

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

16 March 2021

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny
Venue Microsoft Teams Meeting

Membership

Chair Cllr Val Evans (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Simon Bennett (Con)

Labour

Cllr Olivia Birch
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Zee Russell

Conservative

Cllr Sohail Khan

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

Contact Earl Piggott Smith
Tel/Email 01902 551251 email: earl.piggott-smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

Website <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/>
Email democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Tel 01902 555046

Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

If you are reading these papers on an electronic device you have saved the Council £11.33 and helped reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **Welcome and Introductions**

[The Chair to welcome everyone to the meeting. The Scrutiny Officer will then read out a list of those invited to the meeting to confirm who is in attendance.]

2 **Meeting procedures to be followed**

[The Chair will explain how the meeting will proceed, how questions are to be asked and any matters of meeting etiquette.]

BUSINESS ITEMS

3 **Apologies**

4 **Declarations of Interest**

5 **Minutes of previous meeting (19.1.2021) (Pages 3 - 8)**

[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record]

6 **Matters arising**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7 **Adult Social Work Health Check 2020 (Pages 9 - 20)**

[Courtney Abbott, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner for Children and Adults, to present the report]

8 **Adult Social Care Workforce Health Check 2020 (Pages 21 - 32)**

[Courtney Abbott, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner for Children and Adults, to present report]

**Adults and Safer City Scrutiny
Panel**
Minutes - 19 January 2021

Agenda Item No: 5

Attendance**Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel**

Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Olivia Birch
Cllr Val Evans (Chair)
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Zee Russell

In Attendance

Cllr Linda Leach Cabinet Member Adults

Employees

Courtney Abbott

Advanced Practitioner for Quality and
Improvement

Lynsey Kelly

Head of Community Safety

Hannah Pawley

Community Safety Manager

Keisha Harper

Domestic Abuse Specialist

Earl Piggott-Smith

Scrutiny Officer

Jennifer Rogers

Principal Social Worker (Interim)

Julia Cleary

Scrutiny and Systems Manager

Martin Stevens

Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Val Evans, Chair, welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and advised it was being live streamed to the press and public. A recording of the meeting would be available for viewing on the Council's website at a future date.

2 Meeting procedures to be followed

Cllr Evans explained the protocol to be followed during the meeting for asking questions and reminded everyone that microphones should be muted and cameras off, unless they have been invited to speak. Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, confirmed the list of people in attendance.

3 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following member of the panel:

Cllr Lynne Moran

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

5 Minutes of previous meeting

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

6 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

7 Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020

Hannah Pawley, Community Safety Manager, and Keisha Harper, Domestic Abuse Specialist, gave a joint presentation on the work being done and planned to prepare for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

The Domestic Abuse Specialist briefly outlined the progress of the Bill and the background to an announcement by the then Prime Minister of plans to transform the way the Government thinks about and tackles domestic abuse.

The Bill is currently going through Parliament. The Bill is having third reading in the House of Lords to consider amendments during the committee stage. The Bill is due to be implemented in April 2021.

The Domestic Abuse Specialist outlined the four main objectives of the Bill relating to domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Bill has seven key parts. For example, the Bill will create the statutory definition of domestic abuse. This would involve changes such as lowering the age from 18 to 16 years to ensure that children are included as victims or witnessing seeing or experiencing domestic abuse and recognising that domestic abuse is not just physical but also includes the idea of coercive control, and different forms of abuse such as psychological and economic. The Bill will introduce the post of Domestic Abuse Commissioner who will be responsible for overseeing and leading national public policy on tackling domestic abuse.

The Community Safety Manager outlined the new duties that the Bill will place on local authorities. The Bill will place additional duties on local authorities in responding to domestic abuse. Local authorities will have to identify or establish a local partnership board that will be responsible for overseeing the response to domestic abuse and the implementation of the Bill. The local authority will have to provide support and safe accommodation in the City for victims of domestic abuse and their children. The local authority will also be required to commission a robust needs assessment and report back annually to Government on progress.

The Community Safety Manager gave further details of the statutory duty for the local authority to provide safe accommodation and specifically to support all victims of domestic abuse and their children. The duty will include things like the provision of refugees and specialist rescue support, both commissioned and non-commissioned accommodation.

The Community Safety Manager commented on the support for people with protected characteristics or complex needs, in terms of the provision of face to face services and translators.

The Bill will introduce a Capacity Building Fund which is intended to help authorities meet their new responsibilities. Each tier one authority will receive £50,000 from a national budget of £6 million to prepare and conduct a needs assessment.

The expected outcome of this work will be increased engagement with key partners which will help facilitate expertise and information sharing about current local provision both commissioned and non-commissioned.

The Community Safety Manager commented on the expected outcomes of the fund.

The Community Safety Manager commented on the proposed next steps for implementing the Bill.

The panel thanked the Community Safety Manager and Domestic Abuse Specialist for their presentation. The panel welcomed the plans to map provision of commissioned and non-commissioned safe accommodation and support providers across the City.

The panel queried how the views of the victims of domestic abuse will be captured and considered during the needs assessment work, in response to concerns about the provision of support services. The Community Safety Manager responded that the needs assessment work will enable the Council to hold accommodation support providers to account for the services they have agreed to provide to victims of domestic abuse.

The panel queried the basis for the allocation of capacity building fund and how it can be used. The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that every local authority will be given £50,000 to prepare for the implementation of the Bill. The money will be used to fund the cost of the mapping and engagement work to be completed before April 2021.

The panel queried the proposed next steps to be taken in preparation. The Community Safety Manager advised the panel of the work being done with partners to prepare for the implementation. The service has identified the key partners working in the domestic abuse specialist provider sphere, for example, The Haven has been commissioned to provide services in the City.

There are plans to commission providers working either regionally or nationally to work with specific groups. The service is working with partners such as the police, courts and the health sector to make sure that as a City it is really responding to all key themes of the Bill detailed earlier. The panel queried work done to support refugees or people who have language barriers to access domestic abuse safe accommodation and the details of plans to engage with different providers in the City. The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that the service is working with frontline providers about supporting refugees with no recourse to public funds who are victims of abuse.

As part of the needs assessment mapping work the service is starting to engage with victims from different backgrounds and this information will help to better understand the victim's journey, which will include people from the refugee and migrant communities, who may not be aware of the support services available.

The panel queried if the service is planning to work local faith organisation and make them aware of the resources available which can then be shared with the members of the community.

The Community Safety Manager reassured the panel of the work done to support different communities and to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and interpersonal violence. In addition, a targeted awareness campaign is planned to reach more people within local faith communities as there is an acceptance that this an underreported crime. The Community Safety Manager added that work is being done to understand how to encourage people to firstly report domestic abuse, but also to seek support which can help them break the cycle.

The panel queried the work that will be done to capture the views of victims of domestic abuse when developing plans to protect and support them. The Community Safety Manager added that the work is at an early stage of developing conversations with frontline providers about how to best engage with victims; while recognising that it is a sensitive topic. A key part of the work will be to ensure that victims voices lead this process and they feel protected and safe.

The panel requested a report on progress to be reported to a future meeting.

The Community Safety Manager agreed to present a progress report in September 2021 when the needs assessment and service provider mapping work will have been done.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to note the report.
2. The panel endorsed the proposed next steps for implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill as outlined in the report.
3. The Community Safety Manager and Domestic Abuse Specialist to jointly present an update report on progress in September 2021 in meeting the new duties on local authorities as detailed in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

8 **Adult Social Care Annual Report: The Local Account 2019-2020**

Jennifer Rogers, Interim Safeguarding Manager (Adults) and Courtney Abbott, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner for Children and Adults, jointly presented the report to the panel.

Jenny Rogers, Interim Principal Social Worker, gave a brief introduction to the requirement for local authorities to publish Adult Social Care Local Account. The panel were invited to give comment and feedback on the 2019-2020 Adult Social Care Local Account prior to it being presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2021 for approval.

The purpose of publishing the Local Account is to provide the public with information on the performance of Adult Social Care service and activity against performance targets.

The report details the progress made against the priorities set in the previous year and includes a mix of both qualitative and quantitative information. The document also includes examples of real-life stories where there has been an impact.

The Interim Principal Social Worker commented on the importance of celebrating in the document the achievements of the service but also highlighting the challenges and where improvements are needed. The Local Account is part of the self-assessment process and important to make sure that it is easy to read and accessible. It is considered a really good practice for councils to include information about the financial situation and how resources have been used. The inclusion of financial information is not mandatory. The Local Account is normally published in November or December but to the impact of Covid-19 there has been a delay. The Interim Principal Social Worker invited panel to comment on the draft document.

The document has been shared with local groups who were invited to give us feedback on what could be done to make it work better for the public

Courtney Abbott, Advanced Practitioner for Quality and Improvement, commented that the Local Account looks at the strengths of the service and what has been done well against challenges faced during the year. The Advanced Practitioner, commented that the service has made good progress towards meeting the key priorities during the year. A key highlight in the document is that year-on-year adult social care of received fewer complaints when compared to the previous year.

The Advanced Practitioner added that the service replied to most complaints received within the required time scales and there is a focus on resolving complaints as quickly as possible. The Advanced Practitioner gave further details about the progress in meeting the target to register 3000 new people on Telecare which helps support people to remain independent in their own home for as long as possible.

The service is supporting 1372 people and is on target for meeting that goal of 3,000 new people using Telecare.

The Advanced Practitioner commented on the support given to people who have been discharged from the hospital and highlighted the increase in the number of people still in their home 91 days later when compared to the previous year.

The service is helping people to remain more independently in their homes and out of hospital unnecessarily. The service provides equipment and make adaptations that can help ensure that a person's home is safe for them and meet their needs.

The Advanced Practitioner commented on the progress in implementing the 'three conversations' throughout adult social care, and highlighted examples in the Local Account about the positive benefits of the approach in terms of helping people to connect with other people in the community. There has been an increase in the number of 'conversations' held in 2019 2020 compared to the previous year. The work has been supported by the community support and carers support teams.

The Advanced Practitioner commented on the success of care assessments for people being discharged from hospital either into a care home or supported accommodation. The service will ensure that people who are ready for discharge are going to be in the place that will best meet their needs, but there is a recognition that there this more to do to support the people who live in the City.

The priorities set for 2020 2021 are the same as the previous priorities because these are areas which are important to people in the City. The Advanced Practitioner advised the panel that the service wants to make the offer better and also working with the challenges presented by Covid-19.

The service will continue to prioritise the timely discharge from hospital in the future and also help people have more choice and to live more independently. The Advanced Practitioner commented in previous meeting where the issue of isolation and loneliness among older people was discussed and outlined the work being done to tackle this issue for people living in their own homes and connecting to them to support networks. There is a lot of work being done in this area because loneliness can affect both mental health and physical health of carers, for example, connecting carers to people with similar interests and hobbies, which can help to improve the situation.

The Mental Health Team has been set up a WhatsApp group to encourage people with mental health difficulties to keep them in touch with each other and to create a space where they can talk to each other. The aim is for the group to become their own support group. The service is continuing to evolve and learn from what else is going on around the country.

The panel discussed the impact of dementia on people using Telecare and other support that might be needed where they may not be wearing the alarm necklace and need help following an accident. The Advanced Practitioner accepted the ongoing challenge presented in helping people with dementia to remain independent in a home setting but reassured the panel of the work being done to support.

The panel thanked the presenters for their report and presentation.

Resolved:

1. The Panel agreed to note the Adult Social Care Local Account for 2019-2020.
2. The comments of the Panel to be included in the report to Cabinet on 8 March 2020.
3. The Panel agreed to approve the Adult Social Care Local Account for 2019-2020.

9 **Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel 2019 20 - Draft Work Programme - report to follow**

The Scrutiny Officer advised the panel that the draft programme has not yet been finalised. An extra meeting has been arranged for 8 March 2020 to consider a report on care fees charges. A revised work programme will be sent to panel members when details have been confirmed.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the progress of the draft work programme.



Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

16 March 2021

Report title	Adults Social Work Health Check 2020	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Linda Leach Cabinet Member for Adults	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Director of Adult and Children's Services	
Originating service	Adult Social Care	
Accountable employees	Jenny Rogers	Principal Social Worker
	Tel	01902 555704
	Email	Jennifer.rogers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Courtney Abbott	Advanced Practitioner for Quality and Improvement
	Email	Courtney.abbott@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Adult Leadership Team	25 February 2021
	SEB	25 February 2021

Recommendation for action:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on the findings of the Adults Social Work Health Check for 2020.
2. Provide comment and challenge on proposed actions to improve the health of the social work workforce and conditions for practice.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) undertakes a full Social Work Health Check every year to assess the “health” of its social workers and forms part of adult services’ ongoing self-assessment. This report presents an overview of the findings of this year’s survey and concludes with actions to address areas for improvement.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Health checks were a key recommendation of the National Social Work Task Force which was set up by government in the wake of the death of Baby P. The National Social Work Task Force recommended a framework to assist employers and practitioners to assess the “health” of their organisation on a range of issues affecting the workload of social workers and to support the implementation of a set of national Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework. It is recognised that good practice carried out by a “healthy” and motivated workforce can lead to improved outcomes for people and families as well as reduced demand and costs.
- 2.2 City of Wolverhampton Council carry out a Social Work Health Check every year. This year’s Health Check was delayed due to Covid and as such was carried out later than usual.
- 2.3 It is important to note that the country entered the second national lockdown at the time that this Health Check survey was circulated. It is recognised that this year’s responses may have been affected by the unique circumstances experienced this year due to the pandemic. This has included increases in demand and staffing issues in some teams, as well as more general feelings of fatigue, isolation and the ongoing challenges associated with working from home and balancing other commitments.
- 2.4 The framework identifies five key topics to support organisations to undertake a self-assessment to identify current strengths and areas that require improvement. The five key topics are:
- Effective workload management
 - Pro-active workflow management
 - Having the right tools for the job
 - A healthy workplace
 - Effective service delivery
- 2.5 The Health Check was circulated via an online survey between 2 November and 14 December 2020. All registered social workers including student social workers, were invited to complete the online survey.
- 2.6 The survey was distributed to 126 adult social workers. There were 65 respondents to the survey (52%). This is lower than last year’s response rate of 65%, which is likely due to the impact Covid has had this year and the challenges teams have experienced and continue to face.

3.0 Overview and key findings

- 3.1 The findings indicate that average social worker workloads (full and part time) have decreased slightly from 22.4 in 2019 to 21.7 in 2020. It is important to acknowledge however that it is not just the number of people social workers are supporting that is important when considering workloads, but also the complexity of each situation. This is always monitored during supervision and the skills / experience of workers taken into account. The information for this report is based solely on the responses provided by those social workers who completed the survey. However, workload numbers are regularly monitored for all social workers and across all social work teams.
- 3.2 There has been an increase this year in the number of social workers who said that their workloads are not manageable and there has also been a rise in the number saying they are “just about” managing. Covid-19 and the challenges presented during the pandemic is likely to have had an impact on this finding this year.
- 3.3 The survey reveals that full time workers are working an average of 4.2 hours over their contracted hours, compared to 2.4 hours in 2019. However, part time workers are working an average of 2.4 hours over their contracted hours, a significant decrease from 2019 when they worked 10.3 hours over.
- 3.4 Stress levels are slightly higher this year with just over 50% of respondents saying they always or often felt stressed compared to 45% in 2019. Again, the pandemic and the changes and challenges this has posed for frontline social work teams will likely have had an impact on stress levels. A wellbeing survey carried out across Adult Services in July 2020 identified that over half of people felt that there were factors affecting their wellbeing, but 90% said they were getting the help they needed particularly from their team and managers. Supporting wellbeing has been a continual focus throughout the pandemic.
- 3.5 The number of respondents who receive monthly supervision has significantly increased to almost 74% in 2020, from 40.6% in 2019 and 51.3% in 2018. However, those satisfied with the quality of their supervision has decreased from 74.3% in 2019 to 63% in 2020. 74% were happy with the support they receive from their manager with complex pieces of work including risk and / or safeguarding and far more this year said they have sufficient opportunity to reflect on decision making and intervention. It is important to note that supervisions have been completed virtually since the start of the pandemic and this alongside difficulties with childcare, home-schooling, and demands on teams during Covid may have contributed to the decrease in quality of supervisions.
- 3.6 The number of respondents who have received an observation of practice this year has decreased slightly from 24.6% to 23.1%, but senior managers all spend time in Three Conversations© teams observing reflective discussions (huddles) virtually on a regular basis. Observations of practice have been more difficult to carry out due to working virtually but the new supervision policy launched in February 2021 sets out an

expectation on numbers of observation social workers should have a year to help increase numbers.

- 3.7 More social workers have accessed articles and research this year, 80% compared to 70.7% in 2019.
- 3.8 There has been a decrease in the average number of hours social workers are spending working directly with people and families, from 14.2 in 2019 to 11.8 in 2020. However, this is still higher than 2016, 2017, and 2018 when this was 10 hours. It is more difficult to measure this year as the vast majority of social worker's time is spent carrying out work virtually or via other means as face to face visits with people is only taking place if essential to minimise risk of infection.
- 3.9 The majority of social workers (64.6%) said that they spend more than 50% of their time inputting data into systems or completing admin tasks. This is slightly lower than in 2019 when this was 69%.
- 3.10 Communication in the organisation continues to be a key strength. The number who feel that communication between frontline staff and management is effective and appropriate has increased again this year, from 77.6% in 2019 to 84.6% in 2020. More people also knew who the senior managers were and could recognise them. 93.8% of respondents said that team meetings take place monthly, which is similar to last year. Just over 90% said they feel able to contribute to the agenda.
- 3.11 Most respondents, almost 74% compared to 57% in 2019), felt that council is a learning organisation which has a positive learning culture and the majority were satisfied with the learning opportunities available. The majority of social workers reported that their skills are being used effectively in their current role (an increase from 68.8% in 2019 to 78.4% in 2020).
- 3.12 There continues to be a strong sense of pride about working for CWC and more social workers plan to continue working for Wolverhampton for the next 12 months (89.2%) than last year (70.7%).
- 3.13 The things that made respondents feel positive this year included:
- Opportunities for further learning and training.
 - Supportive colleagues and managers.
 - Flexible working arrangements in the current circumstances.
 - "Response to Covid-19 pandemic".
 - "Good quality briefings and conferences, especially the joint social work briefing this year".
- 3.14 12.3% of respondents said that they felt that they had been treated unfairly in the previous 12 months on the grounds of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

4.0 Recommendations and actions

- 4.1 An action plan has been completed as a result of this survey to address the key areas of improvement. The findings will also inform the workforce development plans for the coming year.
- 4.2 The findings and actions will be shared with teams as well as being discussed at the next social work briefing in December 2019.
- 4.3 The Health Check action plan will be reviewed quarterly at the Social Work Development Board. Some key actions are noted below.
- 4.4 To address workload manageability and feelings of stress action is being taken to ensure teams experiencing increased demand and / or staffing issues during Covid have access to the resources they need in the short term. A longer-term review of the whole service is planned. Stress risk assessments will be carried out where needed to ensure workers receive the support they need and support for wellbeing will continue. The supervision policy has been revised and relaunched in February 2021. The updated policy is clear about what managers need to consider within supervision which includes robust discussions about workload manageability. Audits of supervisions will also take place regularly to measure quality and frequency of supervisions. This should help improve the quality of supervision and ensure workers feel supported and less stressed.
- 4.5 The implementation of Eclipse later in 2021 should help streamline processes and reduce the amount of time that social workers spend completing forms and administrative tasks.
- 4.6 Some respondents said that they are struggling to work from home and feel isolated by not being with their colleagues and having that face to face support. Heads of Service are currently looking at access to hubs/office spaces to help alleviate this extra pressure where this may be appropriate. There has been a continued focus on wellbeing throughout the pandemic with specific sessions at the workforce and social work briefings in July and September including an “at your desk yoga” session.
- 4.7 Monthly newsletters sent out by the Director includes resources and training to support wellbeing and teams are encouraged to have regular check ins and catch ups. A wellbeing survey was carried out in 2020 across the whole of Adult Services and this identified that access to equipment and aids to better work from home were the main issue teams were experiencing at that time. As a result, they were supported to access the support they needed. Currently there is more of a focus on emotional wellbeing and ensuring teams have the resources they need in the short and long term. There will continue to be a focus on wellbeing this coming year with access to training to support social workers in terms of secondary trauma and rebuilding resilience in the aftermath of Covid.
- 4.8 Ensuring people feel fairly treated is extremely important to the Council and to adult services. To address the issues raised in this year’s survey:

- This year, the Council will be commissioning training to support managers to facilitate good conversations around Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion and creating safe spaces within supervisions or individual discussions.
- The council is committed to upholding the highest standards of conduct and ethics and has launched a safe space for workers to report any serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work. This will be actively promoted within teams in adult services.
- Equalities champions will be identified within each social work team this coming year
- Anti-racist practice training was commissioned from the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) in January 2021 and actions identified from this includes ensuring access to Unconscious bias training for all staff and ensuring there are equality questions asked as part of all social work interviews.
- Specific training for social workers on anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive practice will be commissioned in this coming year.
- Equality and Diversity is a standard agenda item at all team meetings and in supervisions

5.0 Update from 2019 survey

- 5.1 When the 2019 survey was presented, Panel requested an update on what the Council did to ensure action was taken around areas that needed to be improved. The main areas for improvement are noted below.
- 5.2 In 2019, less than half of the respondents said that they had monthly supervision, but the majority were satisfied with the support they received from their line manager. The majority of respondents were however satisfied with the quality of supervision they received. There were questions raised about how frequent supervision needed to be and as a result consultation work was carried out with social workers in December 2019. They said that they wanted this to be every 4-6 weeks instead of monthly, however it should depend on the worker and their individual needs and circumstances and the frequency should be agreed in supervision and reviewed. This is now part of the new supervision policy which was briefed out in February 2021.
- 5.3 In the 2019 Health Check, almost 30% of respondents said that they planned to leave CWC for a new job or career. Action taken to address some of the issues raised around this included:
- Ongoing discussions with social workers to address issues and challenges they faced, specifically around Three Conversations©.
 - Coaching conversation workshops were held for frontline managers to support teams with culture change.
 - There was recognition in the 2019 Health Check report that the embedding of Three Conversations© was a major culture change and a challenge for teams with the faster pace and removal of processes, such as allocation, which traditionally causes waiting lists and delays. Studies show that change in the workplace can be difficult. For this reason, all teams that have been testing out the new approach have received support and coaching. In 2020 further support was provided by re-commissioning Partners4Change who owns the Three Conversations© approach. Some teams have

found this new way of working more difficult to continue to embed this year because of staffing issues exacerbated by Covid. This is currently being addressed.

- Senior managers have been committed to improving communication and have been using the monthly ASC update(newsletter) and twice-yearly social work briefings
- Increased visibility and presence of senior leadership team by Heads of Service being present at weekly team “huddles”
- In this year’s Health Check (2020) there are much fewer numbers of social workers wanting to leave the council in the next 12 months

5.4 Some social workers in 2019 said that they always or often felt stressed and some said that this was because of too many administration tasks, lengthy forms, and processes.

- The further roll out of Three Conversations© aimed to allow social workers to spend more time with people and families and reduce bureaucracy. However, the changes in working due to Covid will have impacted on this.
- It was hoped the introduction of Eclipse would also help, but the roll out has been delayed
- Stress levels have not reduced in this year’s health Check (2020), but it is thought that the main sources for this additional stress could relate to Covid and the challenges this brings.

5.5 In 2019 social workers said that they wanted more face-to-face training and shadowing opportunities.

- Social workers have continued to access training and development opportunities via webinars, teams etc. The Social Work briefing was held virtually in July 2020 and the joint Social Work conference which had been planned for March 2020 took place in October 2020 and was a real success with good attendance
- More social workers this year (2020) said that they felt that CWC is a learning environment and far more are satisfied with the learning opportunities available compared to 2019

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report.

6.2 Any costs arising from actions in the workplan and priorities will be funded from within the Adult Services overall budget of £68.2 million. [MK/26022021/R].

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report although it is important to ensure there are practices and procedures in place to ensure the wellbeing of employees in order to avoid potential employment claims. [SB/26022021/C]

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 The adult social work workforce in Wolverhampton is largely representative of the diversity of the local community and the people currently being supported by adult social care.

9.0 Climate change and environmental implications

9.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

10.1 The health and wellbeing of our workforce is a priority for the City of Wolverhampton Council. The purpose of this health check is to get feedback from the workforce about how they feel about working for Wolverhampton and how we can work to make improvements where necessary to ensure that the workforce feels that they are happy and supported at work.

11.0 Human resources implications

11.1 There are no Human Resource implications arising out of this report.

12.0 Corporate landlord implications

12.1 There are no specific Corporate landlord implications arising out of this report.

13.0 Covid Implications

13.1 Covid has had an impact on the overall health of the workforce, as evidenced by stress levels reported. Senior managers are aware of the impact this has on workers and continue to support the wellbeing of the workforce in balancing their work and personal circumstances.

14.0 Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1: Adult Social Work Health Check 2020 Dashboard

Adult Social Work Health Check

February 2021

Courtney Abbott

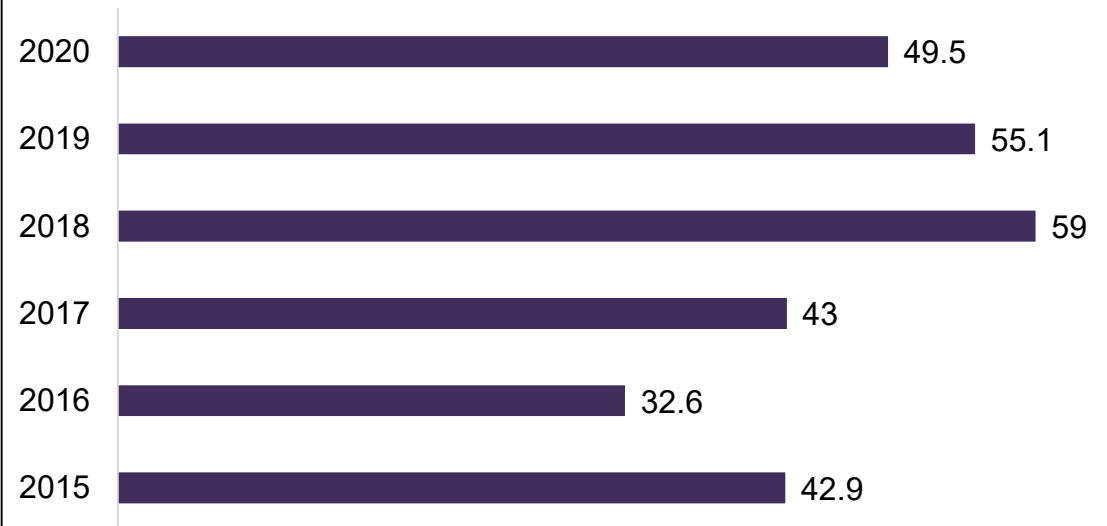
Adult Social Work Health Check 2020

Effective Workload Management

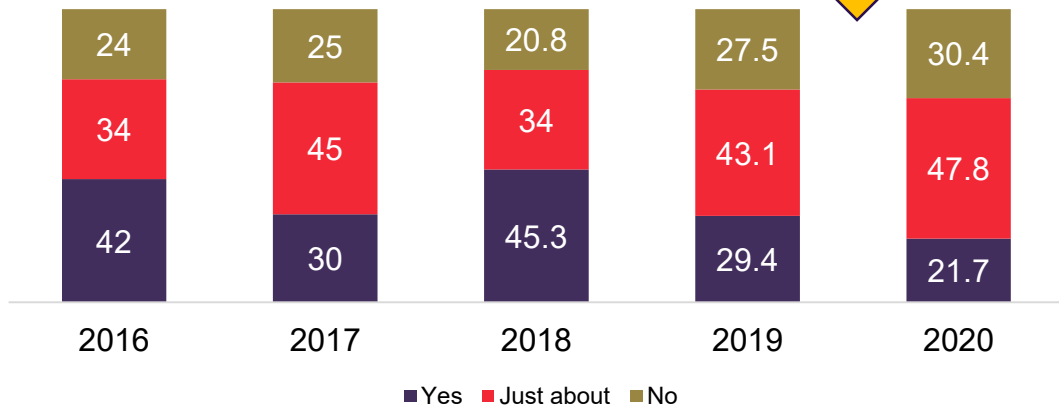
Average no. people being supported
(All respondents)



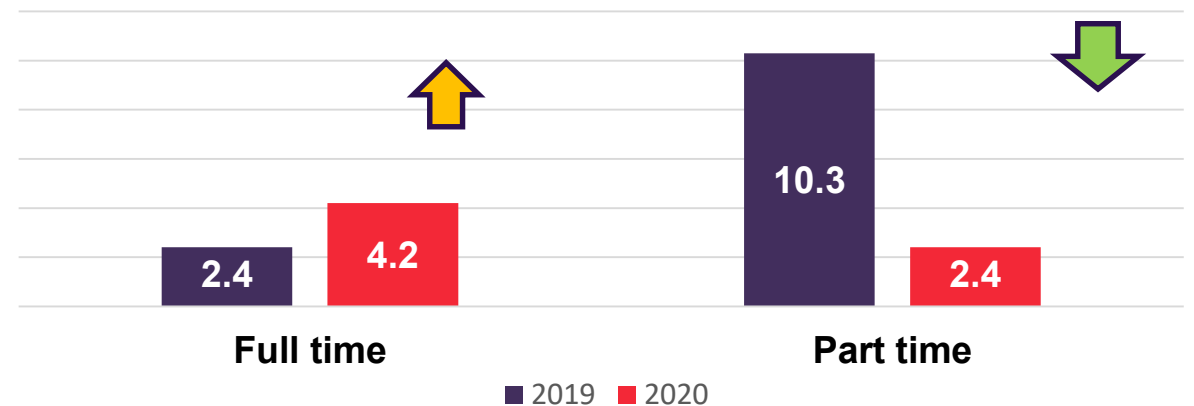
% of people never, rarely or occasionally feeling stressed



Workload Manageability (%)



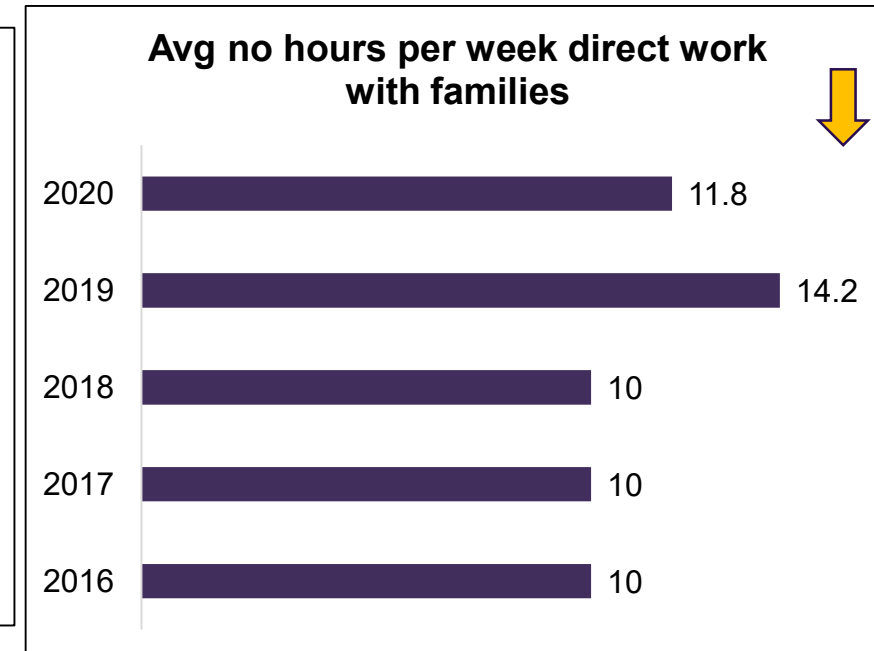
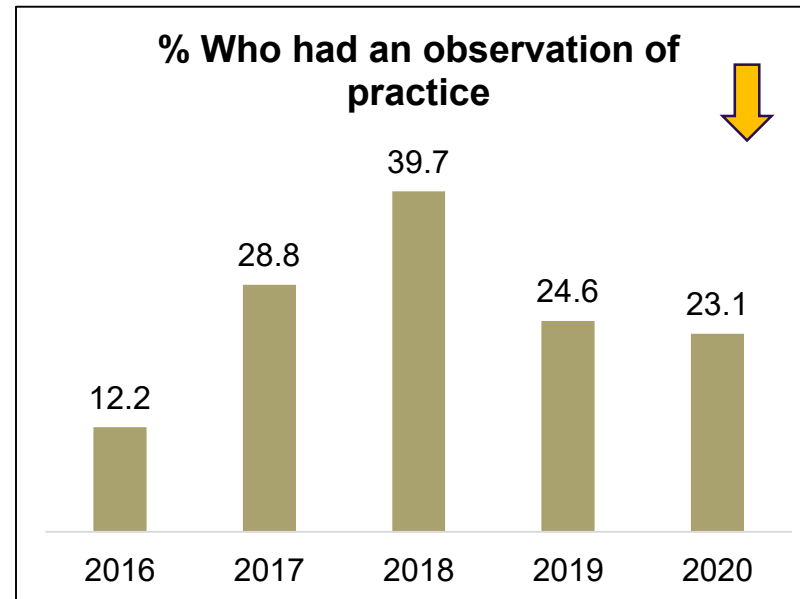
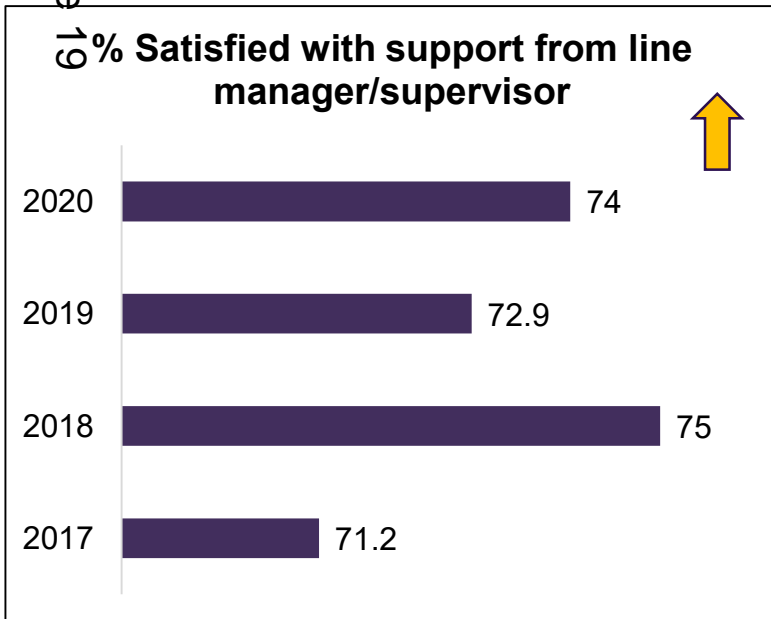
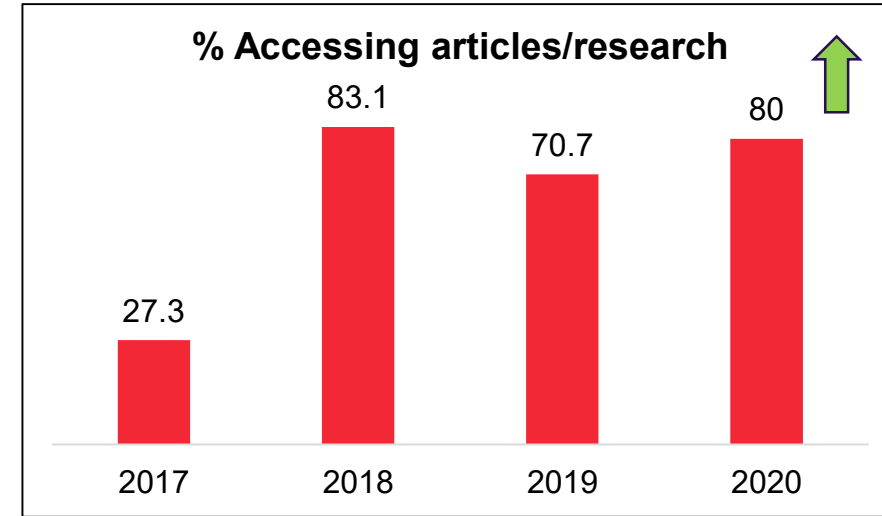
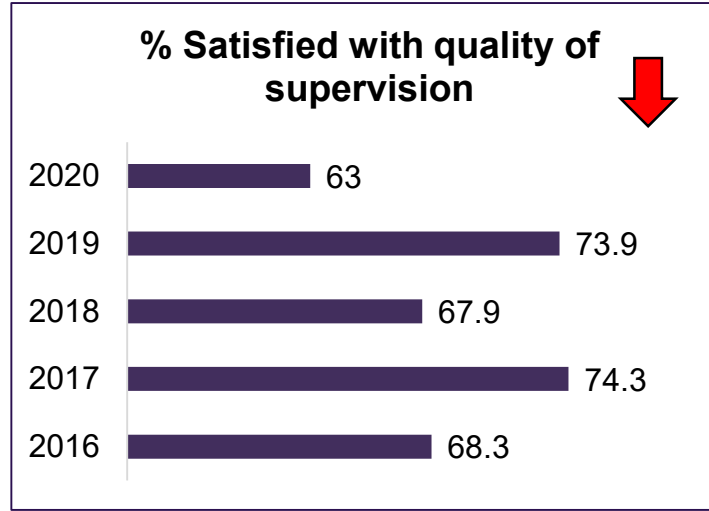
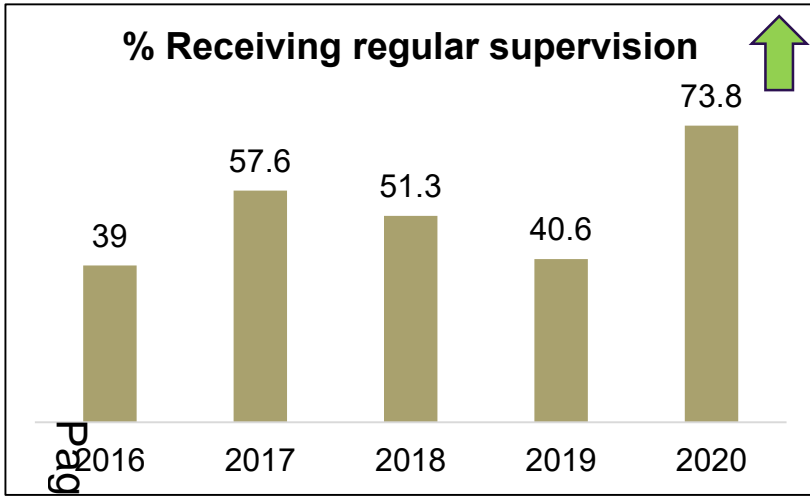
Avg hours worked over contracted hours



*Note – prior to 2019, the question referred to caseload rather than number of people

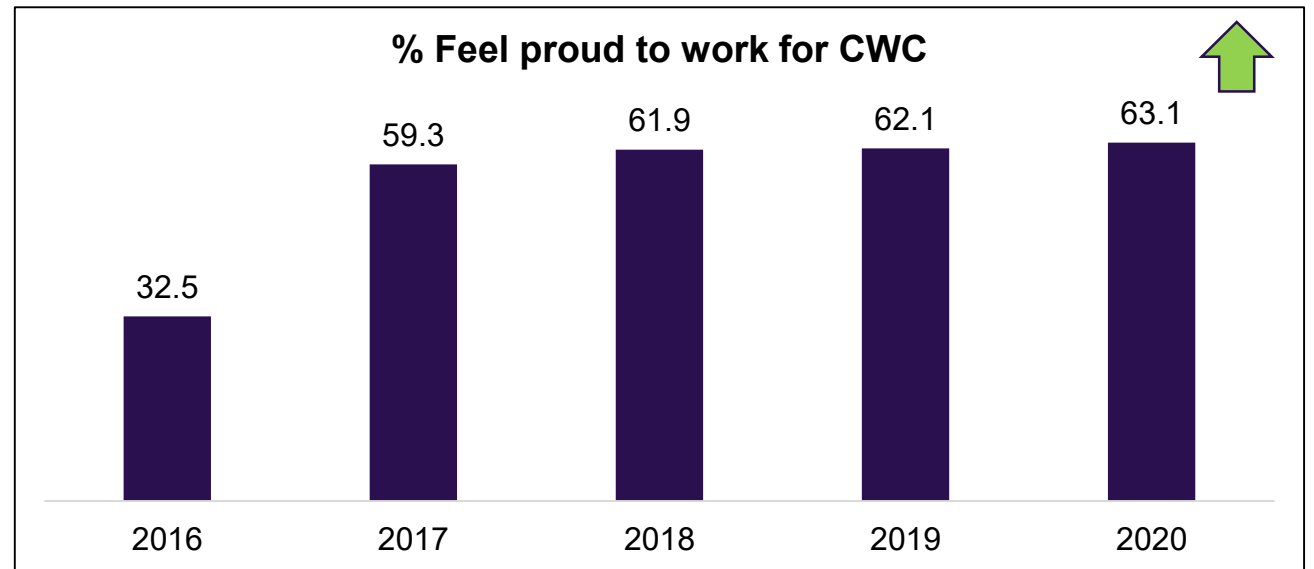
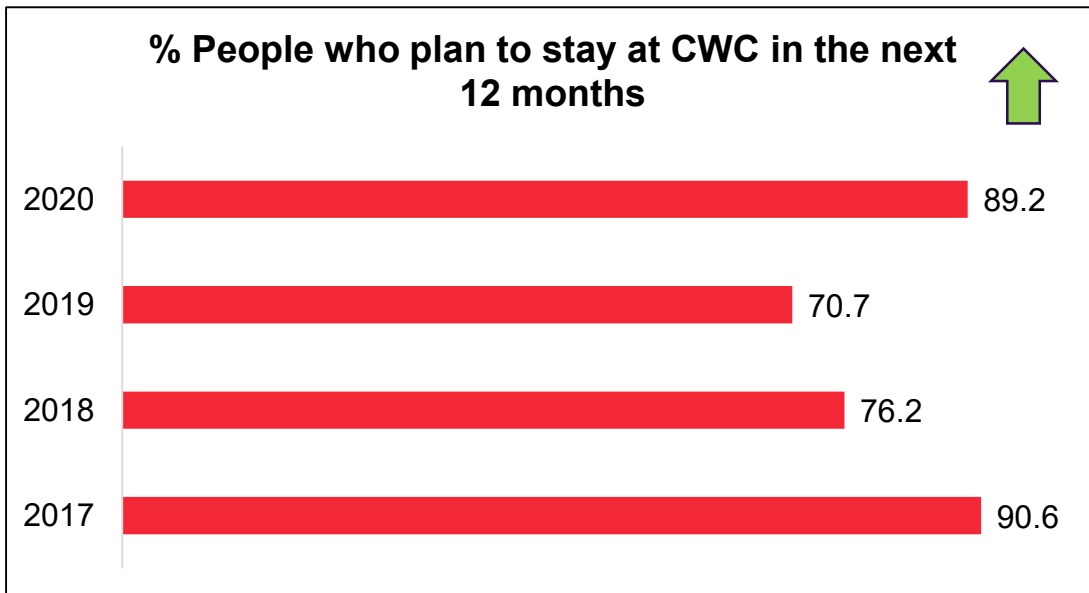
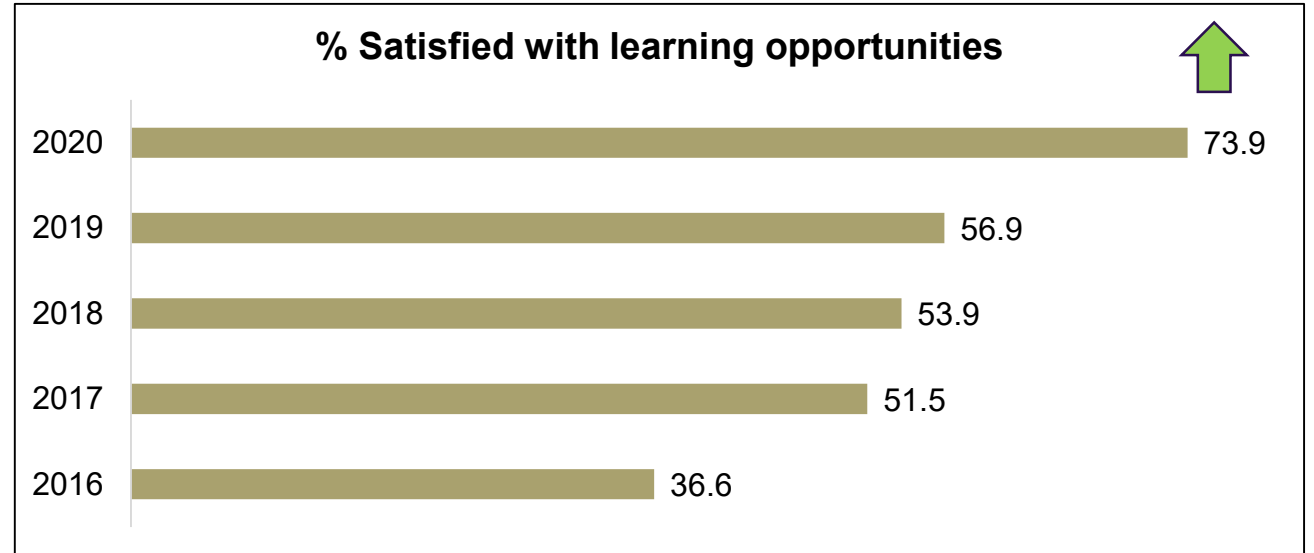
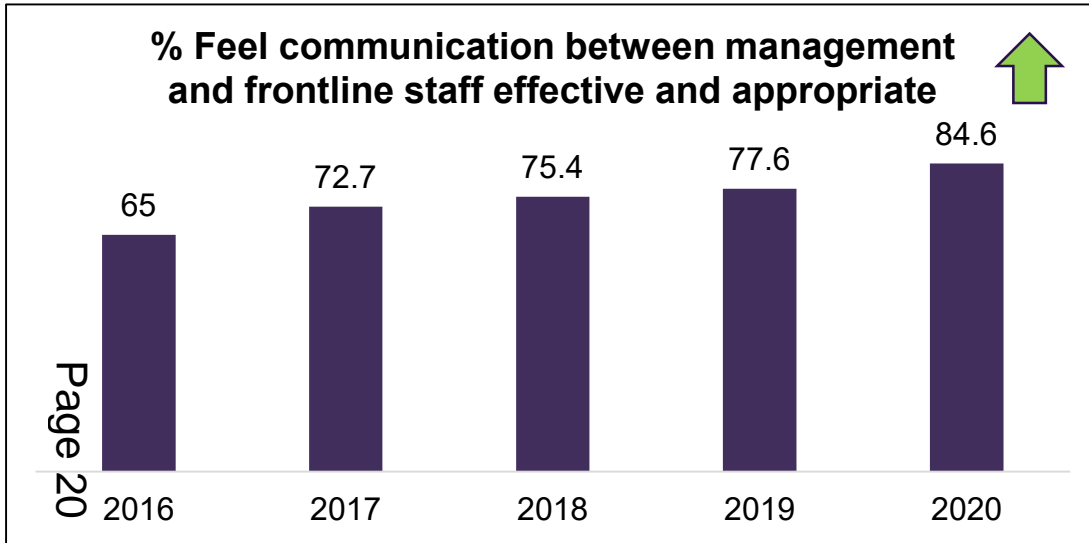
Adult Social Work Health Check 2020

Effective Workload Management / Having the Right Tools for the Job / Healthy Workplace



Adult Social Work Health Check 2020

Having the Right Tools for the Job / Effective Service Delivery



Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

16 March 2021

Report title	Adult Social Care Workforce Health Check 2020	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Linda Leach Cabinet Member for Adults	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Director of Adult and Children's Services	
Originating service	Adult Social Care	
Accountable employee(s)	Jenny Rogers	Principal Social Worker
	Tel	01902 555704
	Email	Jennifer.rogers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Courtney Abbott	Advanced Practitioner for Quality and Improvement
	Email	Courtney.abbott@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Adult Leadership Team	25 February 2021
	Strategic Executive Board	25 February 2021

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Note and comment on the findings of the Adult Workforce Health Check for 2020
2. Provide comment and challenge on proposed actions to improve the health of the workforce and conditions for practice

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) carries out a survey each year to check the “health” of its social workers. Last year the Health Check was extended to include the wider adult social care workforce and it was decided that this should continue every year. This report presents an overview of the findings of the wider workforce survey and concludes with actions to address areas for improvement.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Good practice carried out by a “healthy”, motivated workforce can lead to improved outcomes for people and families as well as reduced demand and costs. The National Social Work Task Force final report, published in November 2009, recommended a framework to assist employers and practitioners to assess the “health” of their organisation on a range of issues affecting the workload of social workers and to support the implementation of a set of National Standards for Employers and Supervision Framework. It is recognised that good practice carried out by a “healthy” and motivated workforce can lead to improved outcomes for people and families as well as reduced demand and costs.
- 2.2 The framework identifies five key topics to support organisations to undertake a self-assessment to identify current strengths and areas that require improvement. The five key topics are:
- Effective workload management
 - Pro-active workflow management
 - Having the right tools for the job
 - A healthy workplace
 - Effective service delivery
- 2.3 The wider adult workforce Health Check was circulated to 301 employees via an online survey between 2 November 2020 and 14 December 2020. All grade five and six non-social work qualified staff were invited to complete the online survey. It was also sent out to several senior occupational therapists (grade seven). This is a very diverse workforce and is made up a variety of roles such as social care workers, day opportunities team leaders, reablement assistants, welfare rights officers, direct payments reviewing officers and occupational therapists.
- 2.4 It is important to note that the country entered the second national lockdown at the time that this Health Check survey was circulated. It is recognised that this year’s responses may have been affected by the unique circumstances experienced this year due to the pandemic. This has included increases in demand and staffing issues in some teams, as well as more general feelings of fatigue, isolation and the ongoing challenges associated with working from home and balancing other commitments.
- 2.5 A total of 100 responses were received (33%), although not every respondent answered every survey question. This is a slightly lower response rate from 2019, which was 38%,

which is likely due to the impact Covid has had this year and the challenges teams have experienced and continue to face.

3.0 Overview and key findings

- 3.1 The average number of people being supported varies because of the diversity of job roles. It is difficult to draw comparisons as each team / service may have a variety of roles with differing expectations in terms of workload. Those who said their service area was Community Financial Support work with the greatest average number of people with care and support needs and although this average appears high, over half of these people would not require active involvement and is reasonable for this team. It is also lower than in 2019.
- 3.2 On average most teams are generally supporting fewer people than they were last year or just slightly more. However, full time Occupational Therapists seem to be supporting more people this year. The variety of responsibilities within the service makes it difficult to draw any conclusions around this increase. Although referral rates are increasing due to Covid, workloads remain static overall. It is important to note that the small number of therapists and even smaller number of respondents (10 respondents in 2020 and 5 in 2019) can skew these numbers.
- 3.3 Almost all (97%) respondents that work directly with people felt that their workload was manageable this year.
- 3.4 More employees than in 2019 “never”, “rarely” or only “occasionally” feel stressed due to workload or the nature of their work (71% compared to 65.8% in 2019), which is really positive given the challenges of the pandemic.
- 3.5 Although still high, there has been a slight decrease in the number of employees that are receiving supervision compared to last year (72% compared to 82% in 2019). Satisfaction with the quality of supervision is also high and about the same as last year. However only 65% had an appraisal this year, much lower than the almost 90% in 2019. But it is important to note that the Council changed the appraisal process partway through 2020 and due to Covid related challenges some team managers have struggled to complete their training. The Policy and Procedure Officer will work with teams to help ensure that all employees across adult social care participate in a Professional Conversation (appraisal) in the next year.
- 3.6 Slightly fewer respondents said that they had an observation of practice this year, 58% compared to over 60% in 2019. Observations of practice would have been more difficult to carry out in 2020 due to Covid restrictions. About the same number (77%) said that they were satisfied with the support they received from their line manager/supervisor, which is positive.
- 3.7 On average, full time employees spent slightly less time carrying out direct work with people and families (17 hours compared to 20 hours in 2019) while part time employees spent slightly more time (16 hours compared to 15 hours). Due to the variety of roles and

how areas may have been impacted differently by Covid restrictions, it is difficult to draw conclusions about these results.

- 3.8 There has been an increase in the number of employees saying team meetings take place monthly or weekly (82% compared to 71.3% in 2019), and more (93%) said that they feel able to contribute to the agenda. Communication in the organisation appears to be a key strength, particularly between management and frontline staff with more employees reporting that this is effective and appropriate (85% compared to 72% last year). However only 34% said that they are involved in or consulted about proposed changes, although it is important to note that a significant number (36%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. This is a slight improvement from 2019.
- 3.9 More respondents than last year (81% compared to almost 69%) said that they plan to remain with CWC for at least the next 12 months. This is a very positive improvement. When asked what they would change about their job, common themes were more time to work with people and less admin / paperwork. When asked what made them feel positive about their job responses included flexibility, staff safety during the pandemic, feeling supported and valued by the Council during the pandemic, supportive colleagues / managers and learning and development opportunities. Some notable comments were:
- “The Chief Executive listens to and communicates with staff”
 - “Very enlightened and supportive management team”
 - “I feel that our service offers people a good life”
- 3.10 More respondents this year are completely satisfied with the training and development opportunities on offer to them, with 61% agreeing to this compared to 41% in 2019. There have been a number of webinars and virtual training opportunities available for the adult social care workforce this year. Additionally, the social work apprenticeship programme will offer an opportunity for non-social work qualified employees to progress their careers and to gain a recognised qualification.
- 3.11 There is a strong sense of pride with 82% agreeing that they are proud to work for CWC, a significant increase from 2019 when this was about 56%.
- 3.12 10% of respondents said that they felt that they had been treated unfairly in the previous 12 months on the grounds of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and actions will be taken to address this.

4.0 Recommendations and actions

- 4.1 An action plan has been completed as a result of this survey to address the key areas of improvement. The findings will also inform the workforce development plans for the coming year. The key actions are noted below.
- 4.2 One clear action is to ensure that employees feel that they are involved in and consulted about any proposed changes in the next 12 months. Where any changes may be being planned the Adult Leadership Team are committed to ensuring teams are involved and consulted. There are two workforce briefings a year, led by the Deputy Director and

Director for Adults Services and these will continue to take place to communicate key updates and information to employees. The monthly newsletter the Adult Social Care (ASC) Update is sent out by the Director for Adult Services and will continue to provide updates and information about developments across the whole workforce. Managers will be asked to promote the ASC Update to their teams, sharing key parts of it at team meetings and ensuring copies are accessible to those employees who may not have access to emails. Consultations will take place when any significant changes are planned and Senior managers will revisit the Engagement Plan in light of restrictions imposed by Covid in order to establish how leaders can reengage with the workforce.

- 4.3 The findings from this year's Health Check suggests that the frequency of supervision has reduced, and some employees are still always or often feeling stressed, although this is less than last year. To address this the Policy and Procedure team will be working with Heads of Service to produce a general adult service supervision policy over the next three months. This will set out expectations about frequency and quality of supervision in wider adult services teams and this will cover workload manageability and support for wellbeing. It will also include expectations around Professional Conversations and carrying out observations of practice so these should also increase next year. Supporting wellbeing has been a continual focus throughout the pandemic and been a feature in workforce briefings and team meetings. This focus on wellbeing will continue this year. Stress risk assessments will be carried out where identified as needed to ensure employees receive the support they need.
- 4.4 The implementation of Eclipse later in 2021 should help streamline processes and reduce the amount of time that practitioners spend completing forms and administrative tasks.
- 4.5 The champion programme is not working well in all areas. Therefore, the champion programme will be reviewed and refreshed in 2021-2022 by the Quality and Improvement team and teams will be encouraged to identify Equalities Champions.
- 4.6 Although there has been a significant improvement in the number of employees feeling satisfied by the learning and development offer it is important that the Council builds on this progress. As a result, training and opportunities will continue to be promoted via the monthly newsletter and the leadership team will ensure that workforce briefings have a focus on development as well as information updates. Heads of Service are currently working with Workforce Development to identify training needs for their service areas for the coming year, which teams are encouraged to contribute to. Workforce Development will be encouraging all the workforce to sign up to Research in Practice for Adults (RiPFA) and this will be promoted during March 2021 with sessions to support people on the benefits of using this resource and how they can access it. The social work apprenticeship scheme will continue to be offered.
- 4.7 Ensuring people feel treated fairly is extremely important to the Council and to Adult Services. Actions will be taken to address the issues raised in this year's survey including:

- Promoting training to support managers to facilitate good conversations around Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion and creating safe spaces within supervisions or individual discussions.
- The Council is committed to upholding the highest standards of conduct and ethics and has launched a safe space for employees to report any serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work in a confidential way. This will be actively promoted by all managers and teams across Adults Services.
- Adult leadership team are progressing their Service Equality Plans and training is planned to ensure all frontline employees are able to have good conversations with people about their uniqueness and protected characteristics. This will also improve data collection on protected characteristics so gaps and representation can be explored further.
- Equality and Diversity is a standard agenda item on all team meetings at all levels as well as covered at every supervision.
- Equalities champions will be identified within teams this coming year

5.0 Update from 2019 survey

5.1 When the 2019 survey was presented, Panel requested an update on what the Council did to ensure action was taken around areas that needed to be improved. The main areas for improvement are noted below.

5.2 In 2019, over 40% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed that CWC had a positive learning culture and a quarter were not satisfied with the learning and development opportunities; they wanted more face to face training. Actions taken to address this included:

- Continuation of twice-yearly workforce briefings, but they incorporated more learning and development sessions
- Opportunities for learning and development were better promoted through the monthly ASC update (newsletter)
- The Workforce Development team worked with Heads of Service to explore training needs and further opportunities for the workforce and will continue to do this every year. More face to face training was offered.
- The introduction of the social work apprenticeship programme offered the opportunity for those eligible to apply to gain a professional / recognised qualification.
- This has resulted in an increase in the number of employees this year (2020) who felt satisfied by the learning and development opportunities on offer and more have said the Council has a learning culture.

5.3 In 2019, some respondents said that they did not feel involved in or consulted about proposed changes. To address this the following actions were taken:

- Continuation of twice-yearly workforce briefings which included key updates from the Director of Adult Services
- The Monthly ASC Update newsletter was introduced and provided updates about changes and developments across the workforce.

- There was a commitment by managers to share updates and information at team meetings and that these should be held at least monthly.
- The 2020 findings show that there were more regular team meetings and more employees feel communication has improved. There has also been an increase in the number who say they have felt involved in proposed changes, but this is still an area needing further improvement. It is hoped that the 2021 survey will continue to show progress in this area

5.4 In 2019, many respondents said that they were spending a lot of time inputting data onto systems and completing paperwork. Some of the key actions taken as a result included:

- The further roll out of Three Conversations© should have helped to reduce the amount of time spent inputting into systems and completing lengthy forms. However results are similar this year so this remains an area to improve.
- The implementation of a new system called Eclipse was also intended to be rolled out in 2020 to support more efficient working but this has been delayed until 2021-2022.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report.

6.2 Any costs arising from actions in the workplan and priorities will be funded from within the Adult Services overall budget of £68.2 million. [MK/26022021/R].

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report although it is important to implement practices and procedures to ensure the wellbeing of employees in order to avoid potential employment law claims. [SB/26022021/C]

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 The Adult Social Care workforce in Wolverhampton is largely representative of the community and the people currently being supported by adult social care, with a slight over representation in regard to Black and Asian communities.

9.0 Climate change and environmental implications

9.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

10.1 The health and wellbeing of our workforce is a priority for the City of Wolverhampton Council. The purpose of this health check is to get feedback from the workforce about how they feel about working for Wolverhampton and how we can work to make improvements where necessary to ensure that the workforce feels that they are happy and supported at work.

11.0 Human resources implications

11.1 There are no Human Resource implications arising out of this report.

12.0 Corporate landlord implications

12.1 There are no specific Corporate landlord implications arising out of this report.

13.0 Covid Implications

13.1 Covid has had an impact on the overall health of the workforce, as evidenced by stress levels reported. Senior managers are aware of the impact this has on practitioners and continue to support the wellbeing of the workforce in balancing their work and personal circumstances.

14.0 Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1: Adult Social Care Workforce Health Check 2020 Dashboard

Adult Workforce Health Check

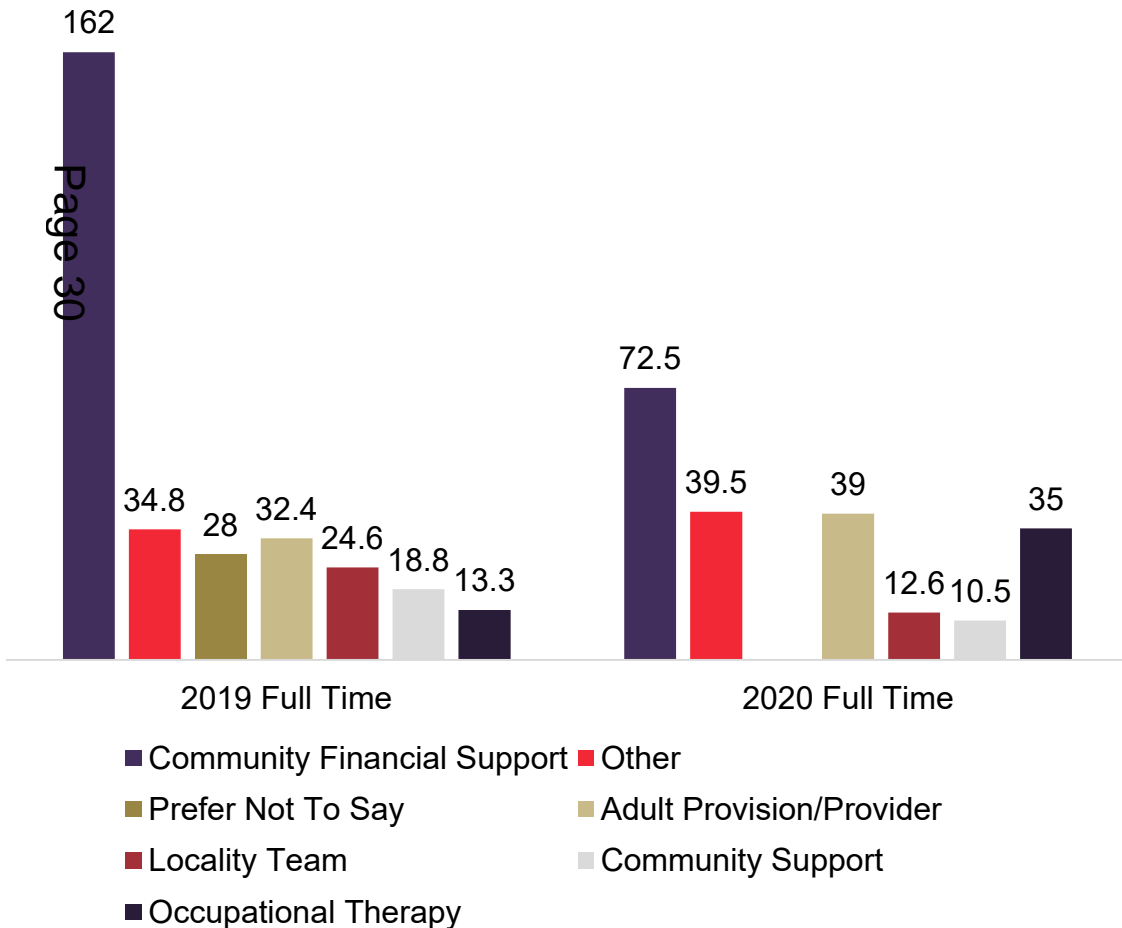
February 2021

Courtney Abbott

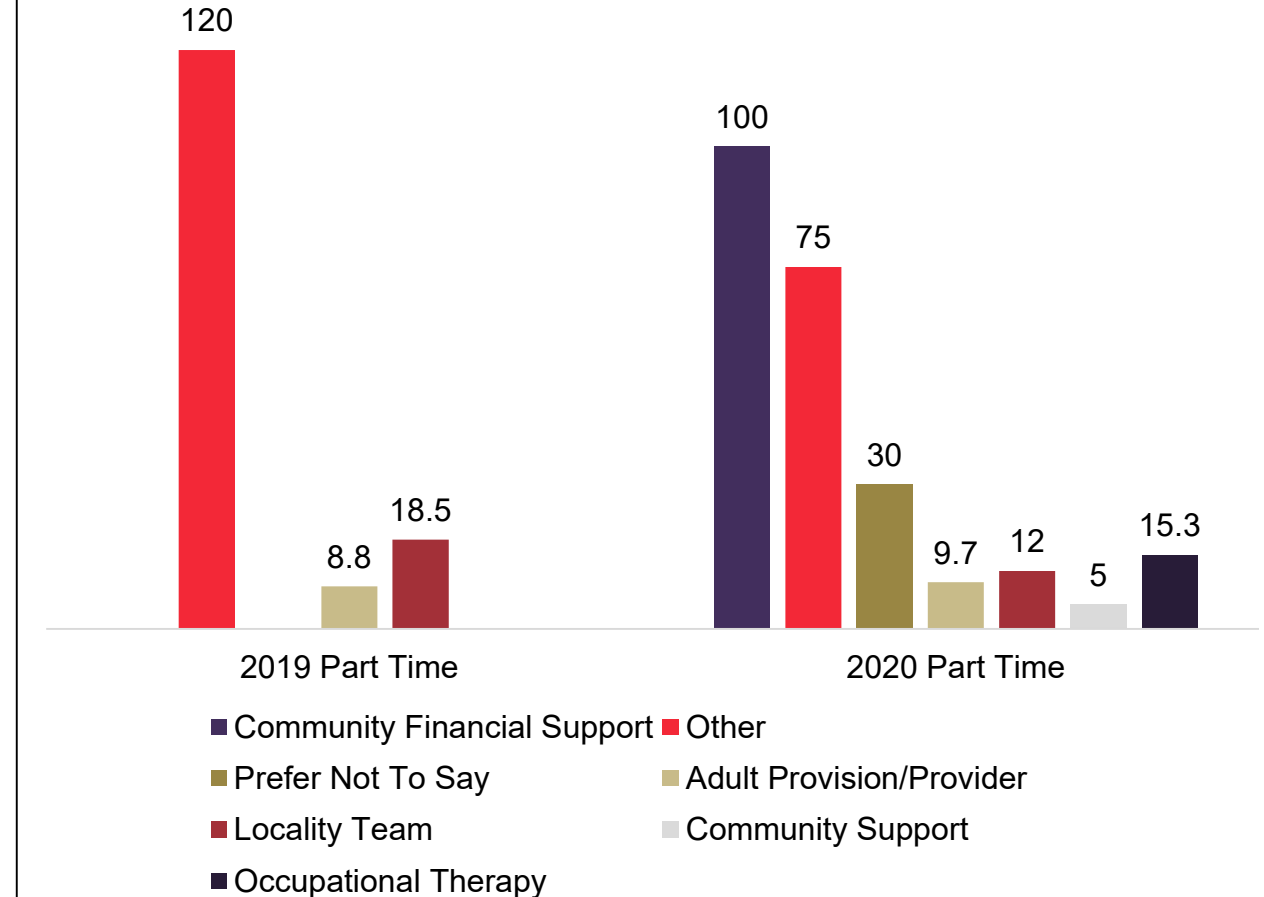
Adult Workforce Health Check 2020

Effective Workload Management

Average No. People Being Supported (Full Time)

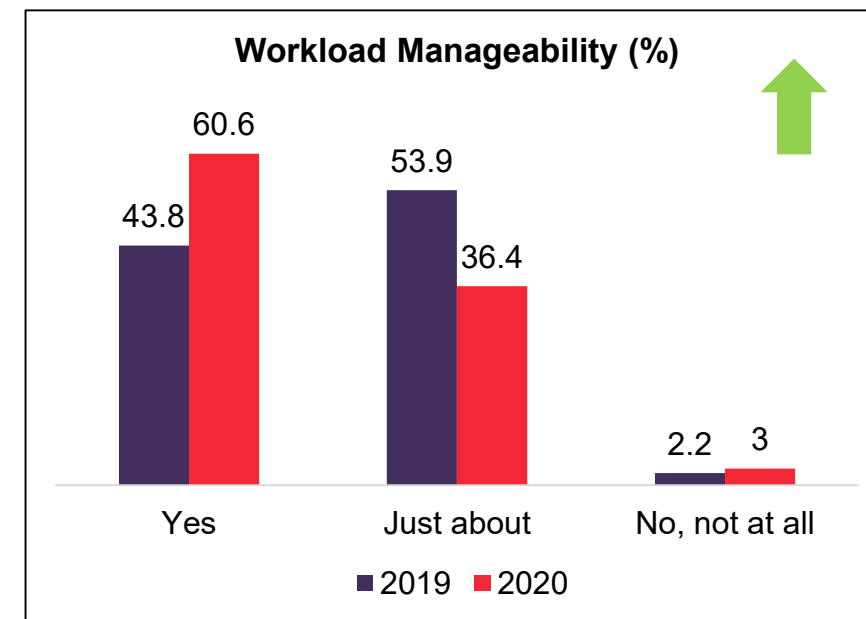
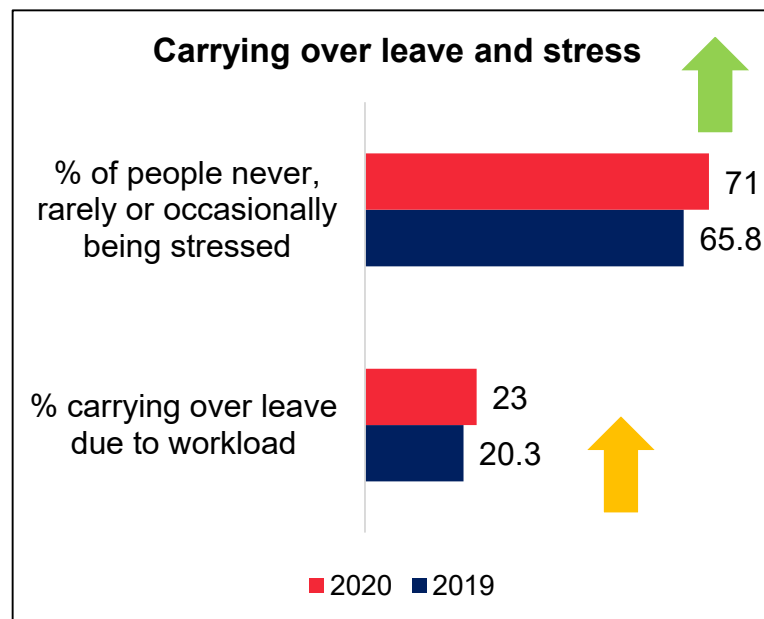
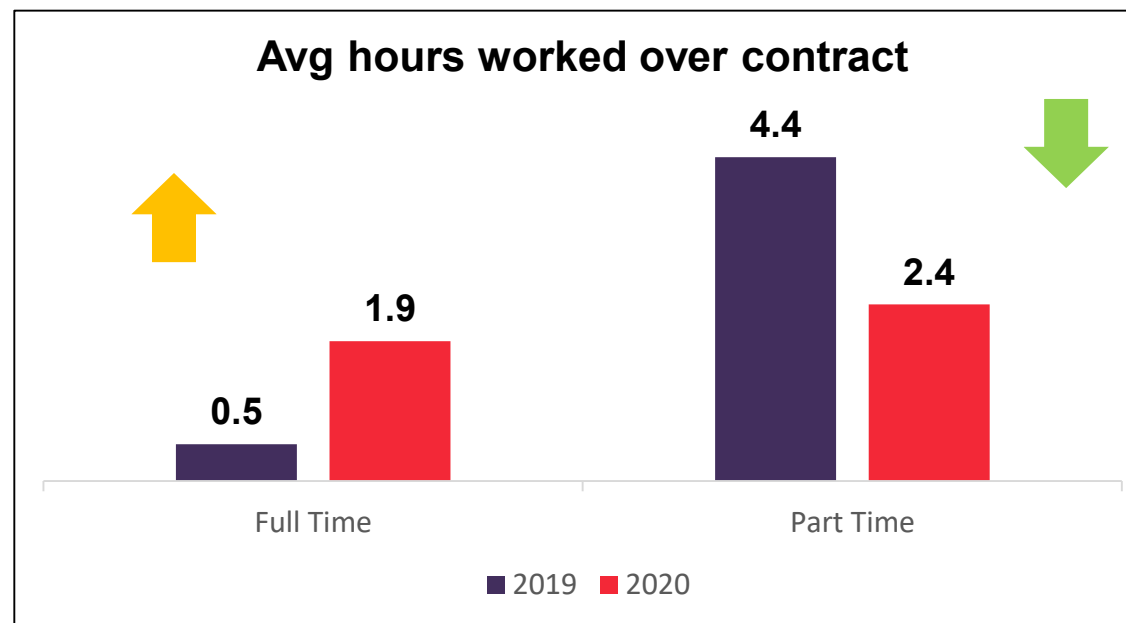
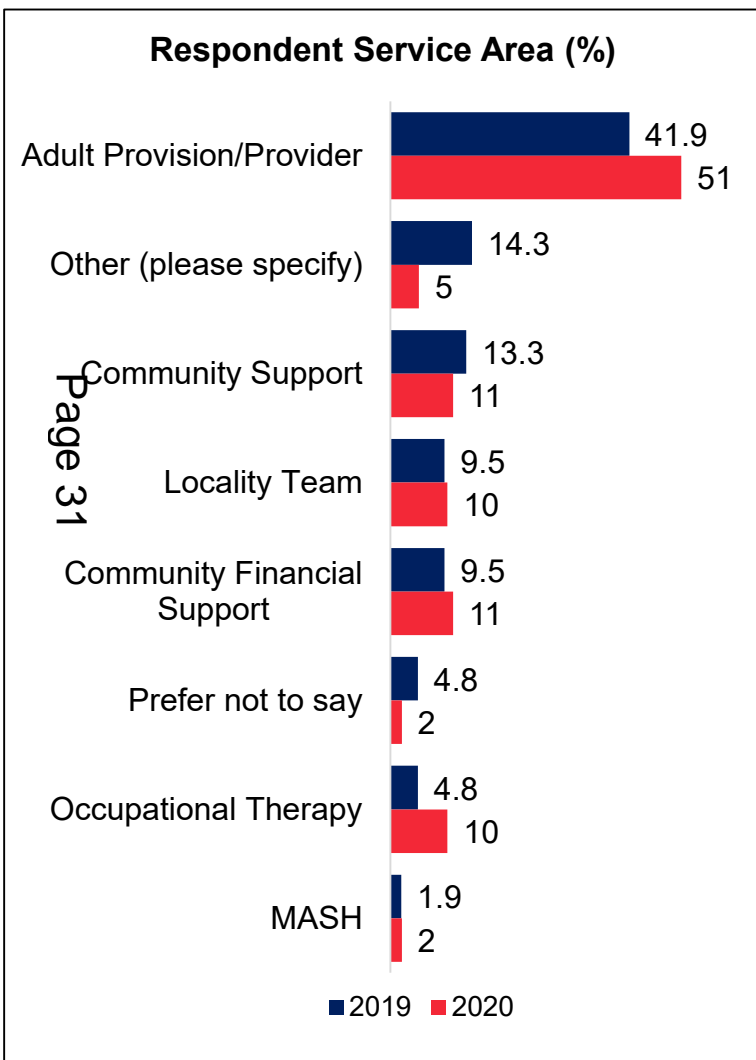


Average No. People Being Supported (Part Time)



Adult Workforce Health Check 2020

Effective Workload Management



Adult Workforce Health Check 2020

Effective Workload Management / Having the Right Tools for the Job / Healthy Workplace

