OUR PEOPLE

Focus on Sustainable and Resilient Workforce

Annual Review **2020/2021**

Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

Sustainable and Resilient Workforce
Warwickshire's Story

**Message from Monica Fogarty,
Chief Executive**

The wellbeing of our people is a key priority. Our people are what makes Warwickshire great, and we know that supporting people to be their best at work, will enable the Council to achieve and even exceed its objectives.

2020/2021 has been a time when the resilience of the Organisation and that of our workforce has been tested. During that same time, we have seen a significant reduction in sickness absence. This must be because people have been able to strike a better life-work balance. Going forward as an organisation we must continue our efforts to promote wellbeing and to support our people to be well at work. We need to establish our new blended way of working and sustain this improvement over the next year.

At a glance

1. Absence has reduced significantly from 10.9 to 7.45 days per FTE over the last year. This reflects a period where we have been working through the pandemic with many of our people working from home. With a 3.45 days reduction, the rate is the lowest level for a decade and is below the public sector and the Shire's Counties LA comparators for the first time in 5 years. A 25% overachievement of the target of 7% and an actual reduction of 32%.

2. Regular 'Check-ins' with our staff has allowed us to track how people are feeling and tailor our supporting staff offer. We know that at least 80% of our staff have been doing OK or better, and 86% of our people feel that wellbeing is promoted at work.

3. The sustainable and resilient workforce group, which is a collaboration of managers and professionals, has been created and are driving actions to maximise wellness at work. Priority has been focused on data and insight for managers and working towards achieving Bronze Thrive at Work accreditation.

4. Stress and mental health absence makes up over a third of time lost due to absences, and remains a focus for 2021/2022 along with long term absence, which makes up over 70% of our absence. Whilst this is an increase in terms of percentage, the days per FTE for stress have reduced from 3.17 to 2.47.

5. Two thirds of our people have taken no sickness absence at all, an increase from 50% last year. Absence relating to cancer, is now one of our top reasons, and we have seen a reduction in absences relating to chest and respiratory. Covid-19 related absences has not had a significant impact on the absence reasons, however, what is not yet fully known is the longer term effects, in relation to long COVID and the mental health impacts of the pandemic.

6. 2020/2021 has been an extraordinary year in terms of reducing sickness absence, likely to have been impacted considerably by home working, social distancing and increased hand hygiene. Therefore, this attendance performance should not be regarded as a benchmark year, instead the aim should be to maintain this improvement, and as such a target range of 8 absence days per FTE (+/- 1 day) is proposed.

7. Priorities for 2021/22 will focus on stress and mental health related absence and workload management; managing long term absence; understanding the longer-term impact of the pandemic; and the use of data to target our actions.

Focus on Sustainable and Resilient Workforce

Through the later end of 2020, the council refreshed its Our People Strategy, to drive through the vision of Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.

Embodying our Values and Behaviours, the Our People Strategy is built on 6 building blocks:

Our behaviours

Our behaviours were first introduced in 2016 and these haven't changed. Our behaviours frame how we should behave at work. They help us to understand how we should go about our work and the way we should interact with each other and our customers.

do what we say.

move with purpose and energy.

focus on solutions.

help people and communities to find their own solutions.

build strong working relationships.

be the best we can be.

To support the achievement of our vision, five key organisational values have been identified:
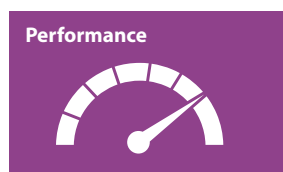
High performing

Collaborative

Customer focused

Accountable

Trustworthy

Our People Strategy building blocks

The building blocks provide the foundations for the delivery of Our People Strategy vision. We have identified six key building blocks:

Culture, values and behaviour

Leadership

Organisational Development and Design

Performance

Reward and recognition

Talent development and career opportunities

For each building block we have a clear set of outcomes we need to achieve so that we can fulfill our vision and transform as an organisation in a way which is sustainable.

Building a sustainable and resilient workforce

One of the main enablers of the Our People Strategy is that **"We will listen, learn and act to create an inclusive organisation with a sustainable and resilient workforce."**

With the introduction of the Our People Strategy at the end of 2020 and the increasing absence figures in 2019/2020, the council identified a key priority area of developing a sustainable and resilient workforce.

The aim is to support the wellbeing of our workforce and reduce the level of sickness absence across the council, by providing an infrastructure for managers to proactively support wellbeing and manage absence. Throughout the pandemic the priority has been to keep people safe and well whilst adopting different societal challenges and working arrangements.

This document reviews absence statistics and actions taken to create a sustainable and resilient workforce through 2020/2021 along with the plans for 2021/2022.

Absence has reduced significantly over the last 12 months, which can mainly be attributed to our approach to agile working with approximately 80% of our workforce working from home, alongside a more accurate recording of absence data in our Fire and Rescue Service.

Measuring Success

In order to measure our performance for 2021/2022 we continue to monitor and report the following:

- Days lost per employee
- Days lost per employee - stress/anxiety/mental health
- Percentage pf employees taking no sickness absense in the last 12 months
- Number of people on long term sickness
- Long term / short term % split

Achievements 2020/21

Sustainable and Resilient Workforce

The purpose of the project is to support the management of wellbeing, absence and attendance, by ensuring that the council has the data and insight, culture, behaviours and skills to maximise wellbeing and attendance at work

Achievements to date include:

• A council wide group was been established in Autumn 2020, consisting of a cross section of manager/leaders and professionals from HR, Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Business Intelligence and Communications

• Regularly reviewed absence data

• Launched a new approach for data, so that managers and leaders can be responsible for managing absence cases.

• Launched a new leadership module of HR for non HR managers on sustainable and resilient management

• Launched a new managers' HR induction which has a focus on attendance management and wellbeing

• Defined the priorities for 2021/2022 including launching a wellbeing charter, reviewing the sickness absence policy, responded to the Thrive health needs assessment findings, scoping a programme of activities, scoping the ongoing approach to attendance management targets.

Supporting Staff

Alongside the sustainable and resilient workforce project and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the council set up a supporting staff hub which has co-ordinated a range of support to our people, particularly those working from home. This has included a dedicated intranet area; developing how we work protocols; designing the check-in approach to engagement and regular wellbeing focused content in our weekly issues of the Working for Warwickshire staff magazine and on Yammer.

Engagement

In reviewing our approach to engagement, we have moved from an annual YourSay survey to a more regular, shorter check-in survey. The average response rate is 45%. The wellbeing of our people has been a consistent theme, where we have tracked how people have been feeling. Throughout, at least 80% have been feeling OK for better, although the number of people not coping well has also increased. Ensuring that we support our people has therefore remained a priority.

Throughout the check-ins, we have been able to measure other elements of our approach and wellbeing offer including:

- 86% of our people believe wellbeing is promoted at work, a 14% increase on the previous year.

- 89% are satisfied with internal communications, an 11% increase.

- 76% employee engagement score, an increase of 6%

- 83% of our people believe WCC values equality and diversity in the workplace, a 2% increase

Wellbeing

Through the pandemic response our approach to wellbeing and supporting our people has been critical. The main achievements include:

- Network of support including access to Occupational Health, Employee Assistance Programme, Wellbeing champions and Listening Mates

- Commissioned and delivered a series of personal resilience workshops focusing on Cope – Happy, Thrive – Happy, Succeed Happy, both live and recorded to maximise participation

- Developed tools for managers and staff to identify and support colleagues who may be suffering, including spotting the signs and conversation starters guidance

- Empowering our people to prioritise their own wellbeing and developing protocols so that our people can own their day

- Updated and promoted individual wellness plans to reflect working from home to support our people, leaders and managers in having conversations about wellbeing.

- Defined our agile working offer, with the overriding principle that work is what you do, not necessarily, when and where you do it. This is based on service delivery, trust and choice, empowering our people to work in the way that enables them to work at their best.

Thrive at Work Accreditation

Warwickshire has committed to achieving Bronze accreditation through the West Midlands Combined Authority's Thrive at Work programme.

- Undertaken a Health Needs Assessment, this looked at how people are feeling, their health and their wellbeing

- Demonstrated our commitment to wellbeing

- Provided evidence on a number of key wellbeing initiatives

- Provided evidence that appropriate policies are in place to support wellbeing

- Demonstrated that our leaders and managers are well equipped to support wellbeing

Managers Insight and Data

In order for wellbeing and absence to be managed appropriately, it is imperative that managers have access to the information they need. Whilst we develop a real time absence dashboard for managers, as an interim measure, we have improved our pre-existing approach.

Target

A target of 8 days per FTE (with a +/- 1 day tolerance) has been set for 2021/2022.

Priorities for 2021/2022

Key focus for 2021/2022

- Continued focus on wellbeing to reduce stress and mental health related absence and workload management

- Managing long term absence

- Understanding the longer term impact of the pandemic and continue to monitor how people are feeling as we enter the reinstatement phase and move to an agile working approach, where we will measure, listen learn and adapt

- Using data to target our actions

- Target areas with high levels of absense, correlate with other HR metrics and provide support to address and specific issues.

Action plan

- Seek to maintain the improvement in attendance, with an employee absence target range of 8 days per FTE (with a tolerance of +/- 1 day)

- Launch wellbeing charter including managers must do's.

- Achieve Bronze thrive accreditation and develop an action plan for silver

- Link public health and employee wellbeing initiatives

- Review the sickness absence policy and procedure in line with our tone and voice work

- Implement the Thrive action plan, including analysis of health data to prioritise health initiatives

- Develop a dedicated landing page on the intranet for all wellbeing activities

- Develop a Managers data dashboard for absence data

- Monitor absence rate, return to work interview compliance, immediate referral to Occupational Health for all mental health absences and action plans for those off over 3 months

- Wellbeing and workload management - priority for our engagement survey

- Supporting Mental Health offer

Conclusion

2020/2021 has been an exceptionally successful year in terms of developing a sustainable and resilient workforce, especially considering the global pandemic:

- Absence rates have reduced significantly over the last 12 month and is at the lowest level for a decade, which can be attributed to the majority of our workforce working from home along with more accurate recording of absence in our Fire and Rescue Service

- Our absence is now tracking below our benchmark comparators

- The wellbeing of our workforce continues to be our number one priority, with a commitment to keeping our people well and at work and with our agile working offer encouraging our people to work in the way that enables them to be their best

- Stress and Mental health continues to be a priority area along with reducing our long term absences, understanding the effects of long COVID-19 and the mental health impact of the pandemic.

- A full programme of activity is planned for 2021/2022 to ensure that absence levels are sustained

- A target of 8 days per FTE (with a +/- 1 days tolerance) is proposed for 2021/2022

Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Report 20-21
Introduction

Ref: SRW21 | Version: 1 | Status: Dev
For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
Please quote the Ref number in your email

Key Measures and Definitions

Full Time Equivalent (FTE): Full Time Equivalent relates to the number of hours an employee is contracted to work each week as a proportion of the number of hours per week defined as full-time as per contracts of employment. Thus, a full-time employee would have an FTE of 1/0 and an employee working 18.5 hours per week in a role based upon a 37 hours contract would have an FTE of 0.5

Days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE): Days per FTE relates to the number of days of sickness absence per FTE

Key Highlights

Absence has **reduced significantly** over the last 12 months from **10.9** days to **7.45** days per FTE and is at the lowest for a decade.

The split between long term and short term absence, has seen an **increase** in **long term** absence.

Mental health is the **top reason** for absence, and now makes up over a third of all absences. However, the days per FTE mental health absences has reduced over the year. As a result of Covid-19, we saw a slight increase in Viral, and a significant reduction in check and respiratory.

Long term absences have **reduced** over the last 12 months as have the number of people hitting sickness indicators

Two thirds of our people have had **no absence** in the last 12 months, a significant increase on the previous year.

Warwickshire County Council, a great place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best.
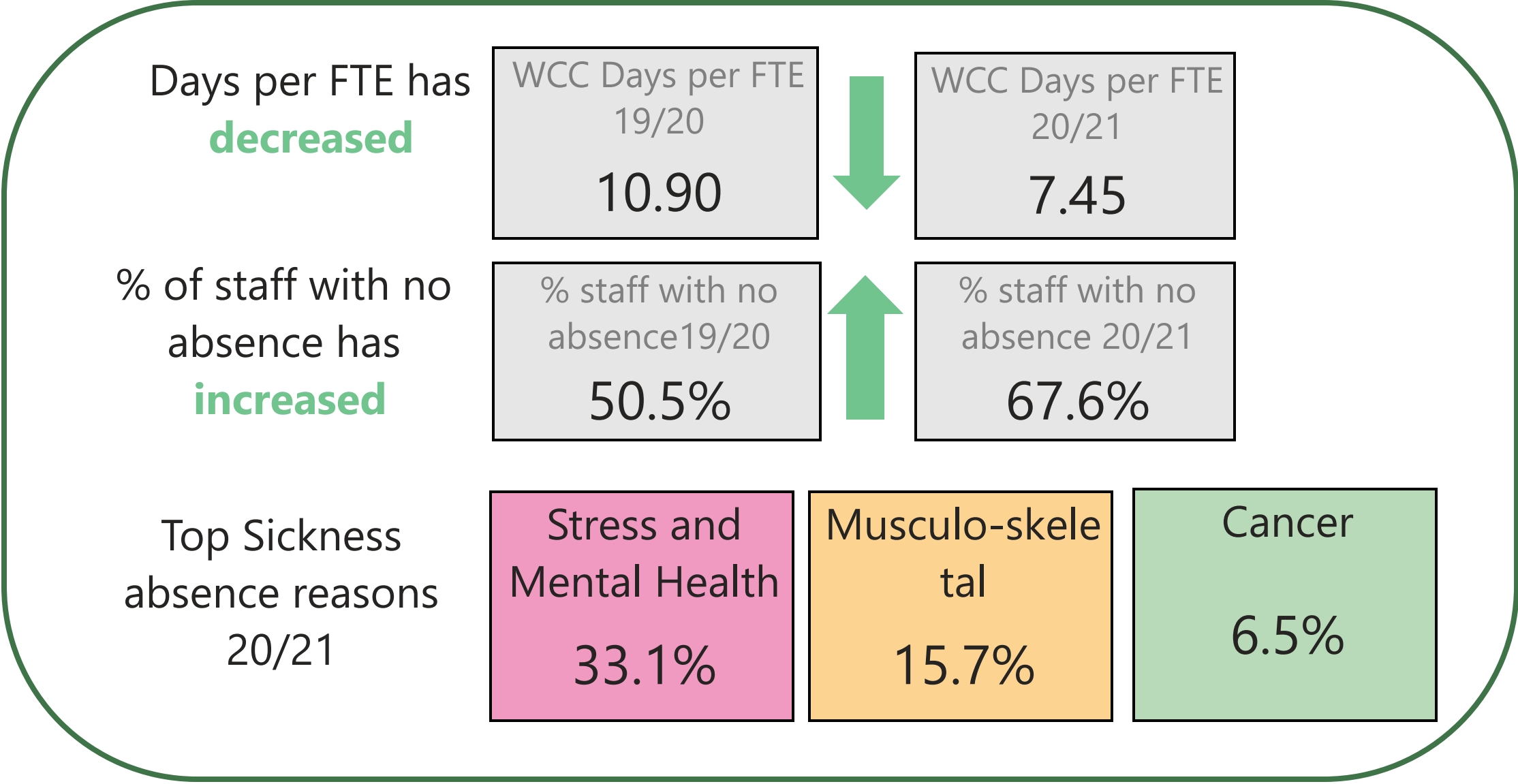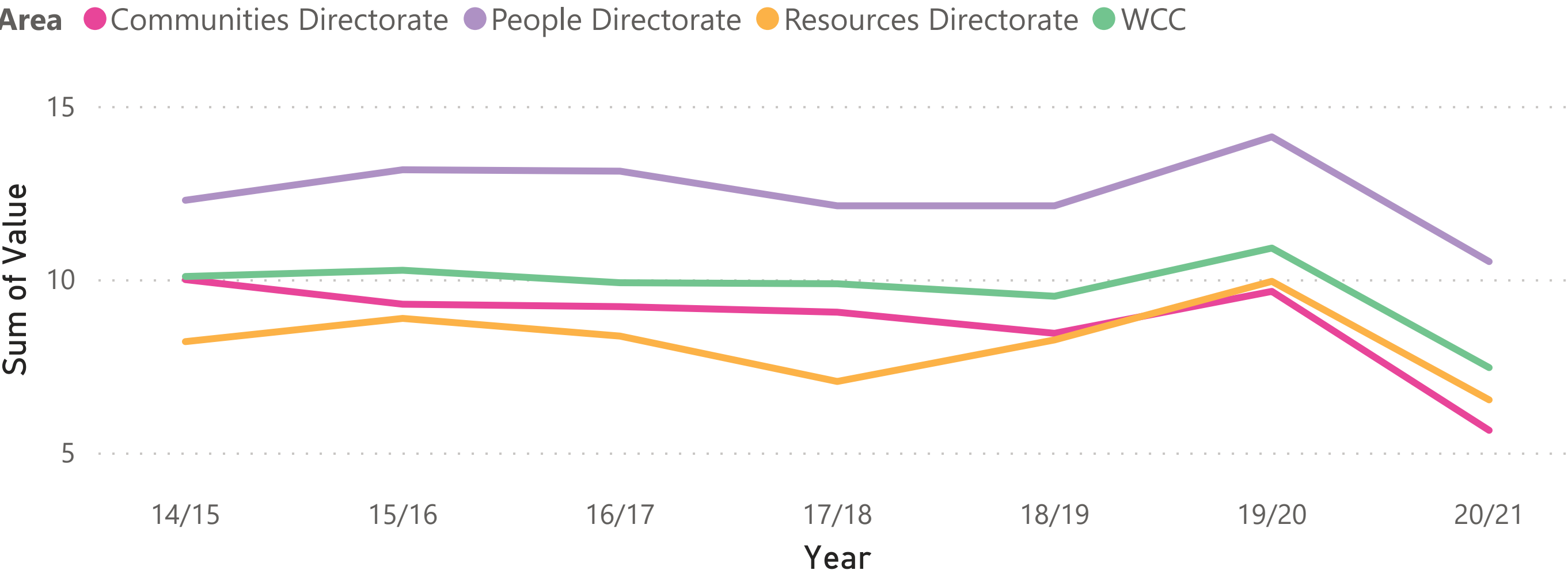

We will listen, learn and act to create an inclusive organisation with a sustainable and resilient workforce.
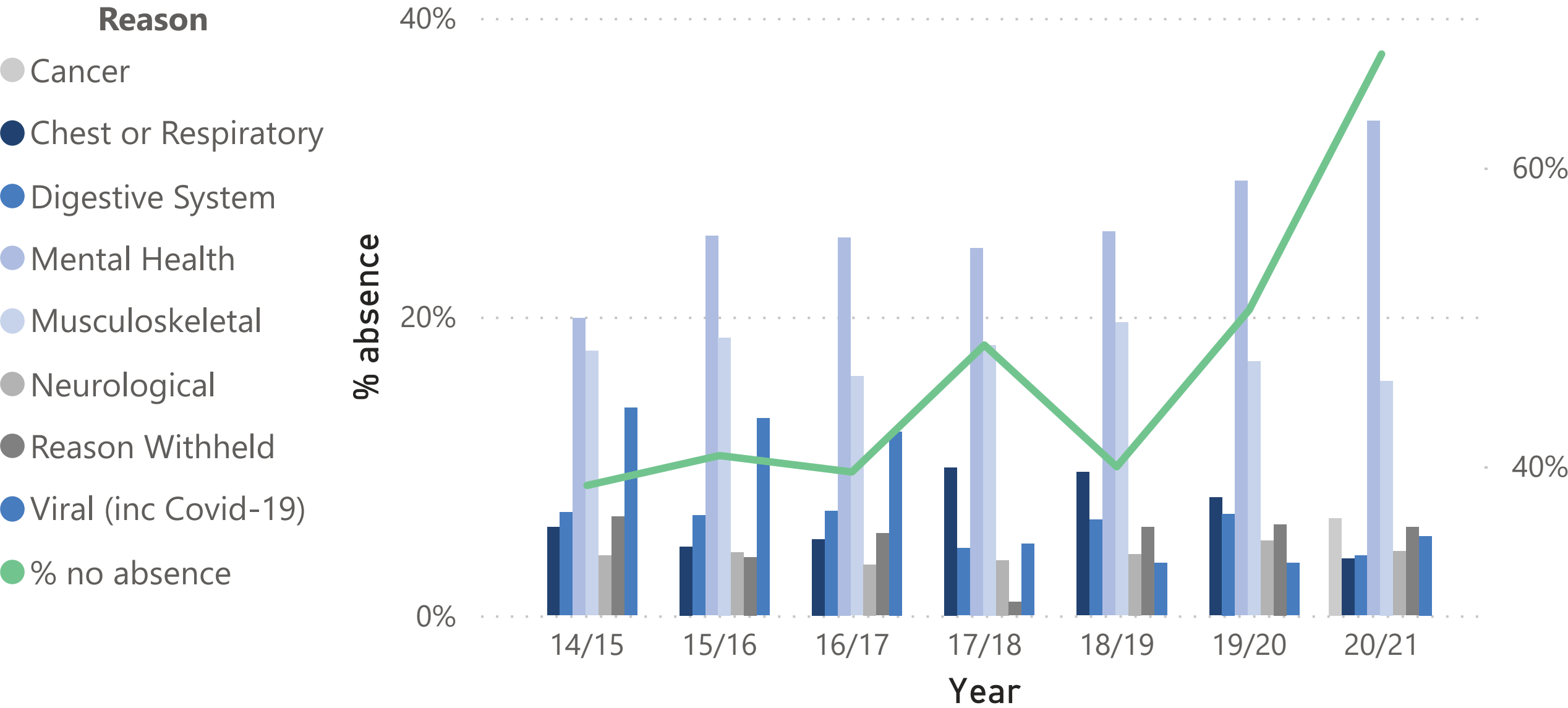
Warwickshire
County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Report 20-21

Ref: SRW21 | Version: 1 | Status: Dev
For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
Please quote the Ref number in your email

Absence

Days per FTE

Area ● Communities Directorate ● People Directorate ● Resources Directorate ● WCC

Days per FTE has **decreased**

WCC Days per FTE 19/20		WCC Days per FTE 20/21
10.90	⬇	7.45

% of staff with no absence has **increased**

% staff with no absence19/20		% staff with no absence 20/21
50.5%	⬆	67.6%

Top Sickness absence reasons 20/21

Stress and Mental Health	Musculo-skeletal	Cancer
33.1%	15.7%	6.5%

Top Reasons for Absence and % of all staff with no absence trend

Reason
● Cancer
● Chest or Respiratory
● Digestive System
● Mental Health
● Musculoskeletal
● Neurological
● Reason Withheld
● Viral (inc Covid-19)
● % no absence

Stress and Mental Health % of days lost

● S&M % days lost per FTE ● S&M Days per FTE
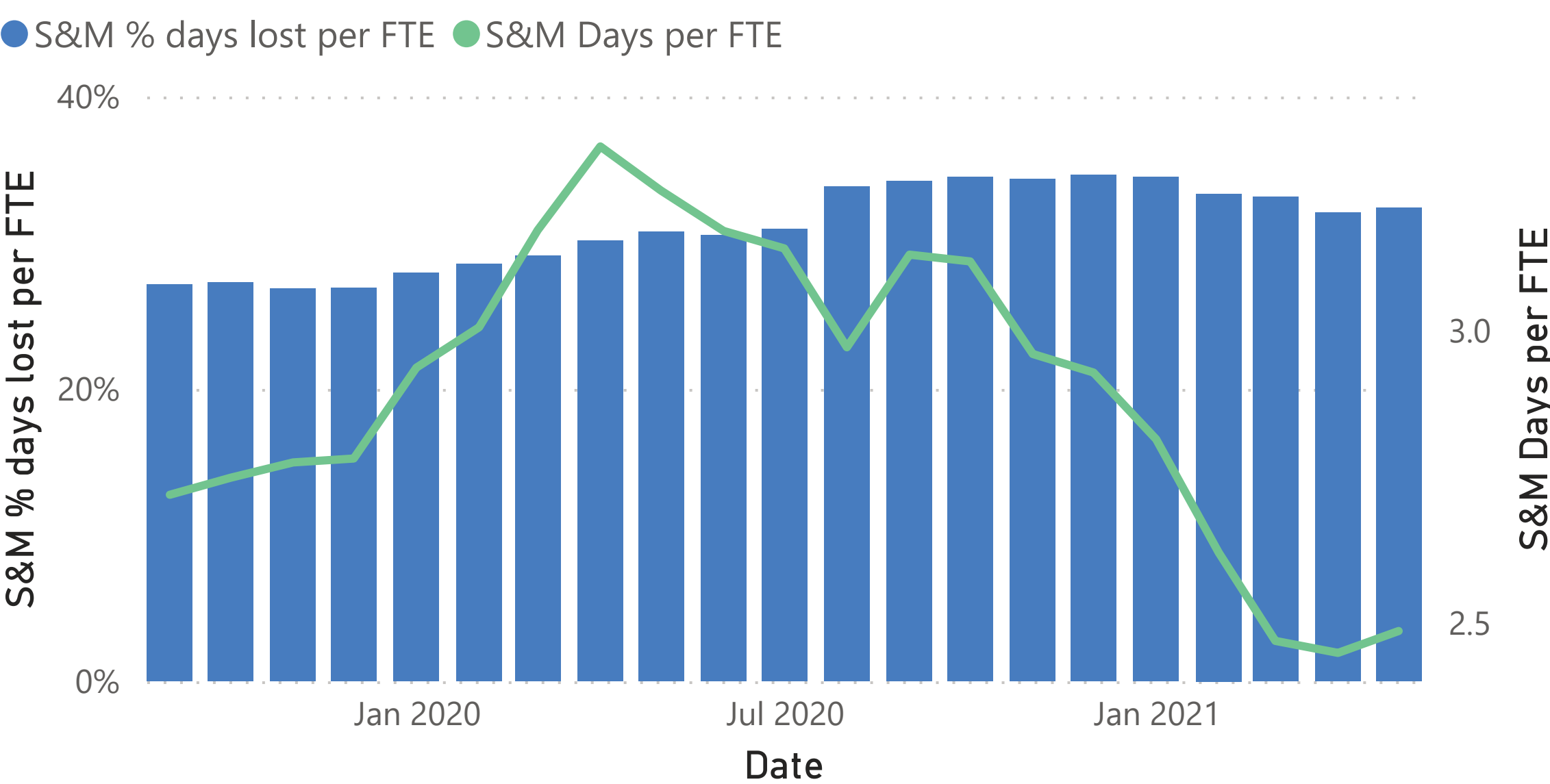
Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Report 20-21
Absence

Ref: SRW21 | Version: 1 | Status: Dev
For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
Please quote the Ref number in your email

% days lost to short term absence

Area ● Communities Directorate ● People Directorate ● Resources Directorate ● WCC ● Days per FTE
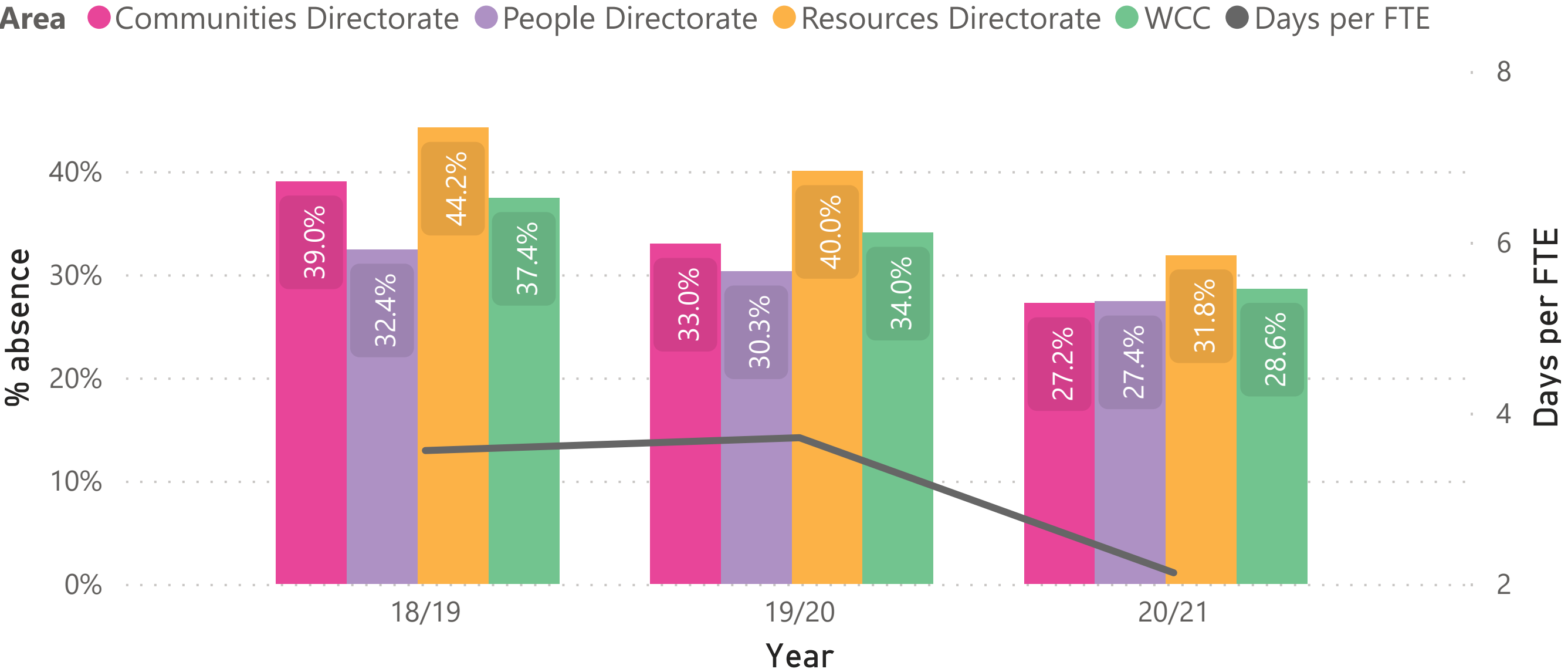
% days lost to long term absence

Area ● Communities Directorate ● People Directorate ● Resources Directorate ● WCC ● Days per FTE
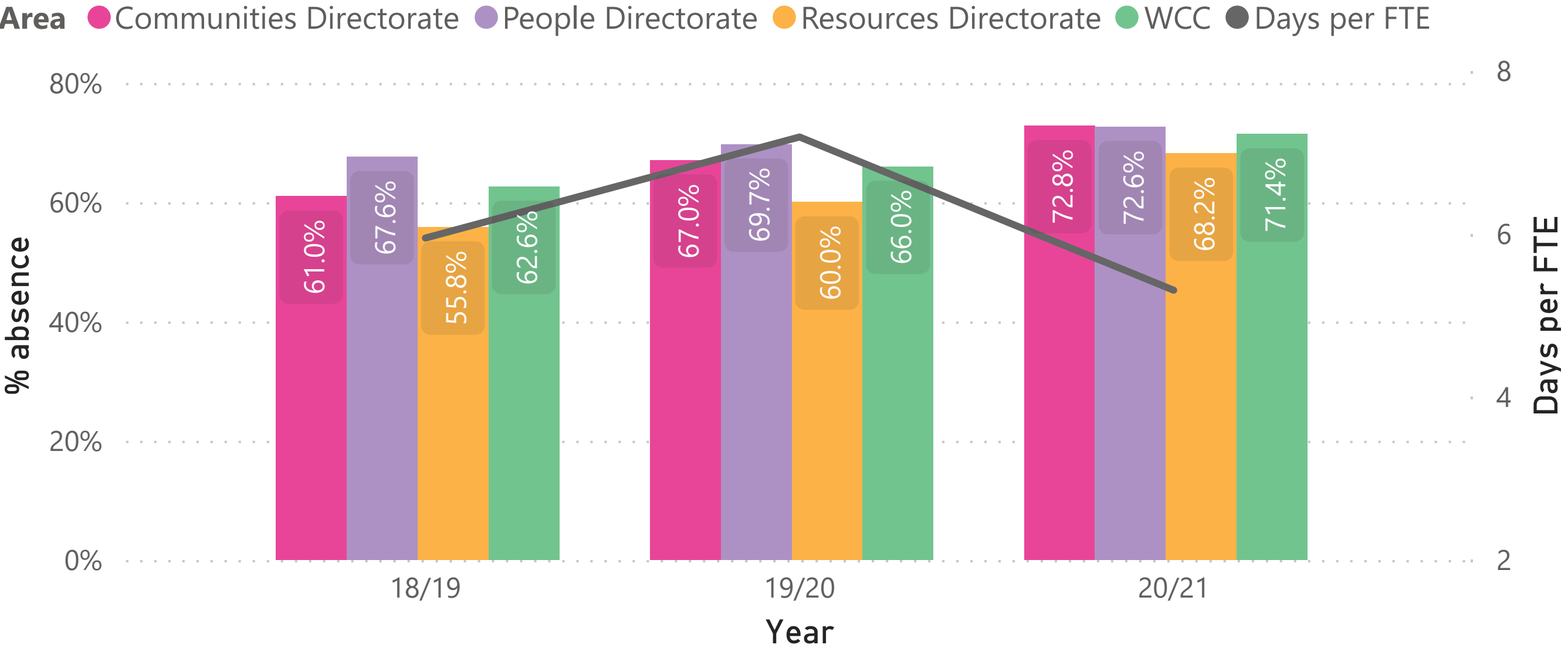
Number of staff hitting trigger indicators

Trigger ● 3 in 6 months ● 5 in 12 months ● 10 days in 12 months
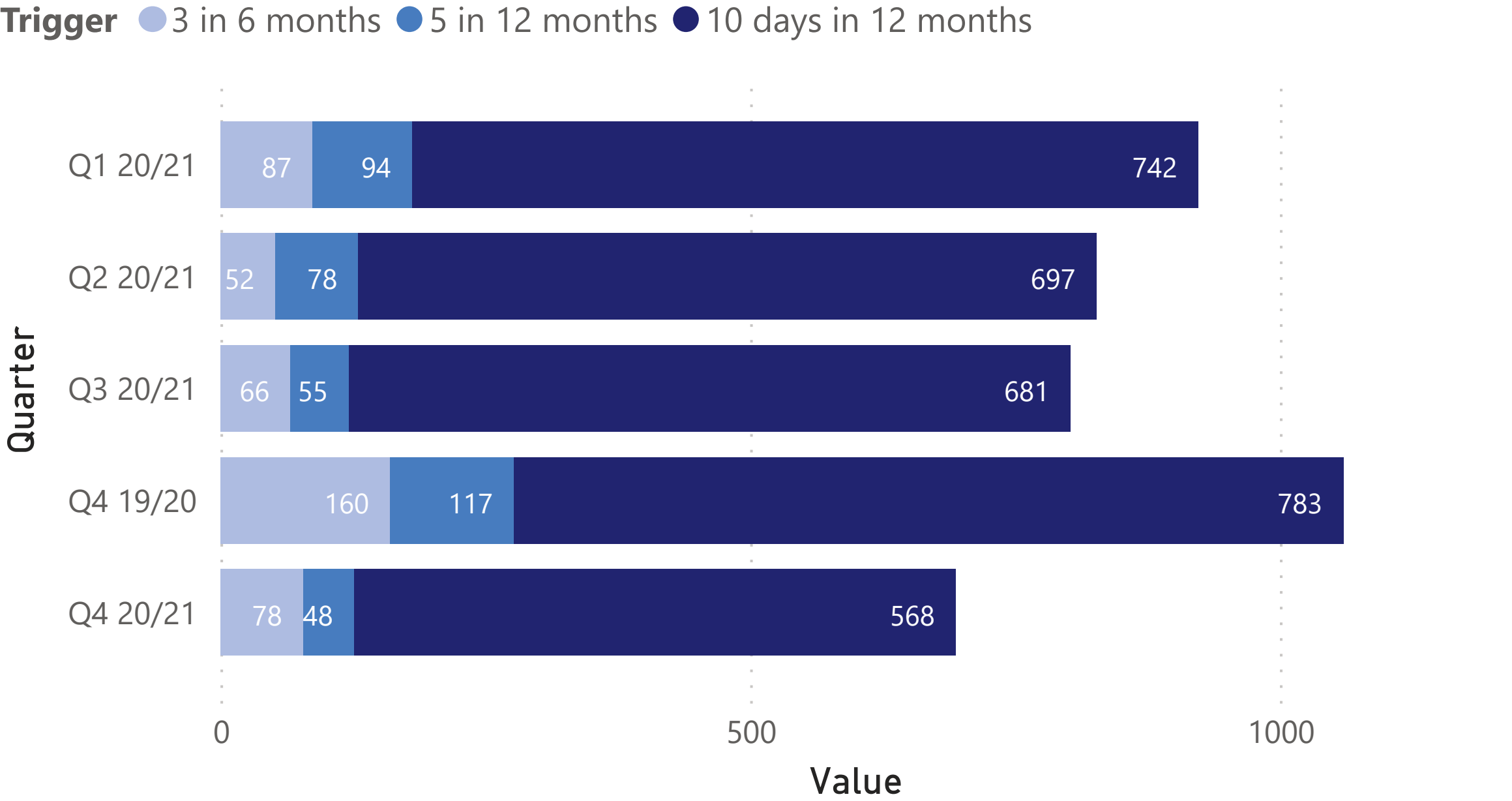
Long term absence by length

Length ● 1-3 Months ● 3-6 Months ● 6-9 Months ● 9-12 Months ● 12+ months

Ref: SRW21 | Version: 1 | Status: Dev
For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
Please quote the Ref number in your email
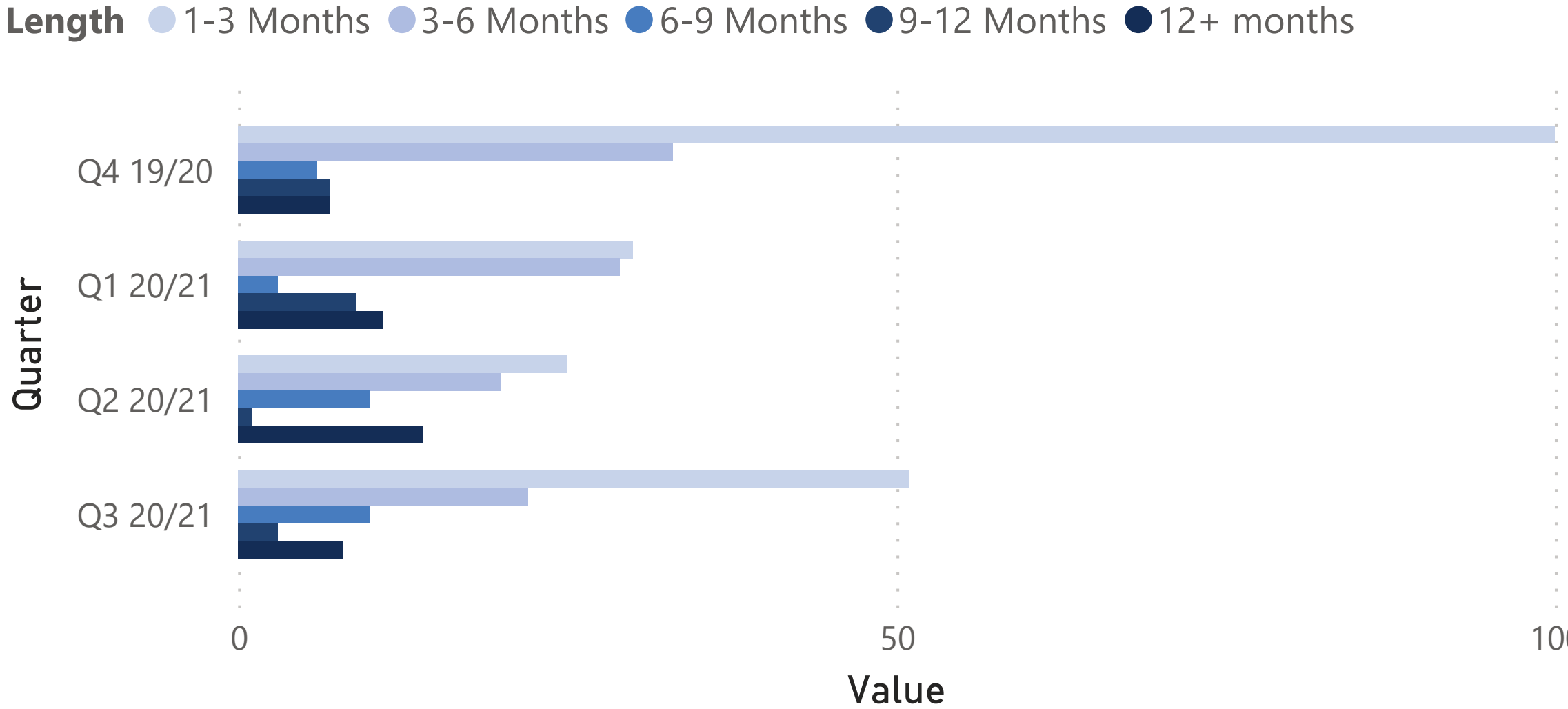
Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Report 20-21
Benchmarking

Benchmark by year

Group ● Highest Shires Network authority ● Lowest Shires Network Authority ● Mean average of Shires Netw... ● Public Sector Average ● WCC
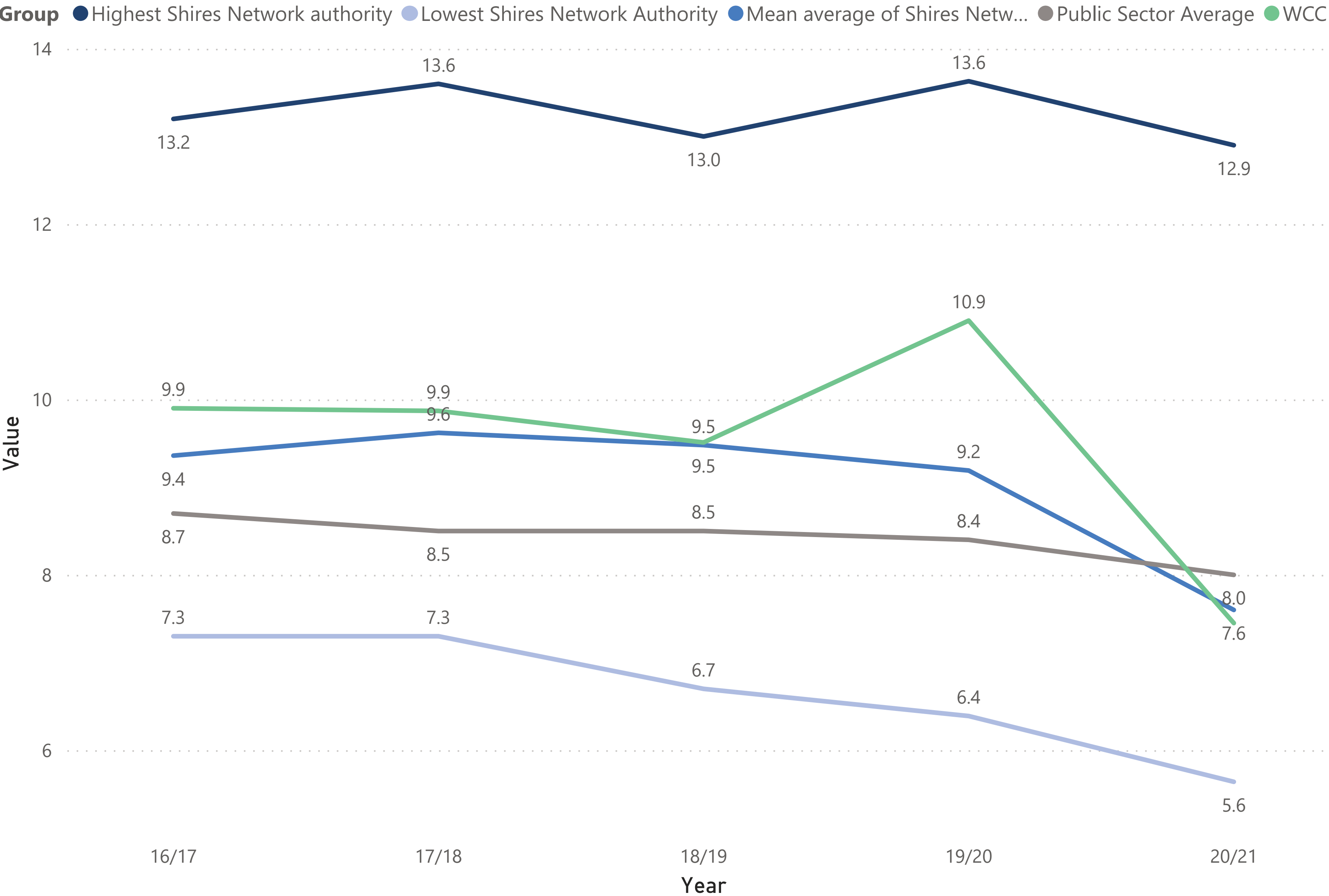
Benchmark data on average days absence has been obtained from 19 local authorities across the Shire Counties network to provide comparative data. The data compares the highest, lowest and mean average against Warwickshire's annual days per FTE figure.
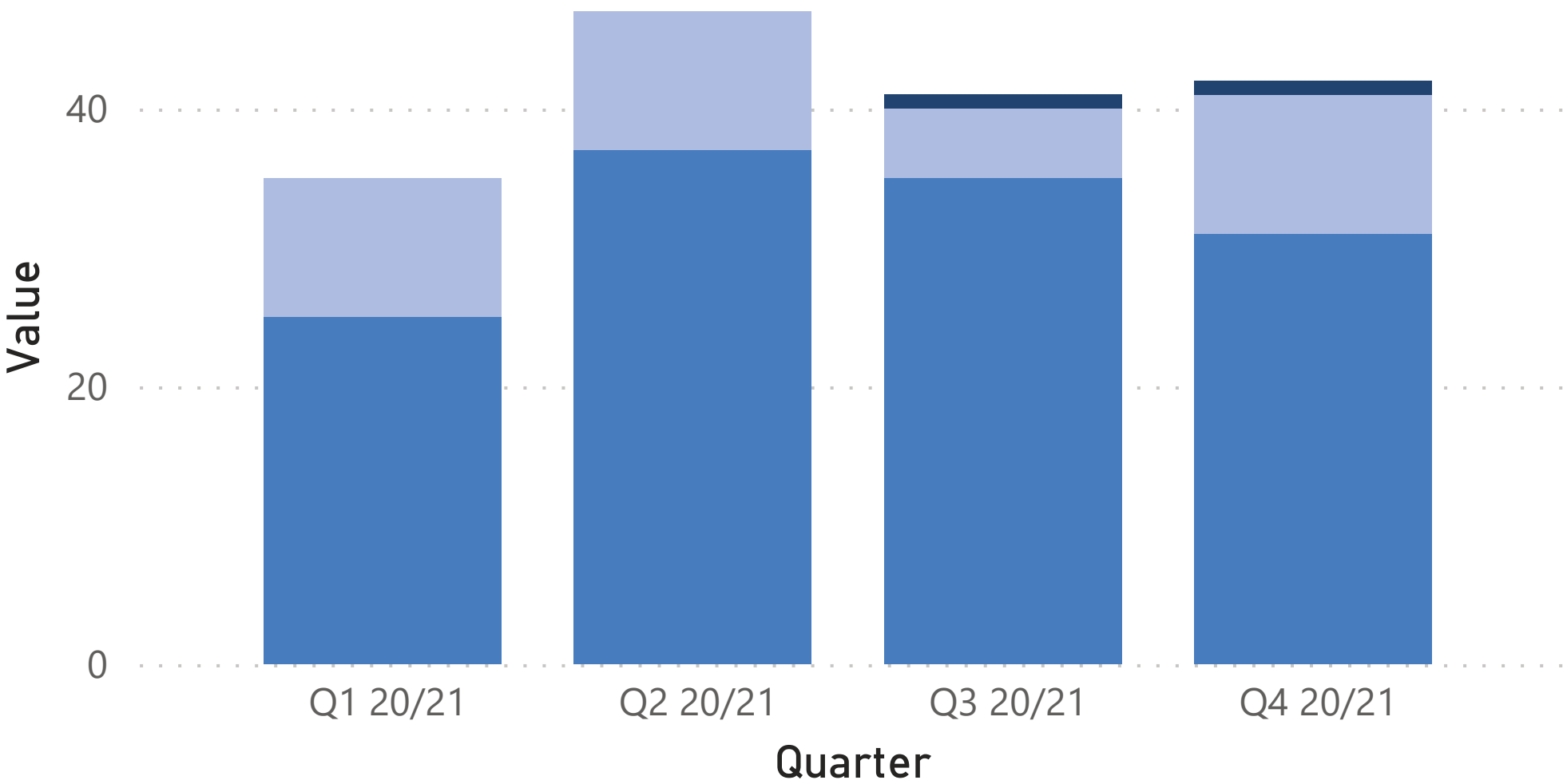
Ref: SRW21 | Version: 1 | Status: Dev
For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
Please quote the Ref number in your email

Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Report 20-21
Employee Assistance Programme & Occupational Health

Employee Assistance Programme

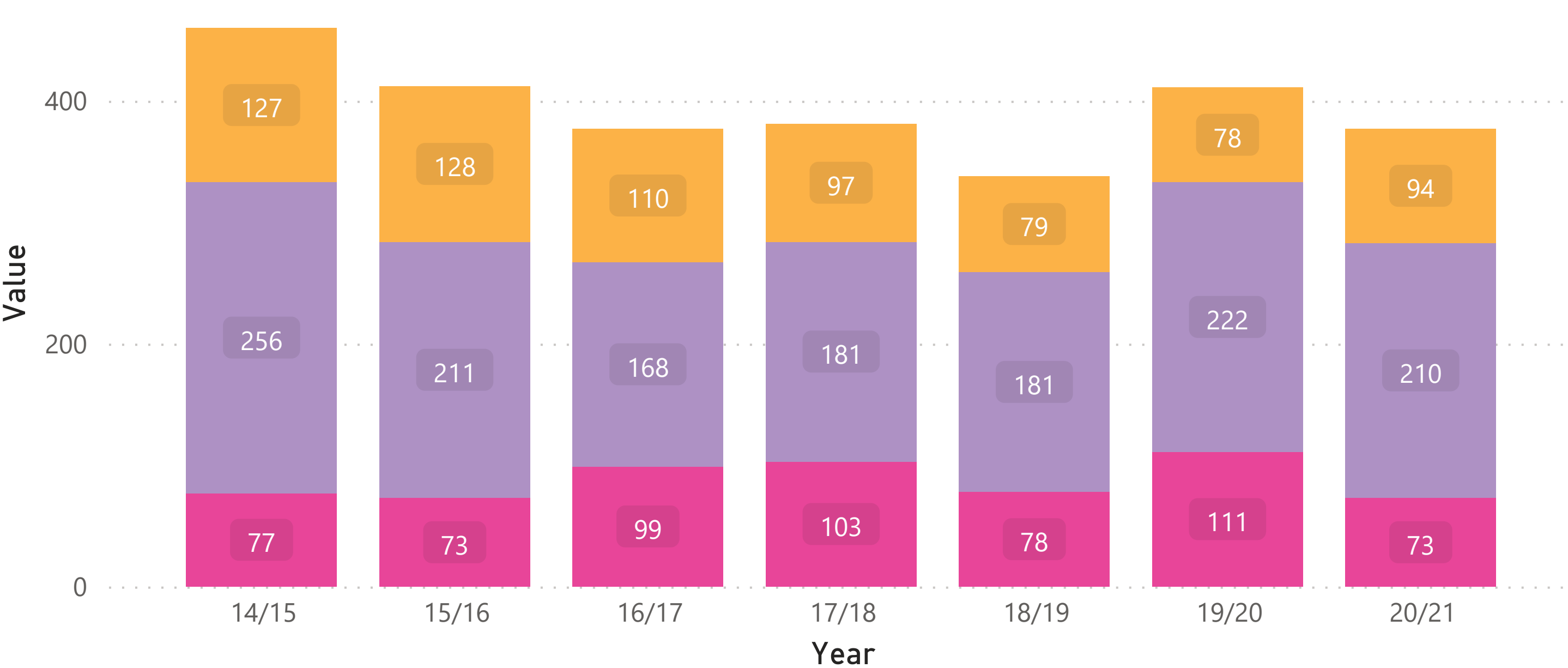**Programme** ● Emotional Support ● Legal and Info ● management Support

Number of Occupational Health Referrals by Year and Directorate

OH referrals ● Communities ● People ● Resources

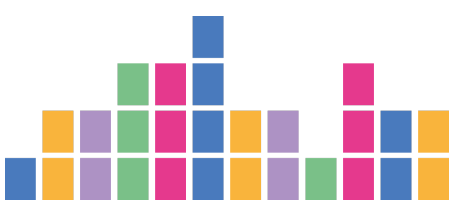## Programme by Directorate

Service ● Communities ● People ● Resources
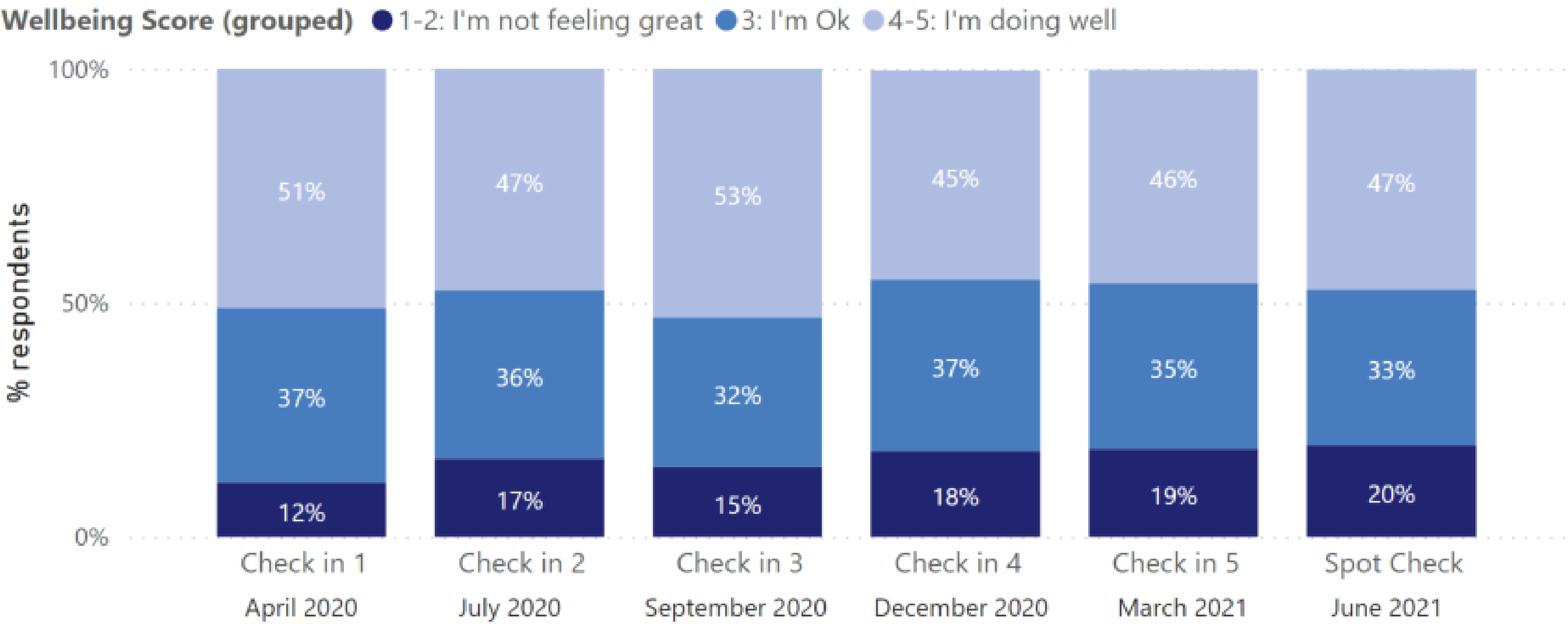

Occupational Health Referral reason by year

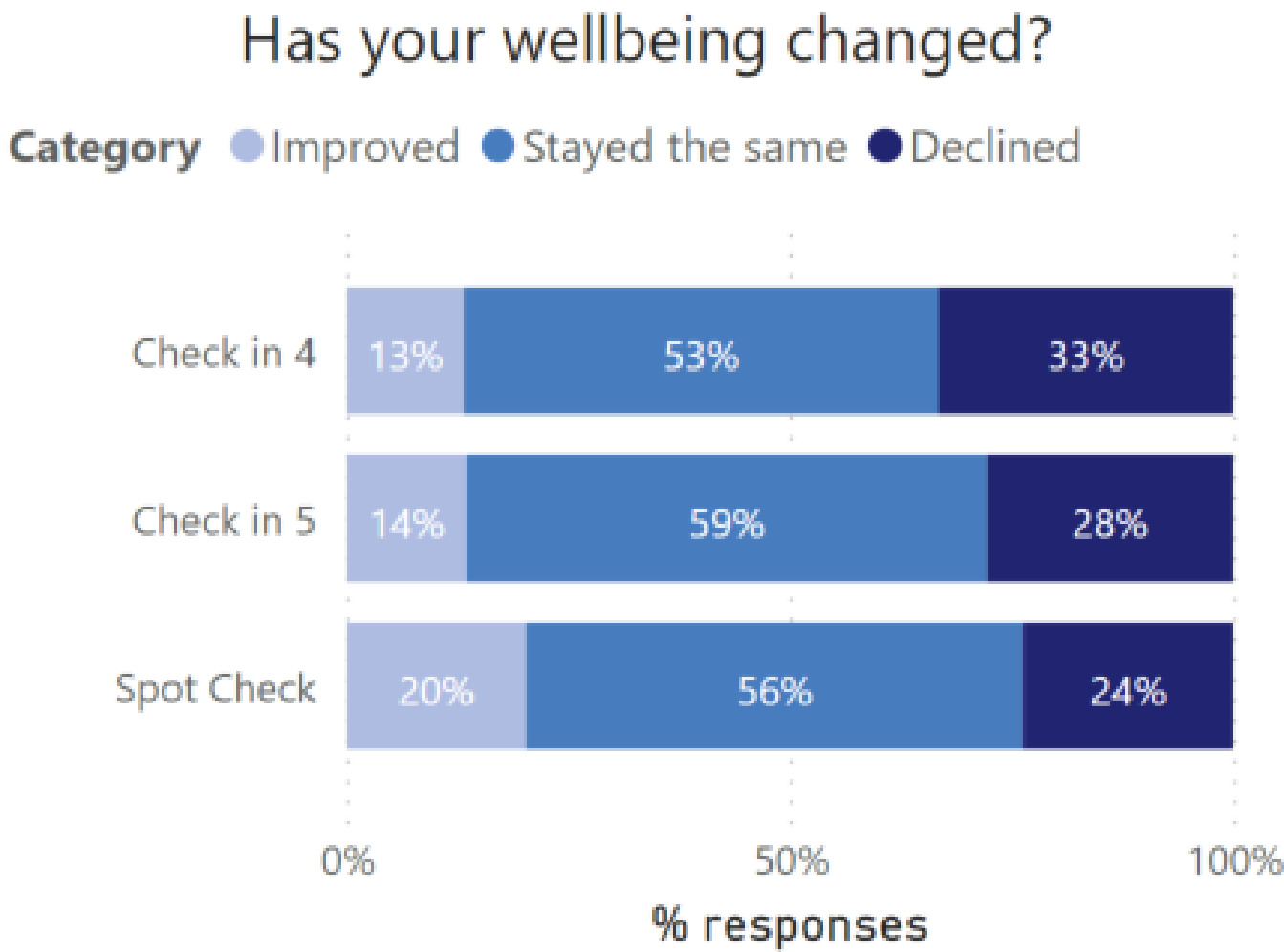**OH referral reason** ● Mental Health ● Musculo-Skeletal ● Other Reasons
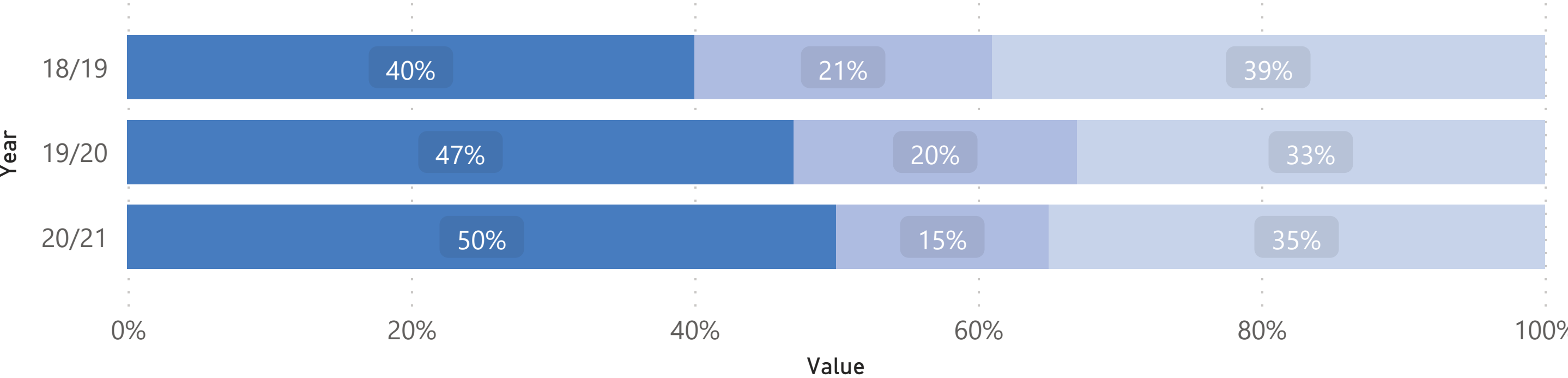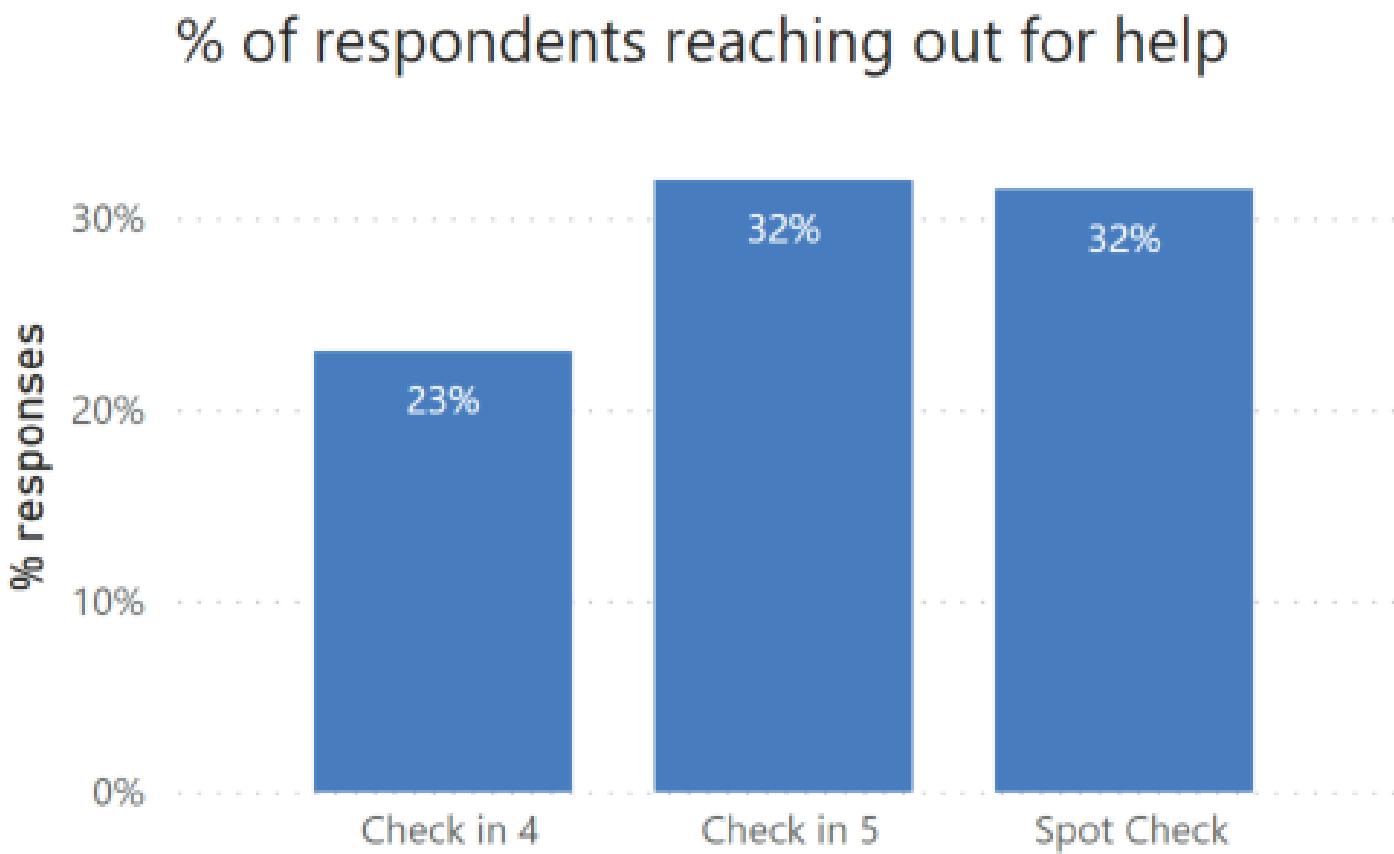
Sustainable and Resilient Workforce Annual Report 20-21
Engagement and Wellbeing

Ref: SRW21 | Version: 1 | Status: Dev
For queries, contact businessintelligence@warwickshire.gov.uk
Please quote the Ref number in your email

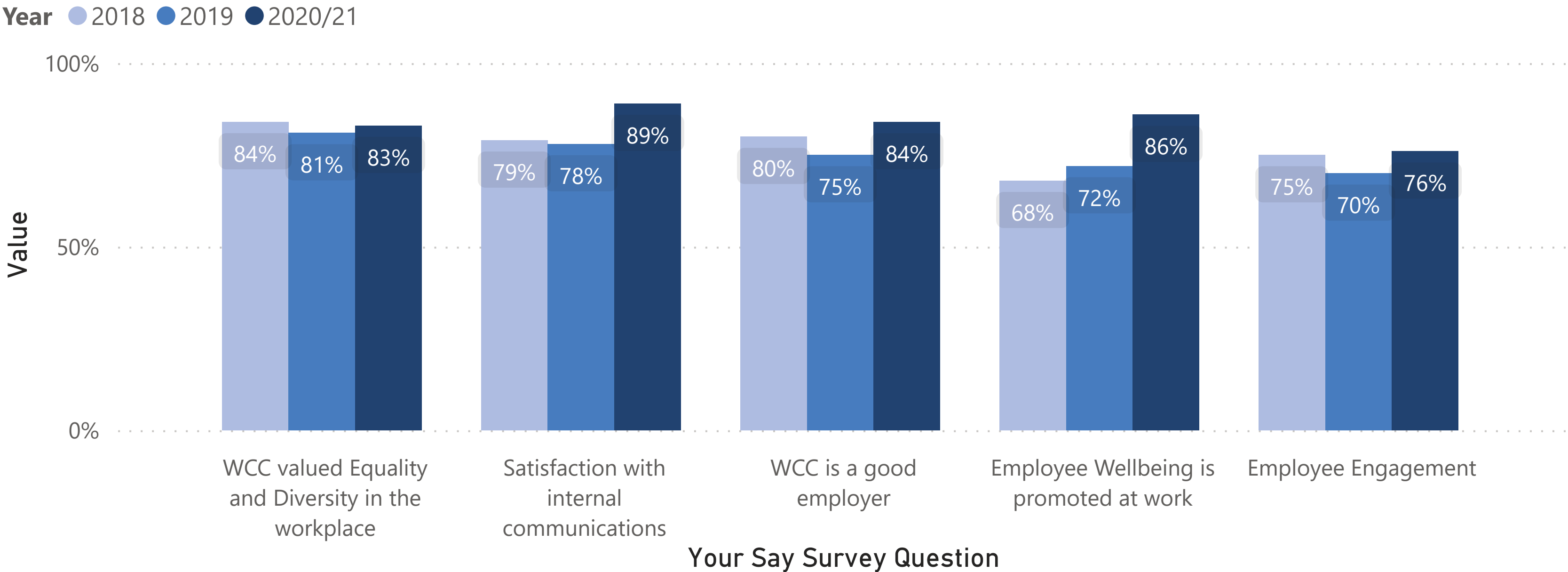**Wellbeing Score (grouped)** ● 1-2: I'm not feeling great ● 3: I'm Ok ● 4-5: I'm doing well

Employee wellbeing and engagement has been monitored through a series of check-in surveys from April 2020 to present.

Check in	% respondents (4-5)	% respondents (3)	% respondents (1-2)
Check in 1 — April 2020	51%	37%	12%
Check in 2 — July 2020	47%	36%	17%
Check in 3 — September 2020	53%	32%	15%
Check in 4 — December 2020	45%	37%	18%
Check in 5 — March 2021	46%	35%	19%
Spot Check — June 2021	47%	33%	20%

Has your wellbeing changed?

Category ● Improved ● Stayed the same ● Declined

	Improved	Stayed the same	Declined
Check in 4	13%	53%	33%
Check in 5	14%	59%	28%
Spot Check	20%	56%	24%

% responses

Your Say Survey Questions

Year ● 2018 ● 2019 ● 2020/21

Your Say Survey Question	2018	2019	2020/21
WCC valued Equality and Diversity in the workplace	84%	81%	83%
Satisfaction with internal communications	79%	78%	89%
WCC is a good employer	80%	75%	84%
Employee Wellbeing is promoted at work	68%	72%	86%
Employee Engagement	75%	70%	76%

% of respondents reaching out for help

	% responses
Check in 4	23%
Check in 5	32%
Spot Check	32%

Thrive at Work Summary results
854 responses

About Thrive at Work

In March 2021 we ran the Thrive at Work Health Needs Assessment. This survey provided further insight into the wellbeing of our people, building on the information gathered through our check in surveys.

Thrive at Work is a workplace commitment to create an organisation that promotes employee health and wellbeing. There are four levels to the programme, WCC is working towards the bronze accreditation (level 2).

Wellbeing

Does WCC take positive action on health and wellbeing?

Yes 92%
No 8%

How much action does WCC take?

A lot 33%
Quite a bit 46%
Some 18%
Very little 3%

In the last 12 months, have you gone to work despite feeling that you should have taken the day off sick?

No, never 53%
Yes, once 16%
Yes, 2–5 times 25%
Yes, 6%

Warwickshire County Council

Working through COVID

How are you coping with remote working?

Coping well 38%
Coping quite well 49%
Coping not so well 12%
Not coping at all 1%

Are any outside of work challenged impacting on how you are working?

Yes 43%
No 57%

How would you describe your weight?

Underweight 1%
About right 52%
Overweight 47%

Have you established a good work routine?

Yes 92%
No 8%

Are you taking regular breaks?

Yes 70%
No 30%

Smoking

currently smokers 31%
non smokers 69%
of smokers intend to give up 68%

What did our people say?

Manager

My manager is accessible and frequently in contact **86%**

My manager keeps me up to date and well informed **85%**

My manager cares about my welfare and wellbeing **85%**

Leadership

The organisation is taking the situation seriously **97%**

Senior Management have been sufficiently visible and accessible **91%**

I have confidence in the senior management team decision responses **87%**

I would be listened to if I voiced concerns regarding WCC's response **70%**

Communication

The communication I have received has been helpful and reassuring **90%**

I am kept up to date and feel well informed regarding WCC's response **93%**

I know who to talk to if I need support **91%**

My team are communicating well and staying connected **84%**

Doing my job

Where I am currently working I have what I need to perform my job effectively **78%**

I am satisfied with the flexible working arrangements made by WCC to accommodate my needs during the pandemic **81%**

What did managers say?

I feel comfortable having 1:1 meetings with staff I line manage **99%**

I feel happy discussing staff health and wellbeing issues with them **97%**

I feel able to deal with any health and wellbeing concerns staff speak to me about **92%**

I feel able to manage staff sickness and return to work effectively **90%**

Do you feel supported by the organisation to manage your team?

Yes definitely 69%
Yes a little 28%
Not at all 3%