

2026-27 Strategic Risk Register

<https://www.spsos.org.uk/sites/spso/files/Corporate/SPSO-Policies/SPSORiskManagement.pdf>

Risk number	Description of area of risk <i>(linked to business objective)</i> Cause - If Event - Then Effect - Result	Strategic Objective	Risk owner	Inherent			Control actions in place to mitigate Likelihood	Control action in place to mitigate Impact	Current			Management response	Further planned mitigation <i>(Actions detailed in the current Strategic and Business plans)</i>	Target		
				Likelihood	Impact (time, cost, quality)	Score			Likelihood	Impact (time, cost, quality)	Score			Likelihood	Impact (time, cost, quality)	Score
SR-1	Casework demand: If SPSO cannot secure funding necessary to maintain a sufficient and skilled workforce to meet demand increases greater than 30%, time and quality performance against our statutory functions will significantly decline, impacting user and stakeholder confidence and trust, and the health, wellbeing and motivation of our staff.	1. Delivering our service / BAU We will deliver an excellent service across casework functions: PSC, INWO, SWF	SPSO	5	5	25	- inform funding by through Strategic Plan laid before Parliament with resourcing scenarios - annually review the medium term financial plan which outlines the resource required to meet rising demand - regular engagement with funding body through budgetary cycle and ongoing contact - adhering to sound governance arrangements that link resource/ workforce planning to decision-making - staff involvement in creating and implementing strong supportive policies and procedures built on a culture of trust and collaboration - maintain IIP Accreditation, high results in the Staff Survey & continue to implement Wellbeing Strategy	- continued regular and timely engagement with funding body, accessing the contingency fund (where necessary) - flexible approaches to ongoing workforce capacity management - sound budgetary management - effective and realistic business planning and BP management, informed by risk and data analysis - horizon scanning to anticipate future impact	5	4	20	Treat	Contingency Fund Bid submitted April 2026 Strategic Workforce Plan developed December 2026 Strategic planning for digital solutions, including AI consideration of workflow automation, AI-powered triage, analysis and decision drafting.	3	3	9
SR-2	Cyber Resilience: If the SPSO has insufficient Cyber resilience measures, then we may experience a cyber-attack or incident, leading to a loss of systems, corruption or loss of data, or personal data breach, which may result in an inability to discharge our functions, additional demand on resources, financial loss, distress to individuals, and may undermine trust and confidence in our services.	1. Delivering our service / BAU We will deliver an excellent service across casework functions: PSC, INWO, SWF	HoCSS	5	5	25	- MFA applied to all systems (completed Jan 2026) Staff training: - annual training for all staff on Cyber Security and IT Code of Conduct, including simulated phishing campaign, results used to direct training External monitoring: - External Cyber Essentials re-certification (since 2019) - annual completion of the Cyber Observatory's Cyber Resilience Assessment - implement Public Sector Action Plan for Cyber Resilience and Public Sector Cyber Resilience Framework actions, monitor actions and report - key suppliers hold certifications to evidence the significant controls in place to reduce the risk of unauthorised access to SPSO systems and data - cyber security internal audit completed in November 2025, covering the NCSC's (National Cyber Security Centre) 10 Steps to Cyber Security guidance Threat monitoring and reporting: - attend relevant briefing sessions and remain informed of the risk and implement appropriate protections.	- Business Continuity Plan reviewed regularly with appropriate testing and liaison with third parties - testing business continuity plans (BCP) for cyber incidents - review Cyber Incident Response Plan and associated Playbooks - ongoing engagement with contractors, cyber security plans/ partners - back-ups for key systems - maintain strong working relationships with SSSC, ITECS Cyber Security Awareness Leads group and Security Champions Network - ongoing Data management to minimise data shared and methods	3	4	12	Treat	- complete map of SPSO ICT supply chain - ongoing enhanced contractual arrangements with suppliers in line with SCCC advice and guidance - continual Horizon scanning	3	4	12
SR-3	Public Sector reform and external environment: If SPSO fails to understand and adapt timely to the threats and opportunities posed by structural public sector, technological, and economic changes in a flexible and agile way, this may result in systemic delivery and resourcing issues impacting on our ability to meet our statutory duties, achieve the best outcome for service users, or meet stakeholder expectations.	1. Delivering our service / BAU We will deliver an excellent service across casework functions: PSC, INWO, SWF	SPSO	4	4	16	- engage in consultation on legislation, policy etc. - ensure Engagement and Communication Strategy includes analysis of the public sector landscape - horizon scan for strategic opportunities - engagement with Parliamentary Committees on new or changing public sector, regulatory and complaints handling landscape - data & AI Strategy and Working Group analysis of internal maturity and requirements - AI and Technology monitoring - monitoring and awareness raising of how BJUs and other organisations apply and use AI/ Technology across a range of applications	- work collaboratively with stakeholders through our stakeholder and communication strategy - agile and adaptive approaches to SPSO service delivery - Data Strategy working group, monitoring and reporting - Flexible approaches to trialling and adoption	3	3	9	Treat	Continuous review of business processes Data Maturity Assessment 2026 AI/Technology Pilots assessed 2027 Technology Architecture reviewed 2028 Technology Route Map developed 2028	3	2	6
SR-4	Resilience and Continuity: If SPSO cannot maintain business continuity due factors outside our control and do not have effective contingency plans this may impede our ability to provide our service for longer than manageable, and we will be unable to deliver our statutory functions, meet our statutory duties or deliver our strategic plan.	1. Delivering our service / BAU We will deliver an excellent service across casework functions: PSC, INWO, SWF	SPSO	4	5	20	- review and practice the business continuity plans, including cyber resilience action plan and playbooks - review and update robust HR and workforce policies and planning - continue to support remote working capability - flexible workforce planning - continue to engage in horizon scanning & national briefings - maintain annual cyber essentials accreditation - ensure ICT systems are fully supported, with cyber resilience measures implemented, including MFA - ensure staff fully comply with mandatory training	- ongoing engagement with contractors, cyber security plans/ partners, including confirmation of backup processes - remotely accessible systems, policies, procedures and guidance - monitor internal impact and respond to Scottish Government (and where appropriate UK Govt) impact surveys.	3	4	12	Treat	Business Continuity Plan reviewed and exercised regularly, considering the significant emerging threats Strategic Workforce Plan developed 2026 Map of SPSO supply chain 2026, with enhanced contractual arrangements with suppliers	2	4	8
SR-5	External engagement: If the SPSO does not engage effectively to explain our role and remit and demonstrate the positive impact of all areas of our work this may impact on our remit and undermine our reputation, inhibiting our ability to drive and deliver learning and improvement in Scottish Public Services.	5. Insight We will share learning and casework insights that help lead to better public services and seeks to manage demand for SPSO	SPSO	4	4	16	- governance structures explicitly require impact and engagement to be integral to corporate decision making - required to lay an Annual Report before Scottish Parliament - annual requirement to provide evidence to Scottish Parliament on the ARFS - welcome all opportunities to provide other Parliament(s) committees, inquiries, consultations and working groups with evidence - plan bi-annual conferences on complaints handling for Scottish Public Services - implementation of the stakeholder engagement and communication strategy	- backlog of Annual Reports recording strong performance and impact - clean external audit performance record - casework QA providing assurance of strong decision-making	3	3	9	Treat	Secure resource to reinstate a regular QA process Spotlight and other special reports, leaflets and materials highlighting specific areas and influencing the public sector discourse	2	2	4