



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Item: 16

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 12 November 2025.

Performance Monitoring – Education, Communities and Housing.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Council Plan 2023-28, approved in March 2023, reflects national priorities set by both the Scottish and UK Governments and the core services which the Council provides day to day, as well as taking account of new duties arising from recent legislation.
- 1.2. The Delivery Plan to support the Council Plan contains several priority actions listed to indicate the work which will be undertaken to achieve the identified outcomes.
- 1.3. The Council Plan 2023-28 noted that each directorate will have a delivery plan describing the priorities that they will deliver.
- 1.4. In terms of the Council's Strategic Planning and Performance Framework, performance in respect of the Directorate Delivery Plan, performance indicators and complaints and compliments are reported to the relevant committee on a six-monthly basis, in June and November.
- 1.5. The Directorate Delivery Plan for Education, Leisure and Housing was presented to Committee on 11 September 2024. It is also important to note that the Education, Communities and Housing services have several, detailed, statutory plans and reports that must be submitted to external bodies for scrutiny and sign off on an annual basis.
- 1.6. Annex 1 provides the six-monthly updates in respect of the Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan, with Annex 2 providing actions included in the Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions Directorate Delivery Plan relating to the Performance and Business Support service area.

- 1.7. Annex 3 provides the six-monthly updates in respect of the Education, Communities and Housing cross Council performance indicators.
- 1.8. The Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy requires that all directorates maintain a register of risks that are inherent in its activities and the services it provides.
- 1.9. Annex 4 sets out the revised directorate risk register for consideration.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Note the performance of Education, Communities and Housing for the reporting period 1 April to 30 September 2025, in respect of directorate priorities and performance indicators, as detailed in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 respectively to this report.
 - ii. Agree the proposed amendments to the Directorate Delivery Plan actions as set out in sections 3.2, 3.4 and 3.5 of this report.
 - iii. Note the complaints and compliments made to Education, Communities and Housing in the six-month period 1 April to 30 September 2025, and for the two preceding six-month periods, as detailed in section 5 of this report.
 - iv. Approve the revised Education, Communities and Housing Risk Register, attached as Annex 4 to this report.

3. Directorate Delivery Plan Performance Monitoring

- 3.1. The Directorate Delivery Plan progress report, attached as Annex 1 to this report, provides the detail of the agreed directorate priorities, as expressed in the Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan 2024-2026.
- 3.2. Set out below are those Directorate Delivery Plan actions assessed as requiring an amendment to the target date:
 - 2.4 – Service Reviews (Sport and Leisure Service, Culture Service, and Library and Archives) - Recommendations from the Member Officer Working Group and suggestion from the member seminar to be presented to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee – target date to be extended from 31 March 2026 to 31 December 2026.

- 3.3. Due to the recent management restructure, Performance and Business Support has now been integrated into the Education, Communities and Housing Directorate. The actions included in the Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions Directorate Delivery Plan will be incorporated into the Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan in future reports. In this report, those actions are shown as Annex 2.
- 3.4. Set out below are those Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions Directorate Delivery Plan actions assessed as requiring an amendment to the target date:
- 3b – Review and update corporate performance framework – target date to be extended from 31 March 2026 to 31 March 2027.
 - 3c – Develop the tools, approaches, and training to embed the framework across the organisation through to an individual team level – target date to be extended from 31 March 2026 to 31 March 2027.
 - 10 – Develop modernised suite of tools and protocols for community consultation and engagement which meet the needs and expectations of the community and ensure better co-ordination between the Council, OHAC and The Orkney Partnership. This includes elements of participatory democracy – target date to be extended from 31 March 2026 to 31 March 2027.
 - 15a – Corporate Leadership Team prioritised rolling programme of improvement priorities for ‘Improvement and Performance’ and ‘Customer Services and Corporate Administration’ prioritised and agreed. This should include outstanding projects from previous initiatives such as the change programme – target date to be extended from 31 March 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- 3.5. Set out below are those Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions Directorate Delivery Plan actions assessed as Blue within Annex 2, namely those which have been progressed to completion and are now being recommended for removal from the Directorate Delivery Plan.
- i. 09a Community Councils – Engage with Community Councils to understand their support requirements including areas like clerking and training. Develop support and training arrangements based on Community Council requirements.

4. Directorate Performance Indicators

- 4.1. Directorate performance indicators provide the mechanism through which the performance of aspects of the services provided year on year are monitored. The monitoring report for Education, Communities and Housing is attached as Annex 3.

5. Directorate Complaints and Compliments

- 5.1. Table 1 below sets out the complaints and compliments made to Education, Communities and Housing in the six-month period 1 April to 30 September 2025, and for the two preceding six-month periods.

Table 1.	Six months ending 30 September 2024.	Six months ending 31 March 2025.	Six months ending 30 September 2025.	Totals.
Complaints.	31.	54.	47.	132.
Compliments.	12.	31.	42.	85.

- 5.2. Table 2 set out a breakdown within the service of complaints and compliments for the six months ending 30 September 2025:

Table 2.	Complaints.	Compliments.
Catering.	1.	0.
Community Learning and Development.	0.	1.
Culture.	0.	0.
Education.	17.	3.
Housing.	20.	21.
Leisure.	8.	8.
Performance and Business Support.	1.	9.
Total.	47.	42.

- 5.3. When considering the raw data within Table 1 above, it should be noted that the Council has adopted a policy of encouraging staff to record all complaints against the Council through the Complaints Handling Procedure. This includes complaints that are quickly and satisfactorily resolved by the frontline service, thereby enabling the Council to identify any trends that would help to improve the service. As a result, the number of complaints captured by the procedure may increase and that does not necessarily reflect an increase in the number of people contacting the service to express dissatisfaction with the Council.

5.4. There has been a decrease in complaints and an increase in compliments between the six-month reporting period ending 30 September 2025 and the previous six-month reporting period. Over the past two years, the end of September six-month reporting periods show lower levels of complaints when compared to the end of March six-month reporting periods.

5.5. The Housing Service received the highest number of complaints within Education, Communities and Housing for the six months ending 30 September 2025. Table 3 sets out a further breakdown of the types of complaint received by the Housing Service for this period:

Table 3.	Percentage of complaints.
Council policy/procedure.	15%.
Failure to provide a service.	5%.
Issue with staff.	15%.
Issue with neighbour.	25%.
Standard of service.	10%.
Delay in providing a service.	30%.

5.6. The Education Service received the second highest number of complaints within Education, Communities and Housing for the six months ending 30 September 2025. Table 4 sets out a further breakdown of the types of complaint received by the Education Service for this period:

Table 4.	Percentage of complaints.
Staff conduct/attitude.	23%.
Quality/level of service.	47%.
Breach of confidentiality.	6%.
Failure to provide a service.	12%.
Council policy procedure.	12%.

5.7. Senior managers regularly review the Education, Communities and Housing complaints log to ensure complaints are dealt with timeously, that the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure is adhered to, and that lessons are learned and incorporated into future service provision.

6. Directorate Risk Register

- 6.1. Managers within Education, Communities and Housing have recently carried out the six-monthly review and update of the Directorate Risk Register, along with the list of actions to mitigate these risks. The updated Risk Register is attached as Annex 4 to this report.
- 6.2. As the Island Games have now taken place, Risk 11 – Island Games has been removed.

For Further Information please contact:

Andrew Hamilton, Service Manager (Resources), extension 2421, Email andrew.hamilton@orkney.gov.uk.

Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** none arising directly from this report.
2. **Legal:** The Council's performance monitoring systems help the Council to meet its statutory obligation to secure best value.
3. **Corporate Governance:** not applicable.
4. **Human Resources:** not applicable.
5. **Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance monitoring.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance monitoring.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** the proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - ☐ Growing our economy.
 - ☐ Strengthening our Communities.
 - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
 - ☐ Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** the proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - ☐ Cost of Living.
 - ☐ Sustainable Development.
 - ☐ Local Equality.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** not applicable.
10. **Risk:** not applicable.

- 11. Procurement:** not applicable.
- 12. Health and Safety:** not applicable.
- 13. Property and Assets:** not applicable.
- 14. Information Technology:** not applicable.
- 15. Cost of Living:** not applicable.

List of Background Papers

Council Plan 2023-28.

Council Delivery Plan 2023-28.

Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan 2024 - 2026

Risk Management Policy and Strategy.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Education, Community and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan Actions.

Annex 2 – Strategy and Performance Business Solutions Directorate Delivery Plan Actions
(Performance and Business Support).

Annex 3 - Performance Indicators.

Annex 4 – Risk Register.

Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate Delivery Plan 2024-26

Progress against ELH Directorate Delivery Plan 2024-26 at 30 September 2025



Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
2.2 Service Reviews (Sport and Leisure Service, Culture Service, and Library and Archives)	Request the creation of three Member Officer working groups, one for the Culture Service, one for the Sport and Leisure Service and one for the Library and Archive Service.	Review service delivery - Ensure that we continue to deliver vital services to the people of Orkney in a sustainable way. Strengthening Communities.	RED		31-Mar-2025
Lead	Comment				
Garry Burton	Culture Service The Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) has not restarted due to delays in the transfer of the service to the Sustainable Regeneration Directorate, primarily due to the recruitment process for the new Head of Active Communities. However, a transfer date of 27 October 2025 has been agreed by both Directors in consultation with the Chief Executive. When the service has been transferred, officers from Sustainable Regeneration Directorate will restart the work and meetings relating to the Culture Service MOWG. Sport and Leisure Service The Sport and Leisure MOWG restarted its meetings on 1 October 2025. The meeting on 1 October 2025 focussed on Council swimming pools and the following meetings have been agreed: • 3 November – Active Schools and Community Sports • 10 November – Pickaquoy Centre Trust • 17 November – Sports Facilities • 28 November – Outdoor Education				

	2 December – Campsites and Hostels <u>Library and Archive Service</u> There has been no request made for the creation of a MOWG for the Library and Archives as no budget has been identified to fund a review of the service, therefore if there is to be a review of the Library and Archive service and the subsequent creation of a MOWG additional budget will be required. Without sufficient budget to carry out a review of the Library and Archives service, this action will not be able to be completed.
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Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
2.3 Service Reviews (Sport and Leisure Service, Culture Service, and Library and Archives)	Member Officer Working Groups to present recommendations to members through member seminars.	Review service delivery - Ensure that we continue to deliver vital services to the people of Orkney in a sustainable way. Strengthening Communities.	GREEN		31-Dec-2026
Lead	Comment				
Garry Burton	The Culture Service will transfer from the Education, Communities and Housing Directorate to the Sustainable Regeneration Directorate on 27 October 2025, following which, dates will be established for when the work of the Culture Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) will restart. The Sport and Leisure MOWG met on 1 October 2025, where the meeting focussed on Council swimming pools. The following meetings for the Sport and Leisure MOWG have been agreed: 3 November – Active Schools and Community Sports 10 November – Pickaquoy Centre Trust 17 November – Sports Facilities 28 November – Outdoor Education 2 December – Campsites and Hostels				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
2.4 Service Reviews (Sport and Leisure Service, Culture Service, and Library and Archives)	Recommendations from the Member Officer Working Group and suggestion from the member seminar to be presented to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.	Review service delivery - Ensure that we continue to deliver vital services to the people of Orkney in a sustainable way. Strengthening Communities.	GREEN		31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Garry Burton	The outcome of this action will be dependent on the progress of action 2.3. As a result, a suggested revised date for this action is December 2026.				

BRAG key

- Red** - the performance indicator is experiencing significant underperformance, with a medium to high risk of failure to meet its target.
- Amber** - the performance indicator is experiencing minor underperformance, with a low risk of failure to meet its target.
- Green** - the performance indicator is likely to meet or exceed its target.
- Blue** – the agreed action has been progressed to completion.

Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions Directorate Delivery Plan 2023-28

Progress against SPBS Directorate Delivery Plan 2023-28 at 30 September 2025



Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 03a Performance	Implement Public Sector Improvement Framework self-assessment across services.	The Council understands how it is performing and is clear about where it needs to improve.	GREEN	▶	31-Mar-2028
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell;	Milestones for this priority are: Milestone one: Completion with the Corporate Leadership Team and the Extended Corporate Leadership Team in 2024/2025. Milestone two: Completion of the first tranche of services in 2025/2026. Milestone three: Completion of the second tranche of services in 2026/2027. Milestone four: Completion of the third tranche of services in 2027/2028. Initial self-assessment with the Extended Corporate Leadership Team completed in 2024/25 and Improvement Action Plan agreed - this will be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team for approval in 2025. Due to a current vacancy in the dedicated Performance and Best Value Officer role, work on the first tranche of services is currently paused but will resume once the vacancy is filled.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 03b Performance	Review and update corporate performance framework.	The Council understands how it is performing and is clear about where it needs to improve.	AMBER		31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell; William Moore	An updated framework has been drafted however following discussion with the Corporate Leadership Team the framework will be revisited, and the intention is now to deliver this during 2026/27. Delivery will be progressed once the Performance Officer vacancy is filled and it is recommended that the target date for this action be extended to 31 March 2027.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 03c Performance	Develop the tools, approaches, and training to embed the framework across the organisation through to an individual team level.	The Council understands how it is performing and is clear about where it needs to improve.	AMBER		31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell; William Moore	With some initial tools already developed, full delivery will begin once the new Strategic Planning and Performance Management Framework is approved and implemented. It is recommended that the target date for this action be extended to 31 March 2027, in line with the target for the corporate performance framework.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 04 Customer service	Review customer feedback and identify key areas of improvement. Develop framework and customer service toolkit for services to support identified areas of improvement. Implementation and embedding of improvements.	It is easy to deal with the Council and access the services the public need. There are consistent standards of customer service and a high level of satisfaction with their interactions with the Council	GREEN		31-Mar-2028
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell; Melanie Slater	Annual customer services pulse surveys are conducted to assess public satisfaction with the service provided by our customer service staff. The most recent survey conducted in May 2025 recorded a 93% satisfaction rate, reflecting a strong level of public confidence in the service. Any areas identified for potential improvement are reviewed and incorporated into future service plans. In addition to the annual surveys, every online process on the Customer Service Platform includes a star rating system (1 to 5) and an option for customers to leave comments about our online forms. These ratings and comments are actively monitored by the Customer Services team and shared with relevant teams as follows: • Service provision comments – forwarded onto the relevant service area • Form usability comments – passed onto the Customer Service Platform Project Team • Website related feedback – directed to the Digital Communications Team • MyGovScot MyAccount issues – referred onto the Improvement Service This multi-channel feedback approach ensure that customer feedback is used to effectively drive service improvements across all areas. This is feeding directly into the customer services and corporate administration review and improvement plan.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 09a Community Councils	Engage with Community Councils to understand their support requirements including areas like clerking and training. Develop support and training arrangements based on Community Council requirements.	Community Councils feel in control of their priorities and are supported to develop local solutions which are visible to the public.	BLUE		31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell;	We have continued with the quarterly Chairs meetings which have been well received. We held several specific training sessions related to the roles of Community Council representatives such as transport and planning. We are planning to continue with the annual Community Council in-person conferences after the success of last year's conference. In addition, we have been holding refresher training sessions with community councils where this has been requested.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 09b Community Councils	Improve communications on the work of Community Councils.	Community Councils feel in control of their priorities and are supported to develop local solutions which are visible to the public.	GREEN		31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell; Melanie Slater	An awareness raising campaign has been completed as part of community council clerk recruitment. This has been a successful campaign, and vacancies are being filled. A further awareness raising campaign will be completed later in 2025-26.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 10 Community consultation and engagement	Develop a modernised suite of tools and protocols for community consultation and engagement which meet the needs and expectations of the community and ensure better co-ordination between the Council, OHAC and The Orkney Partnership. This includes elements of participatory democracy.	Our community consultation and engagement practices are effective and clearly influence decisions and improvement.	AMBER	⚠	31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Garry Burton	Further to the management restructure, the work of the Community Engagement Project Team will be progressed through the new service area of Active Communities. Due to the additional time required to implement the management restructure, it is recommended that the target date for this action be extended to 31 March 2027.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 15a Programme of and approach to improvement	Corporate Leadership Team prioritised rolling programme of improvement priorities for 'Improvement and Performance' and 'Customer Services and Corporate Administration' prioritised and agreed. This should include outstanding projects from previous initiatives such as the change programme.	Services are delivering transparent improvement and transformation. There is a clear and prioritised programme of improvement, supported where required by the Improvement Support Team, where outcomes and benefits are clearly articulated and monitored.	AMBER	⚠	31-Mar-2026

Lead	Comment
Alex Rodwell; William Moore; Melanie Slater	The Council's programme of improvement has been compiled, and work is ongoing to establish how to present the information in a meaningful way to the Corporate Leadership Team, which allows the correct level of oversight and scrutiny. Further progress intended once the appointment is made to the Performance Officer role, and it is recommended that the target date for this action be extended to 31 March 2027 to allow additional time for the recruitment process.

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 15c Programme of and approach to improvement	Refresh project management framework and develop tool, approaches, and training with a focus on people, outcomes, and benefits realisation.	Services are delivering transparent improvement and transformation. There is a clear and prioritised programme of improvement, supported where required by the Improvement Support Team, where outcomes and benefits are clearly articulated and monitored.	GREEN		31-Mar-2026
Lead	Comment				
Alex Rodwell;	The framework for delivering improvement projects has been updated to include several key requirements for various types of project, with a focus on setting out clear requirements for digital improvement projects. Management tools and templates have been developed or refreshed, with an emphasis on the outcomes and benefits from undertaking improvement projects.				

Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 17c The Orkney Community Planning Partnership	Progress the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2025-30 via the three delivery groups.	The Council, as a facilitating partner, adds value to community planning through joint working to deliver improved outcomes for our community.	GREEN		31-Mar-2028
Lead	Comment				
Garry Burton	Cost of Living Task Force In financial year 2025-26, the Cost of Living Task Force allocated £214,000 of funding from the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund to households and individuals to assist with the cost of living crisis. The fund was advertised more widely than previously, leading to a greater number of projects asking for support. Despite the fund being oversubscribed by over £100,000, The CLTF were able to support 18 projects. These include initiatives such as free school meals during holidays, youth-led food and wellbeing programmes, energy and debt relief for low-income households, expanded foodbank services, and targeted support for older residents, families, and young people experiencing hardship. Sustainable Development Delivery Group The Community Planning Partnership has published the Orkney Community Wealth Building Action Plan, which sets out the steps partners will take to increase the wealth created and retained within the county, and to address inequality and poverty by ensuring that this wealth is shared more equitably. This is discussed in more detail under SPBS DDP 18, below. The CPP has been central to the establishment of the Orkney Circular Economy Network, which brings together over half a dozen community groups, including Greener Orkney, Orkney Zero Waste, the Orkney Repair Café, development trusts, and Highlands & Islands Climate Hub, to explore how to reduce waste and subsequent climate change emissions. The initial emphasis was what individuals and households can do to reduce waste, and during the reporting period the online Orkney Repair and Reuse Directory was launched. Highlands and Islands Climate Hubs have now taken on responsibility to co-ordinate the network.				

	Equality Delivery Group During the reporting period, the Equality Delivery Group has not been convened however, work has been progressed on equalities issues, including the very significant Gender Pay Gap in Orkney. At the September CPP Board, the new Interim-chair of NHS Orkney, agreed to take on the chair of the Group. Responsibility for this action has moved from the Performance and Business Support service to the Active Communities service following the management restructure.
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Title	Description	Intended Outcome	BRAG		Target Date
SPBS DDP 18 Community Wealth Building.	The principles and pillars of CWB (spending, workforce, land and property, inclusive ownership, and finance) will be further embedded within relevant Council policies, procedures and working practices. Input into development of partnership delivery plan and strategy for CWB. Review scope of Empowering Communities project in context of its contribution to CWB. Council specific action will include working with partners to develop a coordinated approach to support: • The Fair Work agenda. • Progressive procurement	Community Wealth Building (CWB) is embedded as a means to deliver the wellbeing economy and net zero by greater wealth creation and retention in Orkney and ensuring that wealth is more equally distributed in the county.	GREEN		31-Mar-2028

Lead	Comment
Garry Burton	A multi-agency CWB group was tasked by Orkney Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to produce an Orkney CWB Action Plan for 2025/30. The draft plan was brought to the March 2025 CPP Board, public consultation took place, and the final version was agreed by the Council's CLT on 19 June 2025, and the CPP Board on 3 July 2025. The working group identified actions from the five-year plan to take forward in 2025/26. The key developments and current priority actions under the five pillars include: • Workforce and Markets UHI Orkney are carrying out qualitative research in order to identify why the gender pay gap in Orkney is double the national average, and this will contribute to a plan to address this. An Orkney Skills Plan, which addresses CWB, is in development with participation from different Council Services, including Employability. • Spending The Council approved its Procurement Strategy 2023/28, which incorporates Community Wealth Building in balance with Best Value and Community Benefit by promoting local supply chains, fair work principles and support for the community. A local directory promoting reuse and repair has been launched with the participation of the CPP and different council services (including Waste and Environment) and published by the newly established Orkney Circular Economy Network. • Financial power The Islands Growth Deal and the Orkney Fund, have incorporated CWB principles and the five pillars into their decision making. Work began in this period to develop a shared approach to community benefit and the renewables sector, which will be brought to the council's CLT and the CPP Board for approval by 31 March 2026. • Socially just use of land, sea and property Orkney Islands Council will embed Community Wealth Building principles through the current reviews of the Local Development Plan and Regional Marine Plan.

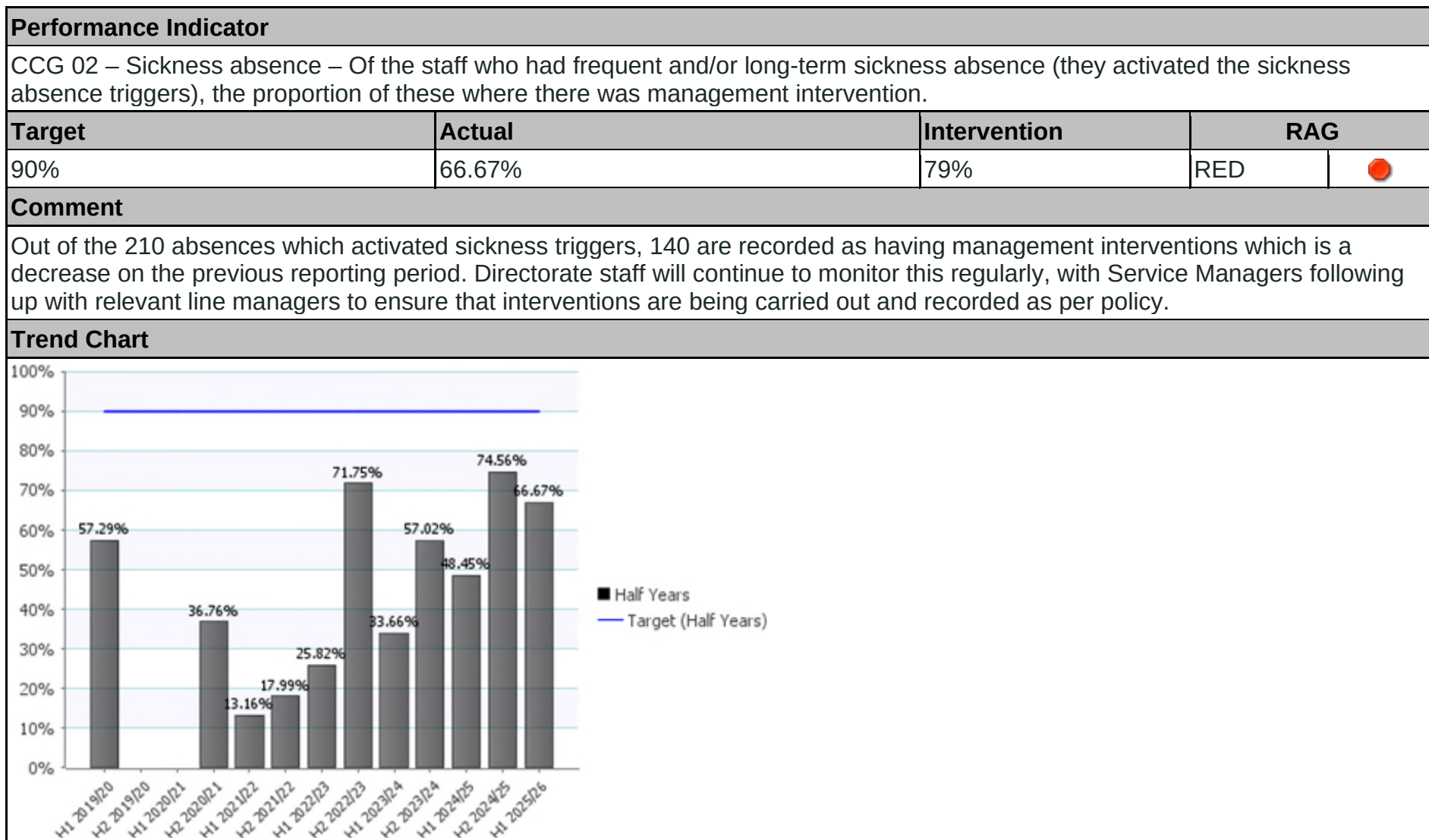
	Different Services in the council and community planning partners have supported the community buy-out and reopening of the Tomb of the Eagles site. • Inclusive ownership The Council is progressing the Community Wind Farm at Quanterness and, , supporting initiatives such as the community buy-out of Tomb of the Eagles site. Responsibility for this action has moved from the Performance and Business Support service to the Active Communities service following the management restructure.
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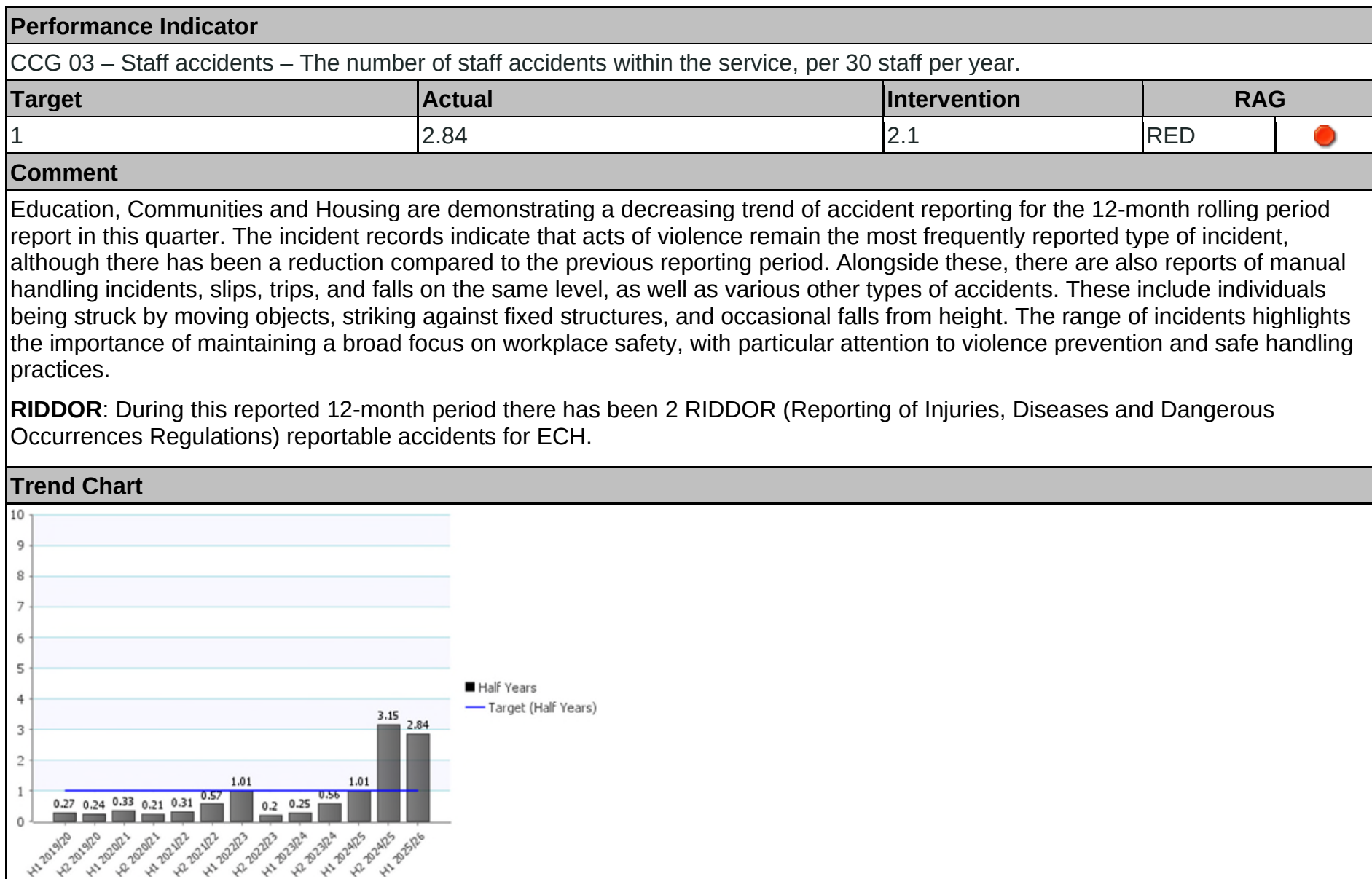
Education, Communities and Housing Performance Indicator Report

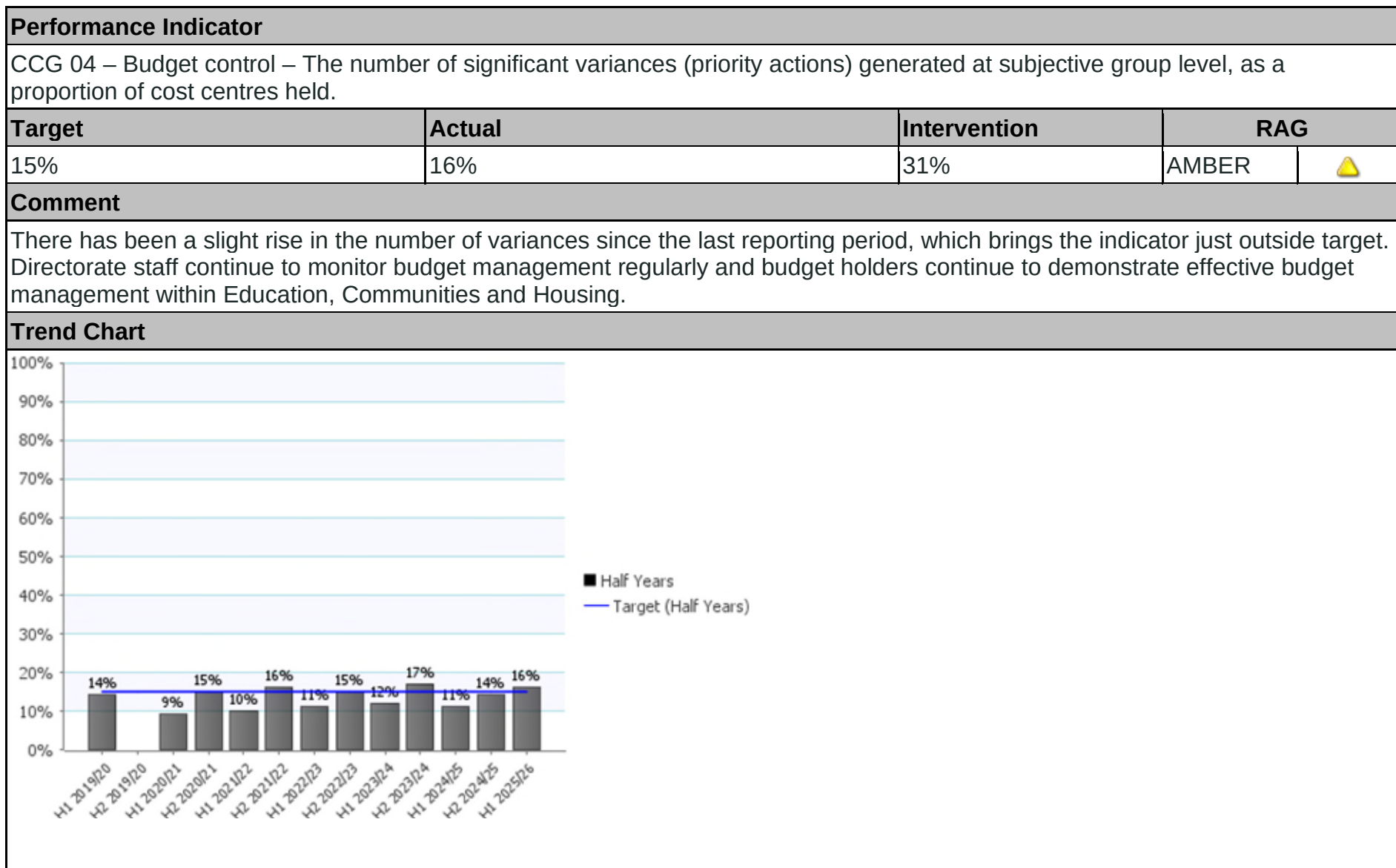
Service Performance Indicators at 30 September 2025

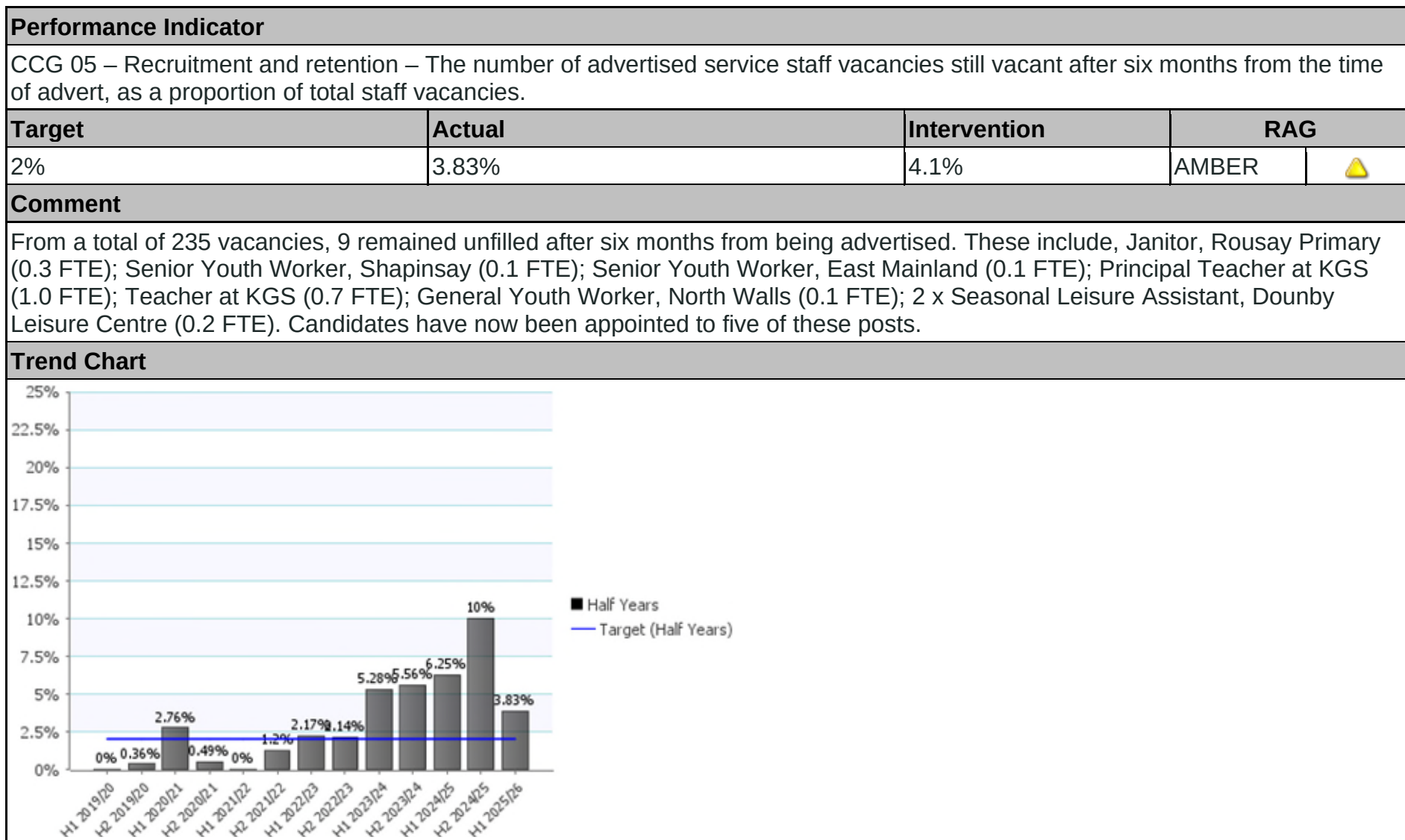


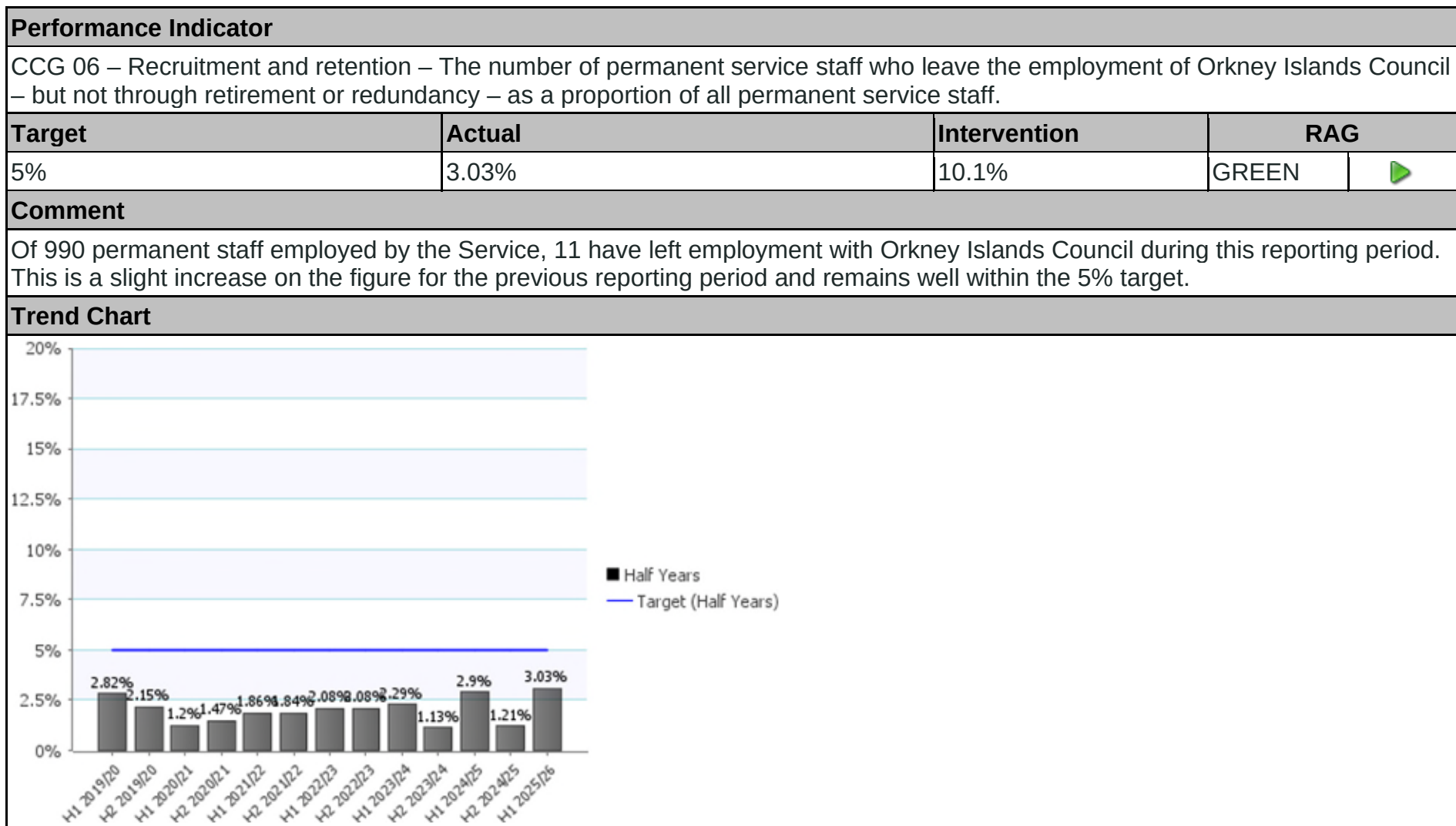
Performance Indicator																																
CCG 01 – Sickness absence – The average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence, expressed as a percentage of the number of working days available.																																
Target	Actual	Intervention	RAG																													
4%	4.31%	6.1%	AMBER																													
Comment																																
This indicator has seen a slight decrease from 4.85% to 4.31% in the past six months. Our records indicate that over 33% of sickness absences are short term absences due to minor illnesses/conditions. Service Managers have identified specific areas of concern and are working with managers directly.																																
Trend Chart																																
<table><caption>Sickness Absence Data (Percentage of Working Days)</caption><thead><tr><th>Period</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>H1 2019/20</td><td>2.97%</td></tr><tr><td>H2 2019/20</td><td>3.28%</td></tr><tr><td>H1 2020/21</td><td>1.74%</td></tr><tr><td>H2 2020/21</td><td>3.14%</td></tr><tr><td>H1 2021/22</td><td>2.79%</td></tr><tr><td>H2 2021/22</td><td>5.08%</td></tr><tr><td>H1 2022/23</td><td>4.39%</td></tr><tr><td>H2 2022/23</td><td>5.18%</td></tr><tr><td>H1 2023/24</td><td>4.11%</td></tr><tr><td>H2 2023/24</td><td>5.94%</td></tr><tr><td>H1 2024/25</td><td>3.84%</td></tr><tr><td>H2 2024/25</td><td>4.85%</td></tr><tr><td>H1 2025/26</td><td>4.31%</td></tr></tbody></table>					Period	Percentage	H1 2019/20	2.97%	H2 2019/20	3.28%	H1 2020/21	1.74%	H2 2020/21	3.14%	H1 2021/22	2.79%	H2 2021/22	5.08%	H1 2022/23	4.39%	H2 2022/23	5.18%	H1 2023/24	4.11%	H2 2023/24	5.94%	H1 2024/25	3.84%	H2 2024/25	4.85%	H1 2025/26	4.31%
Period	Percentage																															
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H1 2025/26	4.31%																															

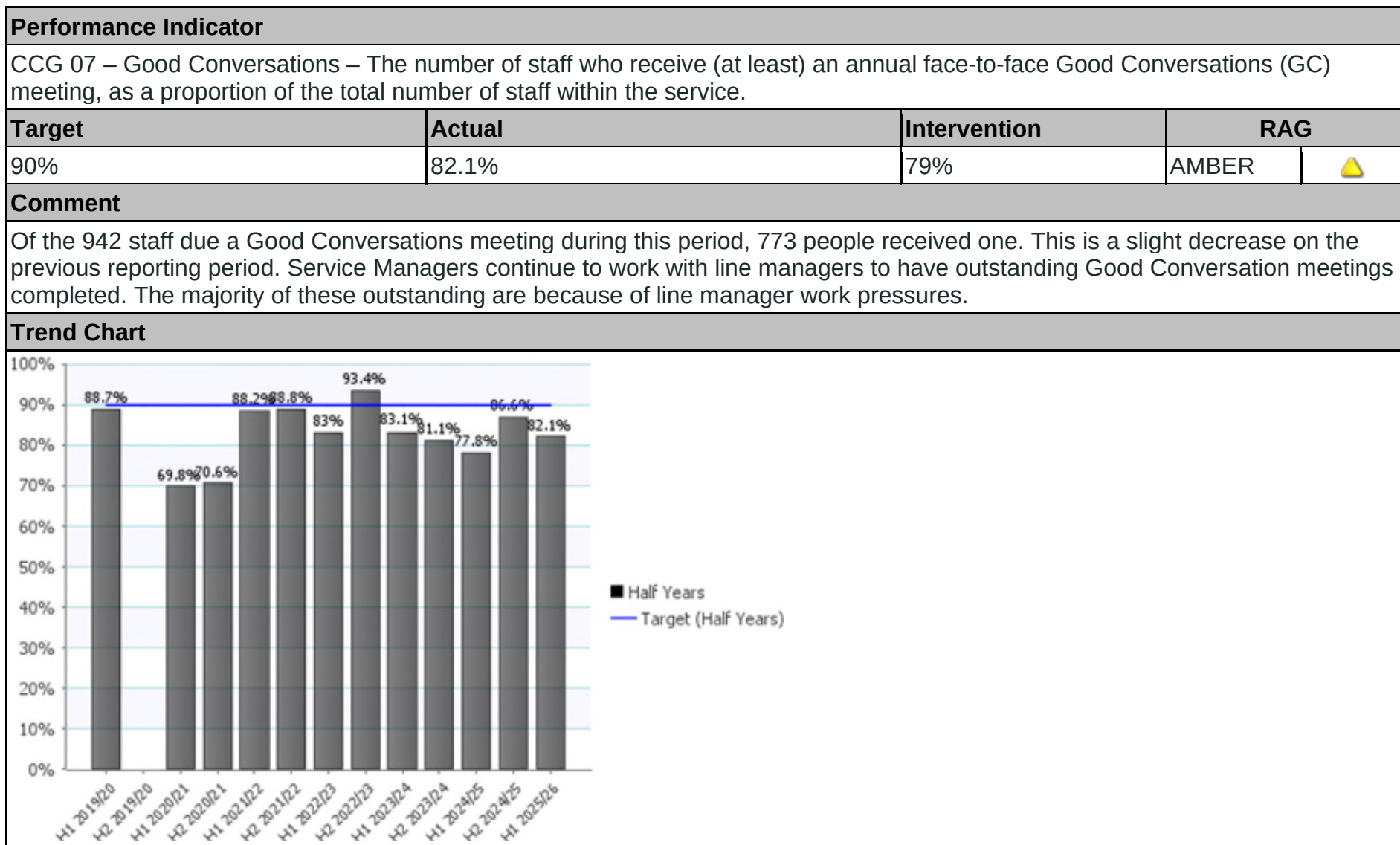


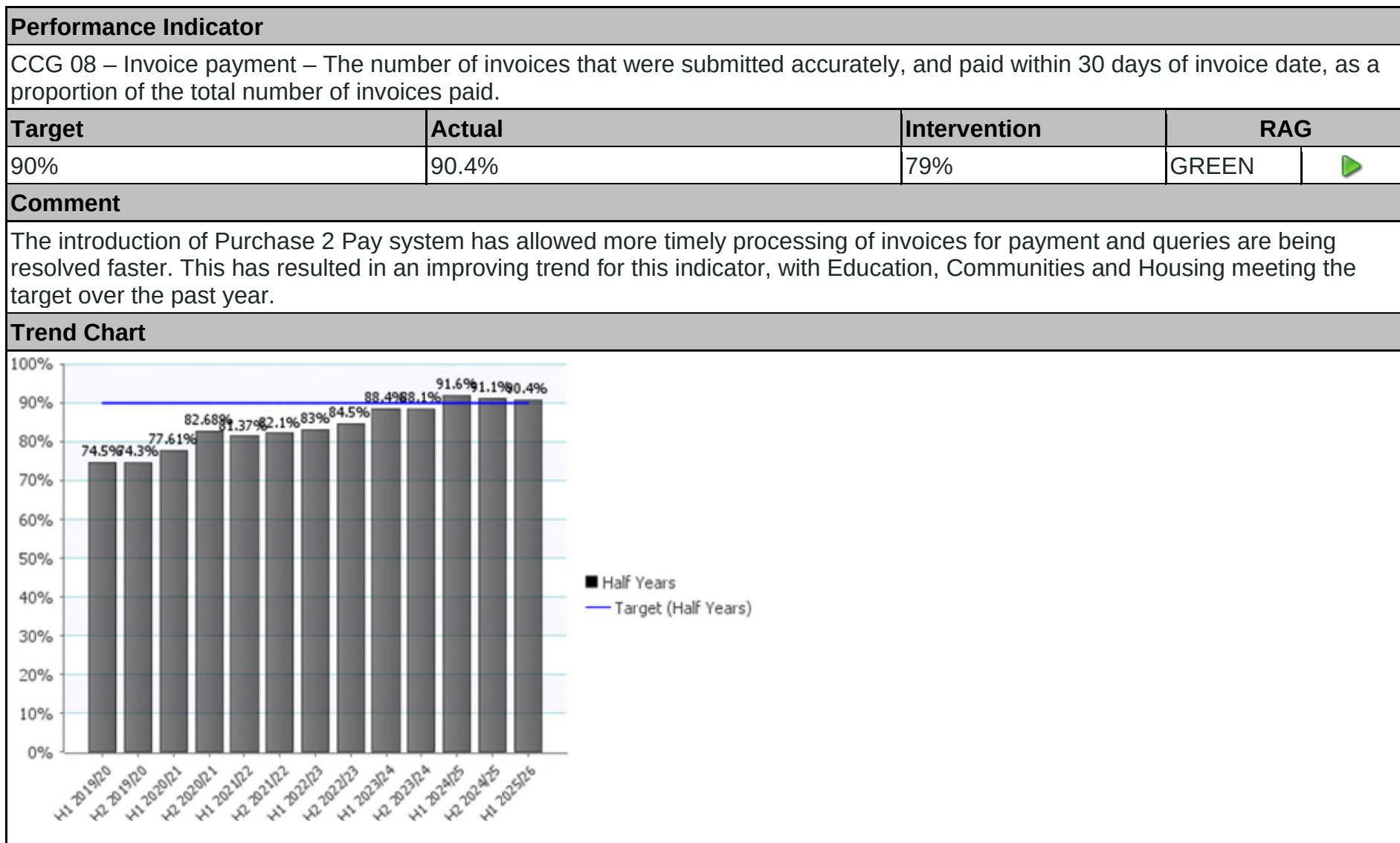


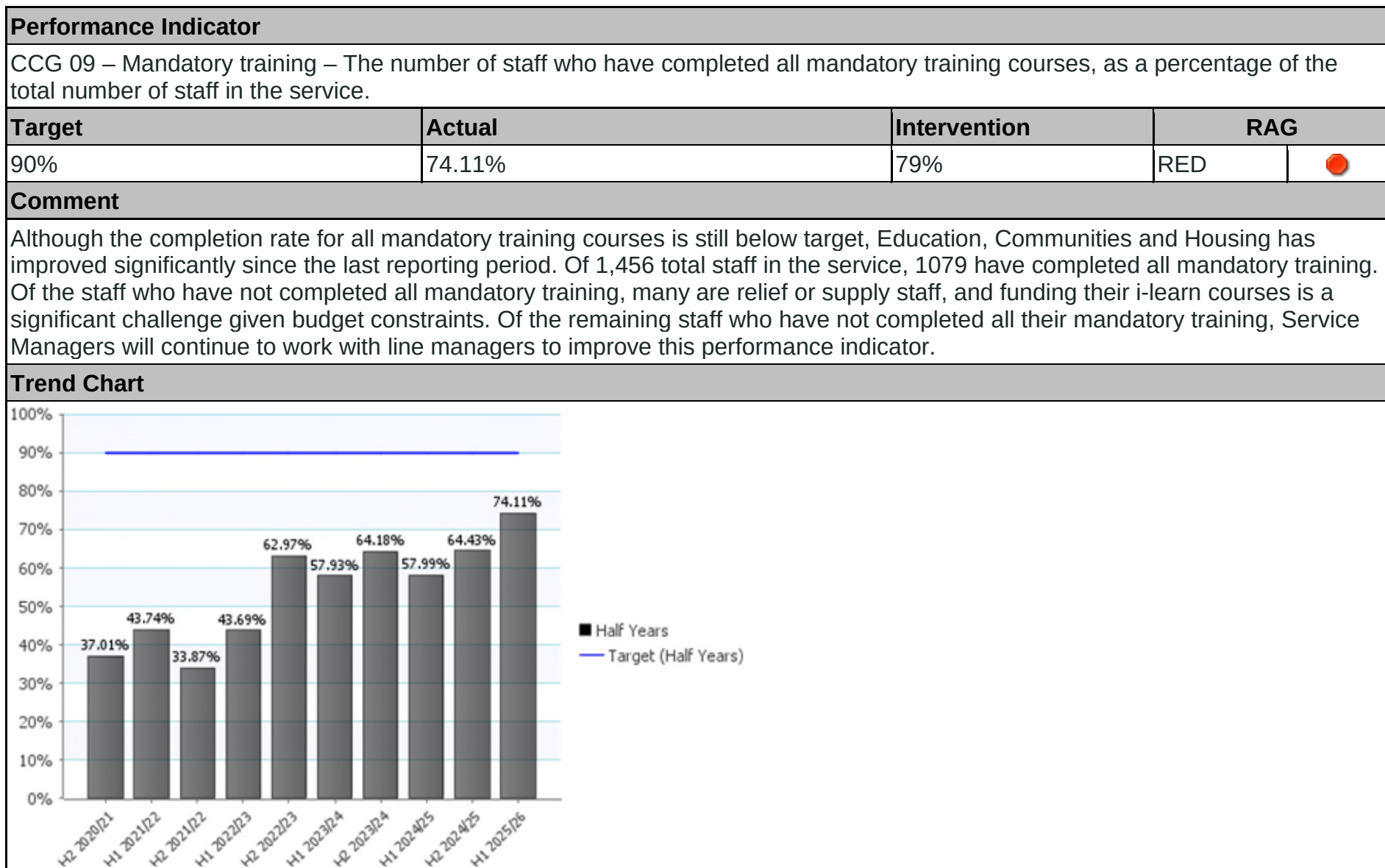












BRAG key

Red - the performance indicator is experiencing significant underperformance, with a medium to high risk of failure to meet its target.

Amber - the performance indicator is experiencing minor underperformance, with a low risk of failure to meet its target.

Green - the performance indicator is likely to meet or exceed its target.

Blue – the agreed action has been progressed to completion.

Education, Communities and Housing Risk Register – November 2025

Strategic Risks

Cluster.	Risk Number.	Owner.
Financial.	1.	Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
Staffing.	2.	Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

Operational Risks

Cluster.	Risk Number.	Owner.
Financial.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11	Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
Staffing.	2, 3, 7.	Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
Governance	12.	Director of Education, Communities and Housing.
Technological	13.	Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

Risk Matrix

			IMPACT				
			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
			Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
LIKELIHOOD	5.	Almost Certain.	Medium	Medium	High	High	Extreme
	4.	Likely.	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	3.	Possible.	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
	2.	Unlikely.	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	1.	Rare.	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High

Risk Title: 01 – Financial Pressures.

Likelihood.	5	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	20	Target Risk Score.	15.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
It is predicted that ongoing savings will be required each year. The next three years require significant savings for ECH. Level of funding for the service is insufficient to maintain the existing standard and range of provision. Lateness of award and lack of certainty around some Scottish Government funding leads to additional pressure on services. Inflation and pay settlements, combined with a standstill budget and/or budget reduction further reduces the capacity to maintain a safe standard of provision. Impact of Council's strategic financial plan exacerbates the vulnerability.	Reduced resource base	Decrease in the quality and resilience of the services provided by ECH (as assessed by inspectors and regulators). Reduction in service offer. Disinvestment in professional learning offer for staff teams. Possible reduction to progress, achievement and attainment of learners. Spiral of decline as increasing time and resource spent on accounting for service failures and complaints, and on making cases for discrete resource allocations in-year. Additional strain placed on staff many of whom already work significant additional hours that they are not paid for.	Tolerate.	Ensure 'fair' distribution of available funding to mitigate differential impacts across the service. Increase budget management and scrutiny to identify both significant and marginal efficiencies. Manage ad-hoc grants to minimise unplanned commitments 'in kind'. Manage vacancies where possible to optimise in-year savings. Explore and exploit opportunities for sharing costs and/or community funding. Oversee budget management. Continue work to identify additional efficient/different

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Some aspects of service provision are reliant on income through income generation, donation or sales which cannot be entirely guaranteed. The funding regime for housing development in Scotland leads to difficulties in making development achievable, given the range of pressures on a small Housing Revenue Account. This, in turn, is impacting on affordable housing provision. Additional changes to welfare benefits following the further rollout of Universal Credit and existing impact of original roll out (from September 2018) plus the legacy of the pandemic has resulted in increased rent arrears. Reduction or loss of key services. Difficulty with covering costs of casual / relief staff. Difficulty with backfilling maternity leave etc.		Insufficient houses and higher levels of disrepair. Reputational impact; Community impact; Impact on staff morale; Increase in difficulty with recruitment and retention; Potential staff losses either through ill health or choosing to leave the Council; Economic impact if people leave the islands; potential limitations on housing development (unless additional provider(s) can be sourced); Increased homelessness; Additional housing pressure; Sustainability threatened in fragile communities; Increased rents; Failure to meet SHNZS (Social Housing Net Zero Standard); Reduced staff wellbeing and increased staff illness; Potential impact on vulnerable groups within society. Increased requests for additional funding from third sector agencies who receive funding and who deliver vitally important services for us at a cost below that of internal delivery. Reduction in income due to cost of living crisis.		ways of working/ service redesign to release budget savings and increase income generation. HRA Business Plan developed – close monitoring to continue. Working with alternative housing providers who may be prepared to build in Orkney. Reduction of service provision in some areas / loss of services to maintain core activities. Work with Scottish Government to ensure more efficient and effective ways of working through multi-year funding. Request island impact assessment to ensure island circumstances are considered in funding allocations.

Risk Title: 02 – Recruitment / Retention Challenges.

Likelihood.	5.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	20.	Target Risk Score.	16.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Some posts remain very difficult to fill. For example, Housing staff, Tenant Participation Staff, Sheltered Housing staff, Papdale Halls, School Catering Staff (particularly cooks), Admin staff, ELC practitioner, Employability Keyworkers, some teaching posts, Staff on insecure contracts eg employability staff and Management staff. Recruitment and retention failures result in un-filled posts. Some posts are subject to annual or specific funding from Scottish Government which are subject to a lack of certainty which limits post security and may potentially limit ability to be flexible with use of staffing resource (Employability, Cultural Services, Housing Support for Refugees etc).	Key posts still remain unfilled following another recruitment drive, casual and relief staff unavailable and often unaffordable.	Reduction in service offer, including not offering undersubscribed courses. Inability to meet the Safe Staffing Standard and / or operational standards. Capacity to deliver specific curriculum subjects compromised. Service failure with respect to progress, achievement, and attainment of learners. Lower quality of service as assessed by inspectors and regulators. Increase in workload and pressure on existing teams. Capacity to deliver specialist housing services is compromised. Capacity to deliver full school meals offering across all schools is compromised. Reduction in performance standards across all Services; Reputational impact; Community impact; Concern about closures; Impact on staff morale; Economic impact if people leave the islands.	Treat.	Support access routes (initial training, career change programmes). Provide support to unqualified staff to gain relevant qualifications. Support for 'grow your own' staff / succession planning and mentoring. This may include incentives to encourage staff retention. Use recruitment processes to ensure applicants are aware of opportunities and (if unsuccessful) are open to continue to seek employment with the Council. Continue to use appropriate alternatives including the use of agency staff (where affordable).

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Vacancies remain unfilled for an extended period. Limited access to appropriately qualified workforce, hampers recruitment, including the availability of casual and relief staff. Age profile of staff and singleton posts in some areas leads to increasing risk of loss through retirement, sickness absence etc. Vulnerability due to certain health conditions including mental health. Difficulty with backfilling maternity and ensuring staffing levels required for services registered with Care Inspectorate / Safe Staffing / Operational Standards. Turnover rate rises to unsustainable levels.		Negative impact upon staff wellbeing and sickness rates. Increased challenge in recruiting quality candidates.		Seek to challenge position with insecure Scottish Government funding. Essential workers housing strategy to assist with recruitment / retention of essential workers.

Risk Title: 03 – Unmet Additional Support Needs.

Likelihood.	5	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	20.	Target Risk Score.	16.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Demand across service areas is out with capacity to deliver. Impact of available additional support is limited as it is shared across too many needs.	Increased demand for additional support combined with an increase in the indicators of unmet need.	Appropriate additional support (approaches to learning and teaching, support from personnel, and provision of resources) to meet the needs of learners / residents is not available. Service fails to meet statutory duties. Facilities with or without support insufficient to meet needs and demands. Level of dissatisfaction increases. Number of complaints increases. Resources diverted to manage complaints and if necessary, legal challenge, which exacerbates the vulnerability. Increase in difficulty with recruitment and retention.	Treat.	Improve and increase efficient and effective use of available resources. Improve and increase staff confidence and capability. Explore and exploit opportunities for collaborative work within and across service and agencies to deliver preventative and early intervention service models. Explore and exploit budget and funding options to increase sufficiency and capacity. £1.5 million is subsidising free school meals and music tuition. If ECH had the funding this could be reallocated to ASL and Inclusion. Explore staffing needs on a regular basis.

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
		Reduction in staff morale. Increase in staff sickness absence levels. Increased likelihood of legal challenge for additional support needs unmet. Likelihood of increased costs for management and outcome of legal challenge.		

Risk Title: 04 – IT Systems Capability.

Likelihood.	4.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	16.	Target Risk Score.	12.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
IT systems insufficiently developed to meet contemporary needs within Service Insufficient wifi within Council buildings limits the flexible and efficient use of staff and buildings Access to modern apps, services, etc are limited, can't access and communicate with service users in expected ways, future provision of AI (or risks of, not planned for) Manual systems required to be developed or maintained, resulting in unnecessary/inappropriate use of resources. Lack of dedicated resource (both staffing and financial) for systems administration and development	The Council fails to maintain and develop information management systems that support the current and future needs of the Service appropriately. Education, Communities and Housing management information systems fail to support the Service appropriately.	Inability to achieve an acceptable level of efficiency (as might be achievable in organisations with more appropriate IT systems). Needs of service users, children/young people/residents, parents/ carers, staff, other stakeholders are not efficiently met. Service ability to provide external bodies with the information they require is impaired. Manual/alternative approaches are costly (diverting resources and time away for core activity) and potentially less 'safe'. Long lead in times for implementing new IT packages means that efficiencies are not realised or become redundant. Inability to communicate with service users to meet expectations of modern service users.	Treat.	Establish a systems review and development roadmap. With colleagues across the Council, explore the possibility of taking a project development approach to improvement. Continue to review effectiveness of SEEMIS and Northgate undertake upgrades as a planned process (includes implementation of direct debit). Concerto continues to be expanded to include all asset management requirements. Ensure provision for homelessness and advice monitoring is developed.

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
		Limit ability for income generation / collection eg through online shop provision / income collection apps etc (staffing is also a limitation). Inability to work with partner agencies in a modern manner eg online housing application / common housing register.		

Risk Title: 05 – Expansion of Childcare Provision/Provision of Non-statutory Provision.

Likelihood.	4	Impact.	3	RAG.	Amber	Current Risk Score.	12	Target Risk Score.	9
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Leadership capacity. Insufficient number of high quality and / or qualified practitioners. Insufficient budget to meet emerging demands of Scottish Government.	Failure to recruit high quality candidates. Legislation/policy insufficiently funded for the local context (e.g. discretionary deferrals, nursery milk and snack).	Lack of leadership in settings. Vacant posts and repeated recruitment. Impact on quality and outcomes for children. Failure to meet National Standard. Budget overspend.	Treat.	Refocus the Leadership pathway to develop leadership capacity within the workforce. Support practitioners to gain relevant qualifications to meet the requirements of their role, including SVQs and degrees Continuation of head teacher training to support development of pedagogical leadership capacity. Continue to work with UHI Orkney to review the availability and quality of courses on offer. Lobby Scottish Government so that they take account of the unique island challenges relating to new policies. Ensure Orkney attendance at national meetings / forums to ensure the remote and rural voice is heard. Ensure Elected Members and the Corporate Leadership Team are well briefed prior to national meetings.

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Financial model for 0-3 service becomes unviable.	Inability to appoint adequate numbers of practitioners to ensure maximum ratio and maximum income.	Greater than acceptable losses. Service failure in workplaces due to lack of childcare available.		Carefully monitor occupancy, staff ratios and fee payment to ensure the setting is running as efficiently as possible.

Risk Title: 06 – Cost of living crisis.

Likelihood.	4.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Yellow.	Current Risk Score.	16.	Target Risk Score.	12.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Cost of living crisis is likely to exacerbate inability to pay housing costs. Impact of welfare reform and further changes to welfare benefits continue to impact on ability to pay rent and this has been exacerbated by the initial rollout of Universal Credit (2018/19), Tax Credit transition to Universal Credit (rollout to all remaining groups) during 2024 and the impact of the pandemic. Negative impact on those we work to support across ECH.	Reduced income for HRA, increased provision for bad debt, increased homelessness. Increased demand for service and inability to meet need.	More rent arrears; Increased impact on HRA; Increased homelessness; Loss of staff; Failure to meet SHNZS (Social Housing Net Zero Standard); Damage to reputation re arrears figures (previously were very good); Negative impact on rural/isles area. Reduced Income levels from OIC (rents) and the general public. Rise in children living in poverty. Inability to meet the required needs of communities leading to increasing vulnerability and exacerbating future demand for services. Poor learning and poor school experience and need for additional services in future.	Treat.	HRA Business Plan to continue to be monitored. Issues of affordability are considered in respect of potential impact of annual rental increase. Monitor situation and continue to pursue rent arrears and also to try and prevent other households from falling into arrears by encouraging payment in advance and seeking to identify vulnerable households at as early a stage as possible. Continue to work with the Cost-of-Living Taskforce and Strategic Children's Services Planning Group. Issues of affordability are considered in respect of potential projects and costs. Continue to increase awareness of free school meal criteria and awareness of anonymity. New

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Meal provision not chosen by particular groups such as Primary 6 and 7 and including S3 due to cost.	Meal of lower nutritional value chosen instead.			ordering system will ensure complete anonymity between those who pay and those who don't. Information re system being disseminated to all users through user groups etc. Includes provision of nutritional advice, recipes etc.

Risk Title: 07 – Tertiary Sector (UHI Orkney) Funding and Business Plan.

Likelihood.	4	Impact.	4	RAG.	Amber	Current Risk Score.	16	Target Risk Score.	12.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
UHI Orkney fails to achieve zero budget. UHI Orkney requires financial support from OIC to continue to operate in a sustainable manner Curriculum and/or staffing cuts are required to balance budget	Flat/capped funding from Scottish Funding Council in Further Education (FE) sector. Challenges in recruiting sufficient Higher Education (HE) students and subsequent shortfall in activity-based funding. Demand for student support services significantly above budgeted provision and rising. Signing up to the National Recognition and Procedure Agreement for Scotland's Colleges. Staff costs at 70% of budget; Distant Islands Allowance not funded by Scottish Funding Council.	UHI Orkney cannot manage within its resources. Falling student satisfaction Student Support expenditure above budget and/or needs go unmet meaning vulnerable students are placed at risk, increased risk in course delivery and practice, additional pressure and strain on teaching staff or refusal/inability to accommodate some students. Reputational damage, increased complaints against the College and legal challenge. Staff exposed to unnecessary risk or harm. Increase in staff absence or sickness. Reduction in staff morale. Lack of skills, experience and capacity (link to Risk 2, Recruitment and Retention Challenges). Growth potential lost. Reduced curriculum leads to skill shortages in the local economy and restricted economic growth for Orkney.	Treat.	Advance from loans fund approved to balance 2024/25 budget and to set balanced budget for 2025/26 Officer Task Force instigated, reporting to ELH Committee. Improve and reinforce budget monitoring. Work with budget holders collaboratively to understand the budget as a whole and take collective responsibility for balancing income and expenditure across the college Ensure appropriate budget profiling and timely invoicing to support budget monitoring. Implement common course viability assessments ensuring all teaching staff resource is directed to income-generating activity, or less viable but locally significant delivery is offset by income elsewhere. Increase corporate training via UHI Orkney for OIC staff training. Work with Island Colleagues to request unions to push for

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
	Rising costs (see Risk 2 which is particularly significant). Expenditure on staff costs insufficiently offset by grant, fee, credit and commercial income. Insufficient funding to sustain aging property assets, which are self-financed by UHI Orkney.			Distant Islands Allowance to be incorporated into national pay bargaining for academic staff. Capitalise on the rebranding and strongly promote the strengths of UHI Orkney.

Risk Title: 08 – Significant demand for emergency accommodation and general needs housing.

Likelihood.	5.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	20.	Target Risk Score.	16.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Inability to meet demand for emergency accommodation (double the number of households are in temporary accommodation than was the case pre-pandemic). Increased housing pressure locally impacting on provision of housing irrespective of tenure.	Current lack of capacity and increased demands due to national policy of rapid rehousing, pressure for housing for essential workers etc. Housing pressures generally mean fewer people can meet their own housing need through private sector tenancies etc.	Significant level of homelessness; Increased risk of OIC being unable to meet its statutory requirements in respect of homelessness; Breach of unsuitable accommodation order; Out of Orkney placements; Substantial unbudgeted increased financial pressure on OIC; Additional demands placed on smaller staffing base (sourcing accommodation and supporting households in transition); Bad publicity; Recruitment issues exacerbated by housing position.	Treat.	Keep demand under review. Further review of Temporary Accommodation provision through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Likely to require additional temporary accommodation to be sourced which is contrary to the national policy position. Delivery of local housing strategy (including homelessness and essential workers) and Strategic Housing Investment Plan etc.

Risk Title: 09 – Failure to meet Social Housing Net Zero Standard (following publication of Scottish Government guidance).

Likelihood.	3.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	12.	Target Risk Score.	9.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Substantially reliant on external funding. Risk that funding is not available. Budgetary position within Housing Revenue Account Business Plan is insufficient due to increases in costs.	Some houses will be below the Social Housing Net Zero Standard.	Government criticism for failing the standard. Failure of Scottish Housing Quality Standard and failure to meet requirements of Scottish Housing Regulator. May have sanctions imposed; Negative impact on inspection results; Adverse effect on tenants; Potential for properties to be damaged as a result of damp, mould, inability to heat etc, Bad publicity leading to increased complaints. Increase in fuel poverty.	Treat.	Review progress on a regular basis (following confirmation of Scottish Government guidance and confirmation of date). Develop detailed plan to ensure properties meet the Social Housing Net Zero Standard within the designated timescale. Monitor through Annual Return against the Charter in line with requirements of Scottish Housing Regulator

Risk Title: 10 – Buildings and Facilities.

Likelihood.	4.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	16.	Target Risk Score.	12.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Council's financial position leads to reduction of spend on repairs and improvements and gradual decline in quality of buildings Buildings will not meet accessibility / equality requirements. Lack of office accommodation and service user space.	Quality of buildings may decline, and condition / suitability does not meet the standard expected. Quality of internal structures become unsuitable for current use eg food preparation. Buildings lack flexibility to meet needs around accessibility and equality requirements. Insufficient desk and office space for employees and no space to undertake the statutory work of CLD.	Reduced spend on repairs and maintenance leading to poorer quality buildings; safety of buildings declines; historic buildings will be lost without investment; lack of investment in catering equipment will lead to failure to deliver / breach of legislative requirements; no maintenance provision will lead to loss of availability of play areas; impact on staffing requirements due to change to national practice by key agencies including Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Failure to meet legislative requirements / service user needs. Poor working environment which debilitates the prospects and outcomes of staff. Not meeting the occupational standards and health and safety requirements for office space.	Tolerate.	Review progress on an annual basis. Work with partners in NSI to make best use of limited resources. Investigate options for additional income / funding to assist with preservation of some buildings / ensure risk assessments are regularly updated / PPE provided / training provided. Consider suitability of existing buildings and ability to source additional funding. Identify additional office space within OIC building. Secure an external functional space for staff and service users

Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Inability to repair and replace essential equipment.	Equipment failure.	No space for working with user groups and vulnerable people keen to benefit from our services support. Inability to maintain and run services.		to utilise, especially with the loss of The Learning Link building in 2025 due to financial reductions. Identify and cost a rolling programme for replacement.

Risk Title: 12 – Business Continuity.

Likelihood.	3.	Impact.	4.	RAG.	Amber.	Current Risk Score.	12.	Target Risk Score.	9.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
An event or incident leads to the inability of teams to carry out their core functions.	Pandemic, IT incident, power outage, fire, flood etc	Backlog of work and failing to meet deadlines. Loss of critical documents.	Treat.	Directorate ensures that service business continuity plans in place. Remote working possible at home on laptops. Ensuring documents are stored in the cloud using the Microsoft 365 stack (OneDrive, Teams and SharePoint).

Risk Title: 13 – Development of Systems and Processes.

Likelihood.	3.	Impact.	3.	RAG.	Yellow.	Current Risk Score.	9.	Target Risk Score.	8.
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Vulnerability.	Trigger.	Consequences.	Options.	Mitigating Actions.
Due to other work being prioritised by services - failure to support services to progress system developments and lack of progress on strategic outcomes.	Services unable to lead system developments due to volume of attention that day to day operational tasks require. Unable to progress systems development without service lead and project management.	Strategic priorities not delivered. Cost savings not identified and achieved. Negative impact on service delivery. Reduced staff morale.	Treat	Improvement Support team to ensure project management support and guidance in place. Mechanisms identified for escalating issues in project delivery at an early stage. Expectations managed and good communication on timescales and clarity of roles.