

SCTS PEOPLE COMMITTEE

MEETING: Wednesday 13 August 2025– Parliament House, Edinburgh:

Attended:

Dr Sophie Flemig, SCTS Board (Chair)
Helen Meldrum, Non-Executive Member
James Saville, Non-Executive Member
Anne Scott, SCTS Board
Sheriff Wendy Sheehan, Non-Executive Member

Also Attended:

Steven D'Arcy, Corporate Secretary, SCTS
David Fraser, Executive Director Court Operations, SCTS
Bhavna Nair, Director ELU, SCTS
Lisa Sellars, Director HR, SCTS
Alastair Young, PCS (SCTS Branch Secretary)

Sarah Imery, Executive Support Officer, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive, SCTS
Ruth Innes KC, SCTS Board
Katie Leighton, PCS (SCTS Branch Chair)

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members.

2. Minutes of the Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April were approved.

3. Action Points and Matters Arising

3.1 The chair welcomed Bhavna Nair who joined SCTS as the Director Education and Learning Unit on 1 May.

3.2 The Committee received an update on the matters discussed at the Board meeting in June and August 2025. The Board had recently visited the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) and had been updated on the development and implementation of the new OPG case management system. Members agreed it would be important to expand their knowledge of the work of the OPG and Tribunals areas of the organisation.

3.3 The Committee discussed recent correspondence between the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs. The letter outlined the challenges and opportunities faced by the SCTS and the wider justice system. The correspondence set out how SCTS intended to support reform and digital transformation aimed at delivering real service improvements and longer-term efficiencies. This work was essential, but would require

sustained effort, partnership and funding. Members recognised the position and proposals made within the letter – which would inform development of the 2026-29 Corporate Plan and associated budget.

4. Cross Committee Update

4.1 An oral update had been provided to members on matters arising from the Board and the other SCTS Committees.

4.2 An update on the Employment Rights Bill had been provided to members by the Executive:

Employment Rights Bill

The Executive provided members with an update on the Employment Rights Bill 2024 which had been published on the 10 October 2024, the Bill outlined 28 Employment Law changes and had been referred to by the UK Government as “the biggest upgrade to rights at work for a generation”. The Scottish Government had published a ‘Roadmap’ on the 1 July, the legislation would be introduced as part of a phased approach. Looking ahead, 2027 would be the year SCTS would be likely to be most impacted by the Act. The HR team would continue to prepare as much in advance as possible.

5. People Survey Action Progress Report

5.1 Following the publication of the SCTS People Strategy 2024-28 in November 2024, the Executive confirmed that good progress had continued to be made. HR had continued to work in partnership with PCS and Senior managers to review the way we manage change in two key corporate areas:

- Leadership and Managing Change
- Values and Behaviours

5.2 A review of the SCTS change framework is underway. The Directors of HR and ELU are chairs of two of the Subgroup (Organisational Design and Role Design) and Skills and Training Subgroup. The Executive confirmed that any overlap between the People Survey Action plan and the People Strategy would be monitored throughout.

5.3 Members welcomed the positive update and highlighted the importance of embedding what SCTS had learnt from the survey responses and communicating the actions that have been put in place to show to employees how their feedback had been taken on board and reflected in the changes made.

6. Draft annual report for the Board

6.1 Members reviewed the outline of their draft annual report to the SCTS Board. Members agreed that the content accurately reflected the work of the committee during 2024-25. A final draft would be shared for formal approval at the next meeting. The final report would be submitted to the SCTS Board in November.

6.2 Members would continue to develop the core work plan for 2026 over the coming months.

6.3 The Committee expressed thanks to the Executive for the short, clear and concise report.

7. Attendance Management and Wellbeing update

7.1 The Committee had been provided with a paper detailing the sickness absence levels in SCTS from 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025. Since the update last year HR had continued to look at alternative ways to ensure staff wellbeing and manage attendance by introducing activities and initiatives to promote health and wellbeing and encourage open communication between employees and managers.

7.2 HR continues to work with the Occupational Health Provider to develop new and improved ways of make referrals specifically for mental health referrals. Work had commenced on revising the Attendance Management Policy, which will be aligned with SCTS' commitment to wellbeing. It would be employee focused and include proactive steps to manage sickness absence and create a supportive work environment for all employees.

7.3 SCTS had recently seen a decrease in overall sickness absence, however mental health remained the leading cause for absence. The organisation had continued to promote the 48 Mental Health First Aiders who were available at any time to support colleagues. It had been envisaged that with the production of improved absence reporting, support and coaching from HR, continued wellbeing interventions and with the launch of a revised attendance management policy the improvement in sickness absence rates would be maintained.

7.4 The Executive emphasised the importance of ensuring all Senior managers continued to conduct regular, open and transparent conversations with team members and holding regular check-ins.

7.5 Members thanked the Executive for the update, highlighting that accurate benchmarking and measuring would be key going forward. Executives had been encouraged to set a 'tolerance benchmark' with the aim to set a realistic target recognising that sickness absence rates can fluctuate for many reasons that are out with the organisation's control. Members had hoped that a tolerance rate for sickness absence rates would include an aspirational goal. A further update would be shared ahead of the November meeting, if not before for committee sign off.

8. Deep Dive

8.1 The Committee welcomed Charles Welsh, Head of Programmes, Education and Learning Unit (ELU), to the meeting. Charles had previously attended a meeting in August 2024 to provide an overview of the work ELU had embarked on to develop key performance indicators, that would allow the unit to better understand the impact learning offering provided to our people was having on performance and delivery of organisational goals.

8.2 In 2023, an ELU technical team undertook a short intensive training and support programme within Airdrie Sheriff Court following a large staff turnover. The team researched the impact of the training through operational performance, people data and support from local judiciary and senior management. Airdrie had been selected due to the unique opportunity to train multiple new staff members, working in one court, within a short period of time. The next trial would take place in the coming weeks within Alloa Sheriff Court.

8.3 The Committee discussed and agreed the importance of measuring learning impact, transfer and engagement, including follow up sessions with staff where appropriate. Members highlighted concern that the sample number of staff researched initially had been

very small, several factors could have impacted on the successful output/feedback given following the research.

8.4 Members were available to assist and support ELU to embrace new technology that was available using Artificial Intelligence to deliver/support training and learning, the Committee members offered their support in discussing research and evidence strategy.

8.5 Members provided feedback to the Executive and expressed interest in the next batch of data gathering. Updates on progress and development would be provided at the next meeting.

9. Pay Negotiations

9.1 ***The record of this discussion was considered confidential and exempt from publication.***

10. Review/Discussion of Other Papers

10.1 The following papers were provided for scrutiny/exception reporting only:

- HR Risk Register
- ELU Risk register
- HRU Business Plan
- ELU Business Plan
- Learning Council Annual Report + Appendix 1,2,3&4
- Learning Council Minutes
- Employment Tribunals
- HR Measures
- Core Work Plan 2025
- People Committee Action Tracker

11. Any Other Business

11.1 None

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The next meeting is on 5 November 2025

SCTS Secretariat
August 2025