

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service



Mr Craig Hoy
The Scottish Parliament
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Chief Executive's Office
Parliament House
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Dear Mr Hoy

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION S7W-01560

The Cabinet Secretary in his response to the above PQ indicated that it related to operational matters within the responsibility of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service corporate body. I am now writing in response to the matter raised.

S7W-01560 asks: To ask the Scottish Government what the average waiting time is for the Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland) what the average waiting time to process an application for Power of Attorney.

Answer to S7W-01560

The average waiting time to process an application for Power of Attorney (PoA) is indicated below. The average waiting time is shown per month, over a six-month period, starting January 2026:

Month (2026)	Number of Business Days
January	199
February	202
March	190
April	201
May	212
June	224

The reason for the increase in waiting times for PoA registrations relates to the substantial rise in the number of new PoAs submitted annually for registration, and the associated amendments to existing PoAs.

During 2025-26 OPG received 101,826 PoAs for registration, representing a 40% increase since 2021-22. In addition to this, OPG's legacy case management system, which has now been operational for 26 years, has had a negative impact on processing times due both to slow processing speeds and to the instability of the system.

SCTS are taking several steps to rectify the position.

The increased business volumes and demand for registration of new power of attorney and amendments to existing PoAs has highlighted that the 2025-26 OPG headcount was no longer sufficient to cope with demand.

The current (2026-27) staff compliment within the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) has been increased to 126 staff with a full time equivalent of 113.10 FTE. This shows an increase of 14 substantive/permanent staff. In addition, an additional 20 temporary staff have been added to aid recovery efforts plus funding to support overtime.

SCTS also is currently investing in the development of a new case management system for all OPG's functions. The roll-out of the first phase of the new system, which deals with the processing of PoAs commenced during 2025 and continues to be enhanced with a major enhancement expected in August 2026.

When this system reaches maximum efficiency, PoAs will be processed and the caseloads maintained more quickly and efficiently, thus providing a more responsive service to our customers and one which will keep up with future demands in this area.

This change will also see our records and workflows moved to a more secure, efficient and modern platform, which would allow us to then develop and deploy additional features, such as verification codes, customer self-service, and case tracking, all with the caveat that we would need to secure funding from Scottish Government to allow us to do so.

Finally, we will also put in place revised processes and structures based on a new Target Operating Model (which is currently being developed).

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and published on the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Graham', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Malcolm Graham
Chief Executive