



Place Directorate

Protective Services Annual Service Report 2026

Introduction

This report reflects the performance of Protective Services for 2026. It covers the period April 2025 to March 2026, highlighting our delivery, progress, change and improvement plans for 2026-27.

We have considered our performance in relation to the council's policy priorities set out in the Plan for Fife; key indicators; financial and workforce pressures and how we compare in relation to other similar services in other Scottish councils, through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

Individual service indicators and results are published online in advance of this annual review to facilitate scrutiny and feedback. These are available at www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance

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Service overview

The Protective Service vision is to achieve a safe, healthy, clean, and fair-trading environment for residents, businesses, and visitors. We strive to achieve this through activities which monitor compliance with trading standards, environmental health and building standards law.

Key roles and responsibilities include:

Environmental Health (Food and Workplace Safety)

Responsible for food law inspections, workplace health and safety interventions, licensing inspections (e.g., street traders, public entertainment), port health, commercial waste duty of care, and working with NHS in relation to communicable disease control.

Environmental Health (Public and Environmental Protection) -

Handles statutory nuisance complaints (noise, odour, light), animal licensing and welfare, air quality monitoring, contaminated land investigation and remediation, private housing standards, caravan site licensing, private water supply safety, and alcohol licensing compliance.

Trading Standards - Ensures fair and safe trading through advice and enforcement against domestic fraud, counterfeit goods and illicit tobacco, unfair trading, legal metrology (weights and measures), product safety, tobacco and age-restricted products regulation, and operates the Fife Trusted Trader Scheme.

Building Standards and Public Safety - Manages building warrant applications, enforces against unauthorised building work, provides public safety enforcement (dangerous buildings), supports licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and Short Term Lets, and issues safety certificates for sports grounds and raised structures.

In addition, the **Scottish Building Standards Hub (SBSH)**, hosted within Fife Council (Protective Services), is a nationally recognised specialist unit supporting all 32 Scottish local authority building standards teams. Officially launched in May 2024 following a successful two-year pilot in Fife Council, the SBSH is designed to strengthen the building standards system in Scotland by promoting consistency, resilience, and innovation across the sector.

Operating under Fife Council's corporate systems but functioning as an independent entity, the Hub delivers services across three core areas: business strategy and transformation, technical operations and services, and learning and development. It also manages hubs of expertise in fire engineering, structural engineering, and environmental design, and plays a key role in digital transformation efforts, including the development of Scotland's first dedicated Learning Management System for building standards professionals.

Demand & delivery overview

Building Standards & Public Safety

Demand Highlights

- Building warrant activity remained high, with 2,854 building warrant applications submitted during the year.
- The total value of building warrant fee income was £2.6m.
- Site inspection volumes remained high, reflecting continued demand from construction activity, over 3,000 completion certificates were submitted.
- The team continued to support public safety activity, including dangerous building notifications and related enforcement responsibilities.

Delivery Pressures

- Verification performance fell to around 50% against Scottish Government Key Performance Outcomes, primarily due to the 50% vacancy rate in the Verification team.
- The new BSD Compliance Plan Approach guidance applied from April 2026, requiring phased implementation following correspondence from Building Standards Division at Scottish Government.
- A new Building Standards Performance Framework was introduced from April 2026, reducing KPOs from seven to five, moving some reporting from quarterly to annual, and introducing new workforce, competency and FTE data requirements.
- Sustained vacancies have affected service resilience, response times and the pace of improvement activity, despite mitigation through agency support, workload sharing and process review.

Environmental Health (Food & Workplace Safety)

Demand Highlights

- 1,159 food law inspections; 2,098 revisits and other interventions; 699 requests for service; 260 food monitoring samples.
- 465 health & safety inspections/interventions; 203 requests for service; 155 RIDDOR notifications.
- 159 communicable disease notifications followed up with NHS Fife.
- 320 Waste Duty of Care requests for service.
- 26 Ship Sanitation Exemption Certificates issued; 26 cruise liner visits at Port of Rosyth.
- Where required proportionate enforcement action is taken, which can include the services of notices and submission of reports to the Procurator Fiscal; 46 Notices were served, 42 for food and 4 for health & safety matters.
- Joint work with NHS Fife – see case study at end of report.

Demand & Delivery Overview

Environmental Health (Public & Environmental Protection)

Demand Highlights

Land and Air Quality

- 57 Passive Air Quality monitors
- 14 Automatic Air Quality monitors
- Mossmorran/Braefoot Bay – ExxonMobil closure activity
- Air Quality Strategy 2025–2030 approved by Committee; ECO Stars scheme and wood-burning stove engagement continued; positive feedback from Scottish Government and SEPA.

Public Protection

- 1509 Public Health / Nuisance complaints
- 390 Domestic noise complaints

- 375 Non-domestic noise complaints
- 78 National Assistance Burials

Delivery Pressures

- High levels of statutory demand across Environmental Health functions.
- Regulatory reform, including the Food Standards Scotland SAFER Programme.
- Capacity pressures identified through Environmental Health resource modelling.
- Need to balance statutory duties and service requests within available resources.

Demand & delivery overview

Trading Standards

Demand Highlights

- 893 referrals received of which 59% had interventions carried out
- 35 call blockers installed blocking 99% of all nuisance/scam calls – estimated savings of £891,534
- 106 Trusted Trader inspections of members' businesses
- Scams reimbursement claims - £207,390 reimbursement to scam victims resulting in £111,991 in estimated quality of life/healthcare savings and £319,381 total estimated benefit from this workstream
- Weights and Measures inspections – 65 premises visited of which 60% were compliant and 40% were brought into compliance
- Operation CeCe – continued action against illicit tobacco (26 premises visited) – see case study
- Enactment of Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026

Tobacco and vapes underage sales stats

- There are 277 registered tobacco sellers in Fife.
- 58 premises received an advisory visit, representing 20.9% of registered sellers, against the Scottish Government target of 20%.
- 17 tobacco test purchases were undertaken, covering 6.1% of registered sellers, against the Scottish Government target of 10%. Three businesses sold tobacco, giving a test-purchase failure rate of 17.6%.
- There are 282 registered vape sellers in Fife.
- 58 premises received an advisory visit, representing 20.6% of registered sellers, against the Scottish Government target of 20%.
- 38 vape test purchases were undertaken, covering 13.5% of registered sellers, against the Scottish Government target of 10%. Eleven businesses sold vapes, giving a test-purchase failure rate of 28.9%.
- 38 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for various offences.
- 38 non-compliant vapes were seized.

Product Safety – Labubu toy safety issue

- 22 premises visited
- 1397 Labubu toys seized

Demand & Delivery Overview

Delivery Pressures

- Increasing complexity of consumer protection and regulatory responsibilities.
- Requirement to prioritise enforcement activity based on risk.
- Legislative change affecting tobacco, vaping and consumer protection issues.
- Continued requirement for partnership working with Police Scotland, HMRC and national agencies.

Demand & Delivery Overview

Our People

Workforce Profile, including headcount

- 111 headcount, 106.95 FTE. Represents 0.60% of Fife Council's headcount.
- 89.2% are full time, 96.4% permanent and 49.5% female.

Workforce age

- Average workforce age is 48.0, higher than 46.7 in 2024/5. This is above the Fife Council average age of 44.8.
- Average age of leavers is 43.1 and new starts 39.0.
- 5.41% of the workforce is aged 24 and under, lower than 6.14% in 2024/5.

Workforce Turnover

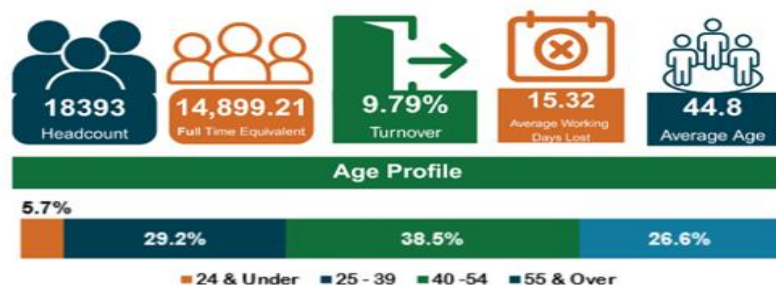
- Turnover rate is 7.21%, lower than 7.89% in 2024/25.
- 50% of leavers were aged 55 and over. The top reported leaver reason was other employment.

Working days lost (WDL) per FTE

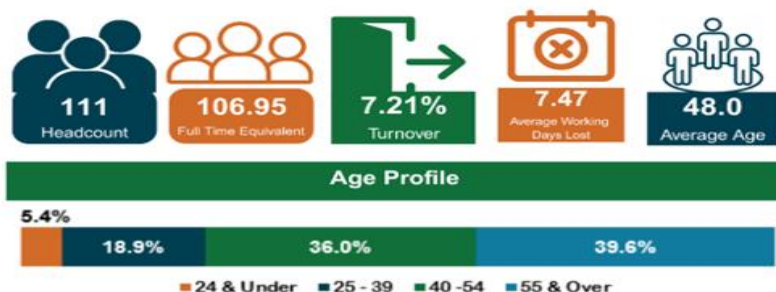
- Average WDL to sickness absence was 7.47, this is lower than 9.66 in 2024/25.
- Short term absences account for 2.86 working days lost and 4.61 for longer term absences (over 28 calendar days)

Demand & Delivery Overview

Fife Council Workforce 2025/26



Protective Services Workforce 2025/26



People Plan Priorities

The Service People Plan priorities will focus on maintaining statutory resilience, growing future talent and supporting staff through significant regulatory, digital and organisational change.

- Build and secure future workforce capacity through apprenticeships, trainee routes, professional pathways, succession planning and a continued Grow Your Own approach.
- Prioritise hard-to-fill statutory roles across Environmental Health, Building Standards and Trading Standards.

- Strengthen professional competence and statutory resilience through CPD, competency frameworks, authorisation arrangements and preparation for new regulatory duties.
- Support change, digital confidence and smarter working by developing staff capability in data, systems, automation and risk-based service planning.
- Develop flexible leadership, collaboration and service resilience through targeted leadership development, skills mobility and cross-team working.
- Promote a positive, inclusive and supportive working environment that supports wellbeing, retention, engagement and effective blended working.

Our Budget

Business Area	Budget 25/26 £m	Provisional Outturn 25/26 £m	Variance 25/26
Protective Services Administration	0.167	(0.025)	(0.192)
Building Standards & Public Safety	1.550	0.489	(1.061)
Environmental Health (Food & Workpl	1.290	1.267	(0.024)
Environmental Health (Public Protecti	1.383	1.513	0.130
Trading Standards	0.947	0.938	(0.009)
Total Net Expenditure	5.338	4.182	(1.156)
	Budget	Provisional Expenditure / (Income)	Variance Overspend/ (Underspen d)
Staff Costs	6.890	6.496	(0.393)
Property Costs	0.048	0.357	0.310
Transport Costs	0.086	0.075	(0.011)
Supplies and Services	1.601	1.170	(0.431)
Third Party Payments	0.070	0.048	(0.022)
Transfer Payments	0.011	0.010	(0.002)
Support Services Charges	0.190	0.196	0.006
Total Expenditure	8.897	8.353	(0.543)
Internal Income	(0.886)	(0.982)	(0.095)
External Income	(2.672)	(3.189)	(0.517)
Total Income	(3.558)	(4.171)	(0.613)
Net Expenditure	5.338	4.182	(1.156)

Key points

The main variances against the budget are summarised below

Staff Costs - Underspend in Building Standards due to part year vacancies in new posts funded from Building Warrant fee increases offset with shortfall in turnover allowance	(0.304)
Property Costs – Costs associated with securing safety of dangerous buildings, costs to be recovered from property owner	0.294
Supplies & Services – Building Standards Hub underspend in funding, carried forward to meet service delivery commitments in 2026/27	(0.541)
External Income - Mainly due to over recovery of Building Warrant Fee income and recharge of costs of	(0.517)

Our risks

Risk	Mitigation
ICT Failure	Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) refreshed. A cross-Service Cyber Security workshop held in March 26 – BCP and critical activities being updated to align with the Council-wide BCP review
Workforce Challenges	Grow Your Own model in place to upskill existing workforce into key vacant roles and to continue to support Modern Apprentices within the Service. Levels of vacancies at 50% in Building Standards Verification Team
Legal and Regulatory Compliance Failure	Scheme of delegation reviewed/updated and Local Government Code of Governance maturity assessment completed; actions for improvement in place.
Data Records Management	Ensure all systems are reliable and secure. Regular review of mandatory eLearning modules carried out.
Inability to Ensure Public Health & Safety and Protection - Building Standards and Public Safety	50% Verification vacancies; agency staff deployed; recruitment campaign ongoing; workload sharing with 2 Scottish Local Authorities; new Lead Professional FC10 post under managing change
Inability to Ensure Public Health & Safety and	Alternative Delivery Model now business as usual; resource modelling identifies gap of (additional unfunded) 11.52 FTE against an

Risk	Mitigation
Protection - Food and Workplace Safety	establishment of 27 FTE, rising to 17.92 when training and vacant posts are included
Inability to Ensure Public Health & Safety and Protection - Trading Standards	Carry out risk-based enforcement by focusing resources on high-risk areas such as illegal sales practices, unsafe goods and domestic fraud. Ensure officers are up to date with legislation, investigative techniques and follow robust enforcement policies. Work collaboratively with Police Scotland, HMRC and other relevant regulatory bodies.
Inability to Ensure Public Health & Safety and Protection - Public and Environmental Protection	Enterprise for Uniform progressed; staff training and team workshops continued; close partnership with NHS Fife on Joint Health Protection Plan 2026–28.
Emerging Risks	UK/EU SPS Agreement (expected mid-2027) – likely to require officer retraining and business support resource; new non-surgical cosmetic procedures licensing regime from September 2027; Deposit Return Scheme launch scheduled October 2027.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Introduction - service delivery context and challenges

A review of current activities is still being undertaken to ensure all priorities and statutory duties are defined along with all required resources identified, to enable a dynamic and flexible approach to the delivery of statutory functions across Team areas. In addition, 2025/26 has been affected by the following external pressures:

- A national workforce crisis across all three regulatory professions (EH, BS, TS) – with the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland reporting a 27% national decline in EHO numbers since 2016 and a 20% reduction in establishment. Trading Standards total establishment in 2025 was 249.97 FTE (down from 511.6 in 2002 – over 50% drop. This has reduced further).
- Regulatory reform – Food Standards Scotland's SAFER Programme; the BSD Compliance Plan Approach and new Performance Framework; Single-use Vapes Regulations, and the new licensing regime for non-surgical procedures; and
- Incidents and high-profile cases – Mossmorran closure, St Michaels Inn fire (Leuchars) and other dangerous building notifications (see case study at end of the report), a number of food related incidents including food alerts for action and ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

Despite these pressures, the Service has delivered against its core statutory remit and made substantial progress against all four priorities set out in 2024/25.

Priorities & progress

Priority 1 - To continue to support and progress the Service People Plan/Workforce Strategy to create opportunities for all including younger members of the workforce, achieved through a 'Grow your own' approach.

Priority 2 - Data Driven Innovation and Improvement.

Priority 3 - Statutory Compliance and Risk Management: Our services will efficiently fulfil statutory functions while effectively managing risks within our resource constraints (this will include time/resource calculations, assessment of statutory priorities etc).

Priority 4 - End to end review of all Building Standard & Public Safety services.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 1 Service People Plan / Workforce Strategy: "Grow Your Own"

Continue to create opportunities for all, including younger members of the workforce, through the Grow Your Own approach.

Progress

Progress was made during 2025/26 to strengthen workforce resilience and build future professional capacity across Protective Services. The Service continued to embed its Grow Your Own approach in response to national shortages in Environmental Health, Building Standards and Trading Standards.

Investment in trainee routes, professional qualifications, apprenticeships and placements supported succession planning and helped fill vacant specialist roles. Staff progressed through Food Safety Officer, Environmental Health, Building Standards and Trading Standards development routes, creating additional capacity in areas facing recruitment pressure.

Workforce sustainability remains the Service's most significant challenge. National shortages, an ageing workforce profile and

ongoing recruitment difficulties continue to create capacity risks across statutory functions. Continued investment in workforce planning, professional development and succession planning will remain essential during 2026/27.

Building Standards & Public Safety:

- Modern Apprentices supported through HNC and degree routes; 2024 cohort progressing well.
- Two Assistant Building Standards Surveyors continuing the BSc Construction & the Built Environment (distance learning, RGU).
- Re-structure proposal in BS team introduced an additional Team Manager FC10.

Environmental Health (Food & Workplace Safety):

- Two Environmental Health Technicians qualified as Food Safety Officers in 2025 and were successfully recruited into the two vacant FSO positions – the first tangible output of the Alternative Delivery Model and Grow Your Own approach.
- One Enforcement Officer is now a Trainee Environmental Health Officer.
- One Environmental Health Technician is enrolled to commence the new MSc Environmental Health at Abertay University.
- 12-week placement supported for an Abertay undergraduate.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Environmental Health (Public Protection):

- Successful recruitment to vacant TO posts; succession planning advanced prior to further review of team structure.

Trading Standards:

- Two new TSOs in post following 2024 trainee qualification; however, 1 TSO has now left.

Areas for Improvement

The Service will continue to take a more structured and longer-term approach to workforce planning, recognising the national shortage of qualified Environmental Health, Building Standards and Trading Standards professionals. This will include strengthening trainee and professional development routes, improving succession planning for hard-to-fill posts, and making better use of workforce data to anticipate future capacity risks.

A key focus for 2026/27 will be to align Grow Your Own activity with service re-design, digital transformation and statutory risk. This will

ensure that investment in apprenticeships, trainees and professional qualifications is targeted at the areas of greatest operational need, particularly where vacancies or retirement profiles create risks to statutory delivery.

Further review and analysis of current vacancies, age profile, turnover and hard-to-fill roles is required to ensure a sustainable approach to succession planning. This should include targeted actions to develop trainee routes, support professional qualification pathways, improve retention, and align workforce planning with emerging statutory duties and service change priorities.

Relevant KPI details

Workforce age profile continues to increase (see Our People).

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 2 Data Driven Innovation and Improvement

To drive greater productivity, increase automation, and improve customer experiences together with moving from data management to deriving intelligence from information.

Progress

During 2025/26 the Service has continued to move from basic data capture and case management towards more active use of information to support decision-making, prioritisation and improvement. This is particularly important given the level of statutory demand, vacancy pressures and the need to ensure limited resources are targeted at areas of greatest risk and impact.

Digital improvement work has focused on improving visibility of workloads, strengthening performance reporting, supporting mobile and hybrid working, and reducing manual processes where possible. The next phase will be to ensure that data is used more consistently across all teams to drive operational planning, identify emerging risks, support earlier intervention and improve the customer journey.

- Trading Standards Idox Cloud (live January 2025) now embedded as BAU; significant improvements experienced in remote-access functionality.
- Power BI dashboards extended across all four teams; benchmarking now possible across sectors and over time.
- Enterprise for Uniform further developed in Public Protection and Food & Workplace Safety Teams – process workflows, bespoke PIs and "live" dashboards now operational, supporting the monitoring of team and individual activities.
- Workshops held around Place-based approach and development of an "Intelligence Hub" workstream.
- A Digital Proposal was submitted by the Food & Workplace Safety Team in February 2026 to scope equipment, smart bots, customer-facing information and new device trial for mobile officers.
- Smartphones now issued to all mobile workers, enabling field evidence capture direct to SharePoint.

Areas for Improvement

- Performance monitoring software roll-out has been delayed due to competing priorities; continued investment in digital skills required.
- Need to better embed Power BI in day-to-day operational decision making.
- Further automation potential exists, particularly in customer contact, routine case updates, inspection scheduling, evidence

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

capture, performance reporting and integration between key systems such as Enterprise/Uniform, Idox, Power BI, Verint, Whitespace and SharePoint.

- Further work is required to develop a more consistent Service-wide approach to data standards, dashboard use, automation opportunities and intelligence-led prioritisation, ensuring that digital tools support both operational delivery and directorate change objectives.

Relevant KPI details

New KPIs in development as part of the digital innovation workstream.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 3 Statutory Compliance and Risk Management

Services to efficiently fulfil statutory functions while effectively managing risks within resource constraints (including time/resource calculations and assessment of statutory priorities).

Progress

The Service has continued to strengthen its approach to statutory compliance during 2025/26 by taking a more structured, risk-based view of demand, resource and legal duties across each Team area. This has included refreshing resource calculations, reviewing delegated powers and authorisation arrangements, and aligning operational priorities with areas of greatest public health, safety, consumer protection and regulatory risk.

This approach supports transparent decision-making where demand exceeds available capacity and ensures that available resources are directed towards the highest-risk statutory functions. It also provides an evidence base for business planning, workforce planning and future discussions on service resilience.

- EH(F&WS) Resource Calculation refreshed (2026): identified a gap of 11.52 unfunded FTE against 38.52 modelled requirement.
- Alternative Delivery Model transitioned from project to business as usual, with Food Standards Scotland's continued endorsement.
- Active engagement with the Food Standards Scotland SAFER Programme – the national reform of food law delivery in Scotland.
- BSD Verification Team Improvement Plan (Jan 2026 – March 2027) submitted to the Building Standards Division of Scottish Government.
- Cyber Security workshop (March 2026) outputs fed into Business Continuity Plan refresh
- Place Directorate List of Officer Powers – Scheme of Delegation refreshed to reflect the Alternative Delivery Model authorisation matrix.
- Protective Services has contributed to national discussions through the SoLACE workstream on regulatory resilience, workforce capacity and statutory service sustainability, helping to highlight the pressures facing local authority regulatory services across Scotland.
- Actions arising from the Public Safety audit have been completed, with revised processes embedded for dangerous buildings and public safety enforcement, strengthening assurance around statutory compliance, record keeping and decision-making.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Areas for Improvement

- Increasingly complex legislative landscape (Consumer Duty, Non-surgical Procedures Bill, SPS alignment, single-use vapes, Tobacco & Vapes Bill) presents both compliance risk and resource demand. Capacity pressures should continue to be escalated through business planning, risk management and workforce planning processes, particularly where there is evidence that statutory expectations cannot be fully met within existing resources.
 - Demand continues to outstrip available resource across all four teams. Risk-based prioritisation matrices need to be embedded more consistently to target limited resources to areas of greatest risk ensuring that decisions on service levels, inspection programmes, enforcement activity and complaint response are clearly linked to risk, available resources and legal duties.
 - Continued assurance will be required around officer authorisations, competency, scheme of delegation arrangements and decision-making records as new legislation and delivery models are introduced.
- approved establishments programmed inspection cycles undertaken.
- Reported scams resulting in an intervention: 84.8% (up from 80.3%).
 - Cost of EH per 1,000 population continues significantly below Family Group Average of £13,992 (LGBF).

Relevant KPI details

- In 2025/26 the overall percentage of premises achieving Food Hygiene Information Scheme Pass following assessment was 80%
- Of the highest risk food law inspection 32 of 33 (97%) Band E inspection due during 2025/26 were carried out. 29 of 33 (88%)

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 4 End-to-End Review of Building Standards & Public Safety Services

Process review to consider changes in the way customers interact with the team, new technology available and making the most of blended workstyles

Progress

The end-to-end review remained an important priority for Building Standards and Public Safety during 2025/26. Progress has been made in areas where improvements could support day-to-day delivery, including inspection scheduling, diary management, quality assurance checks, customer communication routes and revised public safety enforcement processes.

However, the full scope of the review was not completed within the year. This was mainly due to the high number of vacancies and sustained workload pressures from building warrant applications, site inspections, completion certificate submissions and dangerous building/public safety work. Available professional capacity has to be prioritised for statutory service delivery, responding to customers and managing risk.

This remains a high priority for 2026/27. The same pressures that limited progress during 2025/26 also strengthen the case for continuing the review. Improving workflow, reducing duplication, making better use of technical and administrative capacity, strengthening digital processes and improving customer contact are essential to support statutory performance recovery and build a more resilient service.

- Site inspection scheduling for case officers now embedded; co-ordinated diary management by Assistant Surveyors via single email channel for customers – delivering quicker customer response.
- Second electric vehicle delivered Q1 2025/26 and a replacement EV ordered for delivery in 2026/27, supporting the Scottish Government's drive to increase site inspections while cutting carbon.
- Building warrant approval processes: single source technical standards guidance document created; additional QA checks now carried out by Technical Assistants (releasing Lead Professional capacity).
- Public Safety Dangerous Buildings – internal audit recommendations fully implemented; new Public Safety Enforcement processes embedded.

Areas for Improvement

- Further work is required during 2026/27 to complete the end-to-end mapping of Building Standards and Public Safety processes. With ongoing vacancies and workload pressures, the review will be targeted at changes with the greatest impact on

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

statutory performance, customer response times, workload visibility and sustainable use of technical resource.

- 50% verification team vacancies have constrained the pace of full end-to-end review. The impact of verification vacancies means that process improvement must be prioritised around statutory performance recovery, customer response times, workload visibility and sustainable allocation of technical resource.
- Continued development of digital workflows, inspection scheduling, customer communication and quality assurance arrangements will be required to support the new Building Standards Performance Framework from April 2026.
- Public Safety processes should continue to be reviewed to ensure dangerous building notifications, enforcement decisions, cost recovery and audit trails remain consistent and legally robust.
- EV infrastructure issues (overnight parking, charger reliability) need to be resolved ahead of the petrol/diesel ban.
- Vehicle booking and management system limits efficient utilisation – under review with Fleet Services.
- Average working days to issue building warrant: 83.8 (target 80).
- New BSD Performance Framework (5 KPOs from 1 April 2026) will reset reporting baseline.

Relevant KPI details

- Customer satisfaction rating Building Standards (Fife): 5.8 (down from 9.1; against target 7.5).
- Building warrants responded to within 20 working days: 92.1% (target 95%) – decline driven by capacity loss.

Performance assessment – Operational delivery

Overview of progress

All results against key indicators can be found in Appendix 1 and online at www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance to facilitate feedback and scrutiny.

Progress

Overall progress should be viewed in the context of sustained statutory demand, workforce pressures and an increasingly complex regulatory landscape. Across the Service, teams have continued to prioritise activity on the basis of public health, safety, consumer protection and statutory risk, while also progressing improvement work linked to workforce planning, digital innovation, statutory assurance and service redesign.

The strongest progress has been made where targeted change activity has supported operational delivery, including the continued development of the Grow Your Own approach, wider use of Power BI and case management systems, embedding of the Alternative Delivery Model, and completion of key assurance actions in Public Safety. These improvements have helped maintain service resilience and provide a stronger evidence base for prioritisation and future business planning.

However, performance remains sensitive to workforce capacity, particularly in professional roles where national recruitment markets

are constrained. Building Standards verification performance continues to be affected by vacancies, and demand across Environmental Health and Trading Standards remains high. The year ahead will therefore need to focus on sustaining statutory delivery, embedding risk-based prioritisation, strengthening digital ways of working, and continuing to make the case for capacity where statutory expectations cannot be fully met within existing resources.

Challenges

- Professional workforce capacity remains the most significant challenge across Protective Services, with national shortages in Environmental Health, Building Standards and Trading Standards limiting recruitment into qualified statutory roles.
- Building Standards verification performance remains vulnerable due to the current level of vacancies, with recovery dependent on recruitment, retention, workload-sharing arrangements and continued process improvement.
- Demand is increasing in volume and complexity, particularly as new regulatory duties, national reform programmes and high-profile incidents require specialist officer time, legal assurance, partnership working and detailed record keeping.
- The Service must continue to balance statutory expectations against available resource, making transparent risk-based prioritisation essential across inspection programmes, complaint response, enforcement activity and business support.

- Digital improvement is progressing, but operational pressures, system integration issues and varying levels of digital confidence affect the pace at which new tools can be fully embedded.
- Benchmarking data remains helpful but must be interpreted carefully where service structures, income arrangements or included functions differ between local authorities e.g. Cost of Trading Standards per 1,000 population (LGBF) – Fife figure is influenced by inclusion of the Money and Consumer Advice fee, which is not consistently included by other authorities, therefore, comparisons against LAs is not made on an equal basis.
- Increase the use of Power BI, case management data and performance dashboards to support routine management decisions, resource planning and early identification of emerging risks.
- Develop further automation and system integration opportunities, particularly around customer contact, routine case updates, inspection scheduling, evidence capture and performance reporting.
- Strengthen cross-team intelligence sharing and partnership working to support prevention, early intervention and more efficient targeting of regulatory activity.
- Ensure continued escalation through business planning and risk management processes where statutory expectations cannot be fully met within existing resources.

Areas for improvement

- Strengthen workforce planning by linking vacancy data, age profile, turnover, succession planning and professional qualification routes to statutory service risk.
- Continue to develop Grow Your Own and alternative professional pathways across Environmental Health, Building Standards and Trading Standards, focusing on hard-to-fill statutory roles.
- Embed a consistent Service-wide approach to risk-based prioritisation so that inspection programmes, complaint response, enforcement activity and business support are aligned to available resource and statutory risk.
- Prioritise Building Standards performance recovery through recruitment, workload sharing, process simplification, quality assurance and targeted use of technical and administrative capacity.

Our year ahead

Priorities for 2026/27

For 2026/27, the Service will continue with the same four priorities. These remain relevant and provide a consistent framework for managing the key challenges facing Protective Services, including professional workforce capacity, statutory resilience, regulatory reform, digital improvement and the need to improve customer experience and operational efficiency.

The focus for the year ahead will be on moving these priorities from development and improvement activity into more embedded business-as-usual practice. This will include continuing to strengthen workforce planning and Grow Your Own pathways, making better use of data and digital tools to support decision-making, embedding risk-based statutory prioritisation, and progressing the end-to-end review of Building Standards and Public Safety services.

The four priorities will also support alignment with the Directorate People and Change Plans by focusing improvement activity on workforce sustainability, service redesign, digital confidence, productivity and customer-focused change.

Priority 1 – Service People Plan / Workforce Strategy: continue to build future workforce capacity through Grow Your Own, trainee routes, apprenticeships, professional pathways and succession planning.

Priority 2 – Data Driven Innovation and Improvement: continue to develop Power BI, case management systems, automation and intelligence-led approaches to support productivity, prioritisation and customer experience.

Priority 3 – Statutory Compliance and Risk Management: continue to embed risk-based prioritisation, resource modelling, officer competency, authorisations and statutory assurance arrangements.

Priority 4 – End-to-End Review of Building Standards and Public Safety Services: continue to improve workflow, customer contact, inspection scheduling, digital processes, quality assurance and statutory performance recovery.

Reference links

Case Studies

Food and Workplace Safety Team - [Report on Out of Home sector](#)

Trading Standards - [Tackling illicit tobacco through intelligence-led enforcement](#)

Building Standards Public Safety Team - [Response following fire at Former Cinema, Bank Street, Lochgelly](#)

Appendix 1 – Key indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown **Trend:**  Improving  No change  Getting worse

Customer

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
Protective Services Stage 1 Complaints actioned < 5 days	92%	100%	91%	100%	80%	90%		
Protective Services Stage 2 Complaints actioned < 20 days	78%	88%	74%	88%	47%	85%		
Customer satisfaction rating Building Standards Fife	7.2	7.3	8.4	9.1	*5.8	7.5		
% of tobacco & NVP retailers given advice	9.10%	20%	20.10%	20.10%	20.70%	20%		

Resources

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
Building standards verification fee income	217.85%	214.04%	399.50%	184.95%	251.41%	140%		
Protective Services - Average WDL per FTE	DIV/0	10.42	8.46	9.65	7.47	9.6		
Protective Services - Average Long Term WDL per FTE	7.16	8.54	5.46	7.29	4.61	7.2		
Protective Services Workforce who are Female (%)	45.30%	49%	47.70%	49.10%	49.50%	Target not appropriate		
Protective Services Workforce who are Full-time (%)	89.50%	92.20%	89.70%	91.20%	89.20%	Target not appropriate		
Protective Services Workforce who are Permanent Employees (%)	96.80%	95.10%	95.30%	93.90%	96.40%	Target not appropriate		
Protective Services Employee Turnover	N/A	N/A	9.35%	7.89%	7.21%	10%		
Protective Services Employees aged 24 and under (%)	0%	2%	1.90%	6.10%	5.40%	Target not appropriate		
Protective Services Employees aged 25 to 39 (%)	12.63%	14.71%	19.63%	23.68%	18.92%	Target not appropriate		
Protective Services Employees aged 40 to 54 (%)	55.79%	51.96%	45.79%	40.35%	36.04%	Target not appropriate		
Protective Services Employees aged 55 and over (%)	31.60%	31.40%	32.70%	30.70%	39.60%	Target not appropriate		

Service Operations

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
Building Warrants responded to <20 working days % Fife	99%	97%	97%	92.10%	76.10%	95%		↓
% of building warrants issued <=10 days of receipt of all additional information requested	85.50%	82.48%	78.43%	68.68%	49.49%	90%		↓
Average working days to issue building warrant - Fife	56.5	67.3	69.6	83.8	61	80		↑
Reported scams resulting in an intervention (%)	63.70%	80.10%	80.30%	84.80%	80%	Target not appropriate		↑
% of failures under initial test purchase of tobacco/NVPs	DIV/0	DIV/0	12.20%	19.10%	25.5%	10%		↓
Annual Mean NO2 monitoring Cupar	20	18	20	18	16.2	Target not appropriate		↑
Annual Mean NO2 monitoring Dunfermline	16	15	15	14	13.1	Target not appropriate		↑
Annual Mean NO2 monitoring Kirkcaldy	14	12	13	12.5	12.7	Target not appropriate		↑
Annual Mean NO2 monitoring Rosyth	19	18	17	13.7	14.4	Target not appropriate		↑
Annual Mean PM10 monitoring Cupar	14.3	15.4	13.2	11.9	13.4	Target not appropriate		↑
Annual Mean PM10 monitoring Dunfermline	10.6	13.2	12.1	10.7	12.2	Target not appropriate		↓
Annual Mean PM10 monitoring Kirkcaldy	10.3	12.1	9.9	10.2	11	Target not appropriate		↓
Annual Mean PM10 monitoring Rosyth	10.9	12.1	9.9	10.6	12.8	Target not appropriate		↓