



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

Quarterly People Report

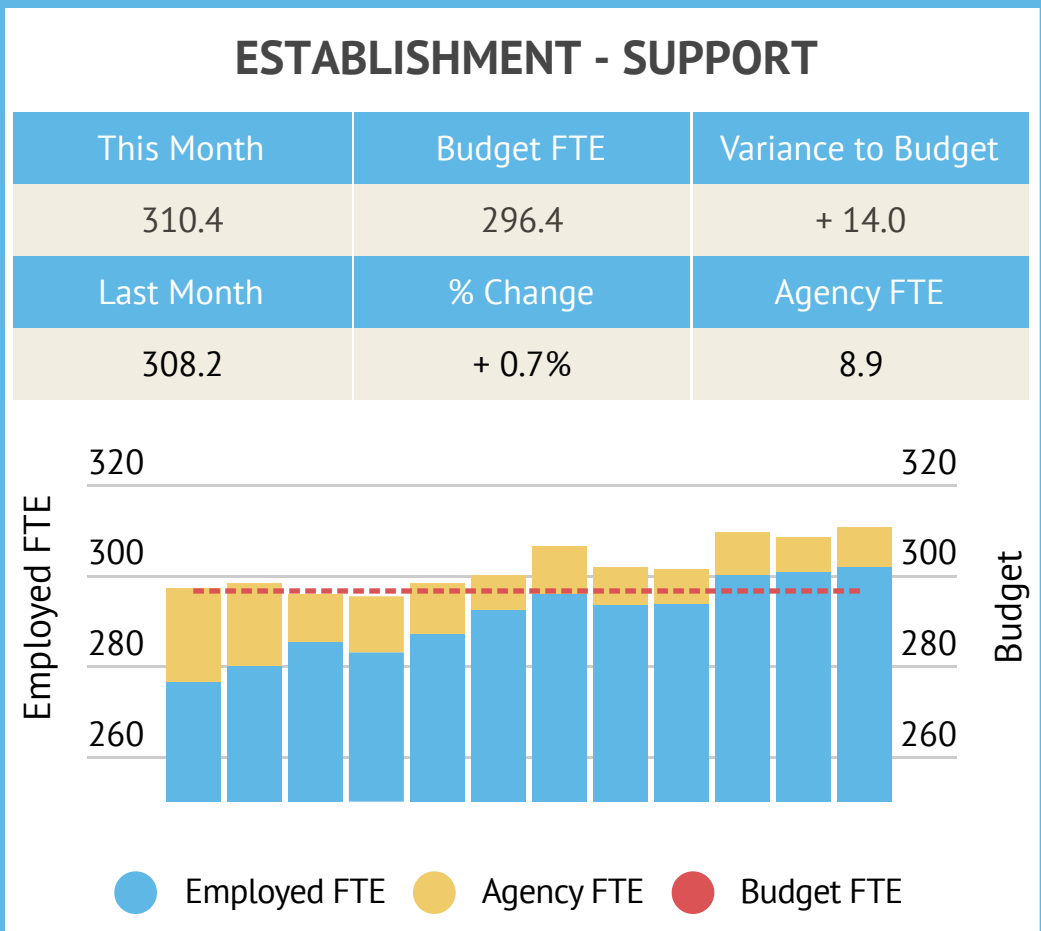
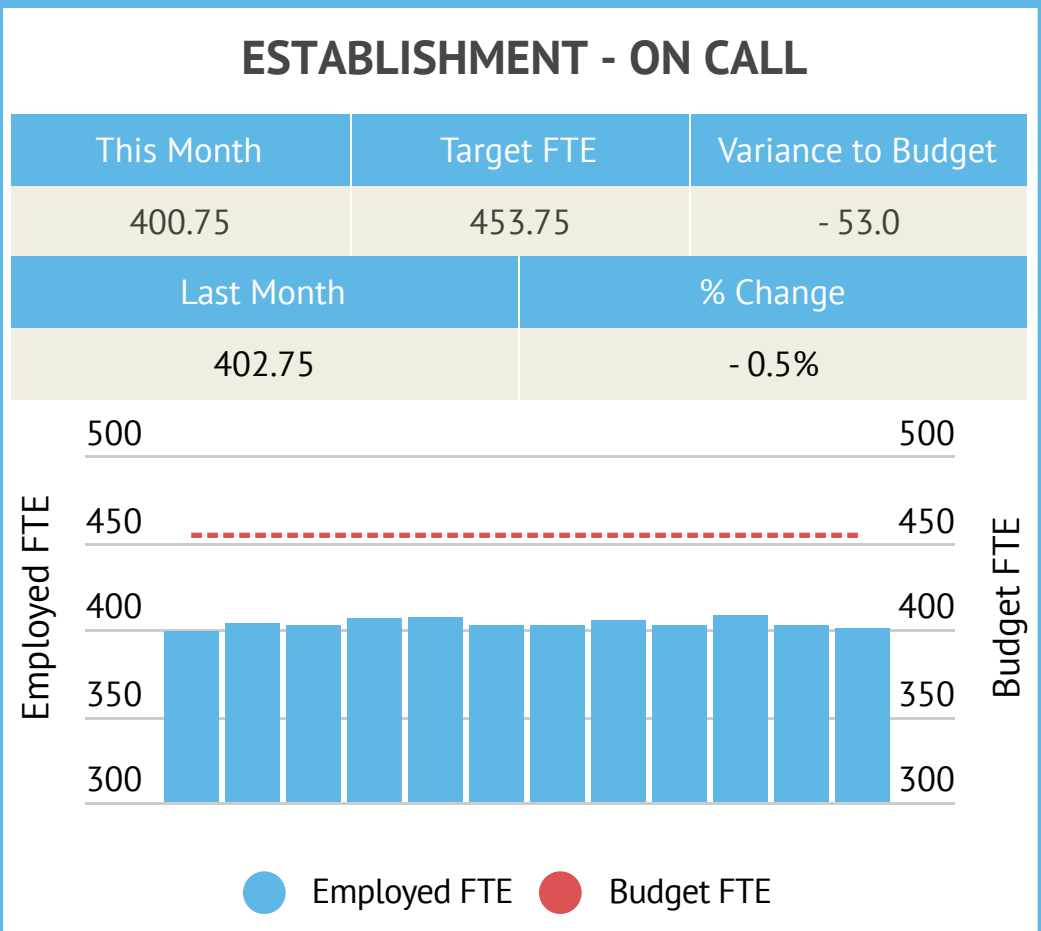
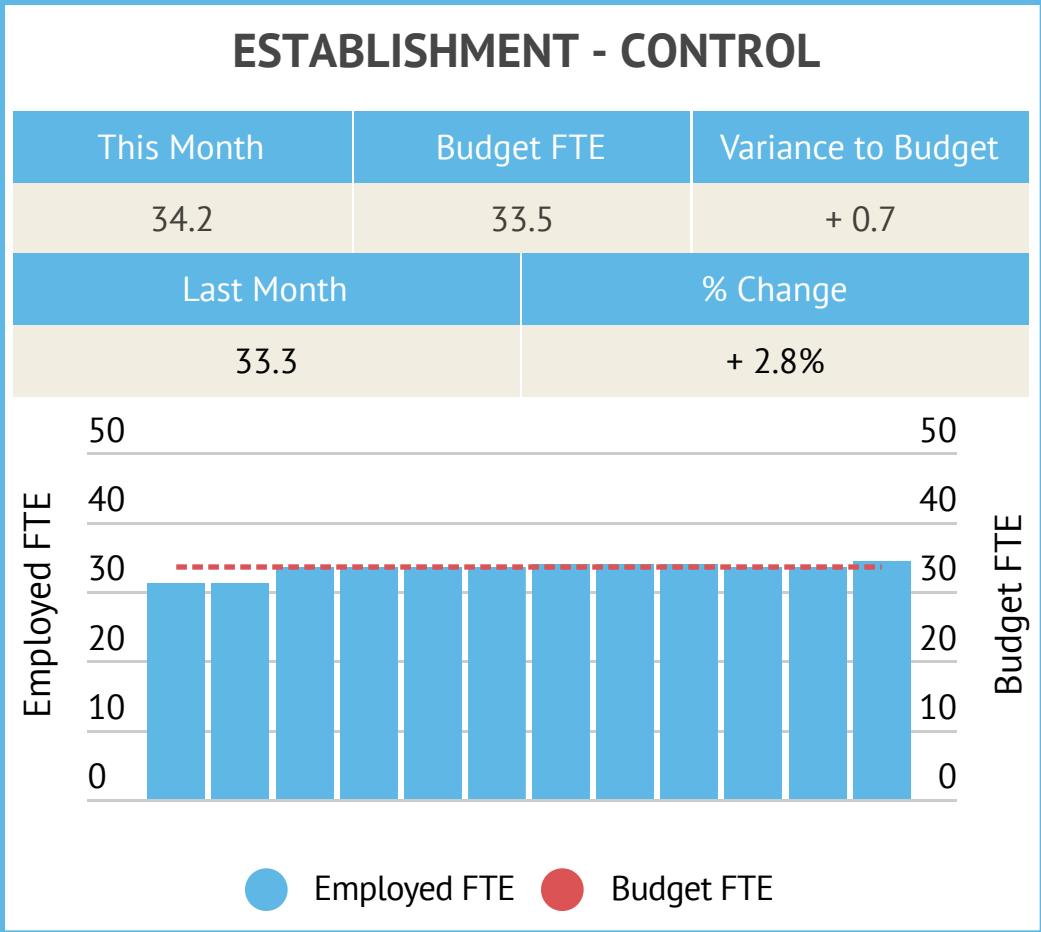
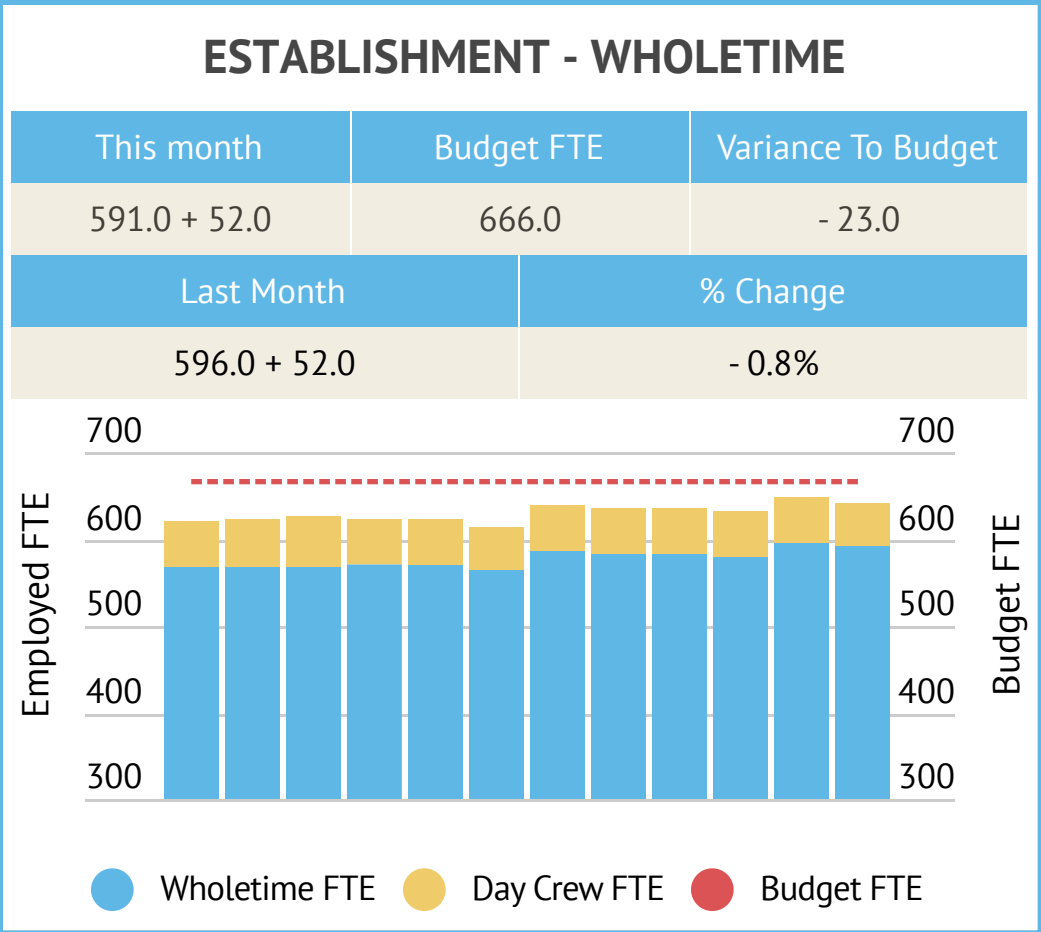
workforceinfo@essex-fire.gov.uk

Q4 2019/20

Data as at 31 March 2020

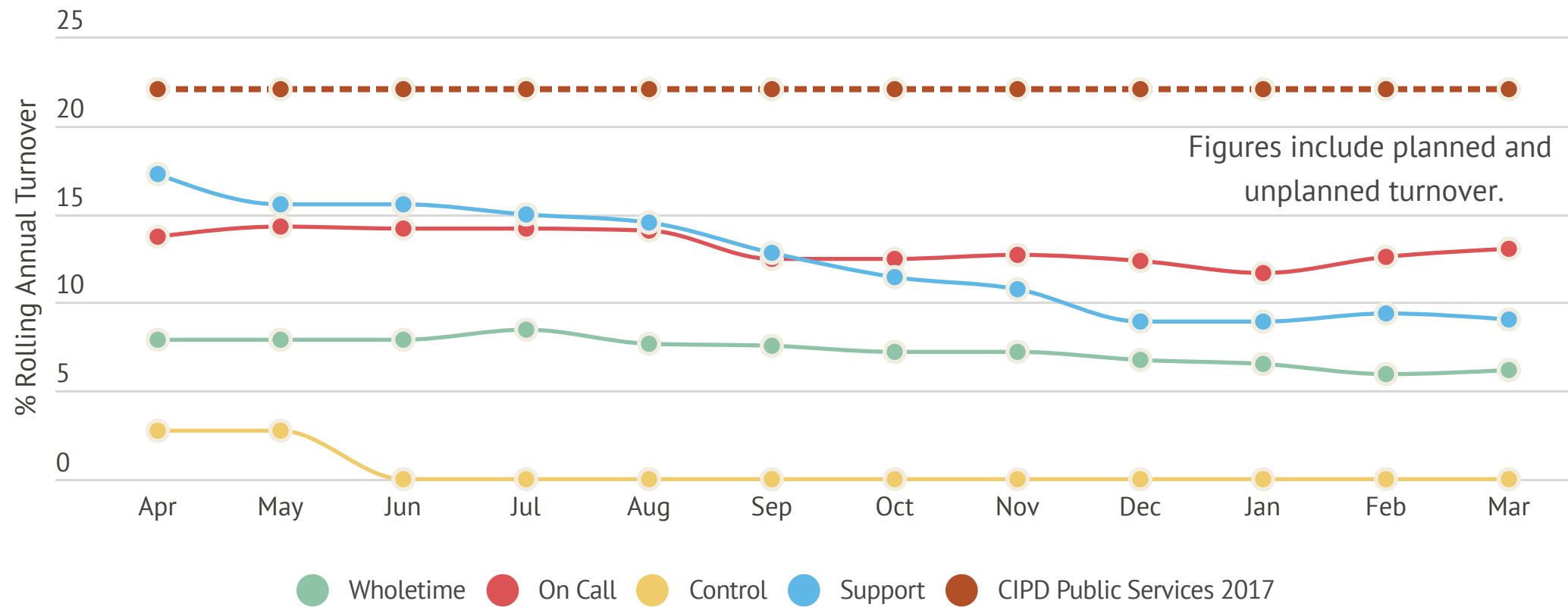
Insights

- An interim workforce plan was submitted to the Senior Leadership Team in April 2020 which focused on wholetime and on-call recruitment to close capacity gaps over the next five years. The proposals included the ongoing recruitment of 36 wholetime firefighters each year and a focus on 6 on-call stations where there are recruitment and/or retention issues. We have also begun to explore the possibility support staff being offered the opportunity to be considered for an on-call firefighter role in addition to their primary role.
- This focus will continue to enable the Service to close the gap between budgeted FTE (demand) and supply (current employees and assumed planned and unplanned attrition).
- The full workforce plan, to be submitted by the autumn, will focus on Control and Technical Fire Safety workforce challenges, supported by the expected introduction of an updated approach to Talent Management, including succession planning.
- We have reviewed the budgeted Establishment and will be working with Hiring Managers to review support staff areas where the supply currently exceeds the demand and the reasons for this. Recommendations will also be included in the full Workforce Plan.



ACTION: Update position on over-budgeted establishment

WORKFORCE ANNUAL TURNOVER - ROLLING 12 MONTH AVERAGE



Insights

- The stability index remains high and compared to the national average for the public sector the turnover remains low.
- There are still some issues with on-call turnover which we have addressed in the interim workforce plan with several activities recommended to understand the themes for attrition.
- The workforce plan indicates that turnover will increase over the next five years, given the age profile of our whole time employees; this is being addressed through programme of recruitment campaigns and talent management approaches.
- The 2019 pension remedy outcome is a potential significant risk that we will need to consider as part of the full workforce plan.

ONE YEAR RETENTION



UK PUBLIC SECTOR: 84%

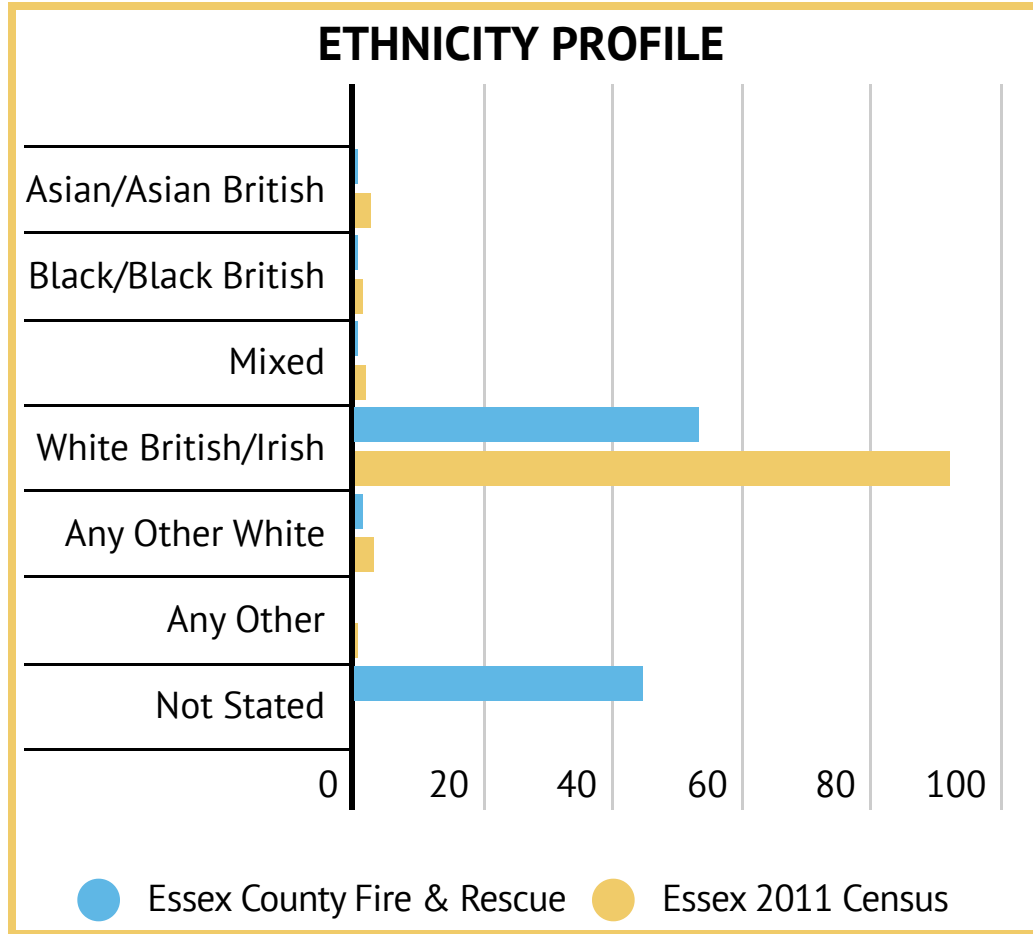
UK WHOLE WORKFORCE: 83%

Source: Office for National Statistics - "Is staff retention an issue in the public sector?" - June 2019

JOINERS AND LEAVERS IN Q4 2019/20

EE Group	Joiners	Leavers
Wholetime	19	9
On Call	24	19
Control	0	0
Support	18	7

ACTION: Update recruitment progress for whole time



GENDER PROFILE

EE Group	Female	Male	Other	Essex %	National %
Wholetime	40	555	9	6.7%	6.8%
On Call	7	444	2	1.6%	5.6%
Control	30	6	0	83.3%	77.0%
Support	160	142	2	51.7%	53.2%

Notes:
 The "Other" grouping includes employees that identify as Non-Binary, Other or Prefer Not to Say.
 Essex % and National % compare the ECFRS % female employees with national fire service % female staff levels.

DIVERSITY SELF-CLASSIFICATION

Characteristic	Number undeclared	% of workforce
Gender	120	7.9%
Sexual Orientation	952	62.8%
Ethnicity	676	44.6%
Religion	1114	73.4%

Notes:
 These figures represent the number of Service employees that have not yet actively self-classified themselves in the above protected characteristics.

GENDER PAY GAP 2018/19

Mean Gender Pay Gap %	Median Gender Pay Gap %
12.2%	13.1%

Pay Quartile	Males	Females
Upper Quartile	22.8%	2.3%
Upper Middle Quartile	22.1%	2.9%
Lower Middle Quartile	22.3%	2.7%
Lower Quartile	17.3%	7.6%

Insights

Inclusive employer of choice

- Inclusion and Diversity Action Group continuing to meet, most recently with a focus on developing a culture of inclusion in recruitment. Particular focus on upcoming firefighter recruitment.
- Approach to developing a culture of inclusion in recruitment and positive action approved by SLT in May 2020.
- Inclusion Co-Ordinator role approved to support the approach.
- Operational Women sub group created to understand experiences of FF's recruited in past 2 years.
- Review of staff networks completed and Ethnic Minority Forum created.

Diversity Data

- Personal invite to all employees to update diversity data led to an uplift in data declared.
- Phone calls to individuals to understand reason for non-completion have commenced.
- Several articles published by both the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the ACEO for People, Values and Culture which are intended to improve understanding of why the data is needed.
- Meetings with Group Managers and Station Managers to improve understanding of why data is needed and how it will be used.

Dignity

- Dignity in our Workplaces sessions moved 'online' and facilitated remotely via MSTeams.
- New neurodiversity tool introduced to HR.

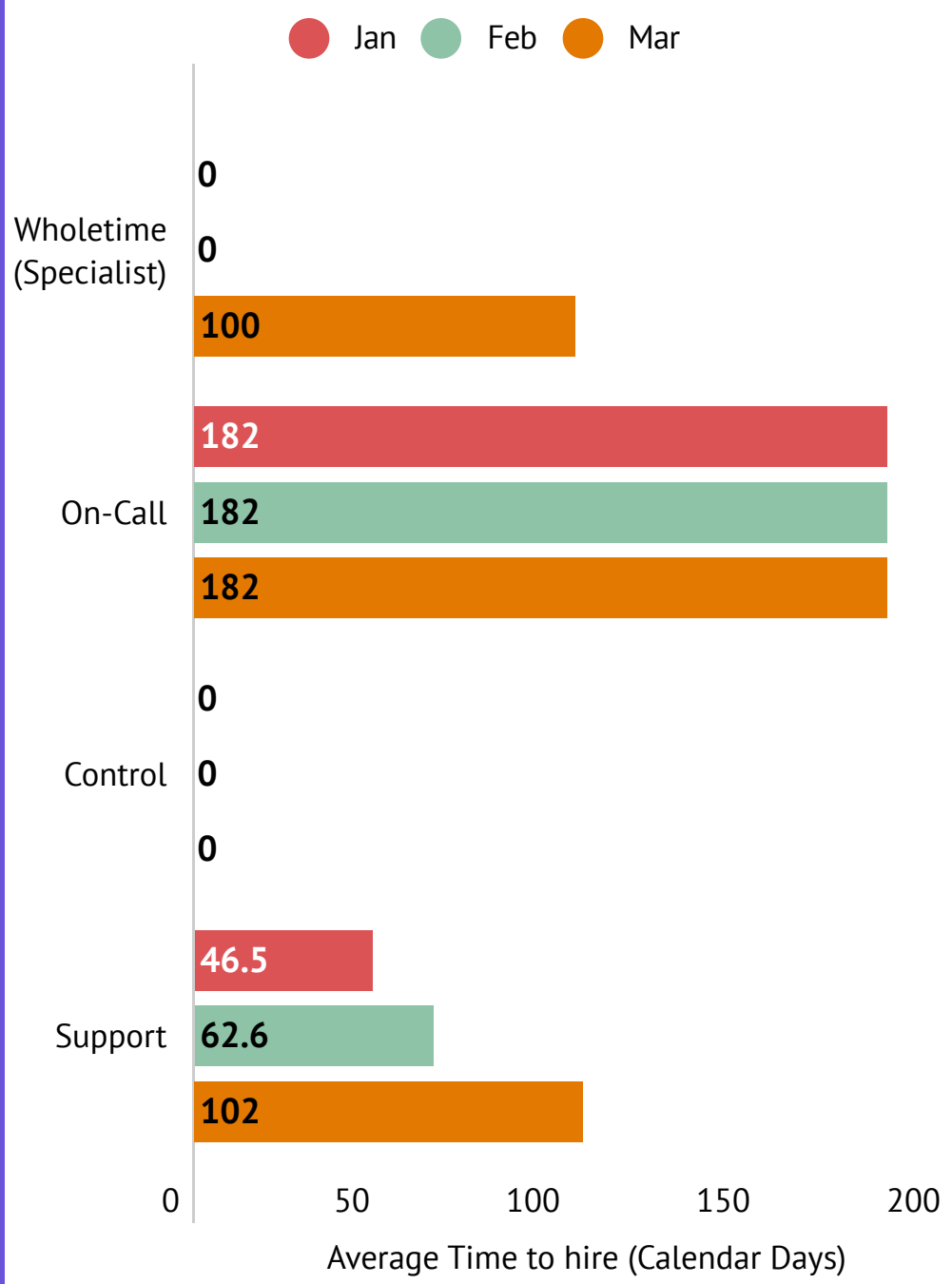
ACTION: Please continue to encourage employees to complete their Equal Opportunities data in Civica

Insights

- Our second Wholetime squad from the 2019 campaign commenced in Feb 2020, with their first 8 weeks being spent at Fire Service College.
- Q4 saw the conclusion of a Group Manager promotion process, that led to the substantive promotions of two individuals via the Talent Pool, as well as the temporary promotions of three individuals.
- The lessons learned from previous campaigns at the Converting Day Crew stations were reviewed and plans to support further recruitment activity, as well as to prioritise six On-Call stations, were made.
- To mitigate against the number of successful candidates from the Wholetime campaign that came from On-Call, we were able to run two squads of new recruits for On-Call.
- Q4 saw the conclusion of a targeted recruitment campaign in Technical Fire Safety in response to HMICFRS recommendations that saw 11 starters in total across Q3 and Q4
- Average time to hire for On-Call roles is calculated from the date of application to date of employment, whereas it is calculated until point of acceptance for support roles.
- We have recently proposed a revised talent management approach to SLT which will help us to build improved talent and succession arrangements to close our future gaps at crew, watch and station manager levels.
- We have also begun work on the commitments set out in the People Strategy to review our assessment and selection processes.
- We have agreement from SLT to attract a more diverse workforce for our future whole time squads by reaching out to Fire Cadets, local colleges who run Public Services Courses, Partner networks and external advertising campaigns.

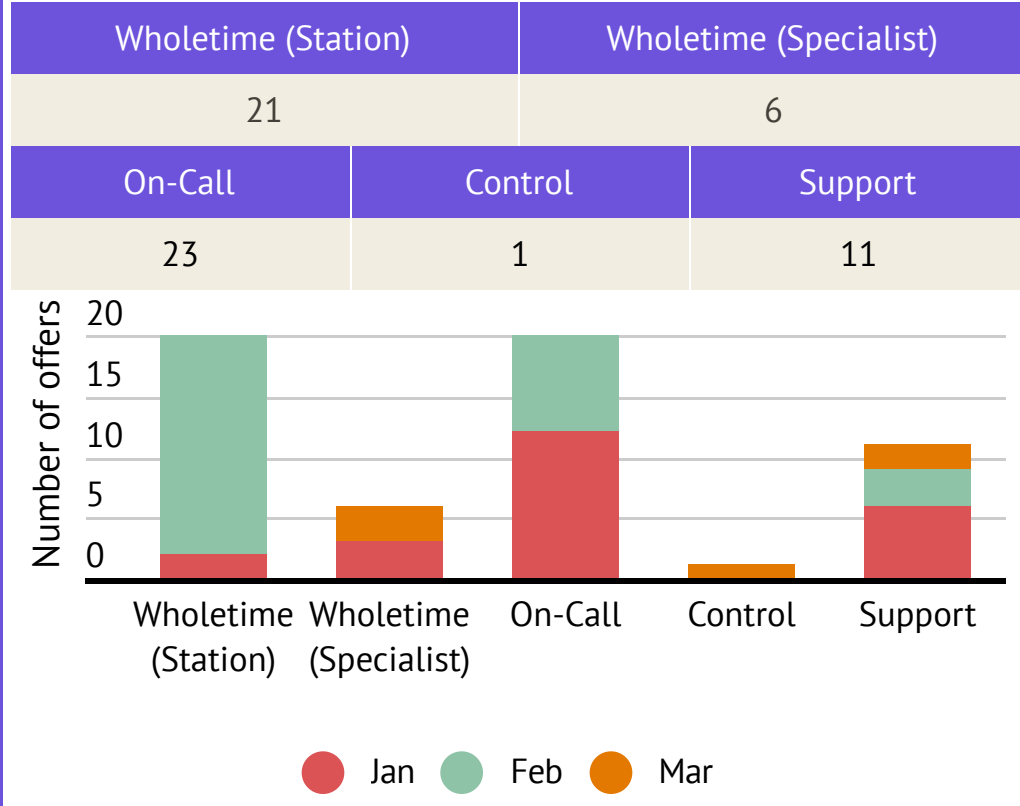
TIME TO HIRE - Q4 2019/20

Measured † as the number of calendar days between recruitment authorisation and offer acceptance by candidate.



£766.84
The average recruitment spend for Support hires in January.

OFFERS ACCEPTED - Q4 2019/20



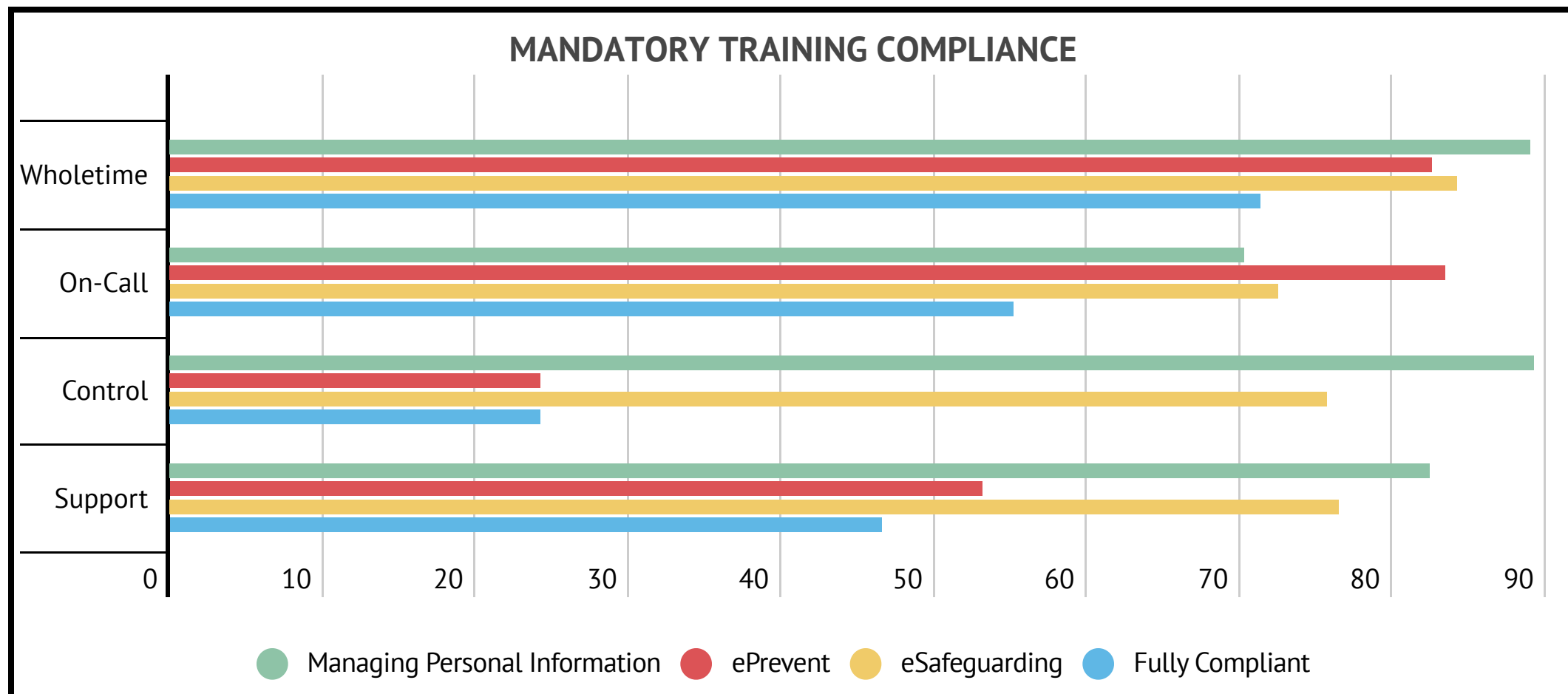
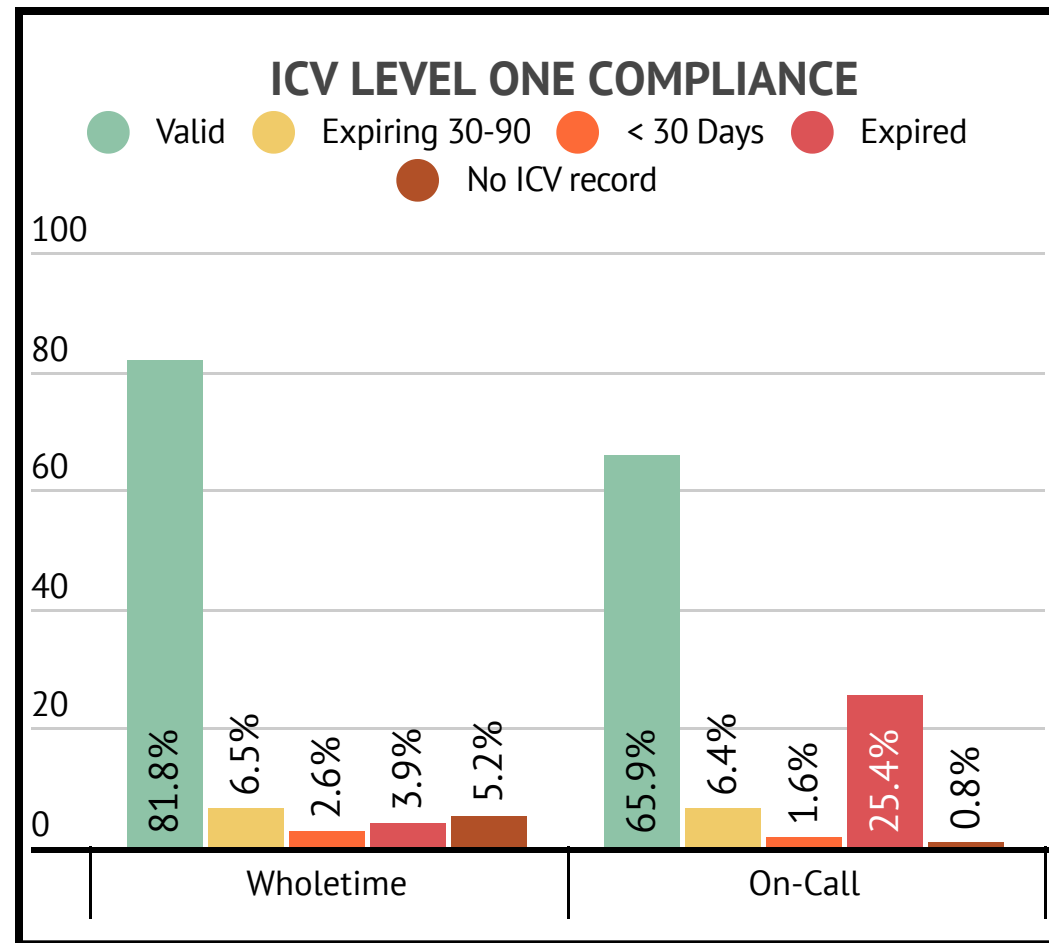
TALENT POOLS

EE Group	Supervisory	Middle Mgr	Strategic
Wholetime	33	13	1
On Call	10	1	0
Control	2	1	0
Support	3	3	0



11
Number of people substantively promoted through Talent Pool process in Q4 2019/20

ACTION: We will use the lessons learned from 2019 to feed into the Inclusion & Diversity work to prepare for a 2020 Wholetime recruitment campaign



Insights

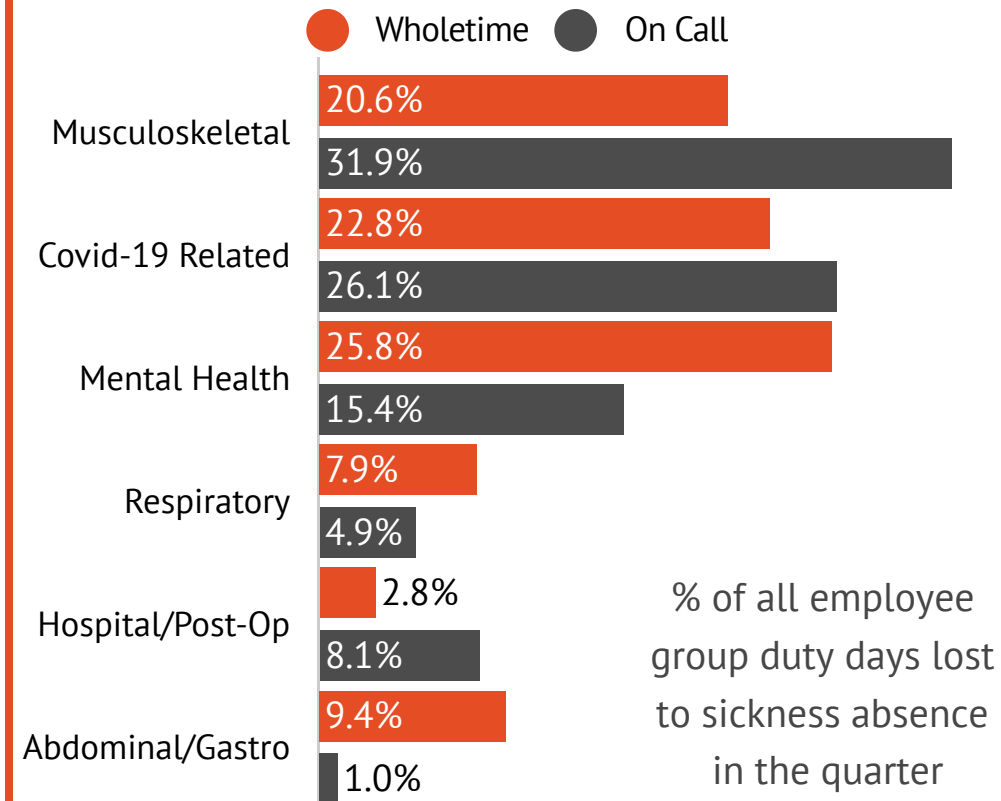
- Our Learning & Development plan was agreed by our Strategic Board this week (writing in mid June). This will mean an additional investment of £1.2 million over the next four years.
- We will be going out to tender for two major development programmes, Leadership programme and Core Learning Pathways working towards NFCC framework.
- We are developing plans to deliver webinars as a 'light touch' introduction to our Leadership and Professional development pillars of learning. The first of these are planned for June.
- The L&D pages on the intranet will be refreshed in June to incorporate information and timings on L&D courses.
- The Coaching Pool has been relaunched, with the opportunity for everyone to access coaching. There are both internal and external coaches available.
- A project team has been set up to look at a new elearning platform, with a potential to move away from Kent 'Elite' platform.
- We are working towards using Civica for all L&D activity, including the updating of training records, providing training course information and post-course evaluation.
- The 2020-21 departmental training plan budgets have been agreed, with a 3-monthly review cycle to allow for any additional input from from performance appraisals and changes within the department.
- Work continues on producing the next set of products for the Operational Training library.
- We continue to see success at increasing our mandatory training compliance.

ACTIONS: Continue with ongoing actions to improve the rate of completion of Mandatory Training items

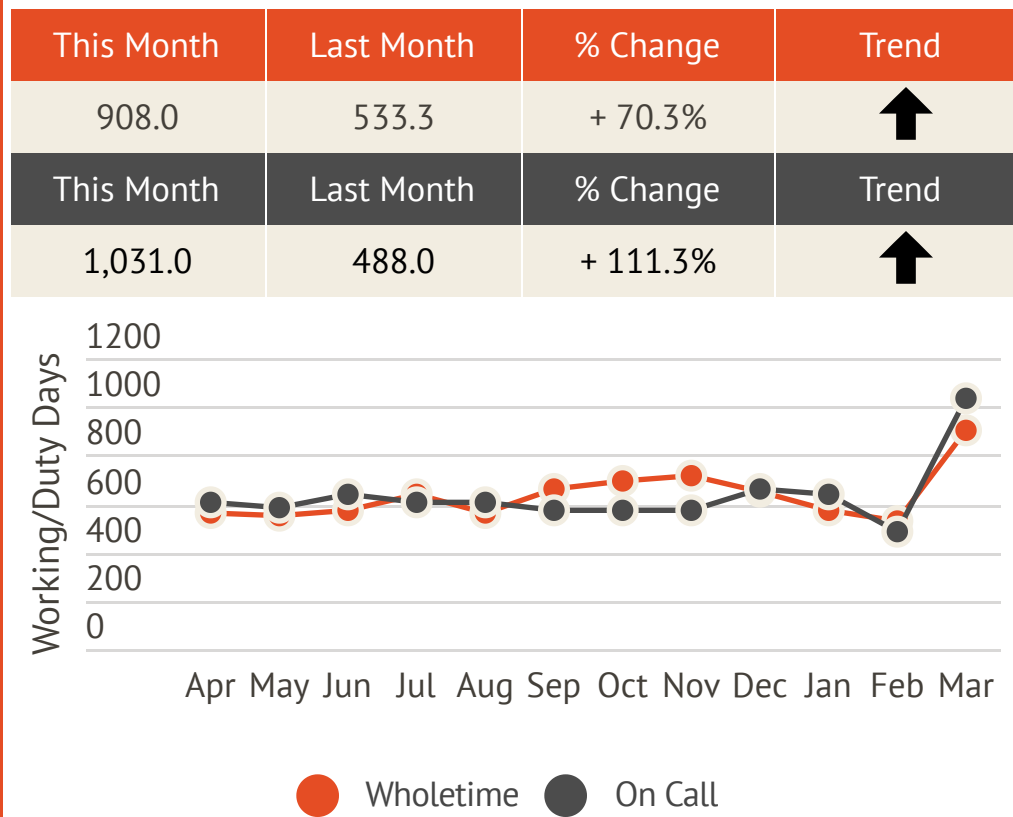
Insights

- This is also the first quarter where we have been able to report on working/duty days lost to sickness, which will allow us to compare within our sector, both locally and nationally.
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic began to be felt during the quarter. Overall, 25.4% of all duty days lost to sickness in the quarter were attributed to Covid-19 related conditions. In this quarter's report, we have included an additional sixth absence reason, to illustrate what might have been noted were we not experiencing high levels of Covid-19 related absence.
- Nationally, 38% of all 2018/19 Wholetime sickness absence was attributed to Musculo-Skeletal conditions. For On Call, the figure was 45%. This continues to be in excess of our reported figures in the quarter. (Source: National Fire & Rescue Service OH Performance Report 2018/19, prepared by Cleveland Fire Brigade).
- Nationally, 13% of all 2018/19 Control sickness absence was attributed to Musculo-Skeletal conditions. Our Q4 figure of 15.5% is slightly in excess of this. (Source: National Fire & Rescue Service OH Performance Report 2018/19, prepared by Cleveland Fire Brigade).
- There were 14 periods of absence with "Cause known, but not specified" recorded in the quarter. (Up from 10 in Q3).
- Of 234 cases of absence in excess of 7 days, only 48 cases (13%) have a recorded fit note. (Non-COVID-19 absence only). This is a reduction from 15% in Q3.

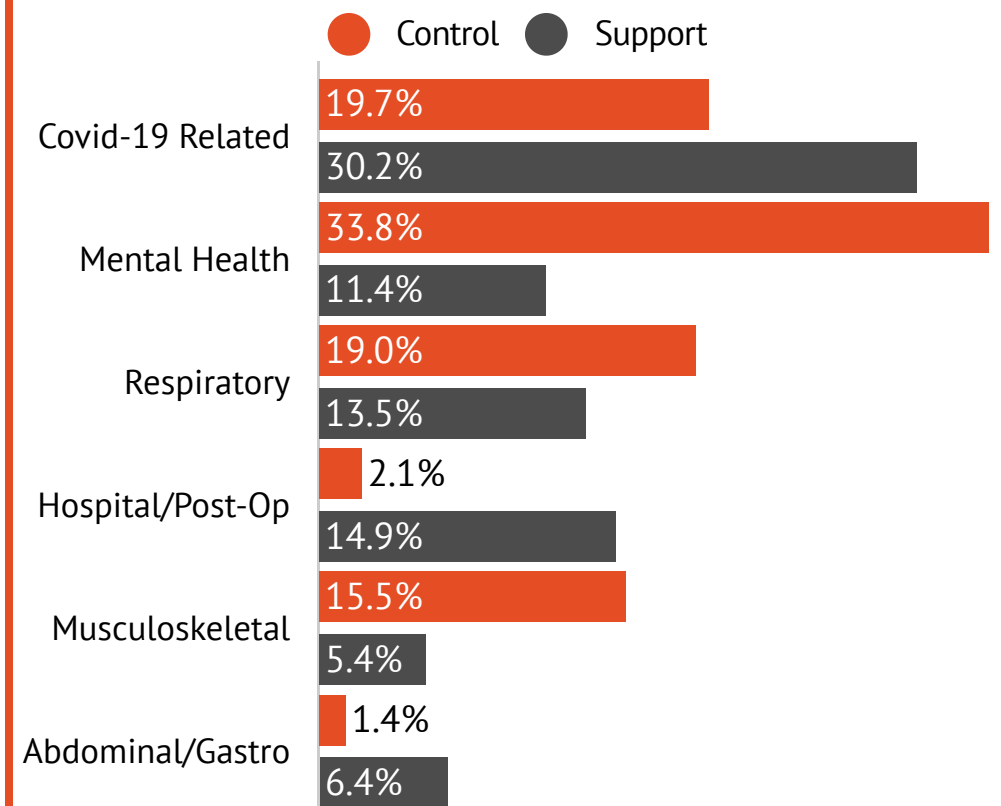
TOP ABSENCE REASONS Q4 - GREY BOOK



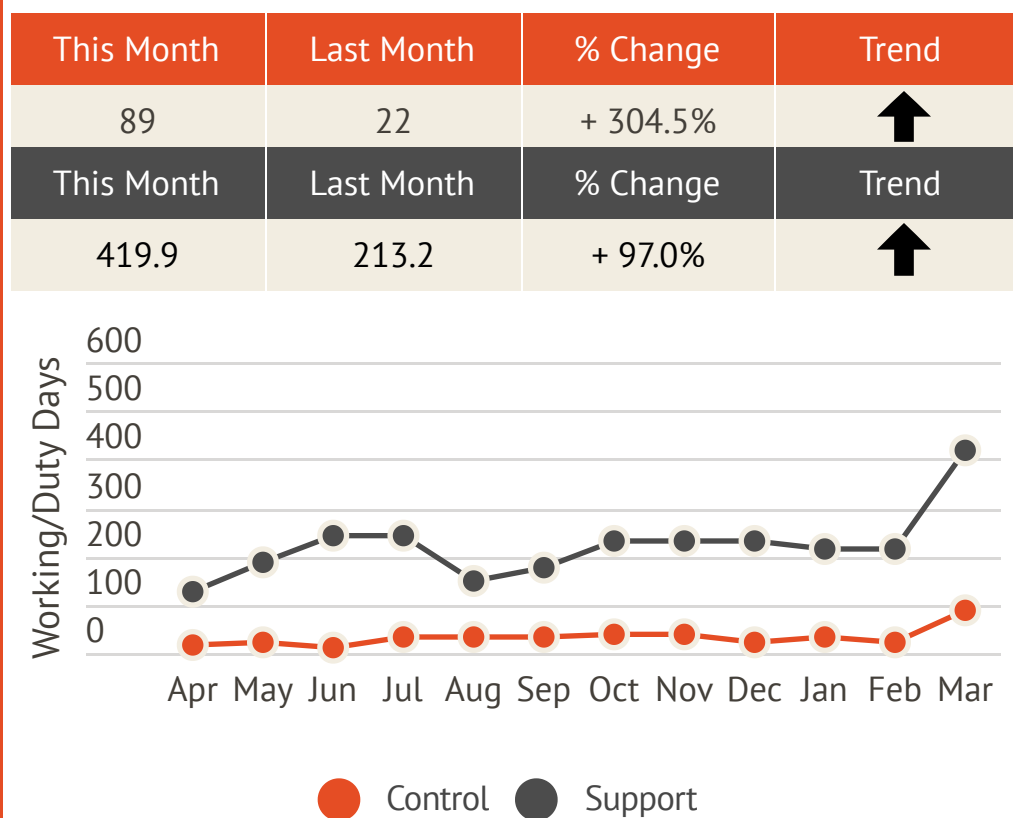
DAYS LOST TO SICKNESS - GREY BOOK



TOP ABSENCE REASONS Q4 - CONTROL/SUPPORT

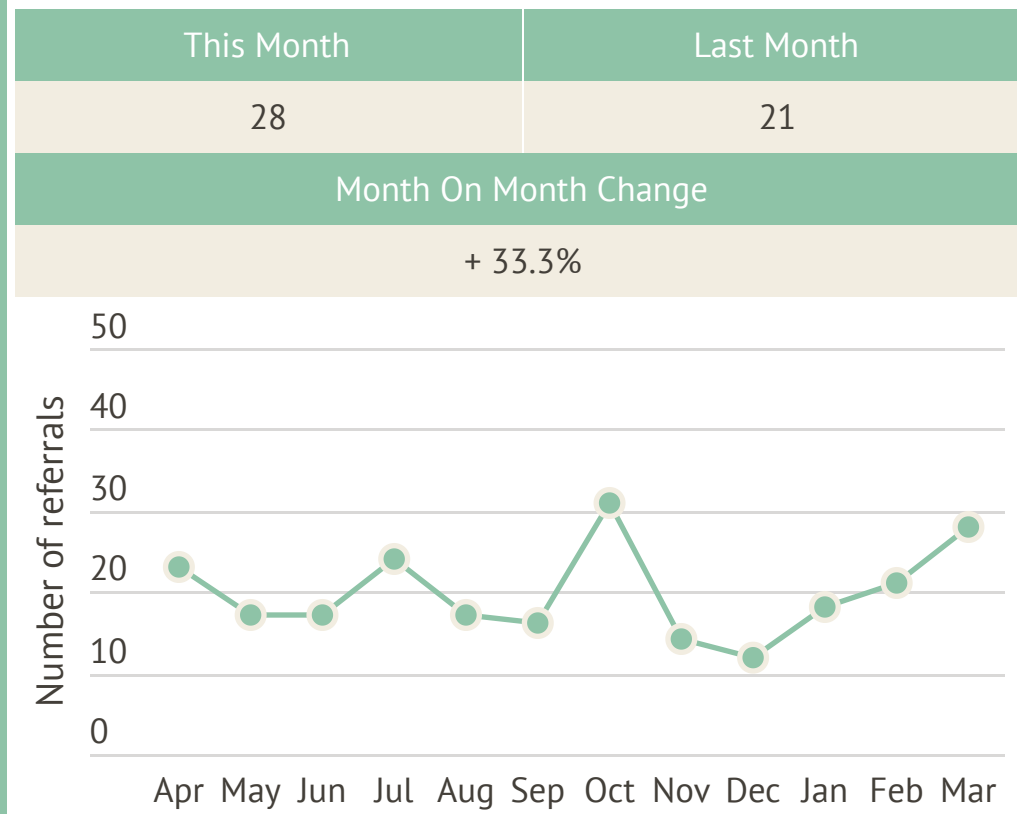


DAYS LOST TO SICKNESS - CONTROL/SUPPORT

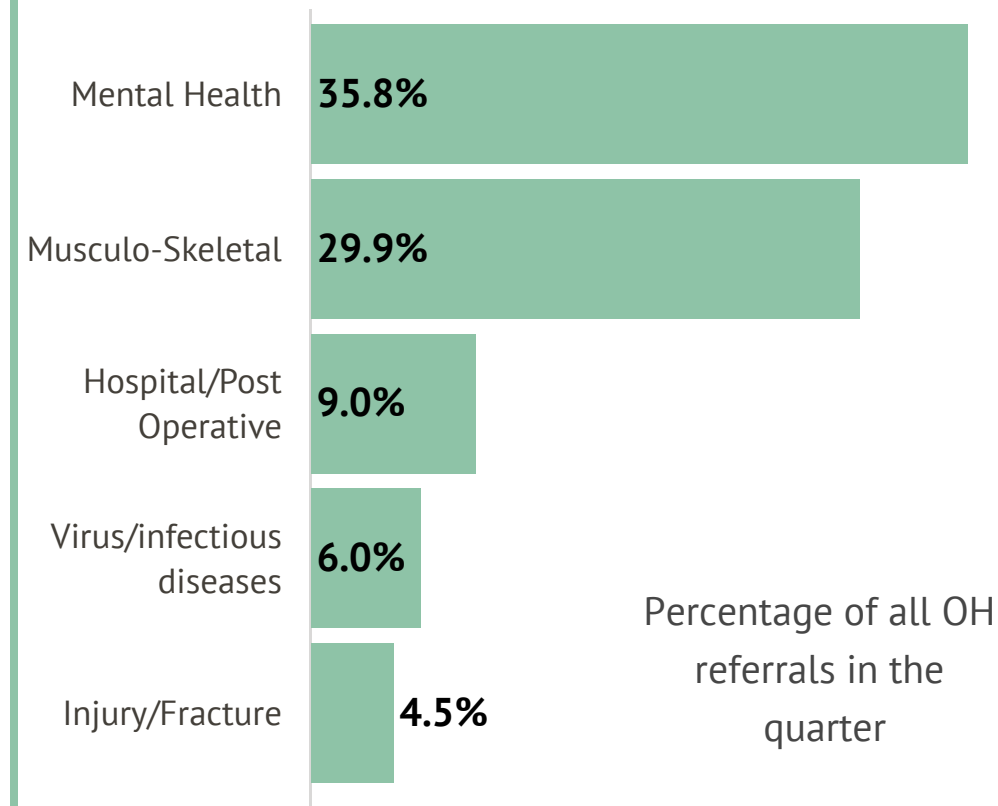


ACTION: We will calculate indicative costs of sickness absence and obtain local and national comparators

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRALS



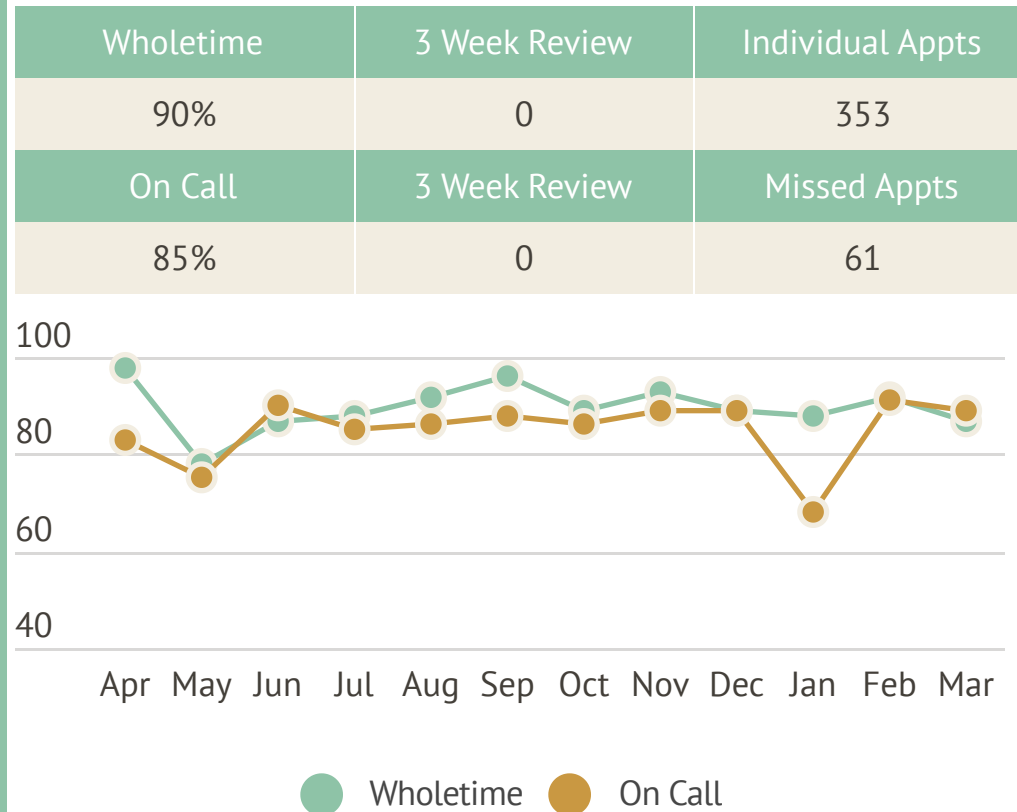
TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL - Q4 2019/20



Insights

- Work to look at absence timelines relating to referrals has stalled due to COVID-19 work pressures but will resume in Q2.
- Fitness testing has been suspended during lockdown, but publication of the Service generic risk assessment is imminent and we will then look at the risks and controls which may allow resumption of testing.
- Implementation of the new fitness policy was put on hold with the suspension of testing, as previously mentioned we will look at resumption and review when safe controls are in place.
- Case review will be discussed with the HR team and potential for a monthly case review meeting to look at long term absence will be explored with the aim of ensuring consistency and momentum to aid the reduction of absence attributable to sickness.
- The increase in referrals is in part COVID-19 related; mental health issues have been magnified during lockdown and new pressures imposed due to the restriction affecting home and family life, finances, relationships and social isolation; wellbeing measures and resources have been put in place alongside existing resources to help support through this period.

FITECH TESTING - PASS RATES



FITNESS REVIEWS



65
Active Fitness Reviews
as at 26 May

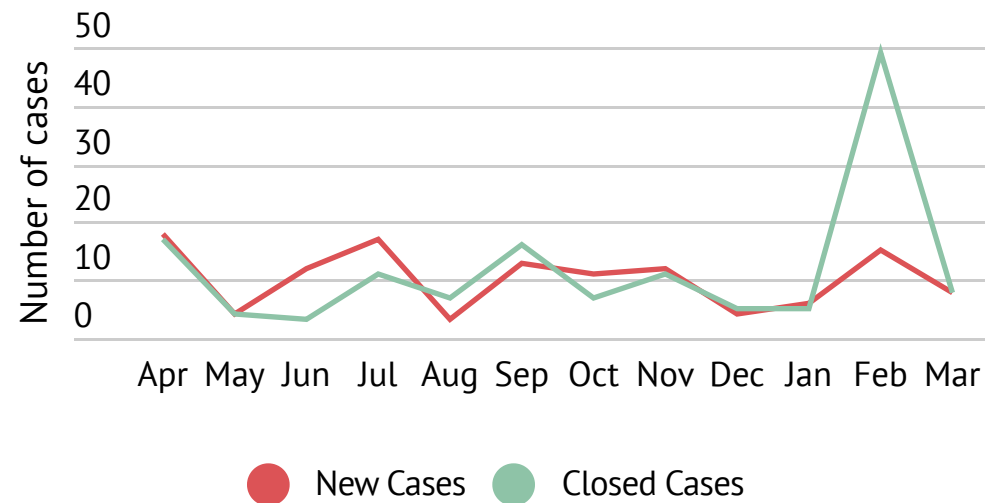


15
Number without
review appointments
booked

ACTION: We will refocus our energy on reviewing absence and corresponding referral timelines

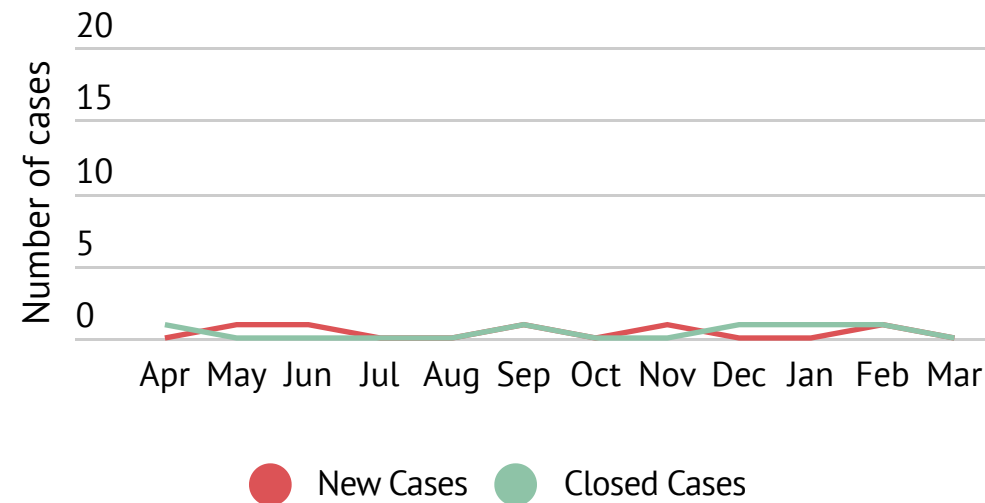
ATTENDANCE CASES

New	Closed	Ongoing	Trend
8	8	34	↓
Last Month	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
15	101 days	138 days	↑



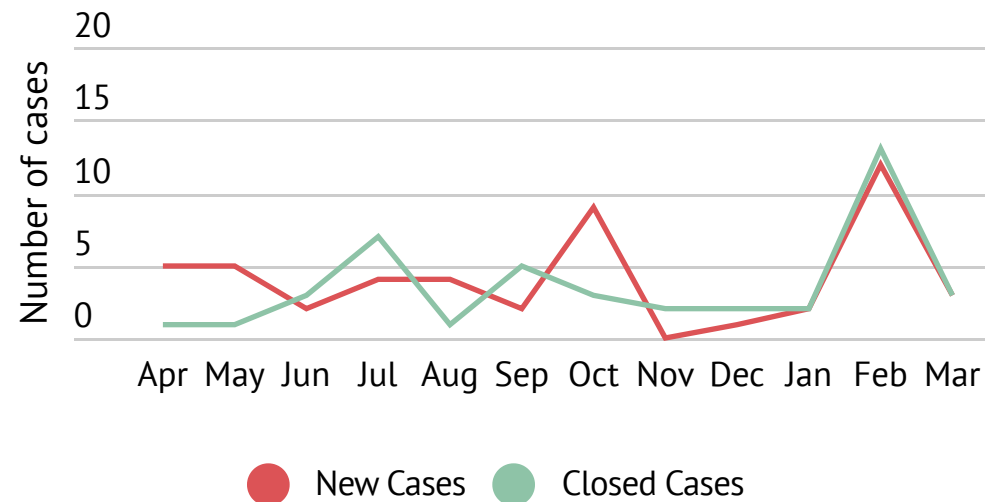
DISCIPLINARY CASES

New	Closed	Ongoing	Trend
0	0	3	↑
Last Month	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
1	-	287 days	↓



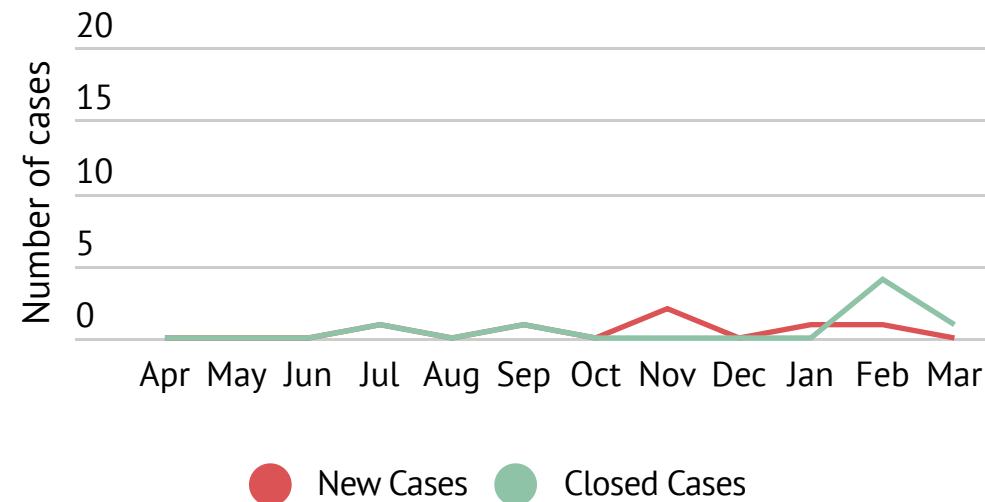
PERFORMANCE CASES

New	Closed	Ongoing	Trend
3	3	16	↑
Last Month	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
0	101 days	68 days	↑



GRIEVANCE CASES

New	Closed	Ongoing	Trend
0	1	2	↓
Last Month	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
2	42 days	176 days	↑



Insights

- We have channelled our energies into getting on top of our case management records and the positive impacts of this are beginning to reflect in the data. The number of cases and the duration of cases has reduced. This is because of improved housekeeping in the system and focused working with line managers to deal with issues at the lowest practicable level and to ensure that our approach supports timely and appropriate outcomes.
- Ongoing Attendance and Grievance case numbers are trending downwards, while the trends for Disciplinary and Performance case volumes are upwards. (Trends are linear and based upon the number of cases remaining open at the end of each of the past 12 months).
- A small number of older, longstanding cases are causing average case ages to remain high and the trend for these figures remain upwards while those cases remain open.
- A fortnightly data-driven meeting, facilitated by our Workforce Analytics Lead and attended by representatives for the People Partnering Team, as well as the Assistant Director of Human Resources, is keeping focus on longstanding cases and pushing them towards resolution wherever possible.
- Some casework activity has been placed on hold during the pandemic, at line managers' request, but the ongoing case volumes and average case age include these cases, so that they do not "slip off our radar".

ACTION: Continue to focus on supporting the management of casework