



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Service Leadership Team</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	6b
	<b>Strategic Board</b>		9
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	<b>Report Number</b>	<b>20-125</b>
	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2020		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Hannah Phipps, Head of Employment Policy & Practice Martin Jones, Workforce Analytics Lead		
<b>Presented By:</b>	Karl Edwards, Director of Corporate Services		
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Annual Workforce Report</b>		
<b>Type of Report:</b>	Information		

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Member of the Strategic Board (Fire and Rescue) are asked to note the contents of the report. This paper provides an overview for the Strategic Board (Fire and Rescue) on the Service's workforce for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020.

Further to the recommendations made within the Annual Workforce Report for 2018, the reporting period for this annual report has now been brought in line with Home Office reporting and has moved from calendar year to financial year.

## 2. BACKGROUND

It should be noted that the overall headcount and full time equivalent (FTE) figures includes one employee that was on a career break on 31 March 2020 and hence there is a minor variation from the figures reported in the March 2020 Finance Report. For the purposes of this paper a series of data extracts were taken from our HR information system to drill down to the specific workforce metrics. Exit interview data and Recruitment and Selection data have also been used to provide further analysis.

Calculations for averages and percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

Where reference is made to national statistics the source is Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pension Statistics: England, April 2018 to March 2019 Published Oct 2019.

### **3. WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS**

Please see overleaf (further detailed data can be found within the Appendix).



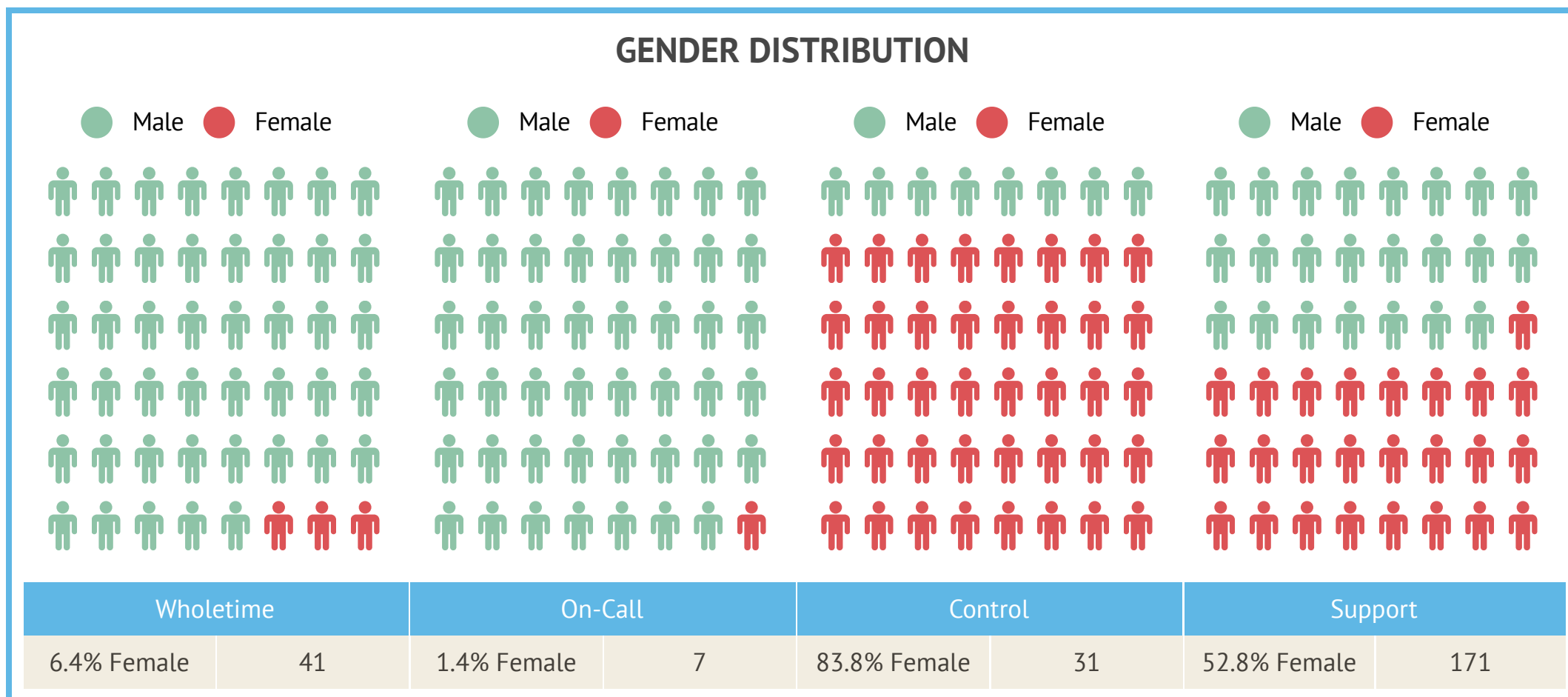
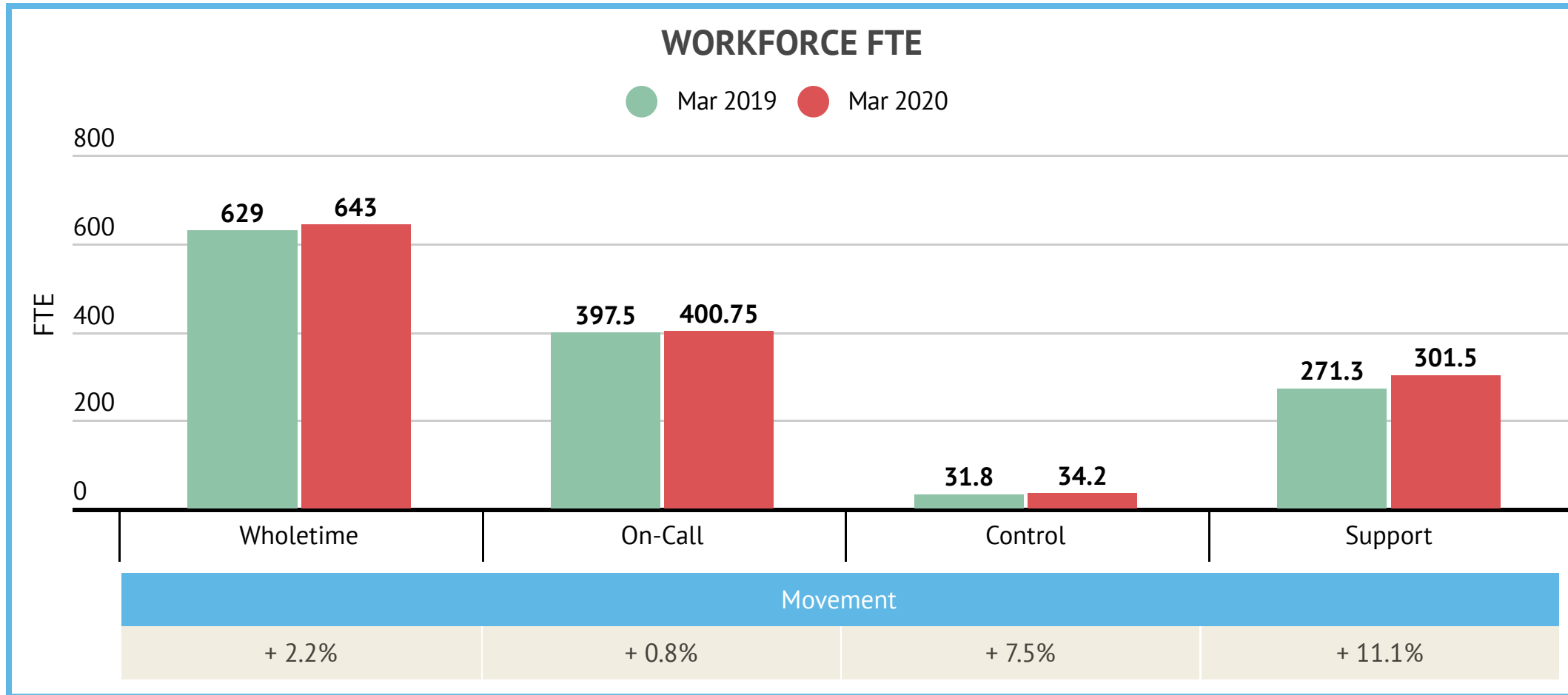
Essex County  
Fire & Rescue Service

# Annual Workforce Report

[workforceinfo@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:workforceinfo@essex-fire.gov.uk)

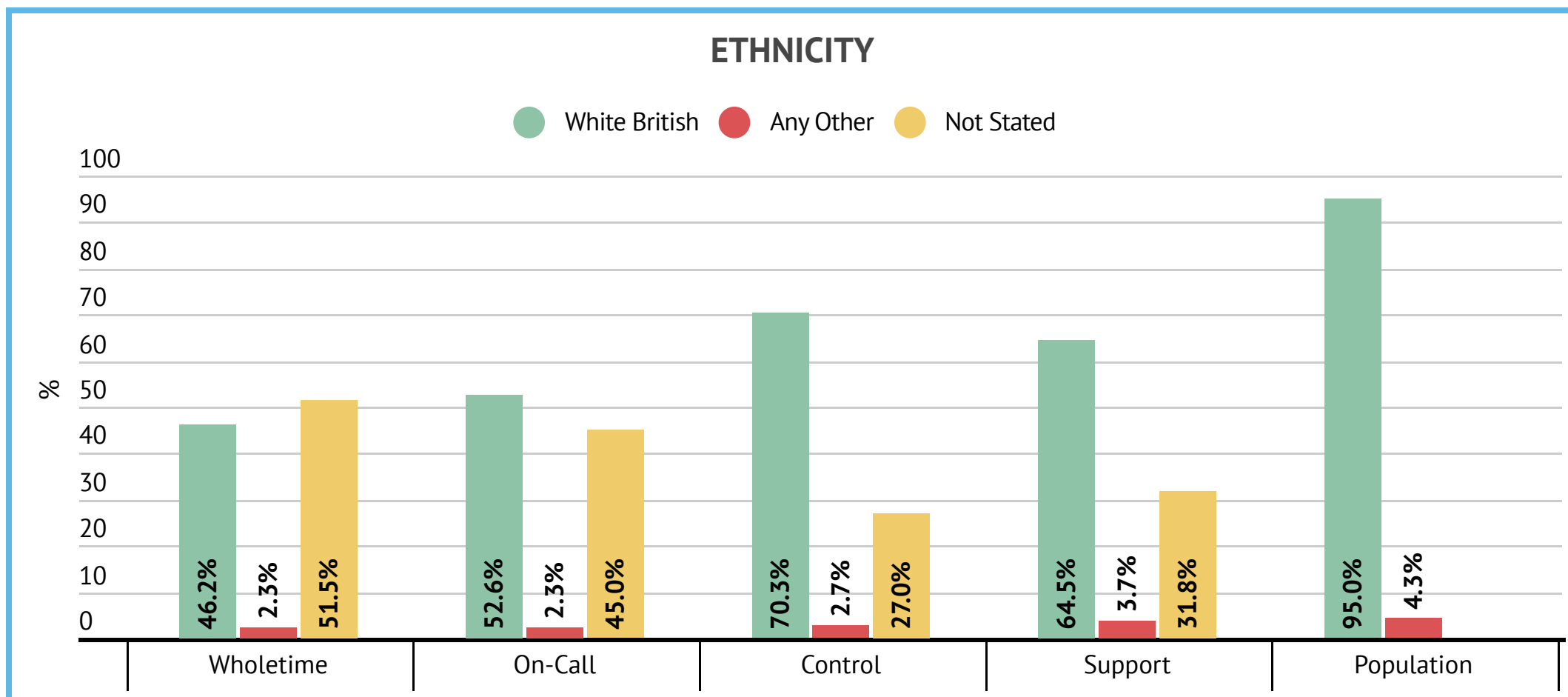
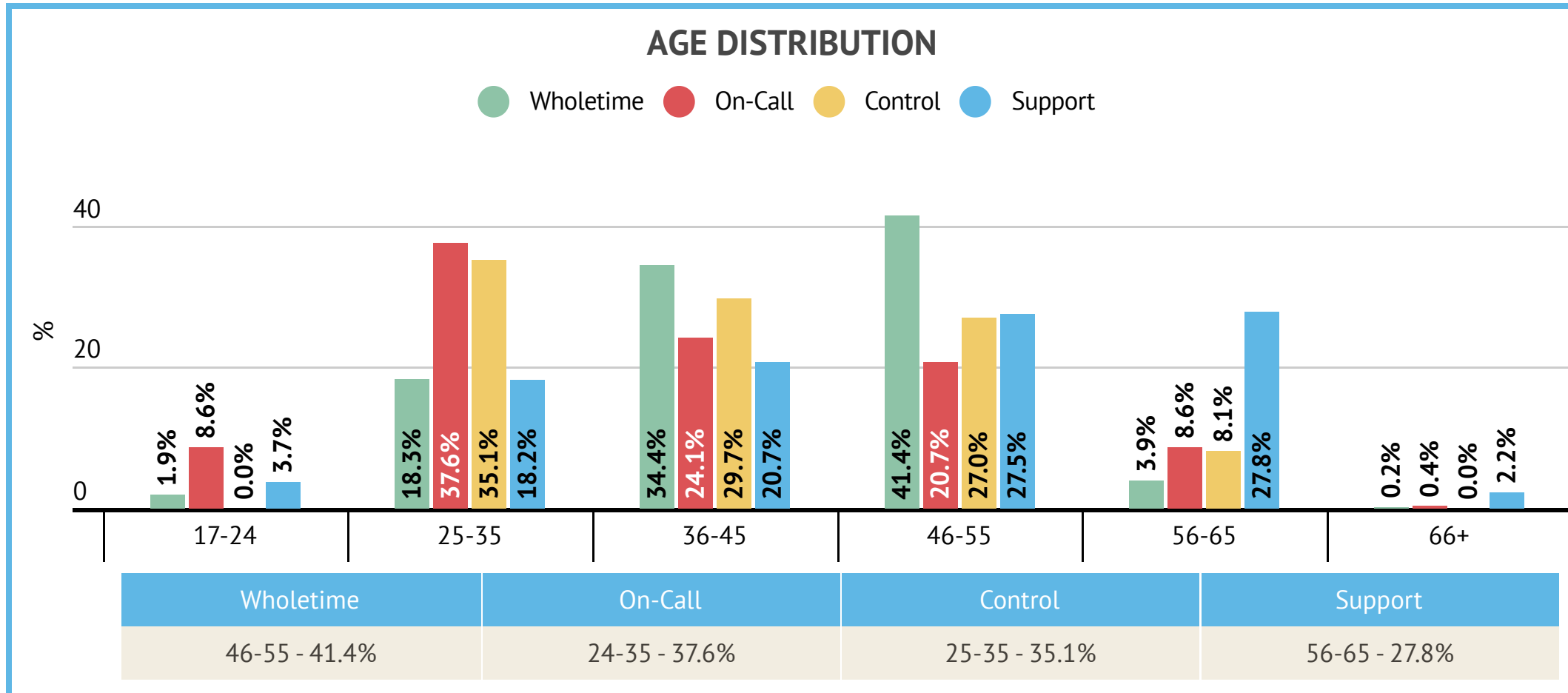
# 2019/20

Data as at 31 March 2020



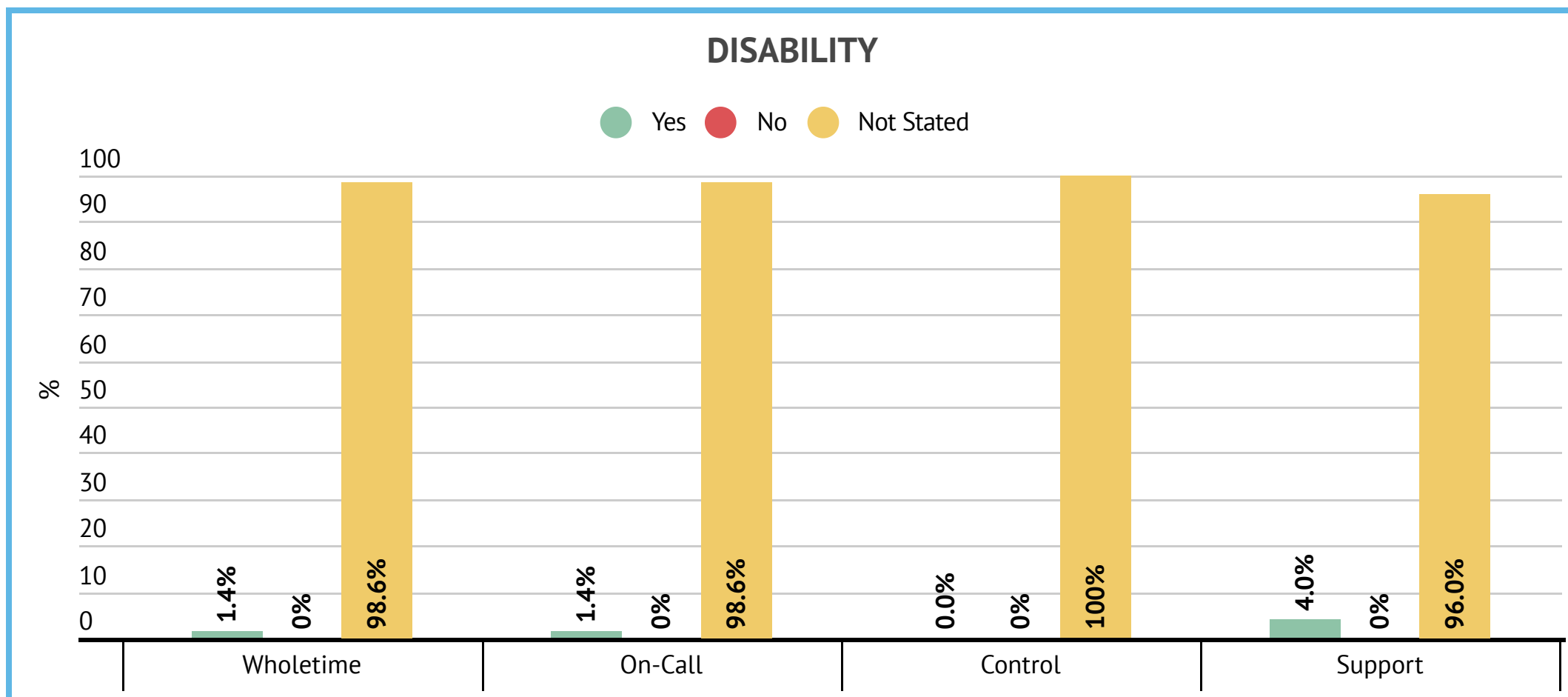
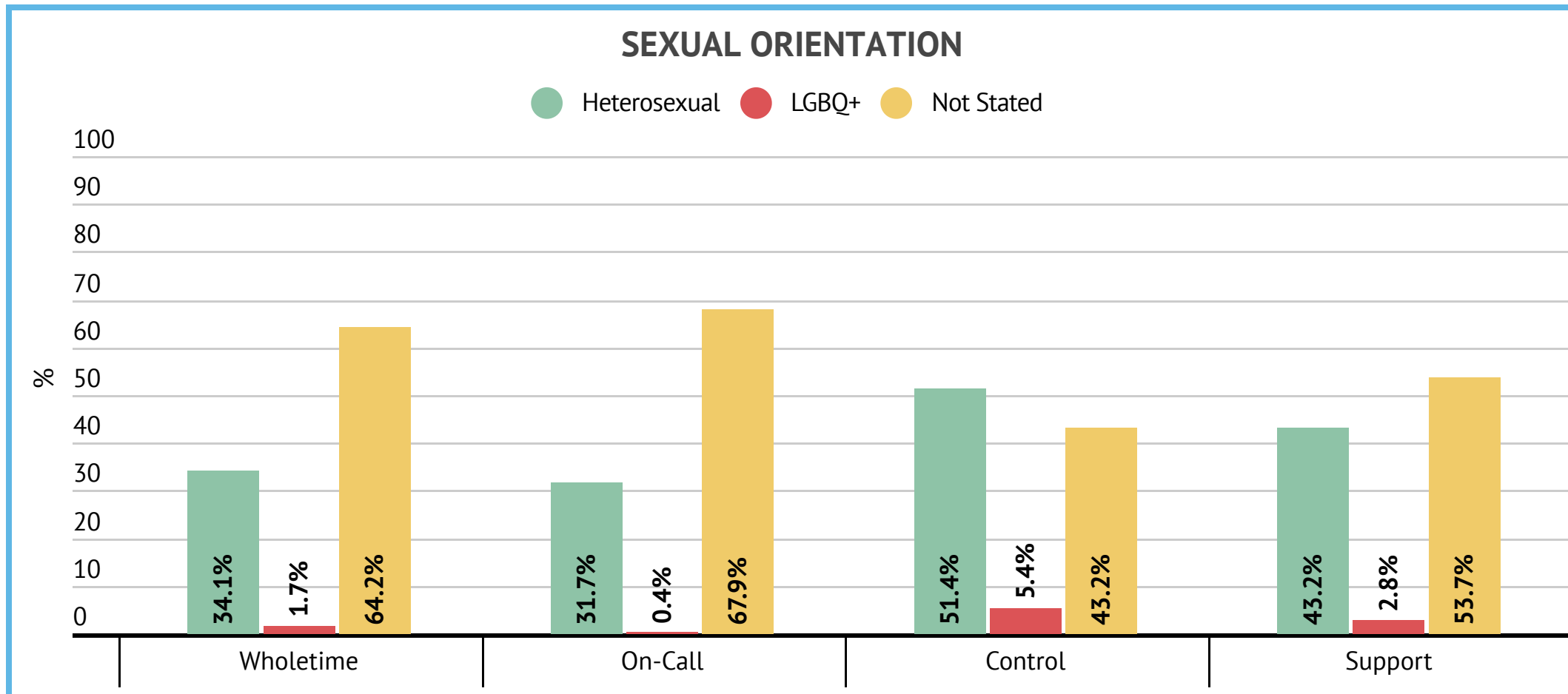
## Insights

- As at 31 March 2020, the organisation employed 1517 employees. The overall headcount has increased by 2.9%. Wholetime FTE increased is reflective of the continued recruitment of Wholetime squads during 2019.
- of the 31 March 2020 headcount, 16.5% of employees are female and 83.5% male. This represents an increase of 26 female employees overall. The largest increase in female employee numbers was in Support, where 19 more female employees were employed at 31 March 2020. However, the biggest increase in female employees as a percentage was in On-Call, where the increase of 2 female firefighters represents an increase of 40% on the previous year.
- Nationally 6.4% of firefighters were female in England as at 31 March 2019. This compares with 5.7% in the previous year and 4.5% five years ago and 3.6% ten years ago. For the first time since 2006 the main reason for the increase in the proportion of firefighters who are female is due to the increase in female firefighters, as opposed to a decrease in male firefighters.
- 6.4% of Wholetime and 1.4% of On-Call firefighters in ECFRS were female as at 31 March 2020. Overall, 4.2% of all ECFRS firefighters were female, compared to 6.4% nationally.
- Nationally the percentage of support staff that are female is 53.2% as at 31 March 2019 which is reflected in ECFRS with 52.2% as at 31 March 2019 and 52.8% as at 31 March 2020.
- 16.7% of all staff employed by FRAs were women as at 31 March 2019 whereas ECFRS had 15.3% as at 31 March 2019 and 16.5% as at 31 March 2020.
- Gender data from the last census shows that for the county of Essex 51% female and 49% males (2011 Census Data ONS)



## Insights

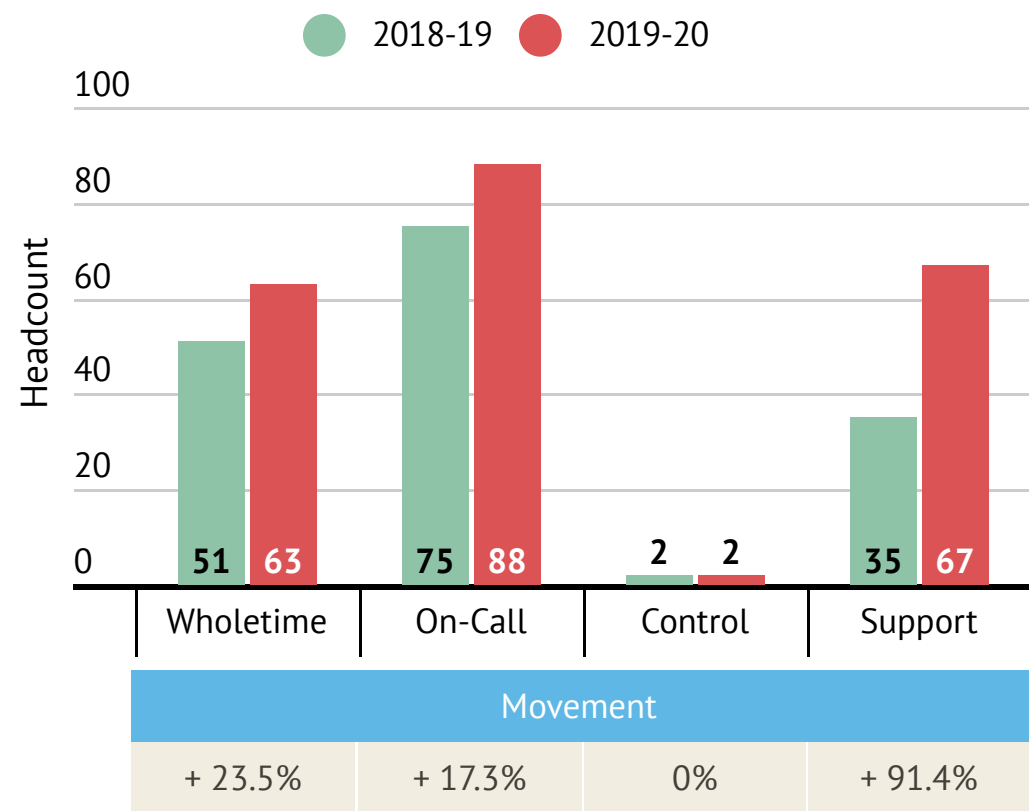
- The age profile of the workforce remains largely unchanged from the previous reporting period with the majority of the workforce falling in the 46-55 age group.
- Nationally the age of firefighters have been gradually increasing. From 2011 to 2018 the average age of firefighters gradually increased from 40 to 42. For the year 2018-19 the average age of firefighters nationally decreased to 41. The Service had been reflective of the national trend however we are yet to see the decreasing trend. This is a legacy of a recruitment freeze that lasted from 2009 to 2018. There are also a high number of Wholetime firefighters approaching a return of service where they can retire, which will also have an effect on our workforce age profile.
- The majority age group across all employee groups remains unchanged apart from Support which saw a shift in the workforce profile from a majority age group of 46-55 to 56-65.
- There remains a lack of monitoring data available. Nevertheless, based on current data the Service is not representative of the community which it serves. This compares with 14.6% of the English population in the 2011 Census belonging to an ethnic minority group. The census data shows that Essex has become more diverse although most of the Essex residents are in the White ethnic group; at 94.4%.
- Of the 55.5% of employees who have provided this information 95% self-identified as White British with 4.7% identifying as another ethnic group.
- National statistics show that 4.3% of firefighters were from an ethnic minority group in England as at 31 March 2019. This compares with 4.1% in the previous year. This has been caused by the number of white firefighters decreasing by a greater rate than the number of firefighters from an ethnic minority group.



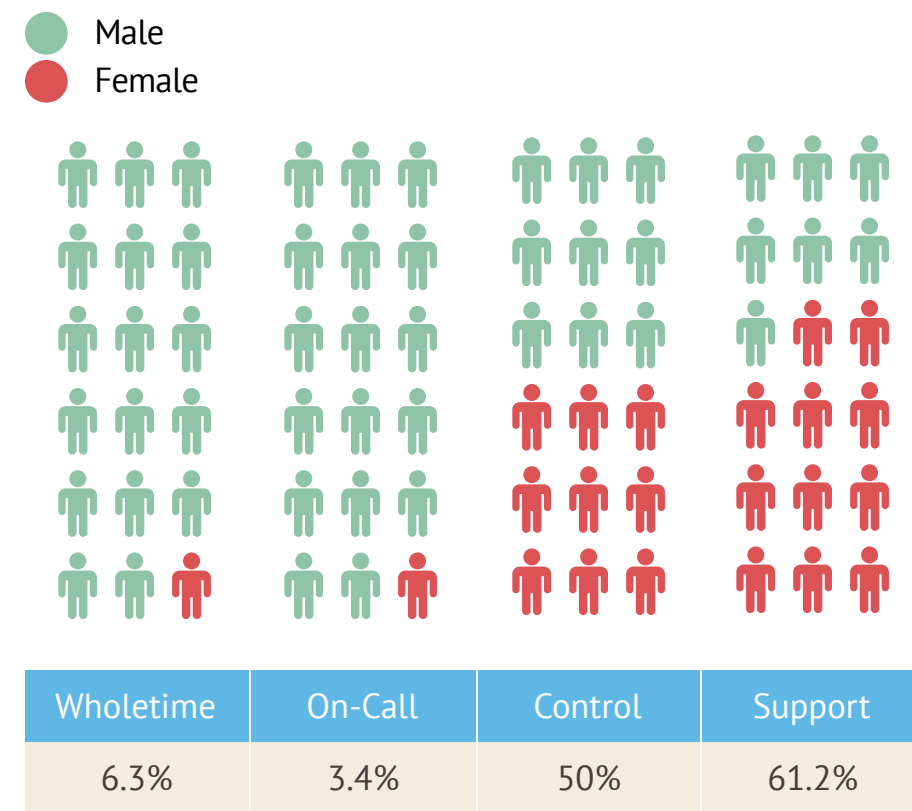
## Insights

- The data being collected by the Service is getting better and, of those who recorded their information, 1.6% identified as LGBTQ+ compared with 1.1% in the previous report.
- The figures provided nationally since 2011 have shown the proportion of firefighters that stated they were gay, lesbian or bisexual has been 3% in each year between 2011 and 2019.
- As at 31 March 2020 1.9% of staff have recorded a disability however 98.1% did not answer the question on disability suggesting we have work to do in order to improve confidence in disclosing this information to us as an employer but the year on year figures show an improvement on disclosure.
- Nationally the disability statistics are collected for the Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pension Statistics but they are not sufficiently complete or comparable to publish at present.

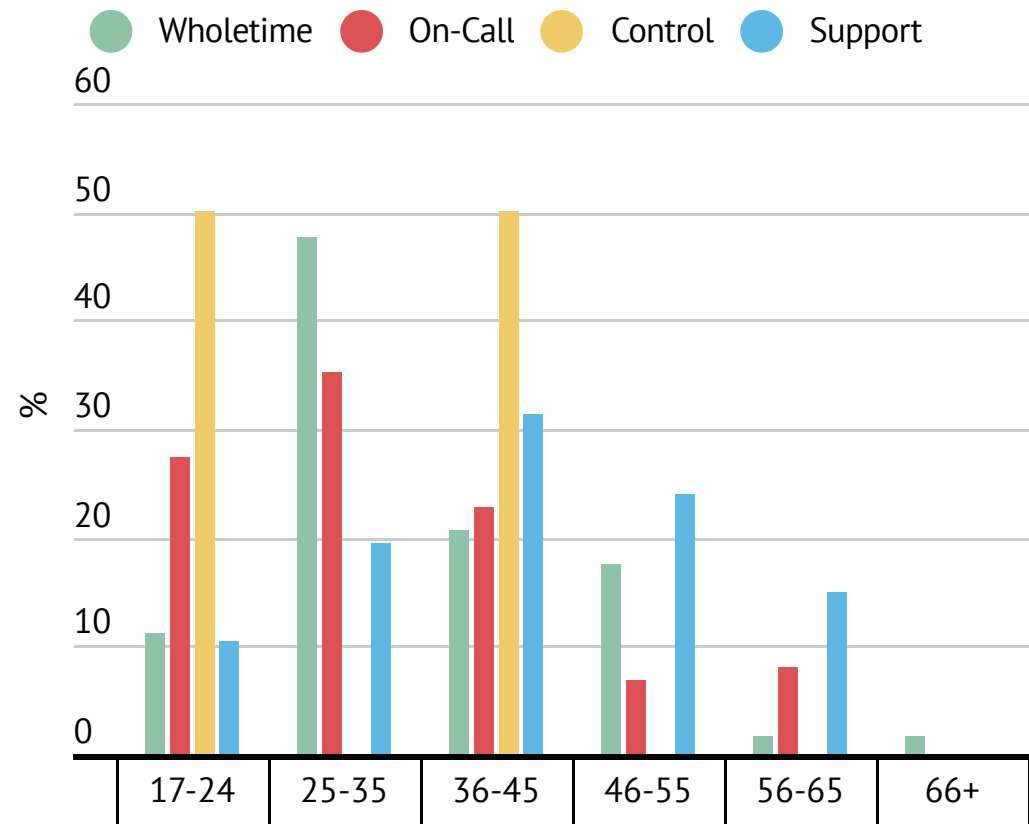
### NEW JOINERS - HEADCOUNT



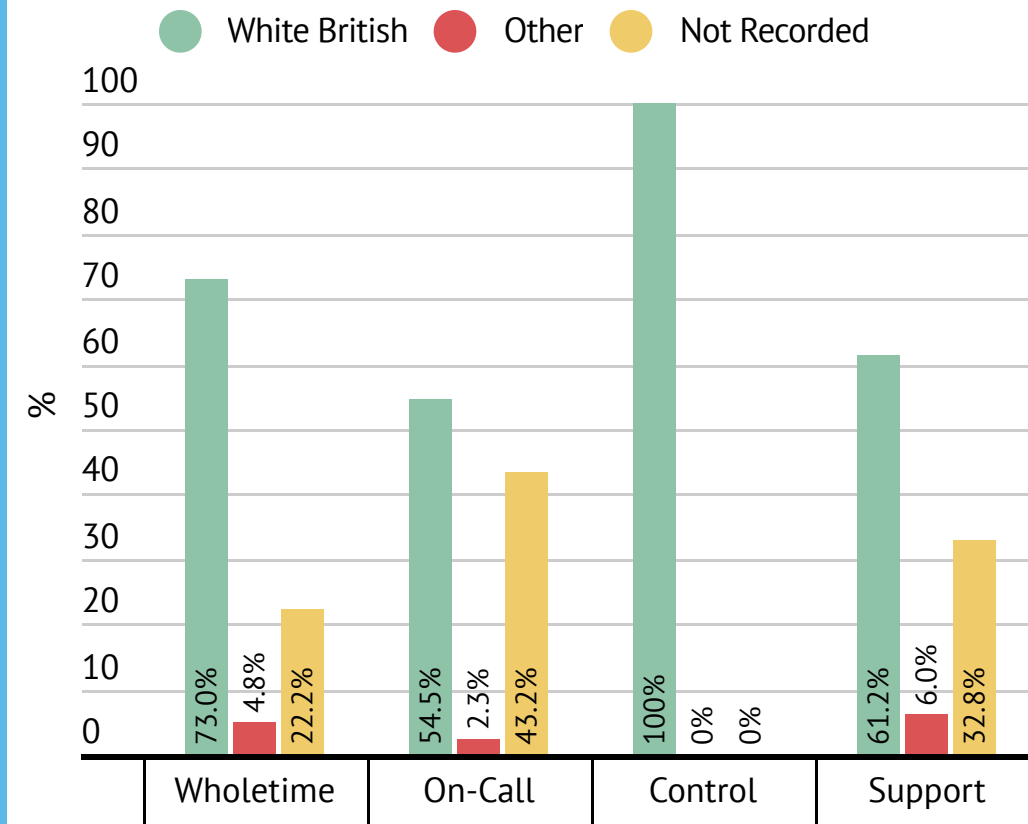
### NEW JOINERS - GENDER (% FEMALE)



### NEW JOINERS - AGE



### NEW JOINERS - ETHNICITY

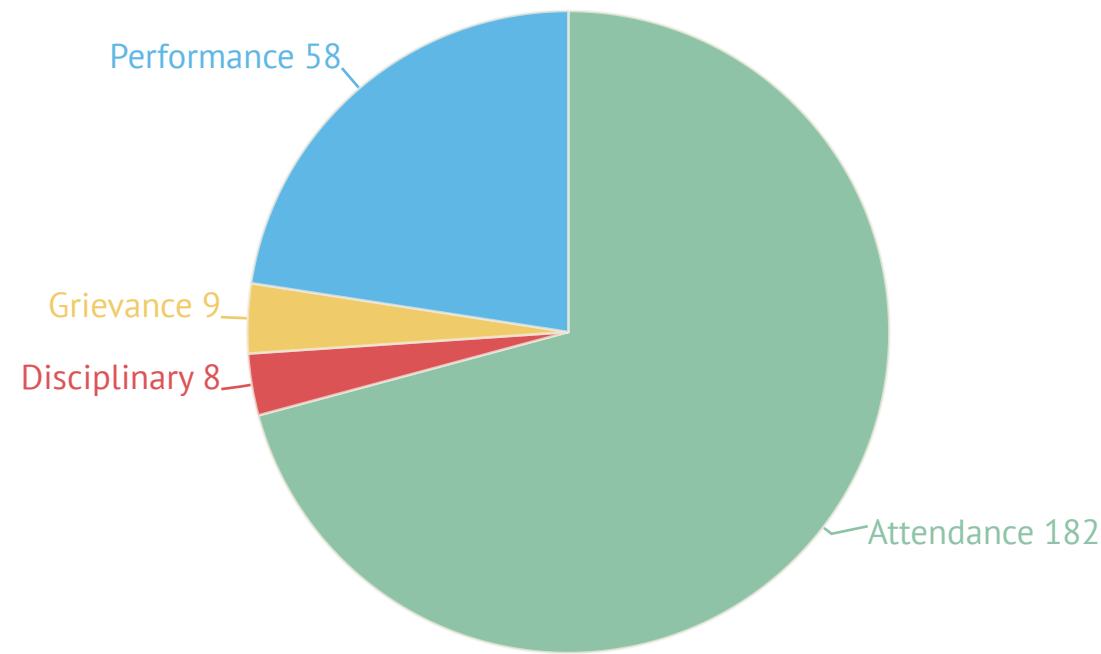


## Insights

- The most recent Wholetime campaign in 2019 was successful in that of the 1200 applications received 54 appointments were made and a reserve list of appointable candidates - an external talent pool - has been created that will make up a further squad. Whilst the campaign attracted a good number of quality candidates, the diversity of applications was extremely limited. Of the 109 applicants received from females, only 3 appointments were made. No disabilities were declared by the successful applicants and ethnicity declared was low throughout the process.
- As part of a collaboration with the Police, the Service has put in place a contract with Randstad, a single agency supplier to manage agency worker requirements. The new, single, provider will enable managers to access agency workers in a smarter way, with less processing required.
- During 2019/20 22.3% of new staff were female, this is greater than the current 16.5% of all employees that are female.
- During 2019/20 4.1% of all new staff recorded their ethnicity as other, this is greater than the current 2.6% of all employees that record their ethnicity as other.
- During 2019/20, 58.7% of new firefighters were 35 or under.



## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS - NUMBER OF CASES ACTIVE DURING 2019/20

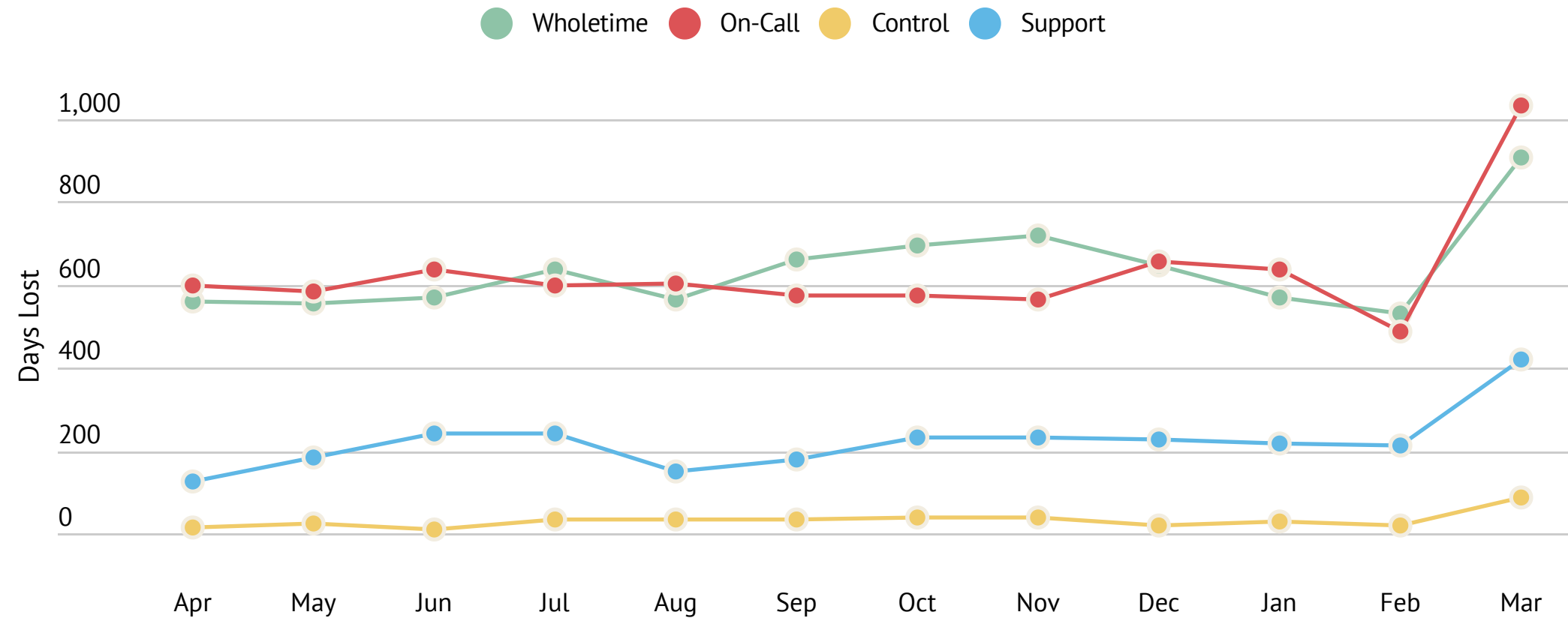


Case Type	Cases Active During 2018/19	Trend
Attendance	161	↑
Disciplinary	13	↓
Grievance	10	↓
Performance	45	↑

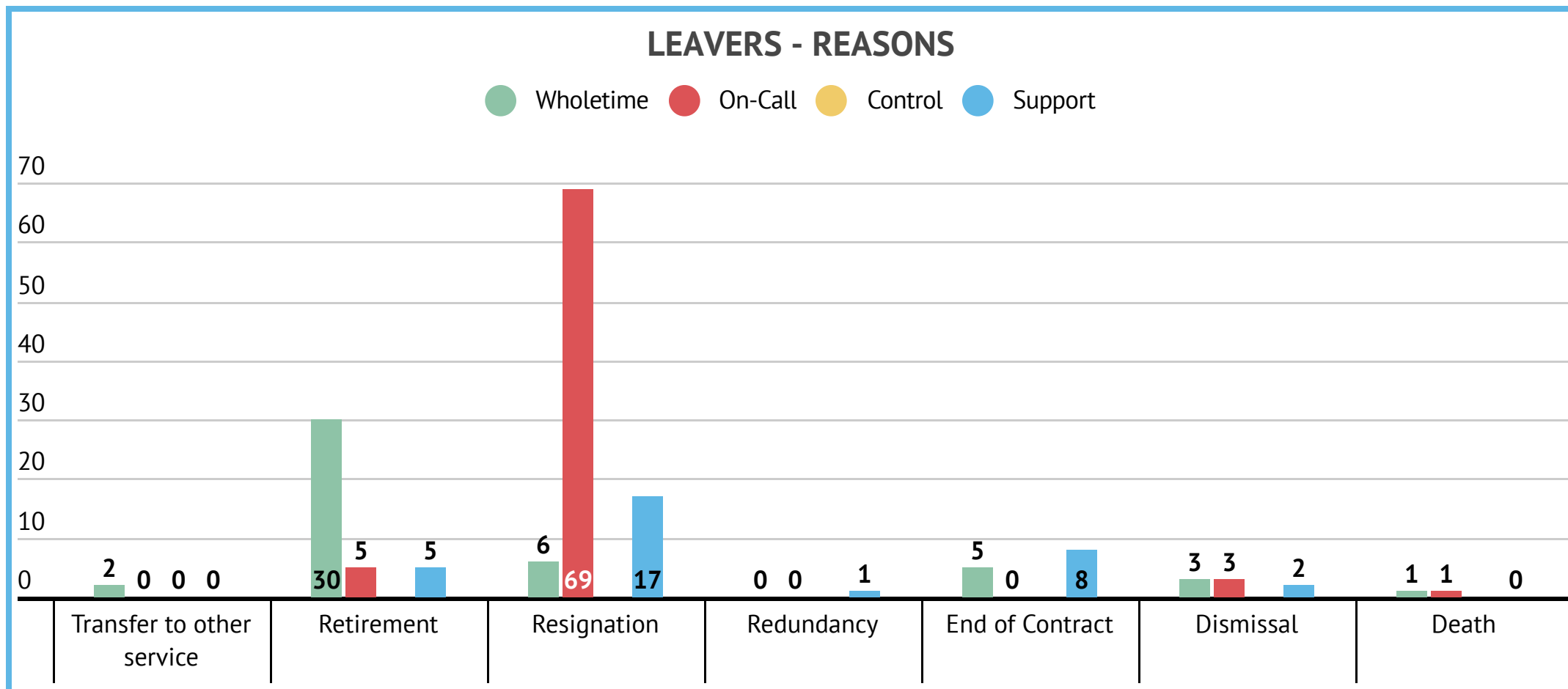
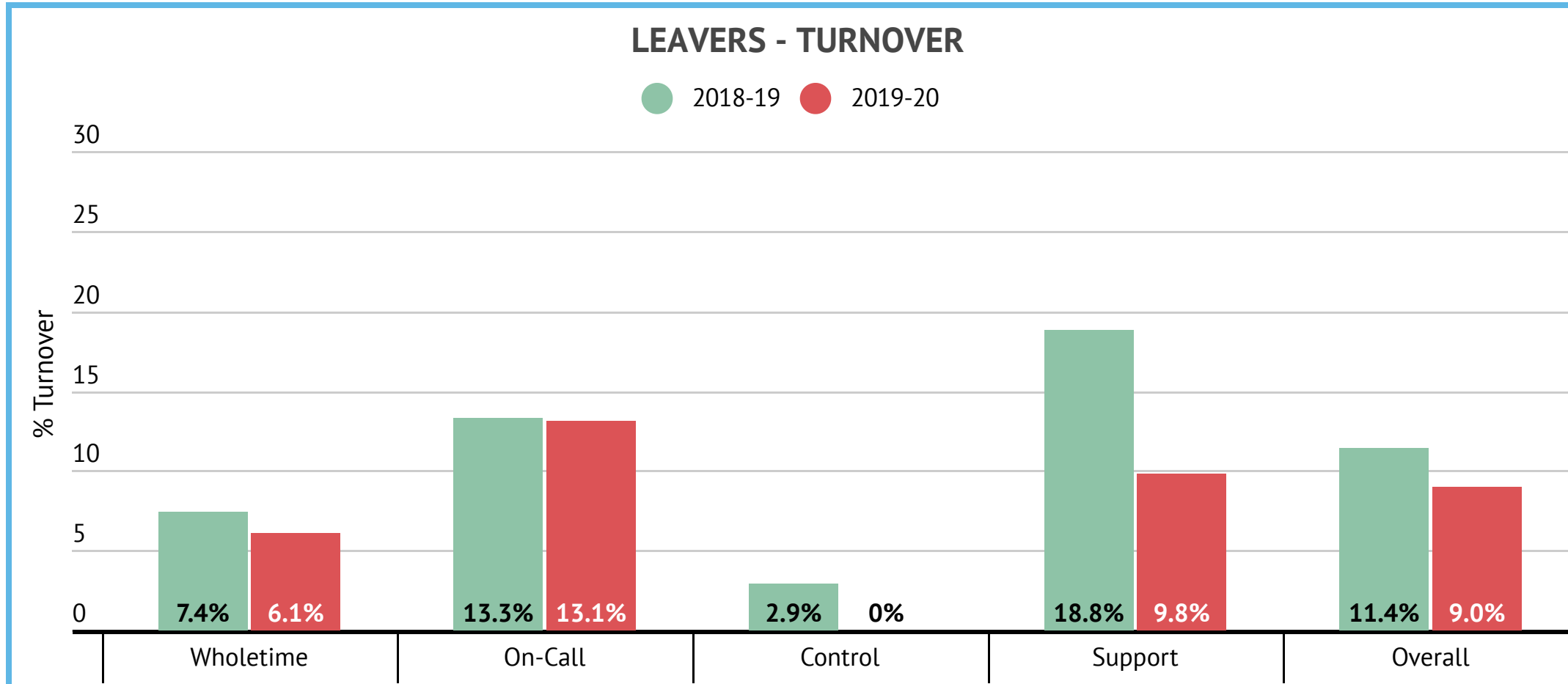
## Insights

- Throughout the period, the data for Attendance Management case duration suggested that cases were resolved within a relatively tight time-frame; the volumes of resolved cases closely tracked the number of new cases opened during the period.
- Cases can last longer than might be expected for a number of reasons, including a) slow/delayed responses from individuals, specifically those working at On-Call stations and b) ongoing absence due to long term sickness and/or fitness cases.
- Seemingly low volumes of Disciplinary and Grievance cases suggest that not all activity is being captured in our Cherwell case management database. This may be due to resolution being reached by informal means, for example mediation/facilitated conversations and a formal case has not been opened.
- Sickness absence levels across the Service are high in compared to the national average in the public sector and within other services. There does appear to be an increase, but it should be noted that there was a change in HR system in January 2019 and the 'rules/parameters' in the previous system (SAP) and the current system (Civica) have been set up differently and therefore not comparative.
- We are now able to extract data to present the volume of working/duty days lost to sickness absence in any reference period. We will soon be able to calculate lost time rates and the corresponding cost of absence which will enable us to compare in the sector, locally and nationally.

## EMPLOYEE SICKNESS ABSENCE - WORKING/DUTY DAYS LOST



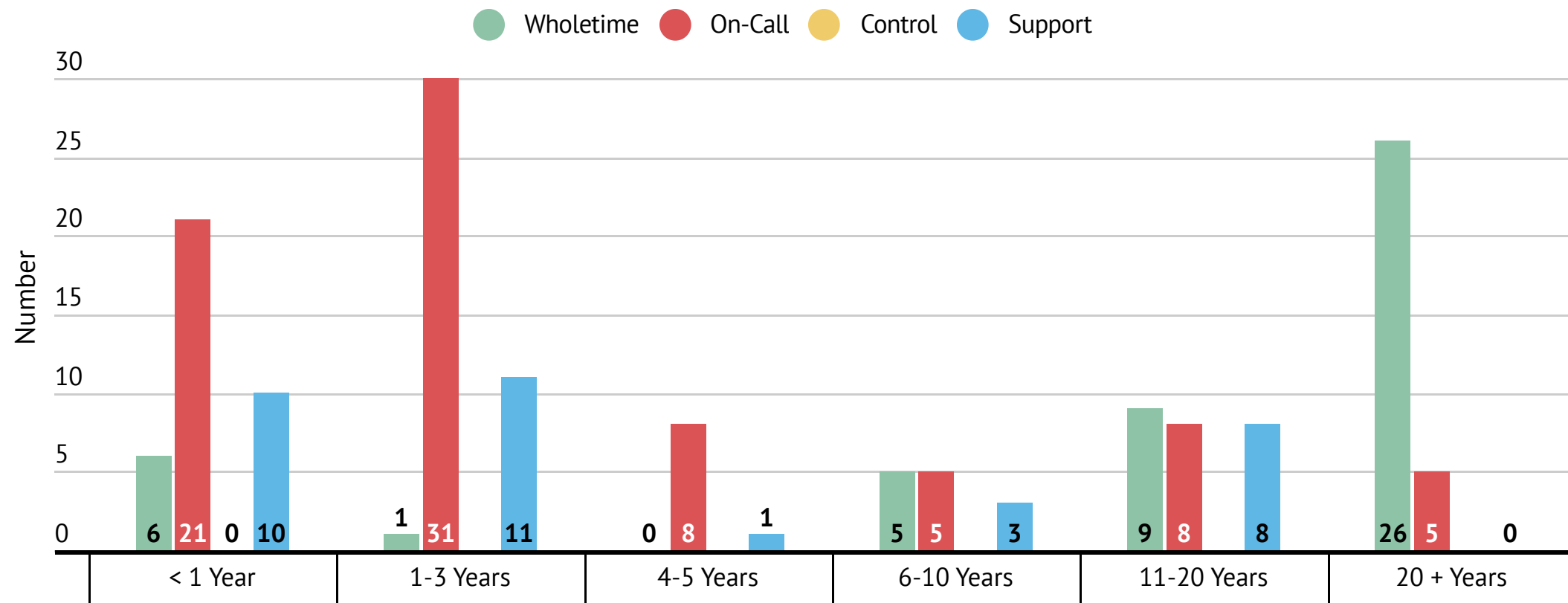




## Insights

- Employee turnover refers to the proportion of employees who leave an organisation over a set period, expressed as a percentage of total workforce numbers (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development). The overall total staff turnover figure for 2019/20 was 9.0% compared to 11.4% for 2018/19.
- The overall turnover rate for the Service is lower than the average total turnover for public sector services figure of 22%. Source: CIPD and the XpertHR Labour Turnover Rate Survey of 2018, which found that the average public sector turnover rate was 15.7%.
- Nationally, since data became available in 2010/11, the proportion of FRS staff that left the FRS increased slowly from 7% to 10% in 2018/19. This is partly caused by increases in the rate of staff retiring through either "normal retirement" or "early retirement". The most common reason nationally staff left FRSs in 2018/19 was because of "normal" or "early" retirement, which accounted for a total of 34% of those leaving.
- The most common reason for employees leaving the Service during 2019/20 was because of "resignation", which accounted for 58.2% of all leavers, the second highest reason for leaving is "retirement" which accounted for 25.2% of leavers during the period and these predominantly fell within the Wholetime employee group.
- Overall the main reason for leaving for On-Call, Support and Control is "resignation" and natural turnover.

### LEAVERS - LENGTH OF SERVICE AT LEAVING



### Insights

- The majority of On-Call leavers left within 1-3 years and < 1 year.
- The majority of Wholetime leavers left within the 20+ years bracket, this will be linked to the fire pension schemes.
- A contributing factor to the higher turnover rate for On-Call remains those leaving On-Call roles to transfer to Wholetime and others resigning, citing work/life balance as their reason for resignation.
- Wholetime and Control turnover continues to remain low however the lead time and investment in our operational staff is likely to be more challenging than general recruitment across the public sector where workers are more likely to be suitably qualified and experienced for the roles they apply for.

## **4. OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS - ACTION BEING TAKEN**

### **4.1. Workforce Demographic Actions**

The Service is committed to improving fairness and valuing difference within our workforce. Whilst we are broadly comparable to the national picture, there is still more we need to do. In respect of ethnicity profile, nearly half of our employees have not stated and just over half are white British. It is important to understand the diversity of our existing workforce and we continue to reach out to our people to encourage them to update their records to improve this picture, so we have a more accurate view of our workforce diversity.

The 2019 Wholetime Recruitment campaign was successful in that all positions were appointed to with a high-quality cadre of candidate, however of the 109 females who initially registered and applied, only two were successful and offered positions. Further work has been done to explore what other Services have done and are successfully doing to attract, assess, select and on-board a more diverse workforce. Our plans, contained within the People Strategy, are to review our assessment and selection methodologies before we invest in the next recruitment campaign for Wholetime employees.

### **4.2. Turnover Actions**

During quarter 3 of 2019/20 On-call recruitment activity was focused on each of the converting Day Crewed stations and further activity was targeted at On-Call stations with high turnover. The team are continuing to find innovative ways in which to improve our conversion rates from initial attraction to successful appointment. The HR team have continued to work with the on-call project team to consider attraction campaign and innovative ways in which we can reach out to potential new candidates and reviewing availability.

Work is underway to develop a Workforce Plan to clearly identify any gaps in our workforce profiles, and propose a strategy for mitigating this; to ensure that the Service has an adequate supply of people with the skills, knowledge and experience required to achieve its strategic objectives efficiently and effectively, both in the short and long term.

### **4.3. Absence Actions**

The People Business Partnering Team within HR has undertaken a review of long-term absences exceeding 28 days. We have focused our business partners to work with managers on each case, ensuring that occupational health referrals are made where required and cases are bring actively managed under the attendance management procedure. Work has also been undertaken to produce additional guidance and arrangements are in place to regularly meet with managers and support their understanding of attendance management, building their confidence in tackling things early; and have commenced work to build materials to support them.

The wellbeing element of the People Strategy 2020-24 will focus on mental and physical health, as well as financial health and social activity, healthy eating and fitness. We will be setting up a wellbeing hub and have already begun our journey to strengthen our counselling, managing stress and trauma and bereavement services. We will work with Civica to explore changing the absence rules/parameters in Civica, so they accurately reflect lost days. We will review our Absence Management Policy and our absence

reporting will be extended to give a fuller picture of the trends and reasons for absence, what action is being taken and how this effort is achieving improvements.

#### **4.4. Employee Relations Actions**

We believe that every employee has the right to be treated fairly, inclusively, with kindness, equality, dignity and respect. We are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive working environment to foster such a culture. We are supporting managers to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination in a timely and consistent way. During the reporting periods there have been Dignity in our Workplace sessions delivered designed around interactive discussion about behaviour in our workplaces and the natural roles that we all tend to adopt that enable unacceptable behaviour to occur, continue and thrive. A Whistleblowing Policy and new Grievance Policy have been launched so that people can raise concerns without fear of consequences.

#### **5. BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional risk management implications.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications.

#### **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The Service is committed to creating an inclusive culture with a workforce that is high performing and values differences to benefit the communities it serves. Our People Strategy is our template for attracting, engaging, developing and retaining our most valuable asset – the people that work here. It provides the components that will equip us to transform our workplace to be more agile, change able and inclusive.

#### **8. WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT**

We meet regularly with our representative bodies. We listen to our employees through our annual Employee Survey. There are regular opportunities for two way communications via forums such as 'Your Voice', 'Manager Briefing' and 'Managers Cascade'.

#### **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### **10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no health and safety implications associated with the content of this paper.

## 11. APPENDIX

Table 1: Workforce Headcount / FTE					
Employee Group	31 Mar 2019		31 Mar 2020		FTE Variance
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	
Wholetime	630	629.00	645	643.00	+ 2.2%
On-Call	500	397.5	511	400.75	+ 0.8%
Control	35	31.8	37	34.2	+ 7.5%
Support	289	271.3	324	301.5	+ 11.1%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>1454</b>	<b>1340.7</b>	<b>1517</b>	<b>1379.5</b>	<b>+ 2.9%</b>

This section covers information on five diversity characteristics – age, sex, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. We also look to compare our staff data to the population we serve and work within and also to national fire and rescue service data.

Table 2: Age Profile				
Employee Group	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Wholetime	43.8	44.7	19.9	61.6
On-Call	39.3	37.2	18.5	70.2
Control	41.9	40.8	25.6	62.3
Support	47.2	49.1	18.4	75.7
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>75.7</b>

Table 3: Majority Age Group				
Employee Group	31 Mar 2019		31 Mar 2020	
	Majority Group	% of Employees in Group	Majority Group	% of Employees in Group
Wholetime	46-55	44.3%	46-55	41.4%
On-Call	25-35	39.0%	25-35	37.6%
Control	25-35	37.1%	25-35	35.1%
Support	46-55	31.5%	56-65	27.8%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>46-55</b>	<b>33.1%</b>	<b>46-55</b>	<b>31.1%</b>

Table 4: Sex Distribution				
Employee Group	31 Mar 2019		31 Mar 2020	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wholetime	94.1%	5.90%	93.6%	6.4%
On-Call	99.0%	1.0%	98.6%	1.4%
Control	14.3%	85.7%	16.2%	83.8%
Support	47.8%	52.2%	47.2%	52.8%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>83.5%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

Table 5: Ethnicity			
Employee Group	White British	Other	Not Recorded
Wholetime	46.2%	2.3%	51.5%
On-Call	52.6%	2.3%	45.0%
Control	70.3%	2.7%	27.0%
Support	64.5%	3.7%	31.8%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>52.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>

Table 6: Disability				
Employee Group	31 Mar 2019		31 Mar 2020	
	Disability	Not Stated	Disability	Not Stated
Wholetime	94.1%	5.90%	1.4%	98.6%
On-Call	99.0%	1.0%	1.4%	98.6%
Control	14.3%	85.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Support	47.8%	52.2%	4.0%	96.0%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>84.7%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>98.1%</b>

Table 7: Sexual Orientation			
Employee Group	Heterosexual	LGBQ+	Not Recorded
Wholetime	34.1%	1.7%	64.2%
On-Call	31.7%	0.2%	67.9%
Control	51.4%	5.4%	43.2%
Support	43.2%	2.8%	53.7%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>

## Workforce joiner diversity

Table 8: Workforce Joiner Gender		
Employee Group	Male	Female
Wholetime	93.7%	6.3%
On-Call	96.6%	3.4%
Control	50.0%	50.0%
Support	38.8%	61.2%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>77.7%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>

Table 9: Workforce Joiner Ethnicity			
Employee Group	White British	Other	Not Recorded
Wholetime	73.0%	4.8%	22.2%
On-Call	58.0%	2.2%	39.8%
Control	100.0%	8.0%	0.0%
Support	61.2%	6.0%	32.8%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>

Table 10: Workforce Joiner Age Distribution						
Employee Group	17-24	25-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+
Wholetime	11.1%	47.6%	20.6%	17.5%	1.6%	1.6%
On-Call	27.3%	35.2%	22.7%	6.8%	8.0%	0.0%
Control	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Support	10.4%	19.4%	31.3%	23.9%	14.9%	0.0%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

## TURNOVER

Table 11: Workforce Turnover		
Employee Group	2018-19	2019-20
Wholetime	7.4%	6.1%
On-Call	13.3%	13.1%
Control	2.9%	0.0%
Support	18.8	9.8%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>



## Leavers

Table 12: Reasons for Leaving							
Employee Group	Transfer to other service	Retirement	Resignation	Redundancy	End of Contract	Dismissal	Death
Wholetime	2	30	6	0	5	3	1
On-Call	0	5	69	0	0	3	1
Control	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Support	0	5	17	1	8	2	0
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 13: Length of Service at Leaving						
Employee Group	< 1 Year	1-3 Years	4-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20 Years +
Wholetime	6	1	0	5	9	26
On-Call	21	31	8	5	8	5
Control	0	0	0	0	0	0
Support	10	11	1	3	8	0
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>

## Joiners/Recruitment

Table 14: Joiners		
Employee Group	2018-19	2019-20
Wholetime	51	58
On-Call	75	83
Control	2	2
Support	35	62
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>205</b>

## ABSENCE

Table 15: Sickness Absence	
Employee Group	Working/Duty Days Lost in 2019-20
Wholetime	7,617.7
On-Call	7,562.6
Control	392.6
Support	2,667.2
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>18,240.1</b>

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Table 17: Casework Volumes					
	Attendance	Disciplinary	Grievance	Performance	Total
New Cases	132	5	9	52	<b>198</b>
Closed Cases	148	5	7	42	<b>202</b>
Cases Active during year	182	8	9	58	<b>257</b>