTS is not therefore exposed to significant liquidity risks.

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market prices that could affect SCTS are interest rate risk. As noted above, SCTS has no power to borrow and any surplus funds are held in interest bearing deposit accounts or the Government Banking Service. SCTS has no other investments and therefore there is limited exposure to interest rate risk.

Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a counterparty will not meet its obligations under a financial instrument or contract, leading to a financial loss. SCTS is exposed to credit risk from its operating activities (primarily for trade and other receivables) but the level of risk is not deemed significant. Credit risk related to trade and other receivables is managed through established procedures relating to the monitoring and follow up of outstanding balances.

Fair values

The fair value of the financial assets and liabilities are included at the amount at which the instrument could be exchanged in a current transaction between willing parties, other than in a forced or liquidation sale. The following methods and assumptions were used to estimate the fair values:

Cash and cash equivalents, trade receivables, trade payables, and other current liabilities approximate their carrying amounts largely due to the short-term maturities of these instruments. There is no difference between the book value and fair value for the cash and cash equivalents shown in note 11.

17. Losses

During the financial year there were 11 instances of cash handling losses totaling £129. (2023-24: 10 instances totaling £665).

18. Third Party Assets

Cash balances of £27,071k (2023-24: £30,462k), as confirmed from the banks, are held on behalf of third parties. This is mainly money consigned into court in respect of liquidations, cautions, expenses in civil actions and unclaimed dividends. These third party assets are not the property of the SCTS and are not included in SCTS' accounts.

19. Contingent Assets/Liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

At 31 March 2025, there were no material contingent assets/liabilities.

20. Post Balance Sheet Events

In line with IAS 10, SCTS considers there to be no adjusting or non-adjusting events.

Supreme Courts, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts, Office of the Public Guardian

High Court

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
High Court judge days	5,449	4,776	4,541
Indictments registered	1,249	1,044	1,038
Trials (evidence led)	739	686	611
High Court criminal appeals lodged	591	597	521

Court of Session

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Court of Session judge days	1,132	1,075	995
Cases registered (General department)	1,312	1,105	970
Proofs proceeding	50	60	55
Court of Session: civil appeals/reclaiming motions	154	88	119
Cases registered (Inner and Outer House Petitions)	1,244	1,183	1,095

All-Scotland Courts

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Sheriff Appeal Court - criminal appeals lodged ¹²	301	326	291
Sheriff Appeal Court - civil appeals lodged	192	202	214
Personal Injury Court: registrations	6,893	5,366	4,129

Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts

Sheriff Courts: Summary Criminal	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Complaints registered	61,606	65,357	57,226
Trials with evidence Led	6,173	5,746	6,380

Sheriff Courts: Solemn Criminal	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Sheriff and jury indictments registered	7,164	7,384	5,938
Sheriff and jury trials with evidence led	1,231	1,275	1,061

Justice of the Peace Courts	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Complaints registered	22,503	19,681	21,756
Trials with evidence led	999	937	999
Sitting days	2,952	2,955	2,488

Sheriff Courts: Civil	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Ordinary Cause registered	21,398	20,866	21,344
OC proofs and debates proceeding	519	498	515

Summary Cause/Small Claims/Simple Proc.	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Cases registered	37,864	32,379	33,316
SC proofs Proceeding	325	266	332

Sheriff Courts: Sitting Days	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Number of days	29,801	29,456	29,624

Commissary	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Inventories recorded	28,835	29,456	27,953

Office of the Public Guardian

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Powers of Attorney registered	67,705	77,446	62,062
Guardianship Orders registered	4,249	3,235	3,146

Upper Tribunal, First-tier Tribunals and other tribunals administered by SCTS

Upper Tribunal for Scotland			
	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	144	2507	37
Disposals	340	1720	48
Hearing Days	59	60	32

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (General Regulatory Chamber)			
Charity Appeals	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	0
Hearing Days	0	0	0
Parking and Bus Lane Appeals (<i>Becomes Transport Appeals Summer 2023</i>)			
Receipts	-	-	1,021
Disposals	-	-	770
Hearing Days	-	-	38
Transport Appeals (<i>From Summer 2023</i>)			
Receipts	1,680	1302	-
Disposals	1,625	1056	-
Hearing Days	53	54	-

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Health and Education Chamber)			
Additional Support Needs	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	249	244	202
Disposals	252	213	183
Hearing Days	102	91	55

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber)			
Letting Agents	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	63	75	71
Disposals	64	63	67
Hearing Days	24	40	64
Case Management Discussion Days	30	56	-
Private Rented Sector			
Receipts	4,838	4,271	3,873
Disposals	4,084	3,745	3,280
Hearing Days	328	329	293
Case Management Discussion Days	1,226	1,362	1,360
Property Factor			
Receipts	421	303	256
Disposals	255	257	232
Hearing Days	126	92	163
Case Management Discussion Days	142	176	-
Rent & Repairs			
Receipts	231	211	180
Disposals	204	173	205
Hearing Days	179	191	190
Right of Entry <i>(Cases are disposed of by decision rather than hearing)</i>			
Receipts	205	153	183
Disposals	156	152	203
Decisions	96	137	129
Third Party			
Receipts	34	97	65
Disposals	56	62	44
Hearing Days	100	106	96

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Local Taxation Chamber) <i>(SCTS assumed responsibility April 2023)</i>			
Local Taxation	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	1,508	41,506	-
Disposals	36,602	5,282	-
Hearing Days	115	92	-

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Social Security Chamber)			
Social Security	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	7,154	2,615	147
Disposals	2,962	772	54
Hearing Days	1,951	585.5	35

First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Tax Chamber)			
Tax	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Receipts	28	23	13
Disposals	24	16	19
Hearing Days	9	3	6

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Council Tax Reduction Review Panel <i>(Functions transferred to the Local Taxation Chamber April 2023)</i>			
Receipts	-	-	40
Disposals	-	-	48
Hearing Days	-	-	27

Lands Tribunal for Scotland <i>(Responsibility transferred to the Supreme Courts from 10 January 2022)</i>			
Receipts		154	339
Disposals		165	547
Hearing Days		80	57.4

Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland			
Receipts	5,745	5,463	5,314
Disposals	5,553	5,251	5,062
Hearing Days	3,851	3,927	3,879

Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland - Excessive Security			
Receipts	28	39	26
Disposals	25	43	24
Hearing Days	20	37	21

Pensions Appeal Tribunal Scotland			
Receipts	111	154	152
Disposals	133	180	244
Hearing Days	35	57	63

(in accordance with section 19(2) of the Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) (Scotland) Act 2018)

Part 3 of this Act came into force on 30 January 2019. From that date, SCTS has the responsibility for appointments to the offices of Auditor of the Court of Session, Auditor of the Sheriff Appeal Court, Auditor of the All Scotland Personal Injury Court and Auditor of the Sheriff Courts. SCTS is obliged to report on the number of taxations carried out and the fees charged by these auditors. Transitional provisions were put in place to permit the continuation of the current service, offered by the existing Auditor of the Court of Session and independent auditors, as private businesses, until they retire or demit office. The transitional arrangements excuse SCTS from reporting on the work carried out by these private auditors.

There are four Full Time SCTS Appointed Auditors of Court.

- Tayside Central & Fife.
- Lothian & Borders
- Glasgow
- North Strathclyde/South Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway.

The Auditor of Court for Grampian Highland & Islands retired on 31 October 2023. Taxations for Grampian Highland & Islands are allocated to one of the Auditors in the other Sheriffdoms.

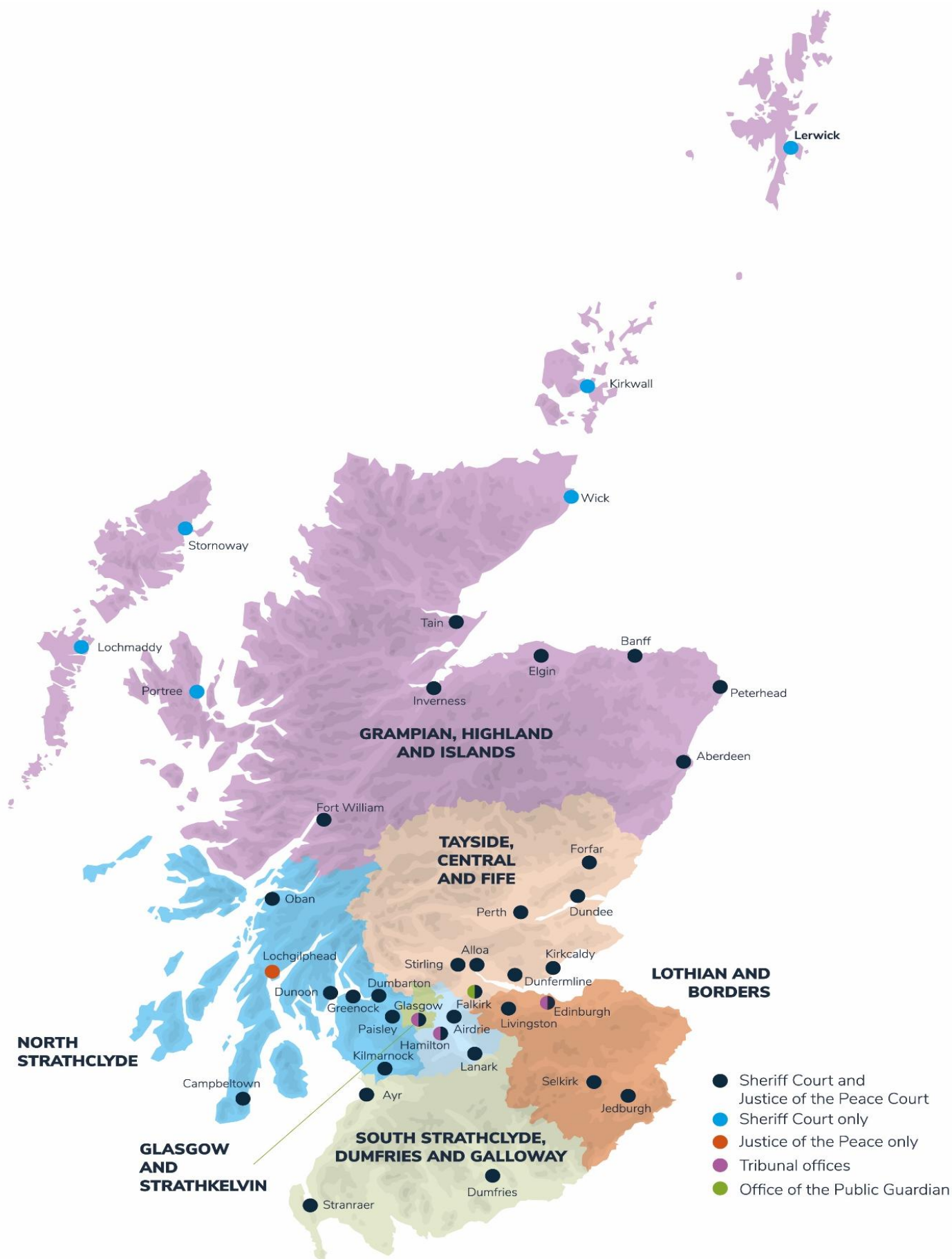
Audits undertaken

Judicial taxations ¹³	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Auditor of the Sheriff Court (appointed by SCTS)	1,612	1,228	1,053
All Scotland Personal Injury Court	-	-	-
Sheriff Appeal Court	-	-	-

Value of fees raised

Judicial taxations	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23 (£)
Auditor of the Sheriff Court (appointed by SCTS)	367,932	320,761	265,874
All Scotland Personal Injury Court	-	-	-
Sheriff Appeal Court	-	-	-

¹³ An account of expenses remitted to an auditor of court by a court or tribunal



Directions by the Scottish Ministers**In accordance with section 19(4) of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000**

1. The statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2014 and subsequent years shall comply with the accounting principles and disclosure requirements of the edition of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FREM) which is in force for the year for which the statement of accounts are prepared.
2. The accounts shall be prepared so as to give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure, recognised gains and losses, and cash flows for the financial year, and of the state of affairs at the end of the financial year.
3. This direction shall be reproduced as an appendix to the statement of accounts. The direction given on the 17 January 2006 is hereby revoked.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alison Stelfox', is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark.

Signed by authority of the Scottish Minister

Dated 4 August 2014



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