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Public Board Meeting

28 January 2026

Item No 11

THIS PAPER IS FOR DISCUSSION

STAFF EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

Lead Director	Graeme Ferguson, Acting Director of Workforce
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Action required	The Board is asked to discuss the Staff Experience and Performance report.
Key points	<p>Key points to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our new Staying Well Service was launched on 1 December 2025 that will be staffed by our Wellbeing Team. As of 8 January 2026, we have had 33 referrals since launch with 75% of referrals mental health related. This is to move towards a more proactive and preventative approach to supporting our workforce's health and wellbeing in the workplace.• Development and progression of bids to support staff health & wellbeing through our Endowment Funds.• As of 5 January, our SAS TURAS appraisal completion rate is 20.06%. There are currently 1770 in-progress appraisals, and should these be completed alongside the 317 partially completed we would see our completed appraisals within SAS reach 51.4%.• A Suicide Prevention & Postvention Short Life Working Group has been established bringing together expertise and knowledge from across the Service to develop and progress an organisational plan and deliverables for suicide awareness, prevention and postvention in SAS.

Timing	This report seeks to present a cohesive and consolidated update on our overall staff experience, cultural transformation and workforce performance within SAS. It incorporates the previous separate reports on health, safety and wellbeing and introduces some new workforce performance metrics. We will continue to refine the report based on the feedback received.
Associated Corporate Risk Identification	Risk ID 4636 Risk ID 5651 Risk ID 5652 Risk ID 5653
Link to Corporate Ambitions	This paper relates to the following Corporate Ambition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be a great place to work, focusing on staff experience, health and wellbeing.
Link to NHS Scotland's Quality Ambitions	This paper relates to 'Safe', 'Effective' and 'Person Centred' NHS Scotland's Quality Ambitions.
Benefit to Patients	The steps we are taking via our organisation wide staff experience commitments to support, nurture, retain, develop & enable our people to thrive at work which will in turn have a direct impact on improving the quality of care we provide to patients.
Climate Change Impact Identification	This paper has identified no impacts on climate change.
Equality and Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 8 July 2024 for our Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-27 and filed with the Service EDI Lead for publication on @SAS.



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SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE BOARD

STAFF EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

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SECTION 1: PURPOSE

This paper provides an update on Staff experience and Workforce performance over the last reporting period to **December** 2025.

SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to **discuss** the Staff Experience and Performance report.

SECTION 3: DISCUSSION

This paper provides the Board with oversight and assurance on the progress of maintaining a positive staff experience within SAS by measuring this against key workforce performance metrics during this reporting period.

The Workforce Directorate has its own Annual Operating Plan (AOP) which is aligned to the Staff Governance Action Plan (SGAP) and the Service's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP). Our AOP is currently being re-prioritised in line with the SGAP for 2025/26. Progress on this will be reported to Board and Staff Governance Committee over the course of 2025/26.

We are currently in the process of developing the next three year workforce plan. The Finance, Strategy (Planning) and Workforce strategic leads are working to closely to ensure all three strands are aligned with the SAS 2030 Strategy".

Our Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-27 builds upon the approach of its predecessor and is grounded in a solid and growing evidence base highlighting the importance of prioritising the health and wellbeing of our workforce. Six ambitions have been developed for 2025/26, the

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second year of our Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2024-27) that underpin our SAS 2030 Strategy and take steps to address our iMatter results and the Improving Workplace Staff Experience & Wellbeing Pulse Survey (2024). These ambitions are incorporated into this new style report under the Health & Wellbeing, Learning, Innovation and Culture & Leadership sections.

2025-26 Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) Strategic aim:

“We will be a great place to work, focusing on staff experience, health and wellbeing”.

3.1 Staff Experience

3.1.1 Health and Wellbeing

Ambition 1 - To create an awareness and understanding at local level of the range of health & wellbeing support available to our workforce and how to access it.

This ambition aligns with our strategic inputs by:

- Increasing awareness and visibility of health and wellbeing pathways.
- Empowering individuals to take ownership of their own wellbeing.
- Growing and raising the profile of our wellbeing networks to build local communities of support.
- Ensuring new colleagues feel welcome and supported from the beginning of their journey.
- Creating a supportive environment where wellbeing conversations are normalised.

Whilst there is a good awareness and knowledge of health and wellbeing support available to our workforce in some areas of the service, this is not consistent throughout our organisation. We are taking the following ongoing steps throughout the year to increase awareness and understanding of support available:

- Increasing the number of wellbeing visits we are conducting to have direct contact with staff.
- Reviewing our communication and methods of communication to ensure messaging reaches a wider audience.
- Promoting key activity through the Live Well Work Well newsletter.
- Expanding the wellbeing content in our internal leadership development programmes.

This reporting period has seen:

- Continuation of Organisational Development and Wellbeing visits to locations/stations alongside local managers.
- A bid approved at The Endowment Management Group meeting on 9 December 2025 to test a new pathway of support with the Police Treatment Centre for staff struggling to remain at work due to diminishing mental health. We are continuing to promote endowment funds to staff in order to progress initiatives to further support the health & wellbeing of our workforce.
- A Staff Engagement session was delivered on 20 November 2025 that focused on staff wellbeing, highlighting the range of services available with an update on our TRiM work and an introduction to our new Wellbeing Leads.

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- November and December 2025 editions of Live Well Work Well have promoted Men's Health Month, Remembrance Day, 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, our new Staying Well Service, boosting your immunity over the winter period and highlighted some of our staff stories.

Ambition 2 - To expand the range of wellbeing help & support available to our workforce, recognising one size doesn't fit all.

This ambition aligns with our strategic inputs by:

- Expanding the range of health and wellbeing support available, recognising individual needs and preferences.
- Encouraging a proactive and preventative approach to health and wellbeing.
- Creating accessible pathways to rehabilitative and specialist support.
- Supporting leaders and managers to recognise early warning signs and signpost to appropriate help.
- Reducing barriers to access by identifying and targeting support where it is needed most.

Work is progressing to develop our range of help and support available to staff and trial new initiatives. Within this reporting period this has included:

- A period of induction for our 4 new part-time Wellbeing Leads in order to familiarise themselves with the Service. They have each been given national portfolios of work in addition to being a link person for wellbeing across specific areas of the Service.
- Our new Staying Well Service was launched on 1 December 2025, staffed by our Wellbeing Team. As of 8 January 2026, we have had 33 referrals since launch with 75% of referrals mental health related. We will collate data on an ongoing basis to continue to inform future service provision. This is to move towards a more proactive and preventative approach to supporting our workforce's health and wellbeing in the workplace. Referrals are submitted to a dedicated e-mail address and triaged to the most appropriate member of the team to respond to.

3.1.2 Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)

TRiM continues to provide support to our staff that have been exposed to traumatic events. Referral figures have now reached 655 since the launch of the scheme at the end of June 2023. Of these referrals, 255 have been from the West Region, 252 from the East Region, 111 from the North Region, 37 from National Operations.

There has been a total of 113 onward referrals to Occupational Health.

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The number of referrals per month is highlighted below:

Month	Number of Referrals	Total
July 2023 – March 2025	509	509
April 2025	19	528
May 2025	13	541
June 2025	8	549
July 2025	21	570
August 2025	11	581
September 2025	17	598
October 2025	19	617
November 2025	19	636
December 2025	13	649
January 2026 (up until 8 Jan)	6	655

We conducted a two-day TRiM training programme for new TRiM assessors with a one-day refresher for those trained in TRiM in previous organisations on 28 – 30 November 2025. We now have an additional 24 TRiM assessors with a greater geographical spread across SAS to support our workforce.

Our SAS TRiM Lead and one of our TRiM Co-ordinators attended the annual TRiM CPD event in Harrogate alongside colleagues from other services in the UK. They will disseminate new learning via the TRiM network.

3.1.3 Employee Development - Appraisal

Our ambition is for every member of staff in SAS to have an appraisal. Historically our appraisal rate has been consistently below 10%, however we are beginning to see slight incremental increases month on month. As of 5 January, our SAS TURAS appraisal completion rate is 20.06%. There are currently 1770 in-progress appraisals, and should these be completed alongside the 317 partially completed we would see our completed appraisals within SAS reach 51.4%.

Appraisal figures are circulated to Regions and National Operations & Departments on a weekly basis that has undoubtedly provided a renewed focus on appraisal completion across the organisation.

Completion rates do vary across Regions. However, completing staff appraisals and PDPs are an integral part of our approach to learning and development of staff. The completion of TURAS Appraisals, PDPs and Objectives continues to be a challenge due to the operational pressures within the Service. A detailed appraisal action plan has been developed to ensure both appraisers and appraisees remain focused on this important human connection activity.

3.1.4 Employee Relations

National Employee Relations Activity

Recording of Employee Relations activity re Grievances, Bullying and Harassment and Conduct as well as Capability and Attendance is monitored via an online recording sheet which is intended

to provide timeous recording of ongoing cases along with additional data which facilitates tracking of timescales and risk status.

Table 1 below represents initial outputs of the online recording as the end of December 2025. Support for ER case work is now being coordinated through the People Services Hub and a new system for recording and reporting is being developed. Ongoing work is being undertaken to identify and highlight trends in employee conduct cases and to compile more data around suspensions. This information will be available to future PPSG and Staff Governance Committee meetings.

Table 1

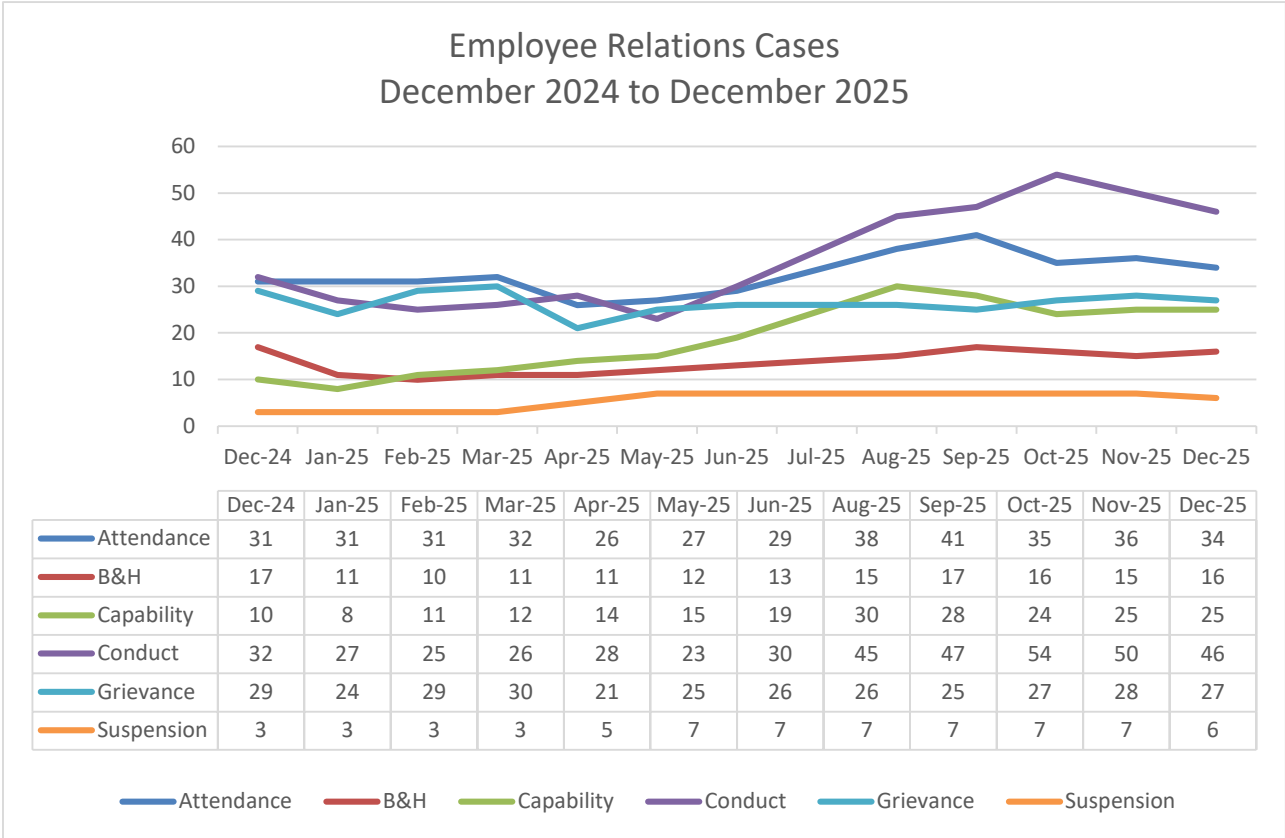


Table 2

	Dec-25	Attendance	B&H	Capability	Conduct	Grievance	Suspensions	Total
Operations - West		17	2	11	12	9	0	51
Operations - North		0	1	4	14	0	3	22
National Operations		6	3	5	8	11	2	35
Operations - East		8	9	5	8	4	1	35
Finance, Strategy and Logistics		3	0	0	3	1	0	7
Care, Quality & Professional Development		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical		0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Collective (National)		0	1	0	0	2	0	3
Total		34	16	25	46	27	6	154

Table 2 shows all Employee Relations case activity as of December 2025 by category and region/directorate. The number of ER cases across the service has shown a downward trend across the last couple of months. The total number of cases was 165 in September 2025 and has fallen to 154 cases in December 2025. The number of suspensions has also decreased from 7 to 6.

We have seen a reduction in Employment Tribunal claims filed from 16 claims filed in 2023 to 8 claims filed at end of October 2025. There are currently 6 live Employment tribunal cases ongoing.

3.1.5 Rest Breaks

Rest breaks remain a significant challenge for the Service. Discussions are ongoing with our staff side colleagues, Scottish Government and SAS to seek a permanent resolution to this issue. All sides remain committed to finding a solution and there are currently two proposals under consideration. Working in partnership with our staff side colleagues, the Rest Break Programme Board continues to focus on ways to improve rest break compliance across the Service with positive and sustained improvements being seen as a result of the introduction of the tests of change throughout 2023 and 2024. SAS has reiterated its commitment to balancing the needs of patients with the wellbeing of staff by ensuring that crews are protected and rested within a shift.

In response to feedback from partnership colleagues, SAS and the trade unions have collectively agreed to simplify the currently agreed Additional Rest Break Protection options to the benefit of both frontline crews and Dispatch colleagues. This streamlined process has been in place since 06:00hrs on Friday 23rd May 2025. This process ensures SAS has a range of options to support the wellbeing of frontline crews and ensure a timely rest break can be facilitated.

In recognition of the current system pressures and periods of increased demand, should a crew reach the end of their first rest break window and feel they require additional protection to facilitate this rest break, this can be achieved by requesting to be made unavailable for a “Special Break”.

Discussions are still taking place with staff side partners and Scottish Government to jointly finalise the Rest Breaks Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This has taken rather longer than expected but there remain opposing views on one element of the SOP that still need to be reconciled.

3.2 WORKFORCE METRICS

Significant work is underway to develop the next 3-year workforce plan for 2025-28. Although no definitive timescale has been confirmed yet by Scottish Government (SG), an abridged version of this plan was sent to SG in mid-March 2025. This had a particular focus on “difficult to recruit areas and roles” and more general workforce challenges. Our intention is to align our next 3-year SAS workforce plan with the Annual Delivery Plan and Financial plan. The draft of the Workforce Plan will be presented to Staff Governance Committee in March 2026.

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The workforce information contained in the Vector of Measures outline varied performance across the different metrics. Key points for noting and discussion are outlined below in our new workforce dashboard report which has been developed by our Finance colleagues.



3.2.1 Newly Qualified Paramedics

Newly qualified paramedics have been identified as the primary source of recruitment across 2025/26 with provision in place for additional recruitment to Technician posts to address any shortfalls in paramedics recruitment.

The 2025 recruitment campaign for Newly Qualified Paramedics has now been completed. 239 NQPs have accepted offers of employment for 2025/26 with a mixture of part time (24 hours) and full time (37 hours) contracts. For the first 6 weeks of training, all NQPs will be required to work 37 hours per week, thereafter returning to 24 hours per week. Our intention however is that, taking into account our normal rate of attrition and the reduction in the national NHS working week to 36 hours wef from April 2026, we will be expecting to offer part time NQPs full time hours (36 as of 1st April 2026).

Active engagement with each of the 5 Universities has proved to be very successful and a more positive candidate experience was had this year. **Planning for next year's intake is currently under way.**

Table 5 shows the recruitment numbers for newly qualified paramedics for 2024/25 by Region and Hours.

Table 5

NQP Offers Accepted							
Course Start Date	North		East		West		Total
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	
21/07/2025	0	0	0	5	2	0	7
18/08/2025	0	0	0	19	16	0	35
15/09/2025	4	0	0	6	12	0	22
13/10/2025	11	0	0	10	4	8	33
10/11/2025	11	0	0	11	5	6	33
05/01/2026	10	0	0	12	2	9	33
02/02/2026	10	0	0	11	0	11	32
02/03/2026	9	0	0	10	0	10	29
23/03/2026	8	0	0	3	1	3	15
Total	63	0	0	87	42	47	239

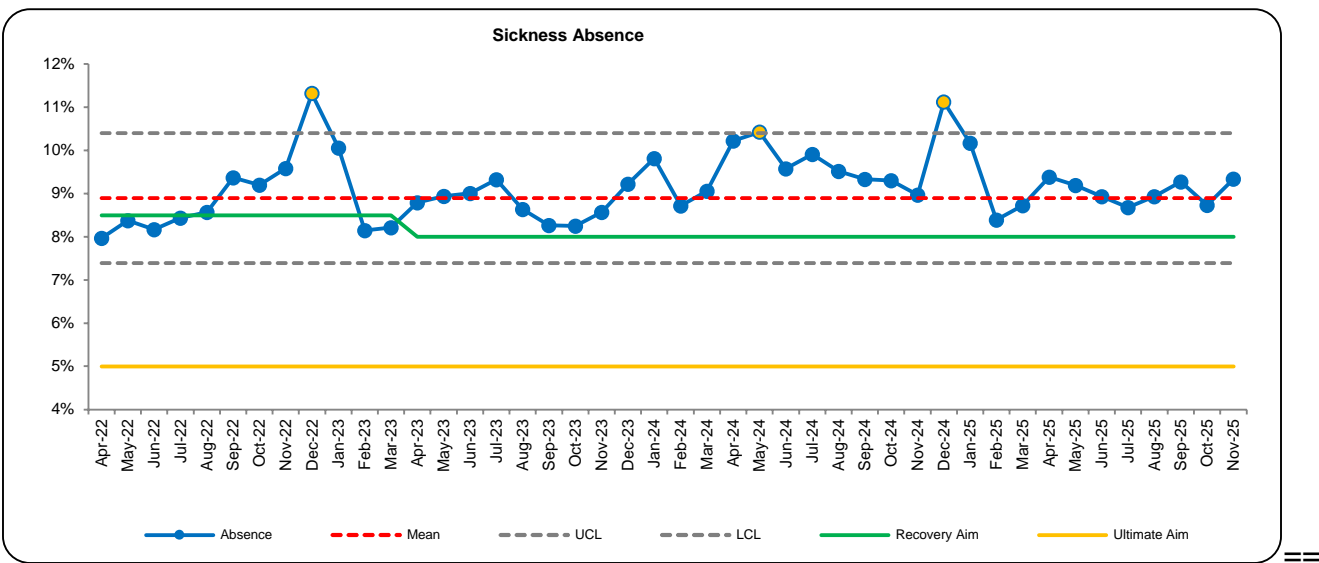
3.2.2 Sickness absence levels

Total sickness absence during the last reporting period **has increased from 8.7% in October to 9.3% in November**. Patterns of absence indicate that there has historically been an increase in sickness levels observed across the winter months and this continues to be monitored given the current elevated levels of staff absence. An Executive oversight group has been recently established to identify the key factors driving sickness absence and develop actions required to reduce both long- and short-term absences. The key driver for this group is to ensure that all available support is in place to support staff with challenging health issues and that our internal processes are applied consistently.

Considerable data analysis has now been undertaken which gives the Service far more workforce data than ever before to analyse underlying causes of sickness absence, including down to station and individual level, as well as highlighting wider abstraction reasons with this data now in place, there can be much more credence given to the available information which in turn will prompt more person centred and supportive management actions to address high level of sickness absence. A new attendance dashboard is currently being trialled within SAS and this will provide access to significantly more attendance-related data than ever before.

Table 4 below highlights the overall sickness absence trends since April 2022.

Table 4



The top reason for sickness absence remains anxiety/stress and depression and much focused work is progressing to enable the Service to interact more proactively with staff with mental health issues to feel more positively supported. Signposting to other sources of help remains available such as The Ambulance Staff Charity (TASC), Employee Assistance Service (EAS), Occupational Health Service (OHS), Keil Centre and our own mental health team. Serious consideration is being given to establishing a wellbeing hub within SAS. This may be an extension of the current People Services Hub, or an entirely separate internal facility available to all staff.

However, due to the persistent and unacceptably high levels of sickness absence across SAS, **a dedicated Programme Board is now in place** to ensure appropriate governance, scrutiny and oversight are maintained to achieve a sustainable and tangible reduction in sickness absence. The Programme Board **is** chaired by the Acting Director of Workforce.

3.2.3 Occupational Health Activity

There remains considerable scrutiny of our various occupational health providers and significant disquiet with the baseline service itself. Whilst we are continually seeking to rectify any Service related problems as quickly as possible, urgent internal discussions are ongoing around possible options to replace the current expired service level agreement. **Regular meetings have taken place with NSS with whom we had the previous Service Level Agreement (SLA) to consider innovative and realistic options for providing a sustainable and effective OH service to SAS. This is also being discussed nationally at the HRD group to consider what other options might be feasible from a national NHS Scotland perspective.**

Data for Q2 (2025/26) received from NSS:

Occupational Health Management Referrals (not including TRiM or Keil)

- **There have been 572 referrals submitted this fiscal year, The main initial triage categories remain the same: anxiety/stress/depression and other psychiatric illness being the highest.**

Pre-Placements

- 108 pre placements were submitted in Q2.
- Highest Directorates undertaking recruitment were the North with 24% and ACC at 20%.

Keil Referrals

- There have been 17 referrals submitted to Keil during Quarter 2.
- 7 were identified through TRiM and 10 via occupational health management referrals.

Physiotherapy

- There have been 207 referrals received into the SAS OH Hub during Quarter 2.

We have been advised that due to demand for occupational health services, all NHS Boards are currently working to approximately 8 to 24 weeks wait time from receipt of referral to appointment.

With our Wellbeing team now supplemented by 4 new part time staff from October 2025, we are in a very good position to significantly enhance our internal support for staff wellbeing. With more specialist skills available and improved signposting to the appropriate specialist support available to all staff, there is a clear expectation that we will reduce “waiting times” for our staff to expedite their return to work, but as importantly to reduce the need to be off work in the first place. Together with our newly established access to Police Scotland’s Treatment Centre in Auchterarder, we are able to offer an increasing wide range of wellbeing support going forward. This is a positive message to all our staff. The SALUS contract ceased on the 31 November 2025 with the new “Staying Well” service launched on 1 December 2025. The team have been allocated portfolios of work to lead on as well as being aligned regionally. There are ongoing regular meetings with SALUS to ensure that all those already under their care will continue to receive that care and any that can be transferred over to the Staying Well service will be transferred over. All those currently under the care of SALUS will be completed by end of March 2026.

3.3.1 Learning and Development

Statutory and Mandatory Training Compliance

The TURAS Learn platform was launched in March 2024 and staff are currently working towards completion of the twelve SAS statutory and mandatory training modules. Table15 shows progress in the levels of completion since the launch of the TURAS Learn platform to December 2025 by Sub-Division level. The RAG status shown is the KPI’s agreed by the Staff Governance Committee.

Work continues to progress TURAS Phase 2 looking at statutory and mandatory training per job role, with the paper now agreed by SAS Executive Team. A further paper detailing the future implementation is due at the next Executive meeting in February. Once for Scotland are launching the ‘Once for Scotland’ Statutory/Mandatory Modules on 2 March 2026. They are launching 9 modules, of which 8 are currently being undertaken by SAS. The one module that SAS do not currently offer is Fraud, so this will now be reported against once it is launched. Some of the others have differing refresher periods, but the hope is that it will even itself out as some of the Once for Scotland modules will be reviewed less often than SAS currently do and

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only 2 will require to be done more often. The Health & Safety Team are also feeding into the wider NHS Scotland review of all e-learning courses to see what can be launched under the Once for Scotland framework. This involves five courses for Health & Safety to date, one of which the H&S module is nearing completion.

We will also be developing mandatory wellbeing training as part of TURAS Phase 2. The SLWG for suicide pre- and post-vention has reviewed training modules for suicide awareness and will be recommending this be adopted. The guidance for post-vention was published in December 2025.

Completion of all 13 modules remains a challenge, but the trajectory is positive and we will continue to monitor this to achieve 100% completion rate for all prescribed modules, which is the goal. The Staff Governance Committee agreed a stepped approach to compliance, with 80% being the target set for now and this will be reviewed in Q1 2026.

The Workforce Directorate has sent out reminder e-mails to all staff in the Directorate to ensure they complete all modules by the end of March 2026. Reminder e-mails will be sent at the end of both January and February 2026 to improve compliance.

Violence Prevention and Reduction (VPR) and Manual/Patient Handling update

VPR “Train the Trainer” for Clinical Training Officers (CTO) is now completed, and NHS Tayside will monitor to ensure they remain competent. VPR and Manual/Patient Handling and training for staff through Learning in Practice (LiP) commenced mid-April, with compliance details to be provided by EPDD.

Table 5 below highlights the current compliance levels, now adjusted to 80%.

% Compliance at date of report	ACC	ScotStar	East Central	NHQ/SAC	NPRD	North	South East	South West	West Central	Date of last data
Basic Life Support	71	75	69	56	86	69	73	63	47	25/08/2025
Fire Safety Awareness Training	67	73	70	61	79	68	73	72	49	30/12/2025
Health and Safety Awareness	70	75	69	61	85	69	73	72	51	31/12/2025
Infection prevention and control (foundation)	58	68	58	48	72	65	60	61	41	30/09/2025
Initial Operational Response	45	57	51	44	81	56	60	63	34	03/12/2025
Introduction to equality, diversity and human rights	59	61	56	51	79	58	61	51	38	25/08/2025
Moving and handling (Module A)	65	69	68	59	84	68	71	70	48	30/12/2025
Ergonomics – Display Screen Equipment (DSE) / Preventing Aches and Pains	67	71	66	61	83	67	71	70	47	30/12/2025
PREVENT Duty Awareness	55	52	51	41	76	55	59	48	34	25/08/2025
Public Protection – child protection and adult support and protection for SAS staff	60	63	59	51	79	61	66	64	40	03/12/2025
Safe information handling	70	72	56	60	76	61	56	61	38	03/12/2025
Staying safe online: top tips for staff	39	57	51	49	56	49	39	56	28	03/12/2025
Violence Prevention Reduction: Conflict Management	63	66	64	55	81	65	69	69	45	30/12/2025
Completion Status	Under 50% Compliance Non Compliant			50-79% Compliance Partially Compliant			Over 80% Compliance Compliant			
Total	Aug	Sept	Oct	Dec						
	23	21	22	21						
	89	91	90	90						
	5	5	5	6						
	117	117	117	117						

Note: module completion rates can alter as the expiry dates vary dependent on when staff members completed the course initially.

Ambition 3 – To further develop our workforce’s knowledge and skills to help support one another, build resilience and signpost to further help as required.

This ambition aligns with our strategic inputs by:

- Taking a proactive and preventative approach to health and wellbeing.
- Decreasing stigma and reducing barriers to accessing mental health support.
- Creating a supportive environment where wellbeing conversations become normal practice.
- Empowering individuals to take ownership of their own health & wellbeing and confidence support one another and intervene early.
- Cultivating resilience to help colleagues cope with the effects of trauma and stress.
- Supporting leaders and managers to recognise early warning signs and signpost to appropriate help.

This reporting period has seen progress in the following areas:

- The Suicide Prevention & Post-vention Group has met every couple of weeks throughout October and November 2025 in order to progress resources and interventions to raise awareness of suicide prevention and establish guidance for managers in the aftermath of a staff suicide and pathways for survivors of suicide. Post-vention guidance for managers and the initial completed work of the Group has been published on @SAS and the Group will continue its work from February 2026.

3.3.2 Innovation

People Services Hub

The **People Services Hub** has been in place since 3rd February 2025 and is currently completing its test of change phase. The objective of the People Services Hub is to provide a professional HR service to the organisation in relation to providing a fast and consistent response to enquiries, as well as dedicated HR professional support for employee relations cases.

The key aims of the People Services Hub are to:

1. Provide consistency in HR advice across all Directorates with an understanding of varying service needs.
2. Provide fast and accurate responses to enquiries with an initial response given within 48 hours (excluding weekends and public holidays).
3. Allocate an appropriate HR professional to support employee relations cases and accurately track the progress of each case.
4. Provide robust and accurate reporting of employee relations activities.
5. Reduce the amount of HR Advisor time spent on low-level enquiries to allow more focus on higher-level work, such as ER cases, portfolio projects, and support organisational delivery of strategic objectives.

The People Services Hub offers two distinct services to SAS staff, staff partners and managers:

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1. The Enquiry Management system, and
2. The ER Case Support Management system.

A formal evaluation is being undertaken with engagement of service users and key partners following the test of change with a view to establishing the People Services Hub on a permanent basis.

As at 31st December 2025, the People Services Hub have dealt with 1983 enquiries and received 329 requests for HR support for ER cases.

Development of a Workforce “Chatbot” is underway with an initial launch meeting with the developers having taken place in December 2025.

Ambition 4 - To become more evidence and data driven in our approach to creating a healthy workplace.

This ambition aligns with our strategic priorities by:

- Strengthening our use of evidence and insight to improve staff experience, support early intervention, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.
- Developing an evidence-based understanding of the underlying causes of absence.
- Creating a culture where early intervention is normalised and supported.
- Embedding continuous improvement through regular feedback and movement towards a just culture.

Initial work was completed by the OD Team on developing a culture dashboard to highlight a more visual representation of progress made in further developing a healthy workplace. HR are now developing how this is integrated into our Staff Experience & Performance reporting alongside other workforce data.

SECTION 3.4 CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Ambition 5: To enable staff to feel valued at work by embedding supportive behaviours within our organisation.

This ambition aligns with our strategic inputs by:

- Leaders treating everyone with dignity and respect and consistently role model positive behaviours and healthy working practices.
- SAS being an inclusive organisation that values diversity and creates an environment where employees feel safe to speak up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.
- SAS owning a reputation for having a positive work culture where employees thrive and feel valued for the work they do.
- Ensuring our values and behavioural expectations are embedded and demonstrated throughout the employee journey.
- Ensuring our people are actively developed and supported through mentoring and lived experience.

Deliverables to support this ambition include focused support to the proposed outcomes of Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report (2025-29), raising appraisal completion rates,

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facilitating a culture of role modelling values-driven behaviour and calling out inappropriate workplace behaviours.

In this reporting period the following work has progressed:

- The reverse mentoring initiative has been launched enabling individuals from underrepresented groups to mentor senior leaders with the first cohort focusing on racial equality, sharing lived experience to influence organisational culture and decision making. Matching has been completed. The mentors have had some initial training with the sessions commencing from February 2026. Two of the mentors shared their hopes for the programme in a staff story to the Staff Governance Committee on 11 December 2025.
- Our second 'Improving Wellbeing and Working Cultures' Pulse Survey launched on 17 November 2025. Response rates fell sharply compared to 2024, with 331 submissions versus 601 previously, likely due to the inability to email all SAS users directly. Promotion relied on corporate channels, requiring staff to actively access the survey link. Key findings reveal widespread dissatisfaction, with 'Dissatisfied' and 'Extremely Dissatisfied' frequently reported across the dimensions of: Leadership, Workplace Culture, Staff Experience, and Safe to Speak Up. While positive responses exist, they are less common, indicating supportive environments are not the norm. However, we should be cognisant of the low response rate compounding the effect of negative reporting bias within these dimensions. Overall, the data underscores a need for targeted interventions to strengthen leadership visibility, enhance workplace culture, and develop psychological safety. It is recommended that this is firmly integrated with the cultural development work currently being undertaken at SAS Executive level, to allow for a joined-up approach where the OD Team are given agency to operationalise the strategic intent of this workstream.
- Appointment of a dedicated "People and Culture Consultant" to work with, and within, the Workforce Directorate to draw together all the differing strands of cultural transformation work already under way and build this into an effective, cohesive and consistent strategic programme for SAS. This will involve an initial scoping phase, followed by a detailed diagnostic analysis stage, and finally a proposed implementation action plan.

Ambition 6: To further develop our leadership and enable leaders to become more connected at all levels of the organisation.

This ambition aligns with our strategic inputs by:

- Supporting leaders to actively prioritise their team’s health, wellbeing, and development.
- Building leaders’ confidence and awareness to recognise early warning signs of deteriorating wellbeing and signpost appropriately.
- Ensuring leaders treat everyone with dignity and respect, while consistently role modelling positive behaviours and healthy working practices.

Planned activity includes expanding our virtual Leadership Academy, introducing wider coaching and mentoring opportunities and facilitating people-centred leadership approaches.

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In this reporting period we have been:

- Submitted documentation to the Faculty for Medical Leadership & Management for re-accreditation of our Foundation Programme.
- Submitted documentation to gain accreditation for our Aspiring Leaders and Intermediate Leadership programmes for the first time. We have yet to hear back from the Faculty of Medical Leadership & Management regarding both of these applications.
- Programmes have been suspended over December due to operational winter pressures.

SECTION 3.5 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

3.5.1 Legislative context

The Equality Act 2010 created a requirement for public authorities, including Scottish Ambulance Service, to meet the public sector equality duty to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 list the obligation to report progress on mainstreaming the public sector equality duty and to report progress on equality outcomes work every two years. Every four years there is a requirement to develop and publish new equality outcomes.

The recent Supreme Court judgement in regard to transgender citizens of the UK has required a major review to be undertaken across all employment sectors in the UK into how transgender colleagues should be treated. SAS, in line with our sister NHS Boards, is currently awaiting further EHRC updated guidance on this matter. In the meantime, we are undertaking an internal review to ensure that our transgender colleagues continue to be treated with fairness, equity and understanding. **We hope to conclude this shortly.**

3.5.2 Sexual Safety Programme Update

The Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2024/25 referred to the Service being a key partner across AACE, NHSS and other emergency services in implementing the Reducing Misogyny Improving Sexual Safety work. A major focus on the EDI agenda this year has been on reducing misogyny and improving sexual safety in SAS. The latest update is detailed below:

- We are working on the development of an all-staff online learning session/module which focuses on preventing sexual misconduct, reinforcing expected behaviours and how to 'Speak Up' and challenge inappropriate behaviour. This will complement the existing TURAS module 'Sexual Harassment for Line Managers'
- Sexual Safety Workshops are ongoing, in conjunction with Police Scotland. Several of our staff attended the sessions and we are gathering feedback to ensure that the sessions are meaningful and productive. These workshops are timetabled throughout the year and time is being provided by means of TOIL to allow attendance.
- We are in the process of creating a structured guidance document for students and university contacts to refer to if they have experienced or witnessed sexual misconduct whilst working with us.
- We are engaging with universities and have attended a recent Scottish Collaboration of Paramedic Education (SCoPE) meeting to discuss the sexual safety of students whilst on placement within the Service
- The sexual safety communication and engagement plan is updated regularly.

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3.6 COMPLIANCE

3.6.1 Health and safety update

The Service remains committed to achieving and maintaining consistently high standards of health and safety compliance. Monitoring these standards is a fundamental aspect of the H&S work programme which enables the Service to comply with its statutory and mandatory requirements. Auditing health and safety compliance remains a key performance measure, and the new audit window has commenced for this financial year, and we will be using the new EVOTIX system which will allow better data analysis. We are continuing to train all managers on how to clear tasks raised on the system and have introduced the escalation process whereby Heads of Service are notified if the actions are not completed in a timeous manner.

The new Fleet Workshops audit is now live, and H&S team will continue to train the workshop staff how to complete this audit. Feedback on the new system has been largely positive as people get used to the new system.

There has been no Health and Safety Executive (HSE) involvement this reporting period.

Accidents

The H&S team continue to work with the Risk Manager to iron out any issues that are highlighted on the In Phase system.

The team continue to review every H&S incident that is reported on In Phase and quality control the information at point of entry to ensure that it is in the correct category, e.g. RTC's are not being reported as vehicles issues when it is clearly an RTC.

RIDDOR

There were:

- 9 October (this includes 6 patient handling, 2 other handling, 1 slip/trip/fall same level)
- 19 November (this includes 14 patient handling, 1 slip/trip/fall, 1 slip/trip/fall from height, 2 physical assaults, 1 patient RIDDOR - struck by or against)
- 7 December (this includes 4 patient handling, 1 slip/trip/fall from height, 2 struck by or against).

