



Essex County  
Fire & Rescue Service

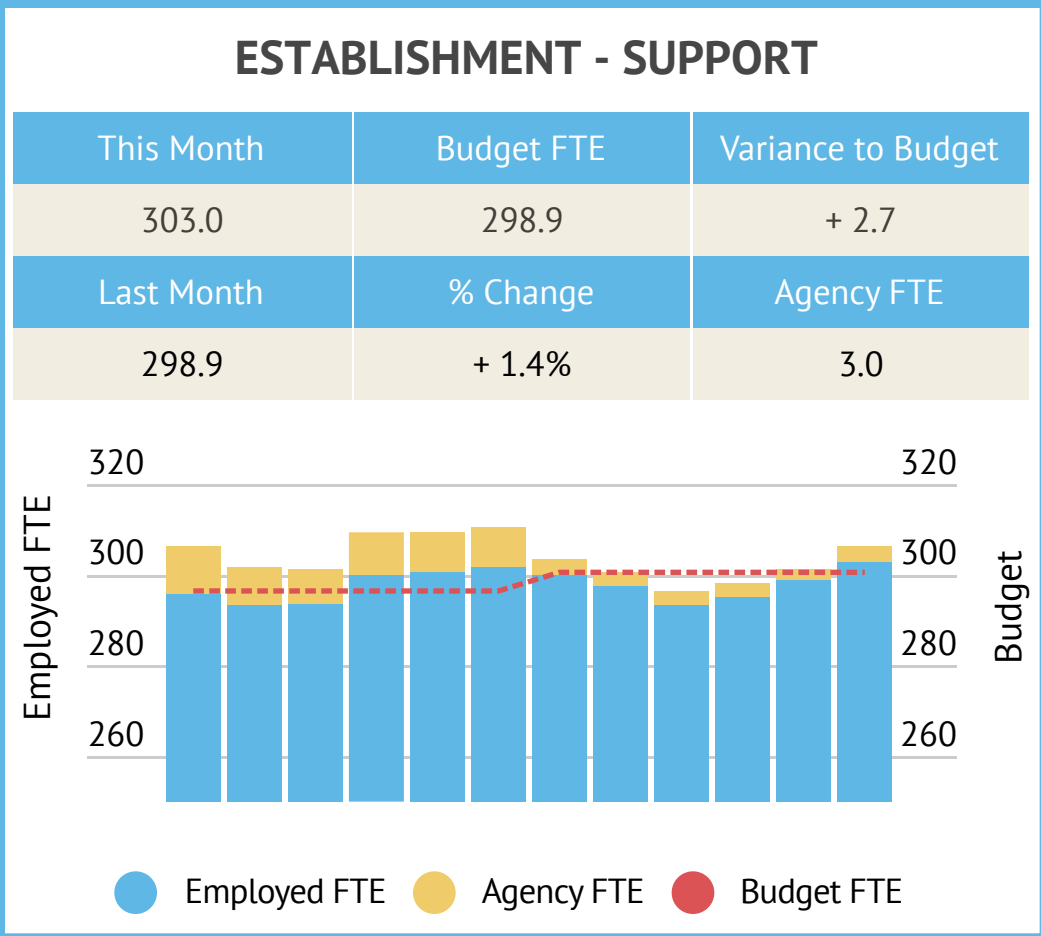
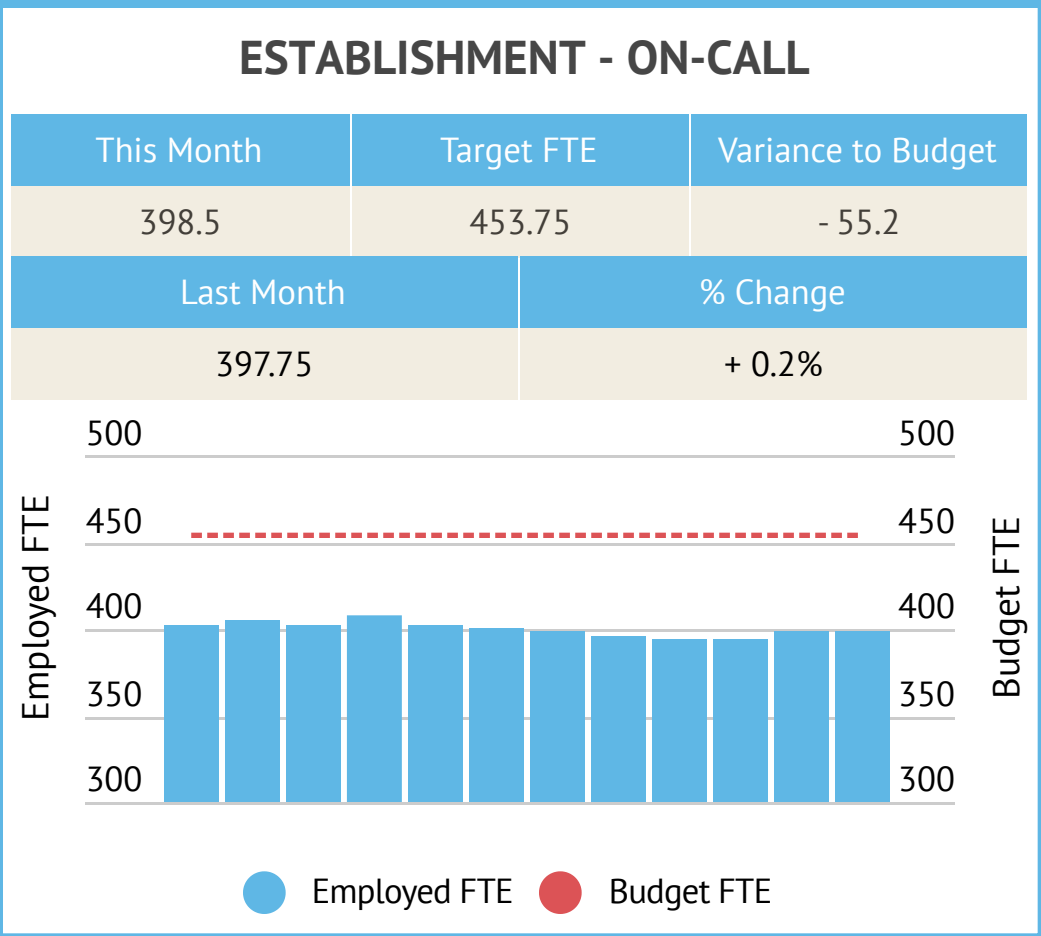
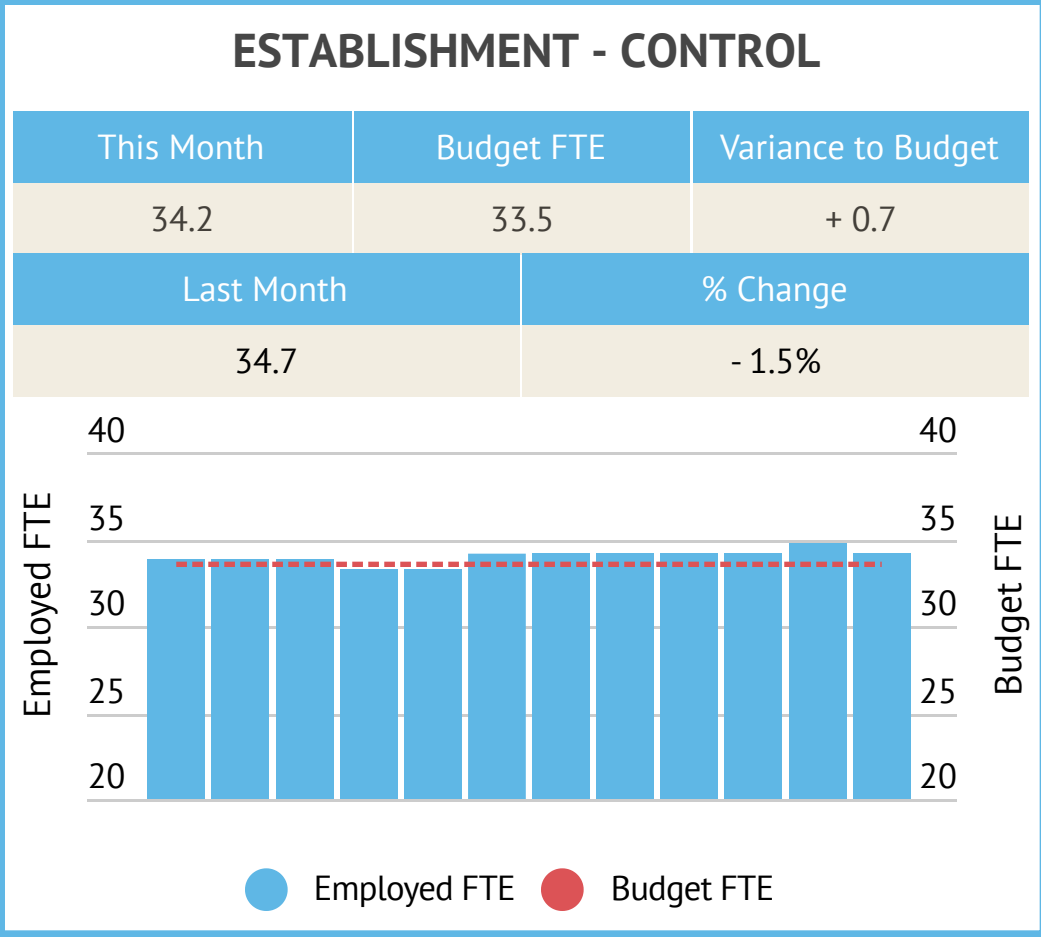
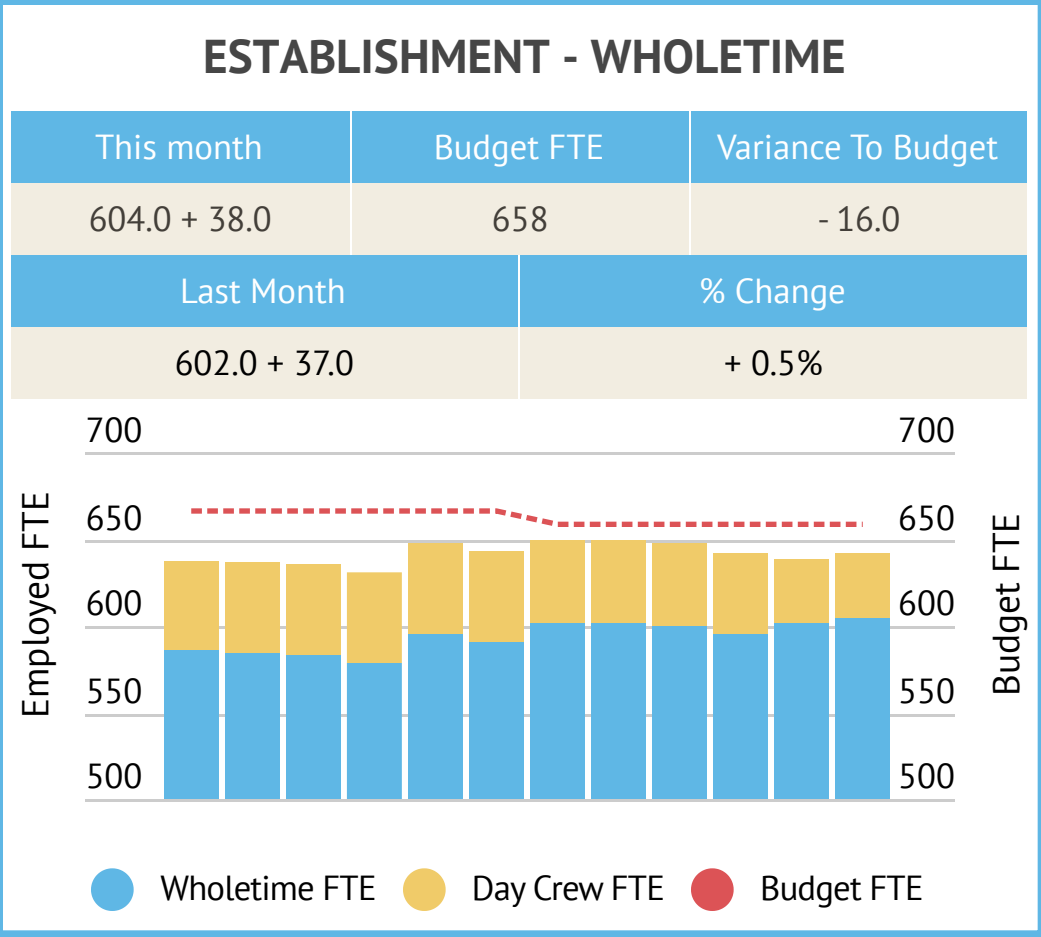
# Quarterly People Report

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## Q2 2020/21

Data as at 30 September 2020

# Insights



#### Whole Time

Phase 1 of the recruitment campaign to support our Workforce<sup>1</sup> and Succession plans commenced this quarter. Our leadership succession preparations commenced – with a launch of the new arrangements being planned for November.

#### On-Call

Work continued to review the recruitment process and to align with whole time assessment approaches. The new process will be in place before the end of the calendar year and will result in a shorter time-to-hire. We are also implementing a more targeted and localised approach to recruitment.

#### Control

We have continued to keep a focus on resourcing this area to ensure availability throughout the pandemic.

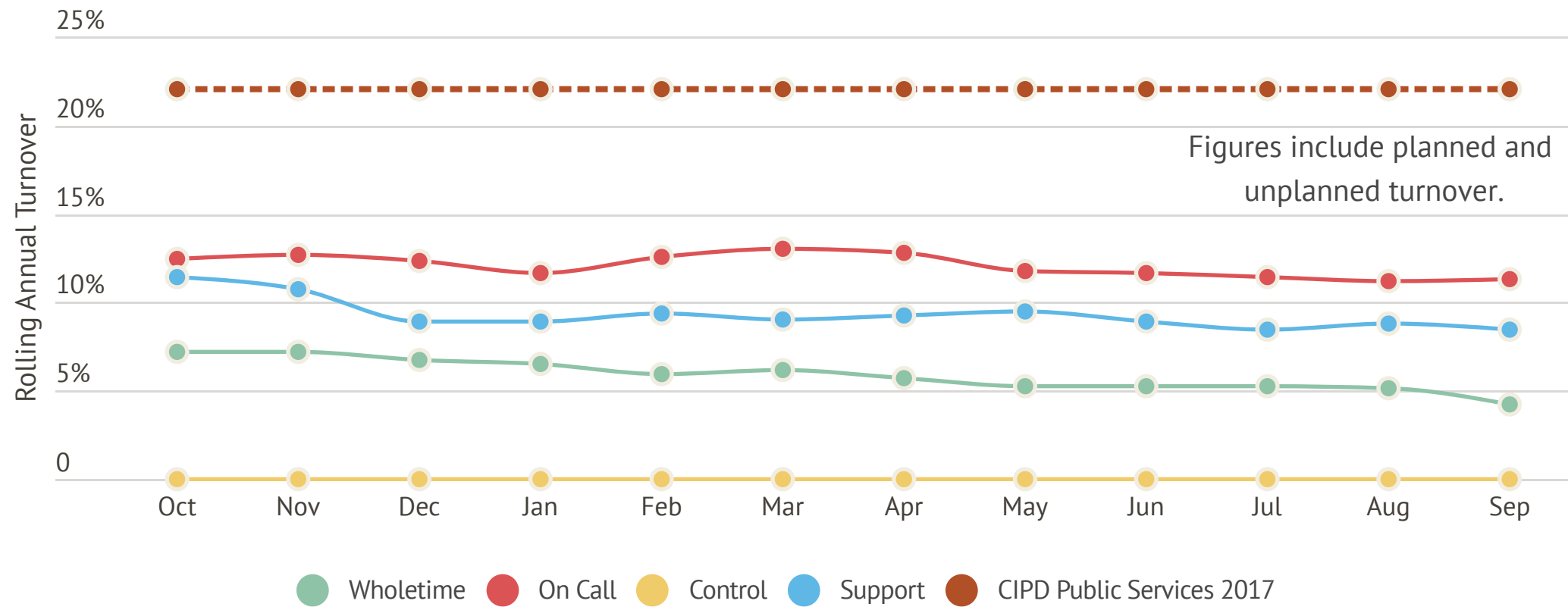
#### Support

Our use of agency staff remains low, with no issues resourcing to vacant positions.

Note 1: Workforce Plan published in October 2020.

**ACTION: Implement the new recruitment arrangements for On-Call**

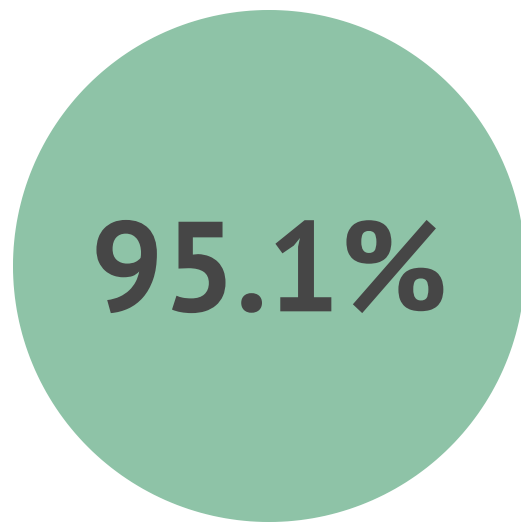
### WORKFORCE ANNUAL TURNOVER - ROLLING 12 MONTH AVERAGE



## Insights

- Turnover rates remain healthy overall except for On Call.
- We are currently reviewing the 68 On Call colleagues that left in the last twelve months and their reasons for leaving.
- Our On Call Liaison Officers are working with HR and will be contacting ex-colleagues, as appropriate, with a view to understanding whether they would consider returning to stations where there are ongoing availability shortfalls.

### ONE YEAR RETENTION



UK PUBLIC SECTOR: 84%

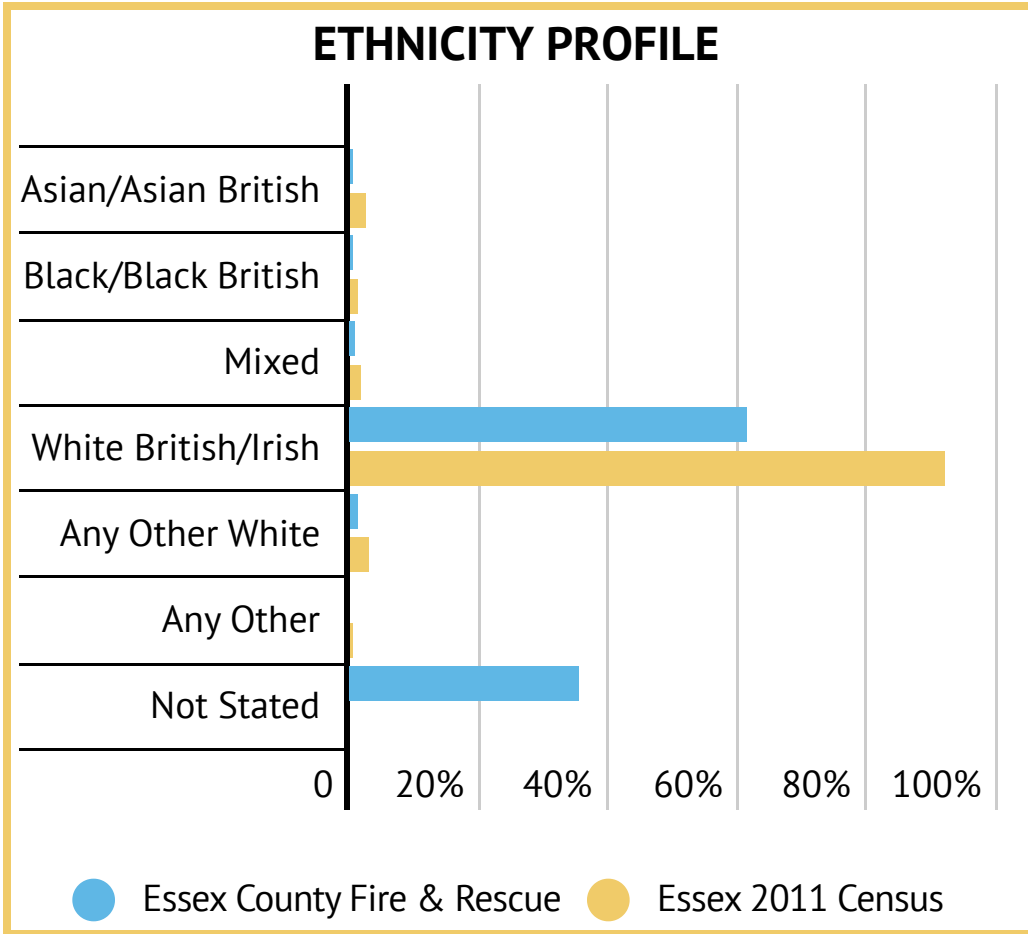
UK WHOLE WORKFORCE: 83%

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

### JOINERS AND LEAVERS IN Q2 2020/21

EE Group	Joiners	Leavers
Wholetime	2	7
On Call	21	10
Control	0	0
Support	12	6

**ACTION: Continue to review On-Call reasons for leaving and put in place arrangements that support attraction and retention**



### GENDER PROFILE

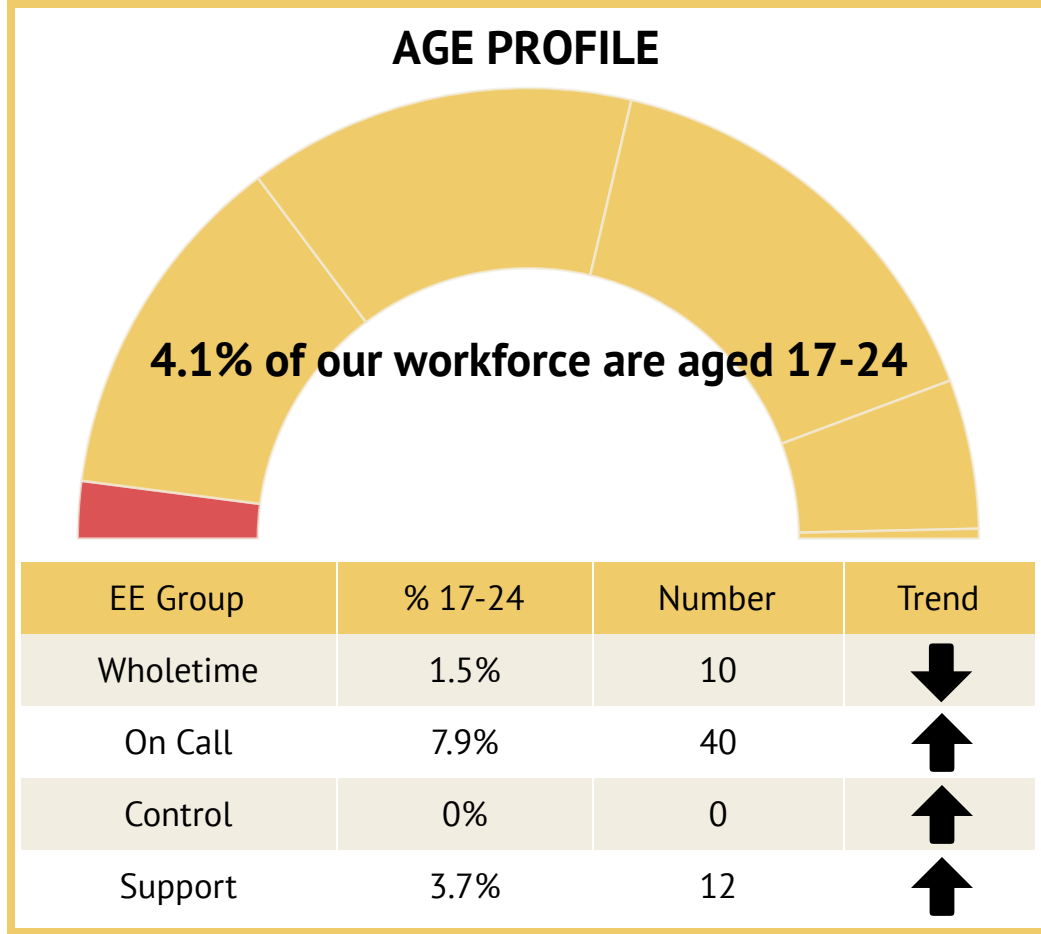
EE Group	Female	Male	Other	Essex %	National %
Wholetime	41	553	21	6.3%	6.8%
On Call	10	447	4	2.0%	5.6%
Control	31	6	0	83.8%	77.0%
Support	168	145	1	51.2%	53.2%

**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	91	6.0%
Sexual Orientation	675	44.5%
Ethnicity	475	31.3%
Religion	665	43.8%

**Notes:**  
 These figures represent the number of Service employees that have no yet actively self-classified themselves in the above protected characteristics.



## Insights

- IDAG membership has grown to include a wider pool of stakeholders and greater diversity.
- The Inclusion Coordinator post has now been appointed to.
- Positive Action activity and engagement has now commenced.
- A passport for workplace adjustments has been introduced.
- An Ethnic Minority Forum is being created as an IDAG subgroup.
- The NFCC Equality Impact Assessment consultation has taken place. We will adopt the new template and provide training in Q3.
- We have assessed 6 Firefighters for dyslexia during the quarter.
- Assessor training for "subconscious preference, bias and blind spots" has been agreed for delivery in Q3.

**Data**

- We have introduced a regular diversity data progress snapshot, which is being shared with Group Managers and heads of department on a weekly basis.
- Alongside this, we have introduced a monthly diversity data report, which reflects the increased rates of diversity data completion across the Service.
- Our Ethnicity Profile mirrors Home Office reporting practice, wherein 'prefer not to say' responses are categorised as 'not stated'.
- XpertHR have returned our completed 2019 Gender Pay Gap report, which has allowed us to submit our mandatory return. Our internal report will be produced in Q3.

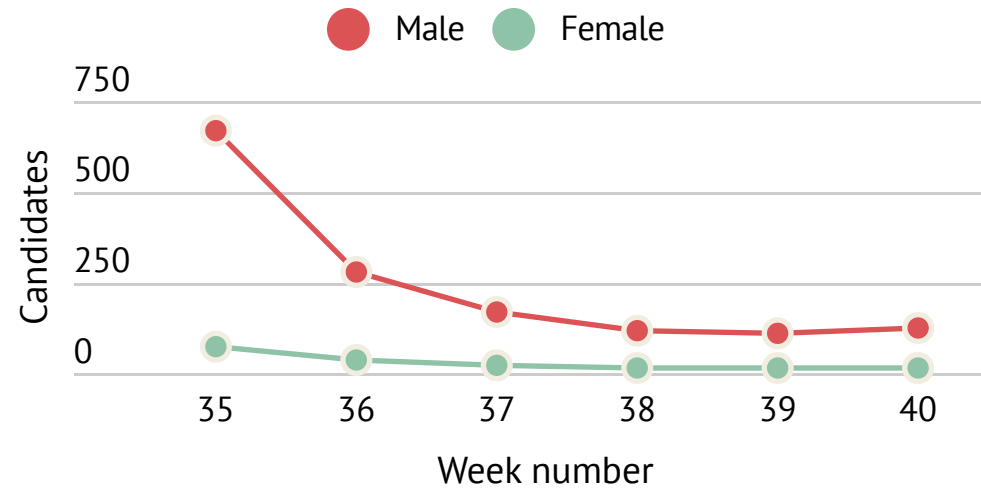
**Dignity**

- Dignity in our Workplace face-to-face sessions will resume in Q3, now that all sites are deemed COVID safe.

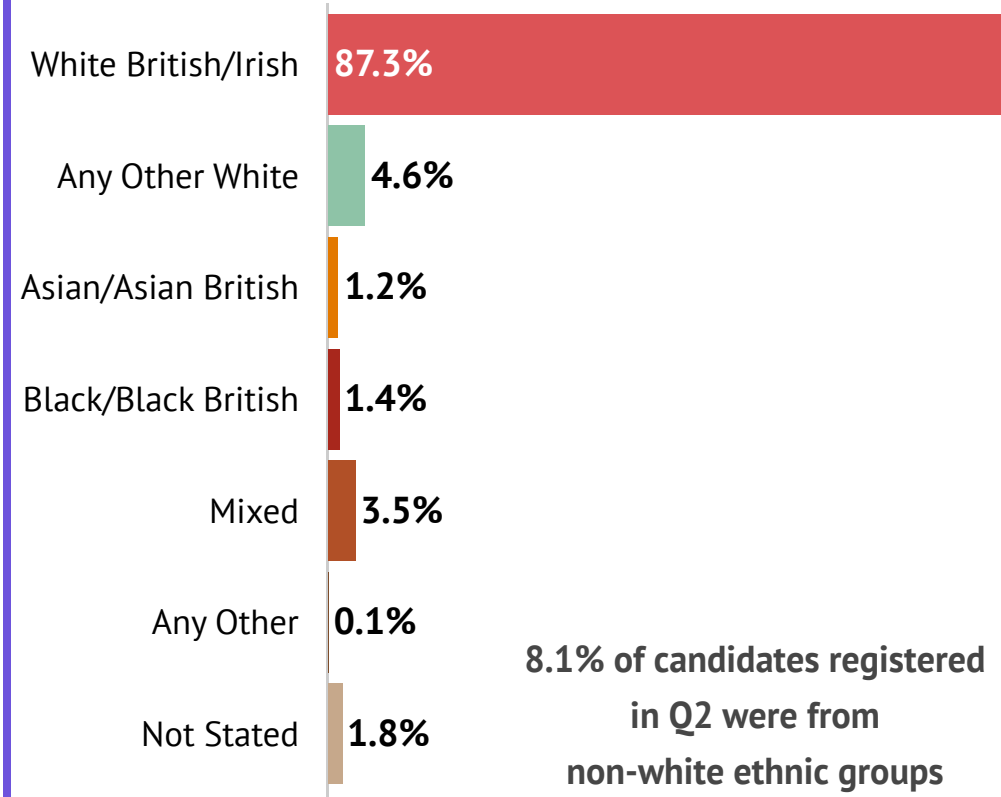
**ACTION: Continue to take steps to improve personal information data held in Civica**

### CANDIDATE REGISTRATIONS - Q2 2020/21

Registrations	Weekly Average
1,632	272
Total Male	Total Female
1,462 (89.6%)	170 (10.4%)



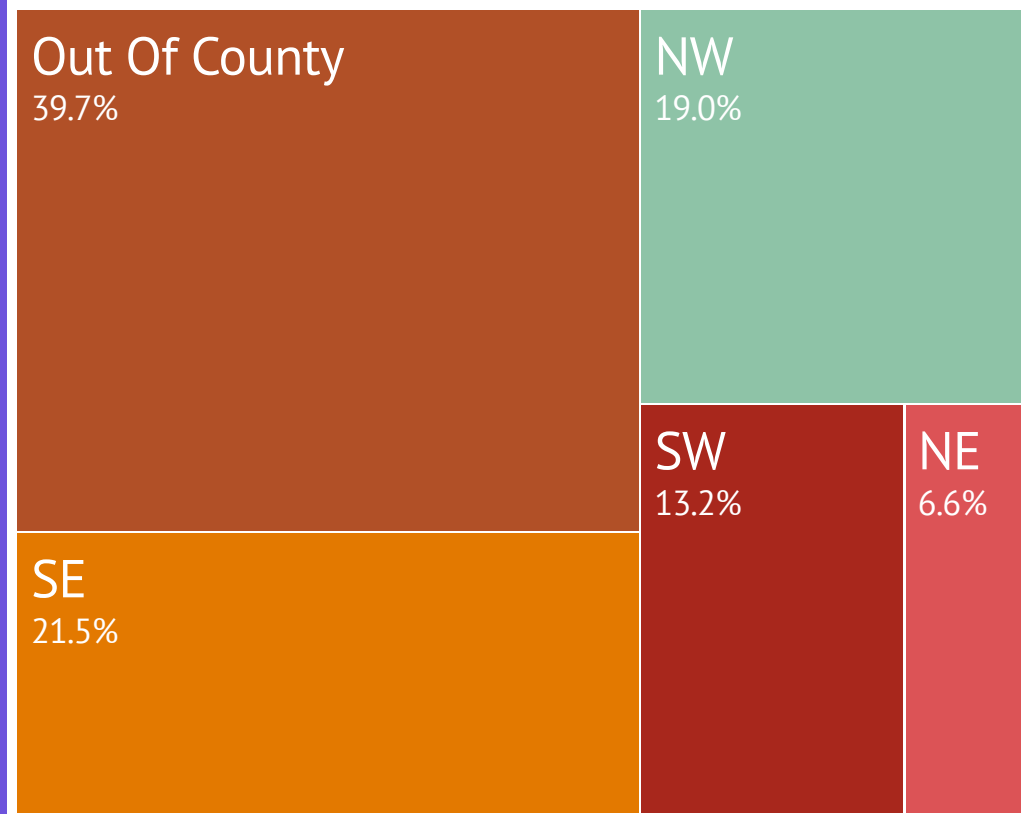
### CANDIDATE ETHNIC DIVERSITY



## Insights

- The Wholetime recruitment campaign opened on Tuesday 25 August, at the start of week 35.
- 739 candidates registered during the first week of the campaign, but numbers have settled since and were an average of 272 at the end of the quarter.
- Where candidates provided a home post code during their initial registration, 39.7% were from outside of Essex. 21.5% stated that their home address was within the SE Command Group area. 92.8% of candidates failed to provide a home post code during the initial registration process. Further data, including expanded diversity information, is captured after initial registration.
- Further detailed information will be provided in the forthcoming Wholetime Recruitment update.
- Initial headlines from October activity include:
  - **Arctic Shores** psychometric assessments sent to 1184 candidates (of which 80 were existing On Call colleagues). 846 completed and returned.
  - 116 candidates received invitations to attend **Physical Assessment**. 102 booked a place to do so. 89 attended, with a further 13 either not attending or deferring to a later date.
  - 70 candidates invited to **Interview**, including 16 On Call personnel.

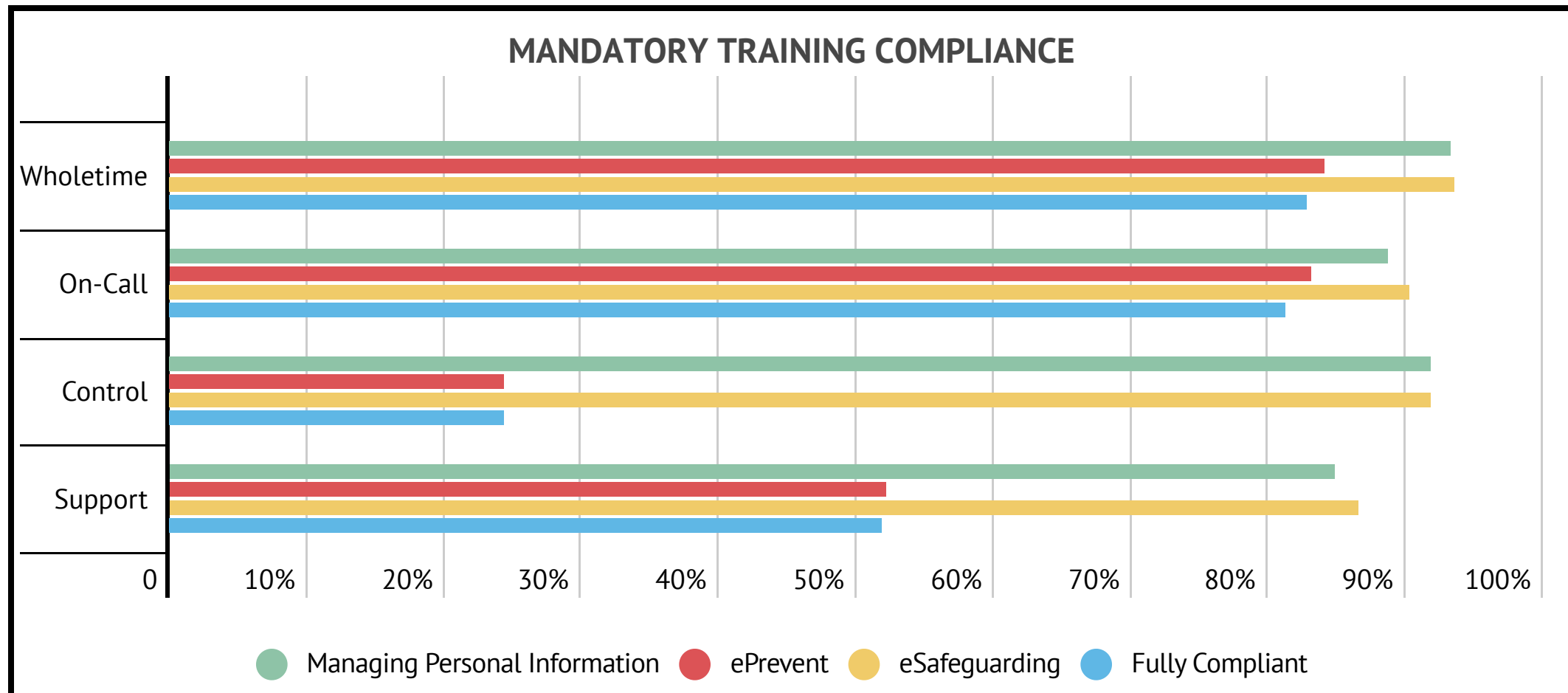
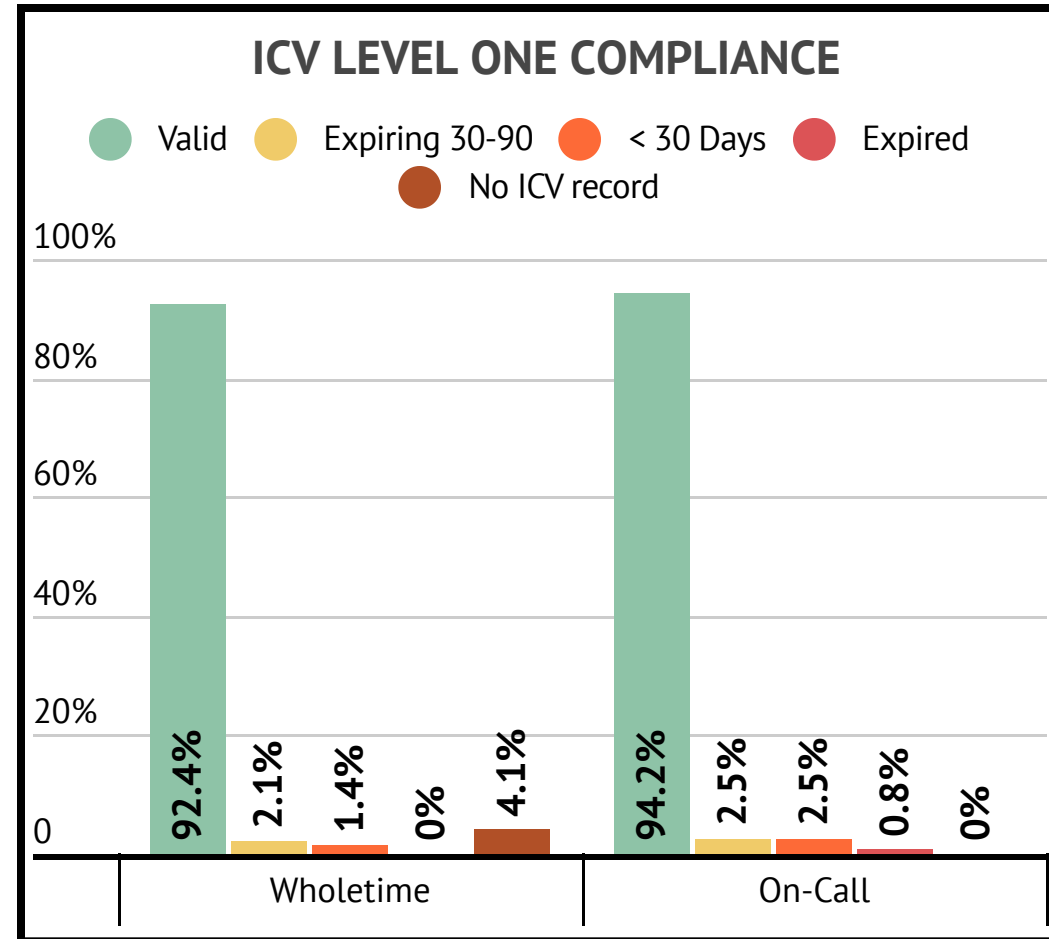
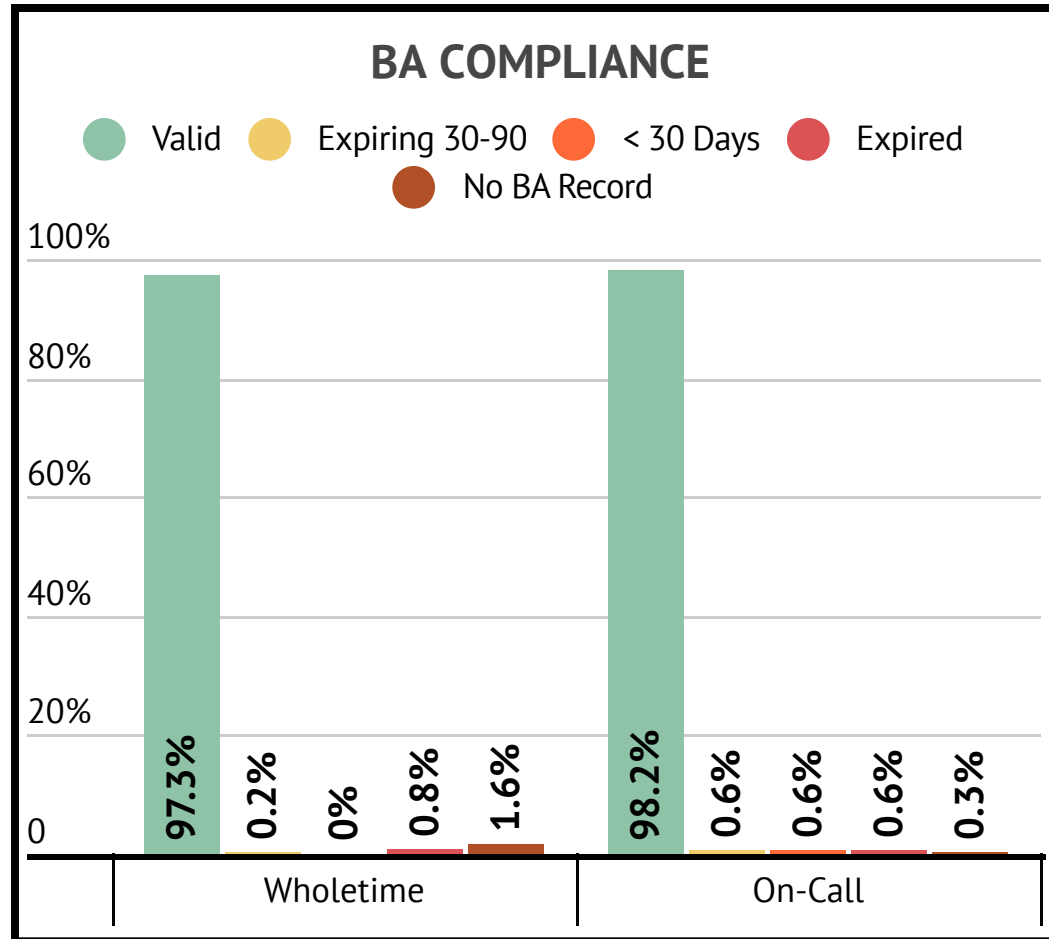
### CANDIDATE LOCATIONS



### CANDIDATE GENDER SPLIT



**ACTION: We will design and present a bi-monthly update detailing ongoing Wholetime recruitment activity**



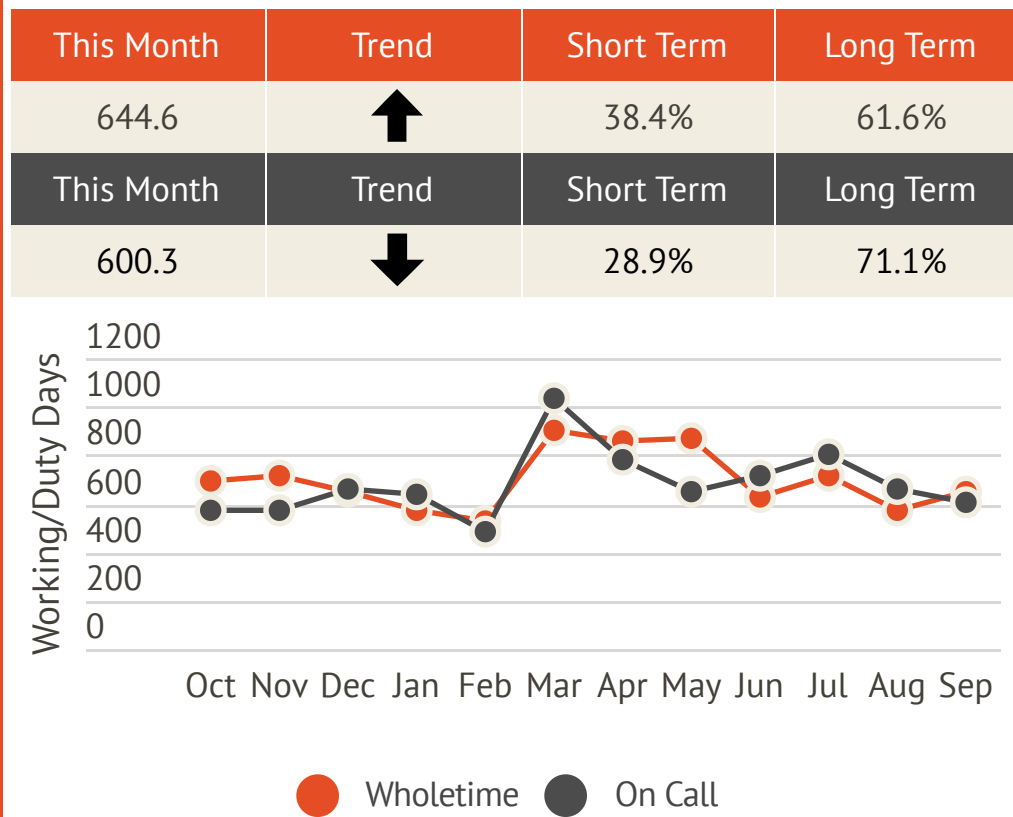
## Insights

- Our 21st Century Leadership programme is underway; 9 delegates are taking part. We will also aim to deliver additional light touch webinars throughout November/December predominantly focussing on feedback.
- Tenders for the provision of our 4 year leadership programme have been received and are being evaluated. Contract award to successful provider is due in late November.
- We are meeting with training providers for modules listed in the core learning pathways; the full programme will be published on the intranet in December.
- We are developing an L&D communication programme to publicise leadership and management courses with a view to attracting delegates.
- The external coaching pool has proved successful with 25 sessions completed. External coaches will continue to be available throughout 2021
- The e-learning project has been incorporated into the competency management system project. Our system of choice is PDR Pro, available to us through eFire Service. Phase 1 of the project - the replacement of TASK - is due to be completed by 1 April 2021. Phase 2 will be e-learning.
- We continue to work with colleagues on completing mandatory training. A review of these modules is planned for the beginning of 2021.

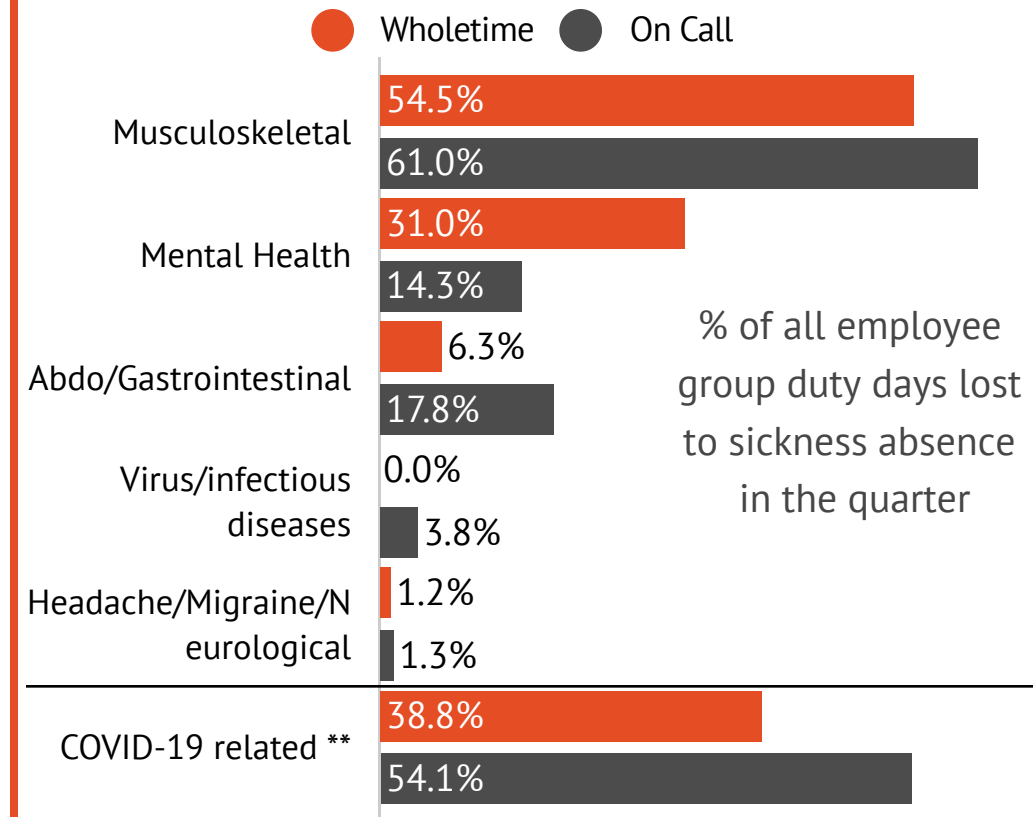
**ACTIONS: Create development pathways across the Service and bring life to the four pillars of learning as outlined in the four year strategy**

# Insights

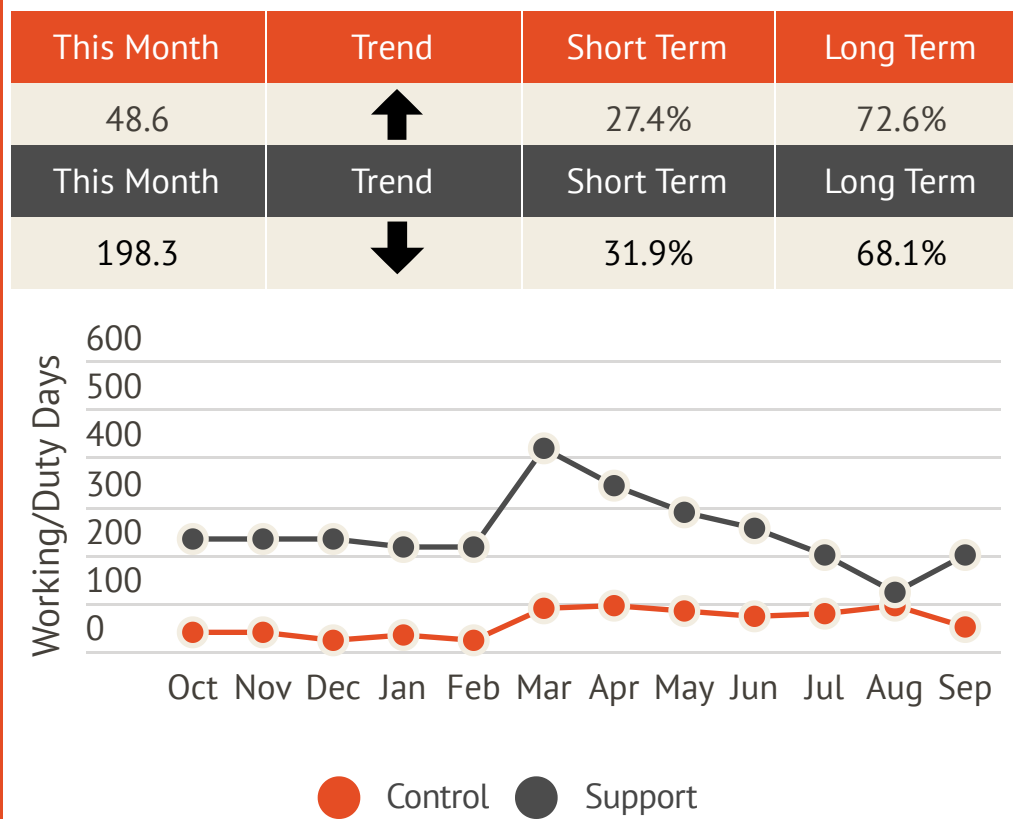
## DAYS LOST TO SICKNESS - GREY BOOK



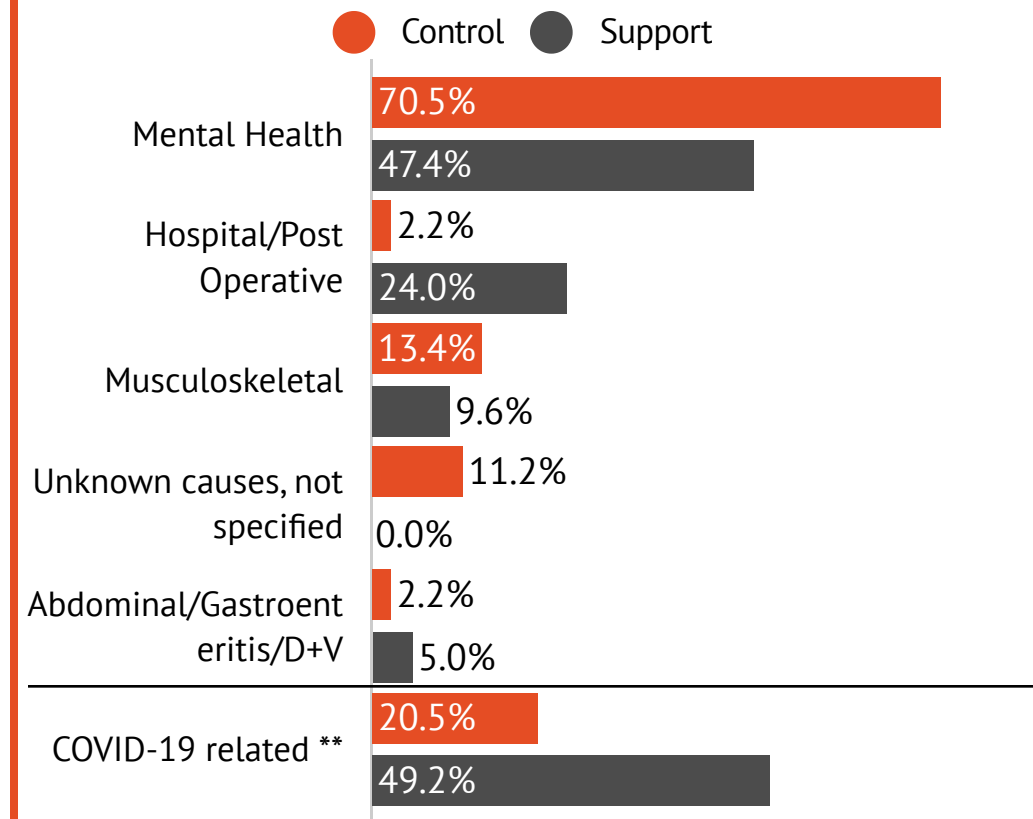
## TOP ABSENCE REASONS Q2 - GREY BOOK



## DAYS LOST TO SICKNESS - CONTROL/SUPPORT



## TOP ABSENCE REASONS Q2 - CONTROL/SUPPORT



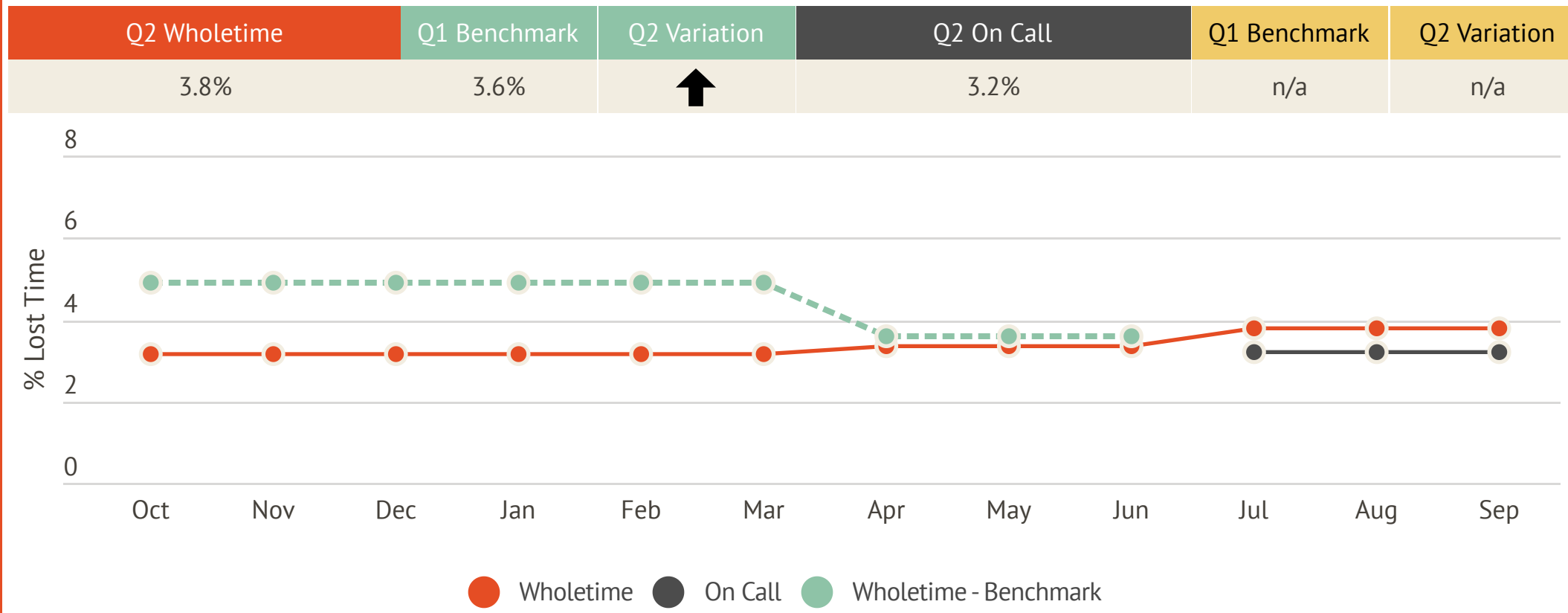
- Across the Service as a whole, 46.0% of all working days lost to sickness absence in the quarter can be associated with COVID-19.
- 61.6% of all Wholetime duty days lost to sickness in Q2 were as part of a long term absence. For On Call, the figure was 71.1%.
- For Control employees, that figure was 72.6%. For Support, that figure was 68.1%. An absence is considered to be long term if it lasts 28 calendar days or more.
- The graphs for the top absence reasons in Q2 include the total proportion of time lost to COVID-19 related absence, however the figures for other absence reasons reflect the proportion of total days lost to NON COVID-19 reasons, in order that national comparisons can be made.
- Nationally, 39.7% of all Wholetime sickness was attributed to musculoskeletal conditions. Our figure of 54.5% exceeds this significantly (37% higher than national levels). This pattern is repeated in the On Call population. (Source: National Fire & Rescue Service OH Performance Report 2019/20).
- The top national reason for sickness absence in Control and Support functions was Mental Health, with absence proportions of 70.5% and 47.4% respectively. In both cases, these levels are significantly in excess of national figures and we would ask for support from SLT members in reminding all line managers to refer all instances of mental health related absence to Occupational Health. (Source: National Fire & Rescue Service OH Performance Report 2019/20).

**ACTION: Future reports will include costings for sickness absence and will present deeper analysis of long term versus short term absence**

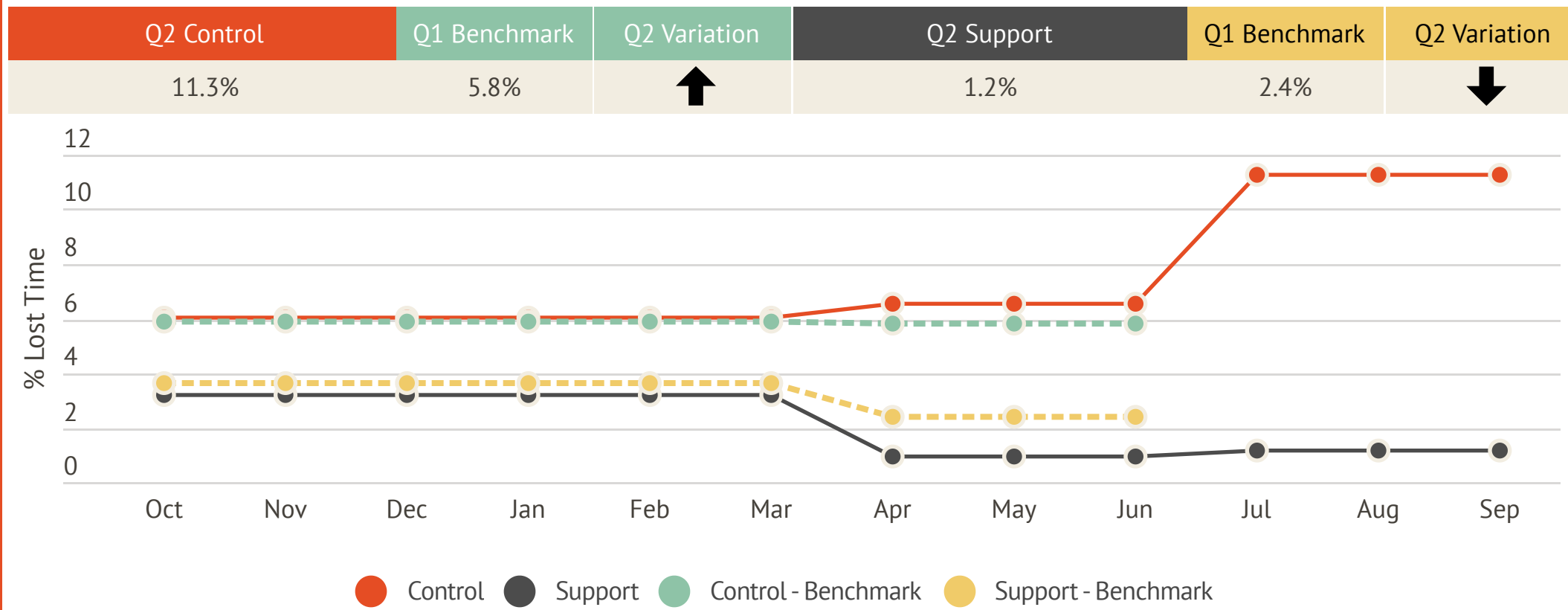
# Insights

- The 'Lost Time Rate' is a nationally recognised measure of how much of an employee's available working time (duty days/shifts or working days) has been lost to sickness absence and the dotted lines in these graphs reflect the national average, as published by Cleveland Fire Brigade.
- Cleveland Fire Brigade coordinates a national survey to collect and analyse fire and rescue service sickness absence data. Data is collected quarterly and published on a cumulative basis, in arrears. The most recent report, for Q1 of the 2020/21 financial year, was published in mid Q2.
- Comparison data does not yet reflect the impact of COVID-related absence. This is primarily because not all Services have responded to the pandemic by developing tools to capture and measure the impact of such absence.
- ECFRS has the ability to capture a variety of categories of COVID-related absence in Civica and include or exclude them from absence reporting and analysis as required. Our absence measures currently EXCLUDE COVID-related absence.
- Our Support absence rates are currently below the national benchmark, whereas Control is significantly in excess. Wholetime absence are broadly in line with national levels. There is no national On Call absence comparison currently available.
- *This is the first time that we have presented lost time rate information and we would therefore welcome constructive feedback to help us improve its presentation.*

## SICKNESS ABSENCE LOST TIME RATE - GREY BOOK



## SICKNESS ABSENCE LOST TIME RATE - CONTROL/SUPPORT



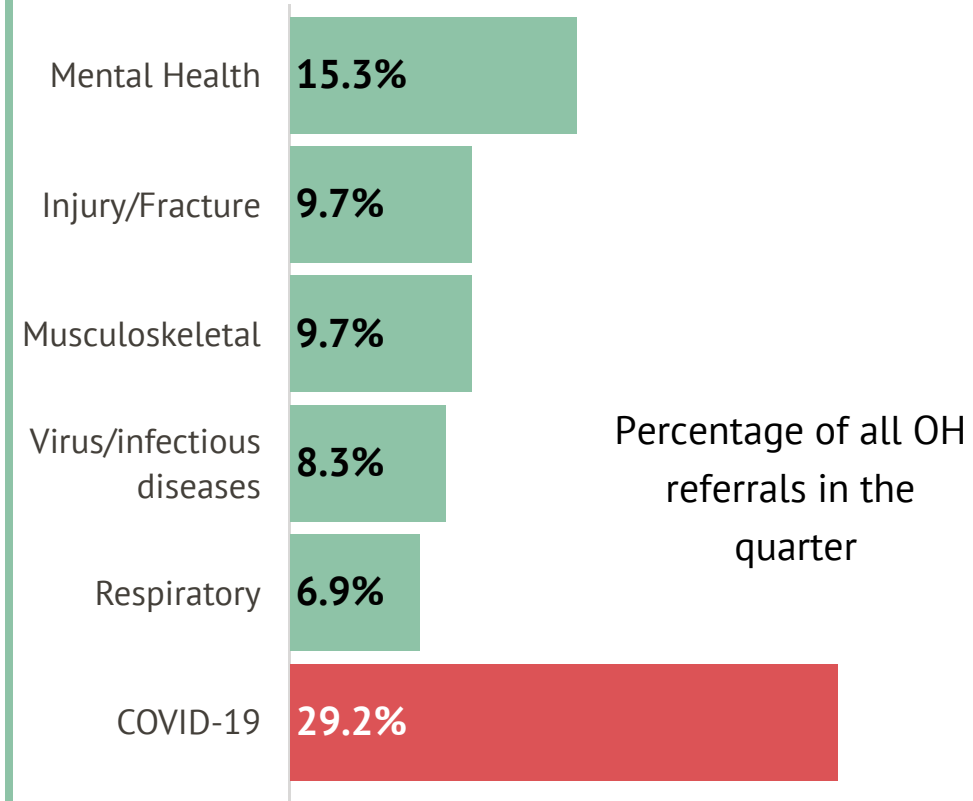
**ACTION: We will refine the presentation of this information based upon feedback received**



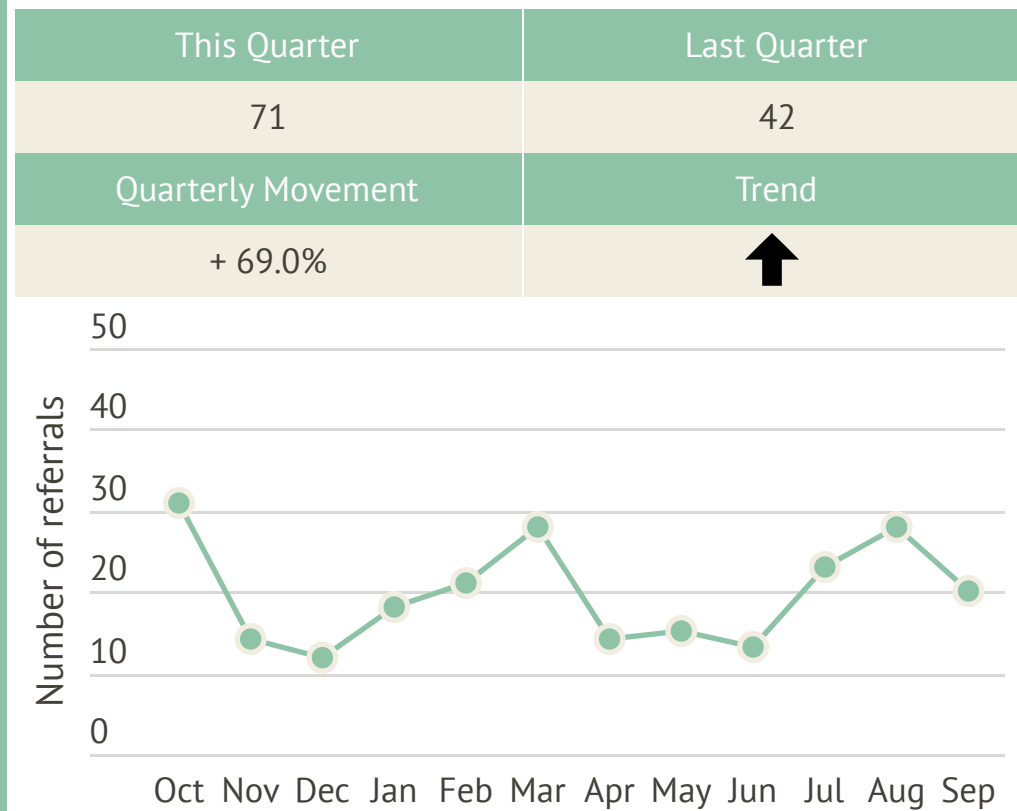
# Insights

- Fortnightly meetings with the HR People Business Partner team are now well established and ensure continued momentum in managing attendance cases. Sessions are overseen by the Assistant Director of HR. Momentum and consistency are key in managing attendance, particularly for long term (28 day) cases. Individual People Business Partners are booking time for more detailed case discussions.
- Ongoing Covid-related advice continues to be given, responding to UK government changes. Those who were shielding are being reviewed in light of the forthcoming lockdown. We are responding to HSE guidance regarding Asbestos medicals and undertaking paper/video call screens with a view to re-commencing face-to-face medicals when the Service Medical Adviser becomes more readily available in the next quarter.
- Management reviews are successfully being undertaken via video or telephone call and we have maintained the quality and consistence of reviews and reports during remote working. Further investigation into lead issues for mental health referrals is being undertaken, i.e. those which are work, socio-domestic or trauma related.
- Fitness reviews restarted at STC in August and on station in September, at a steady pace, ensuring they are conducted correctly, in a Covid-safe way. Station visits and fitness clinics are diarised until March 2021. We are increasing the number of weekly visits from November as Covid-safe arrangements have allowed. These are not always easily booked in and support from managers to ensure this would be helpful. If we are able get through tests at pace, we will bring some station visits forward.
- Providing resource for Assessment Days and Recruitment Q&A sessions have affected the number of visits offered in October, but have proved useful in preparing prospective recruits.
- The Fitness Team is still under resourced due to maternity leave, but interviews begin this week (2/11) for maternity cover.

## TOP REASONS FOR REFERRAL - Q2 2020/21



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRALS



## FITNESS REVIEWS

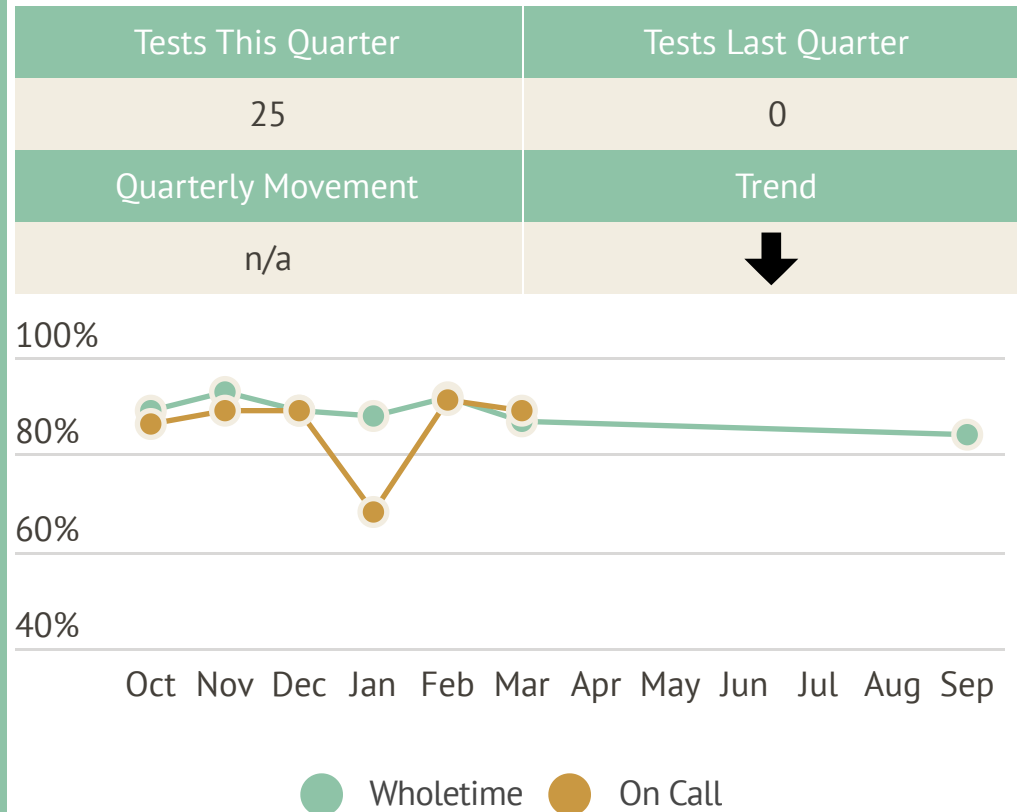


**54**  
Active Fitness Reviews as at 13 October



**34**  
Number without review appointments booked

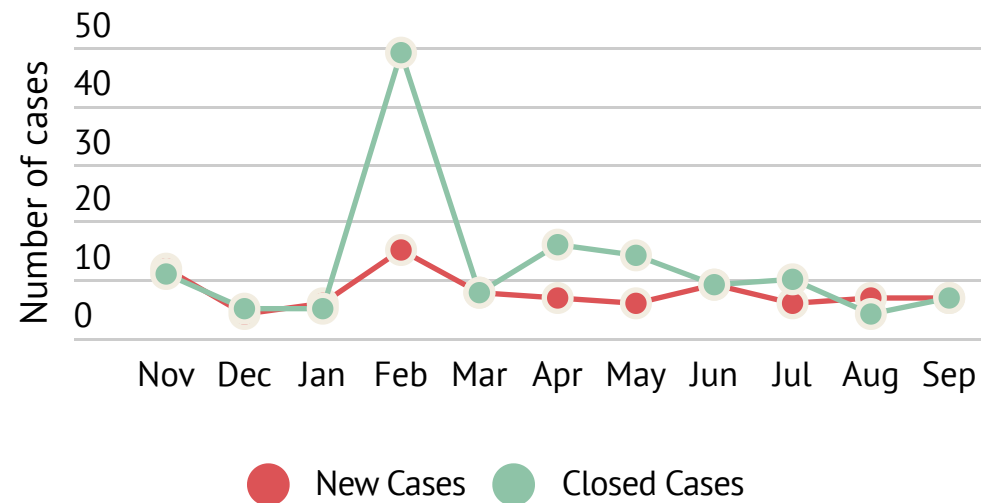
## FITECH TESTING - PASS RATES



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

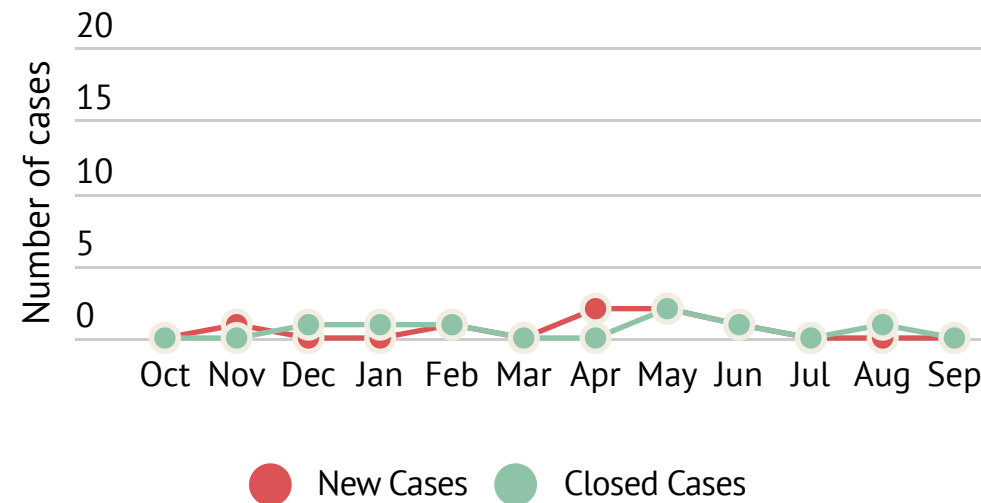
### ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

New Cases	Closed Cases	Ongoing	Trend
20	22	22	↓
Last Qtr	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
22	67 days	135 days	↑



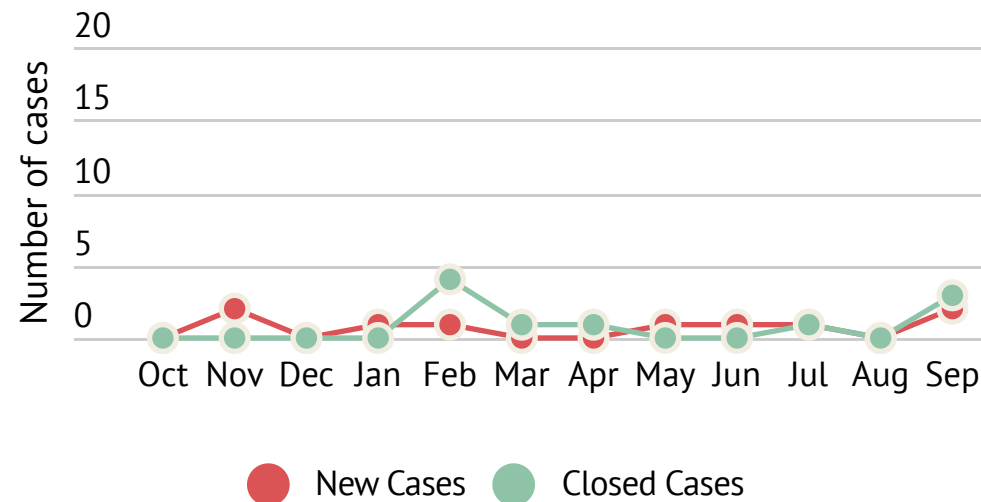
### DISCIPLINARY

New Cases	Closed Cases	Ongoing	Trend
0	1	0	↓
Last Qtr	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
1	70 days	411 days	↑



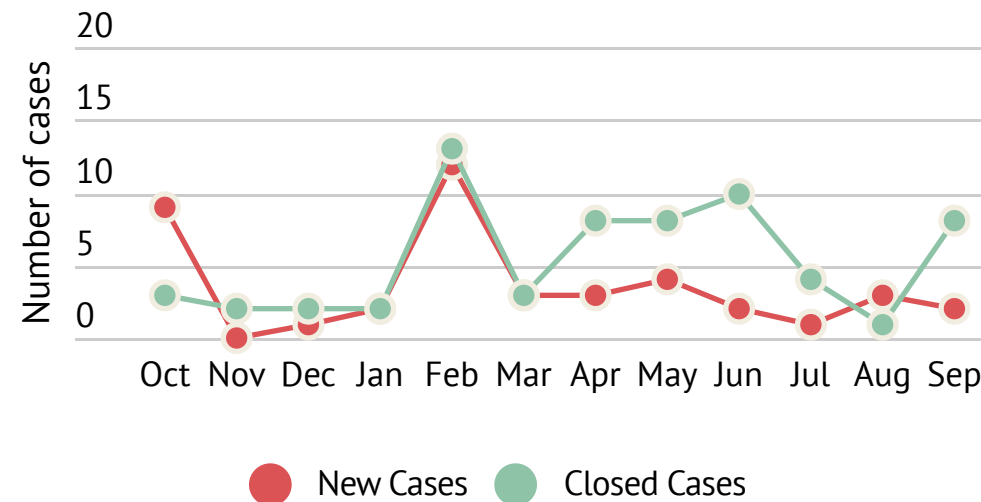
### GRIEVANCE

New Cases	Closed Cases	Ongoing	Trend
3	4	3	←
Last Qtr	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
2	122 days	121 days	↓



### PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

New Cases	Closed Cases	Ongoing	Trend
7	8	10	←
Last Qtr	Avg Duration	Avg Case Age	Trend
10	88 days	106 days	↑



## Insights

#### Attendance Management

Attendance cases are reviewed fortnightly with the business partnering team and support is being provided to line managers to manage long-term sickness absence (28 days or more) as well as absences that have reached our trigger levels (three or more episodes in 12 months). We have a few cases where absence is prolonged and being managed in the formal later stages of the attendance management procedure including ill-health retirement cases – which includes our oldest case.

#### Disciplinary

Our oldest disciplinary case is a dismissal which has progressed to an Employment Tribunal.

#### Performance Management

Activity on our oldest performance case is on 'Stop the Clock' and cannot be progressed at this time due to the individual's absence; as is the oldest grievance case.

**ACTION: Continue to actively manage cases at both formal and informal levels**