

## LGA/NARE: COVID-19 Workforce Update

Issue 13: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### GENERAL COVID-19 UPDATE

#### [Government Announces Next Phase of Recovery Strategy 17<sup>th</sup> July](#)

The government have [announced the next phase of their recovery strategy](#) the document outlines how the government are suppressing the virus, the phased opening of the society post lockdown, their updated plans to re-build the economy, how they plan to preparing for winter (second wave) and further lifting of restrictions.

#### [COVID-19 Second Wave Report](#)

A new report, commissioned by the UK's Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, provides a stark warning about the potential for a second wave of COVID-19 infections and deaths over the winter period. The modelling in the report provides a 'reasonable worst-case scenario' but recognises that there is still a high degree of uncertainty over how the pandemic will play out in the coming months.

#### [DHSC Test and Trace Study Findings published](#)

The initial findings of a DHSC commissioned study, REACT 1, examining the levels of infection in the general population in England has been published. It is the largest study to date into coronavirus rates of infection and provides an insight into who was infected with the virus between 1 May and 1 June, comparing geography, age, sex, ethnicity, key worker status and symptoms. The study falls under pillar 4 (surveillance) of the COVID-19 National Testing Programme, intended to develop a better understanding of the spread of the virus to date, predict how it may spread in the future and inform responses to the pandemic. The final report will undergo peer review before being published, but you can read a [summary of the results](#).

### Flu vaccine Programme Expanded

The Government has announced plans for the UK to undergo an expansion of the flu vaccination programme. This will allow uptake in the "at-risk" groups to be increased. The vaccine is currently free on the NHS to those age 65 and older, pregnant women, those with certain medical conditions, care home residents and carers. Frontline health and social care workers are also eligible to receive the vaccine, which in previous years has been funded by central government.

#### [The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Coronavirus is taking submissions from the public to feed into their inquiry on the UK's handling of the coronavirus outbreak.](#)

The APPG on Coronavirus is calling for evidence from the public on the UK's handling of the Coronavirus outbreak so that lessons can be learnt to improve the country's future preparedness and response. They would like to collect initial expressions of interest from a broad range of individuals by 18 July, including those responsible for a local community response to the pandemic.

### [Travel Corridors New Guidance 8th July](#)

The guidance on travel corridors was updated on 8<sup>th</sup> July to include more information on transit stops, passengers arriving in England before 10 July 2020, and British Overseas Territories. [The guidance](#) for the public on how to self-isolate when they travel to the UK has been updated accordingly.

### [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\) Employee Expenses](#)

This guidance for employers on taxable expenses and benefits paid to employees because of coronavirus, and how to report them to HMRC, was updated on 9th July to include information on coronavirus tests.

**Coronavirus tests provided by the government, as part of its national testing scheme, are not treated as a benefit in kind for tax purposes.**

If employers are providing testing kits to their employees, outside of the government's national testing scheme, either directly or by purchasing tests that are carried out by a third party, no Income Tax or Class 1A National Insurance contributions will be due. The Government is legislating for this through regulations, and guidance will be updated shortly.

## **COVID-19 FUNDING UPDATE**

### [Allocations of £500 million additional funding for councils confirmed](#)

The Government announced individual local authority allocations of the £500 million unringfenced grant. The extra £500 million has been allocated to councils based on population and levels of deprivation, and how the costs of delivery of services varies across the country. The [allocations spreadsheet](#) includes information on how the allocations have been calculated.

## LOCAL LOCK DOWN UPDATE

### [Local lockdown Government Advice 3<sup>rd</sup> July](#)

On 3<sup>rd</sup> July the Government set out its approach for controlling future local coronavirus outbreaks. This is made up of five principle components:

First, monitoring. Public Health England, working with the Joint Biosecurity Centre, will examine carefully data on the spread of the disease and people's behaviour across the country.

Second, engagement. If monitoring identifies local problems, NHS Test and Trace and PHE will work with the relevant local authority to develop a deeper understanding of the problem and identify solutions.

Third, testing. Scaled-up testing at a local level, combined with contact tracing through NHS Test and Trace, can control the virus and thus avoid more stringent measures.

Fourth, targeted restrictions. If the virus continues to spread, we will restrict activities at particular locations and close individual premises.

Fifth, local lockdown. If the previous measures have not proven to be enough, we will introduce local lockdowns extending across whole communities. Local lockdowns will be carefully calibrated depending on the scientific and specific circumstances of each outbreak and we are continually exploring smarter means of containing the virus.

### [Government Guidance for Councils: Containing and managing local COVID-19 Outbreaks 17<sup>th</sup> July](#)

The Government has provided guidance for local authorities and local decision-makers on containing and managing COVID-19 outbreaks at a local level. The document sets out how NHS Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) will work with local authorities, Public Health England (PHE) and the public to contain and manage local COVID-19 outbreaks.

### [Local Lockdown: Social Distancing Guidance](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has published guidance on how those who live in a local lockdown area can see people they do not live with. Individual publications on the page refer to specific lockdown areas, and the guidance will be updated as necessary.

### [Local Lock Down: The safer travel guidance for passengers](#)

Travel guidance has also been updated to include information on when those living in a local lockdown area can travel. The public should only travel into, out of and within areas under local lockdown if their travel is essential, for example:

- to get to and from work, if you cannot work from home
- to get essential food or medical supplies including click and collect services
- to support someone who is vulnerable, if no-one else can do so
- for exercise, locally where possible
- to travel to and from others in your support bubble (where support bubbles are allowed)
- to attend school or college or to accompany a child who is attending school or college where necessary and allowed

### [Local Lock Downs: Schools](#)

The Department for Education has updated guidance on local lockdowns and educational and childcare settings. The guidance covers what schools, colleges, nurseries, childminders, early years and other educational settings in Leicester and the affected parts of Leicestershire need to do during the local lockdown and was updated yesterday to confirm the circumstances in which holiday, after school clubs, and other out of school settings, can operate.

### [Understanding Local Outbreak Planning – Webinar Recording](#)

This is the link for the webinar that Tom Riordan and the Chairman did for a wide range of councillors through the LGA on 10<sup>th</sup> July. It's a useful resource to help everyone understand outbreak planning and Track and Trace.

## COVID-19 ADULT SOCIAL CARE UPDATE

### [Adult Social Care Funding](#)

The Chair of the Lords Economic Affairs Committee has written to the Minister of State for Care to urge the Government to act now to implement the most urgent recommendations in the Committee's July 2019 report, 'Social care funding: time to end a national scandal'. In Lord Forsyth's letter to Helen Whately MP, he echoes our concerns that social care was an already over-stretched sector prior to the pandemic, and the crisis has only exacerbated issues. He added social care needs £8 billion of immediate and up-front investment in order to raise care quality and access to 2009/10 standards. Without this, the gap between funding and need will continue to widen dangerously and the most vulnerable in society will suffer as a result. [You can read the full letter on the Committee's website.](#)

### [Reset, Not Restart: shaping the future of social care in light of COVID-19 Webinar](#)

On 27 July, 2.30pm-4.00pm, the LGA are running a webinar Reset, not restart: shaping the future of social care in light of COVID-19 examining what the future should hold for care, support and wellbeing coming out of the pandemic. The LGA are seeking a change in how people are supported to live the lives they want to lead. Confirmed speakers include James Bullion, ADASS President, and Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chair of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board.

### [Health and Care Death in Service Benefit Scheme](#)

Relatively few claims have been made under the health and care death in service benefit scheme by the families of people who have sadly died as a result of contracting COVID-19 at work. It is understandable that families have many things on their minds at a time of grief and uncertainty, but employers may wish to offer a sensitive message about the availability of the scheme.

### [Updated Guidance for Reporting a Health and Care Death due to COVID-19](#)

The guidance setting out the actions for council and social care providers following a coronavirus related death of an employee or volunteer in adult social care was updated on 7th July to include a new section on informing the coroner.

### [Councils needed to host Social worker placements](#)

The LGA is looking for councils to host short placements for returning social workers within adult social care, as part of the Return to Social Work programme. This programme aims to help councils build their social worker workforce. By hosting a placement, your authority will get the opportunity to test how the candidates fit with your organisation, before discussing employment opportunities.

## PPE UPDATE

### [Use of Randox test kits paused with immediate effect](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care issued statement on 15th July regarding an issue relating to test kits produced by Randox laboratories. NHS Test and Trace has been notified that some test kits produced by Randox laboratories may not meet DHSC's required safety standards for coronavirus testing. As a precautionary measure and while DHSC investigate further, NHS Test and Trace are requesting that all settings pause the use of Randox test kits with immediate effect and until further notice.

### [Safe Use of Face Coverings in Council Buildings](#)

The wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets is to be made mandatory in England. The new measure comes into force on 24 July and anyone failing to comply could face a fine of up to £100, reduced to £50 if it is paid within 14 days. The regulations will be made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and enforcement will be the responsibility of the police. Shop workers will be asked to encourage compliance, but retailers and businesses will not be expected to enforce them. As is the case on public transport, children under 11 and those with certain disabilities will be exempt.

The guidance for the safe use of [multi-purpose community facilities](#) and the guidance for the safe use of [council buildings](#) have both been updated to reflect upcoming changes to the rules on wearing face coverings.

### [PPE Waste disposal Guidance Update](#)

As more people are expected to wear face coverings, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has issued new guidance on how people, businesses and organisations should dispose of waste during the pandemic. This includes guidance on removing and disposing of face coverings and personal protective equipment, disposing of additional cleaning waste and litter picking.

### [PPE for H&SC providers](#)

The guidance for social care and health providers on how to order emergency personal protective equipment was updated this week to confirm that visors can now be ordered using the PPE portal.

Information on how to [safely purchase medical devices for social care](#) was provided recently by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Please note that PPE is used when intended to be worn (or held) to protect the wearer. Medical devices are intended to protect the patient, and medical staff. There will be many instances

## SHIELDING UPDATE

### [Shielding clinically extremely vulnerable people MHCLG Letter to Council CX](#)

An updated version of the shielding guidance document was sent to council chief executives on 15 July. The document follows on from the announcement on the 22 June in which the government set out the relaxation of advice for those shielding. The document is intended for councils, Local Resilience Forums and other local delivery partners only.

### [Updates to the Government Advice on Shielding 6th July](#)

The changes from 6 July are as follows:

- Those shielding no longer need to socially distance from people they live with.
- if they want to, they can meet in a group of up to 6 people outdoors, including people from other households.
- They may also form a 'support bubble' with one other household if they want to, but one of the households in the 'support bubble' should be a single adult household (either an adult living alone or with children under 18 only).
- The government support offer has been extended: those shielding can still get a food box, care and/or medicine delivery until 31 July if they want them, and have registered online by 17 July.
- The latest evidence indicates that the risk of serious illness for most children and young people is low. All children and young people should continue to shield until 31 July. A clinical discussion with a paediatric specialist or GP will be needed before any child or young person is removed from the shielded patient list.

### [Shielding Guidance for Children and Young People 6<sup>th</sup> July](#)

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has updated its [shielding guidance for children and young people](#), to mirror Government endorsed [guidance](#) published by the Royal College Of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH). This follows research by the RCPCH which found that the risk of serious illness for children and young people from COVID-19 is low and only those with the most severe conditions should now be considered clinically extremely vulnerable.

The new guidance means that most children and young people will be removed from the shielded patient list following consultations with healthcare professionals over the summer. Children who receive care from their GP are very unlikely to need to shield in future and only a small group of children with receiving specialist care in hospitals are likely to be advised they may need to carry on shielding if shielding needs to be reintroduced. DHSC has emphasised that all decisions on whether children and young people should be removed from the shielded patient list should be based on a consultation with specialist paediatric clinicians or GPs, who will be asked to contact their children and their families to discuss this over the summer.

See also [updated guidance](#) on protecting the extremely Vulnerable adults issued on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

## Government Summer Economic Update : Plan for Jobs

In the Government's Summer Economic Update, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak confirmed that the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme would wind down flexibly and gradually, ending in October 2020. He also announced a range of measures aimed at supporting, protecting and creating jobs. Of course, we are now analysing the details and will communicate in more detail any implications for councils in the coming days.

**Jobs Retention Bonus** – The Government will introduce a one-off payment of £1,000 to UK employers for every furloughed employee who remains continuously employed through to the end of January 2021. Employees must earn above the Lower Earnings Limit (£520 a month) on average between the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the end of January 2021. Payments will be made from February 2021. Further detail about the scheme will be announced by the end of July.

**Kickstart Scheme** – A new 'Kickstart Scheme' will be introduced - a £2 billion fund to create six-month work placements aimed at those aged between 16 and 24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment. Funding available for each job will cover 100 per cent of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus the associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.

**New funding for National Careers Service** – An additional £32 million funding will be provided over the next two years for the National Careers Service so that 269,000 more people in England can receive personalised advice on training and work.

**High quality traineeships for young people** – An additional £111 million will be provided this year for traineeships in England, to fund high quality work placements and training for 16-24-year olds. The Government will fund employers who provide trainees with work experience, at a rate of £1,000 per trainee. The Government will improve provision and expand eligibility for traineeships to those with Level 3 qualifications and below.

**Payments for employers who hire new apprentices** – The Government will introduce a new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. These payments will be in addition to the existing £1,000 payment the Government already provides for new 16-18-year-old apprentices, and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan – where that applies.

**High value courses for school and college leavers** – £101 million will be provided for the 2020-21 academic year to give all 18-19-year olds in England the opportunity to study targeted high value Level 2 and 3 courses when there are not employment opportunities available to them.

**Expanded Youth Offer** – The Government will expand and increase the intensive support offered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in Great Britain to young jobseekers, to include all those aged 18-24 in the Intensive Work Search Group in Universal Credit.

**Enhanced work search support** – The Government will provide £895 million to enhance work search support by doubling the number of work coaches in Jobcentre Plus before the end of the financial year across Great Britain.

**Expansion of the Work and Health Programme** – Up to £95 million will be provided this year to expand the scope of the Work and Health Programme in Great Britain to introduce additional voluntary support in the autumn for those on benefits that have been unemployed for more than three months. This expansion will have no impact on the existing provision for those with illnesses or disabilities in England and Wales.

**Job finding support service** –£40 million will be provided to fund private sector capacity to introduce a job finding support service in Great Britain in the autumn. This online, one-to-one service is aimed at helping those who have been unemployed for less than three months increase their chances of finding employment.

**Flexible Support Fund** – The Government will increase the funding for the Flexible Support Fund by £150 million in Great Britain, including to increase the capacity of the Rapid Response Service. It will also provide local support to claimants by removing barriers to work such as travel expenses for attending interviews.

**New funding for sector-based work academies** – The Government will provide an additional £17 million this year to triple the number of sector-based work academy placements in England in order to provide vocational training and guaranteed interviews for more people, helping them gain the skills needed for the jobs available in their local area.

**Eat Out to Help Out** – The Chancellor announced the introduction of the ‘Eat Out to Help Out scheme’ to encourage people to return to eating out. This will entitle every diner to a 50 per cent discount of up to £10 per head on their meal, at any participating restaurant, café, pub or other eligible food service establishment. The discount can be used unlimited times and will be valid Monday to Wednesday on any eat-in meal (including on non-alcoholic drinks) for the entire month of August 2020 across the UK. Participating establishments will be fully reimbursed for the 50 per cent discount.

**Temporary VAT cut for food and non-alcoholic drinks** – From 15 July 2020 to 12 January 2021, to support businesses and jobs in the hospitality sector, the reduced (5 per cent) rate of VAT will apply to supplies of food and non-alcoholic drinks from restaurants, pubs, bars, cafés and similar premises across the UK. Further guidance on the scope of this relief will be published by HMRC in the coming days.

**Temporary VAT cut for accommodation and attractions** – From 15 July 2020 to 12 January 2021, to support businesses and jobs, the reduced (5 per cent) rate of VAT will apply to supplies of accommodation and admission to attractions across the UK. Further guidance on the scope of this relief will be published by HMRC in the coming days.

**Temporary Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) cut** – The Government will temporarily increase the Nil Rate Band of Residential SDLT, in England and Northern Ireland, from £125,000 to £500,000. This will apply from 8 July 2020 until 31 March 2021 and cut the tax due for everyone who would have paid SDLT.

**Green Homes Grant** – A £2 billion Green Homes Grant will be introduced, providing at least £2 for every £1 homeowners and landlords spend to make their homes more energy efficient, up to £5,000 per household. For those on the lowest incomes, the scheme will fully fund energy efficiency measures of up to £10,000 per household. In total this could support over 100,000 green jobs and help strengthen a supply chain that the Government hopes will help meet their target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The scheme aims to upgrade over 600,000 homes across England to save money on their energy bills.

**Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme** – The Clean Growth Strategy set out the Government’s ambition to halve greenhouse gas emissions from the public sector by 2032. To help achieve this and support economic recovery, the Government will invest £1 billion over the next year in a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme that will offer grants to public sector bodies, including schools and hospitals, to fund both energy efficiency and low carbon heat upgrades.

**Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund** – The Government will establish a new Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to help social landlords improve the least energy-efficient social rented homes, starting with a £50 million demonstrator project in 2020-21 to decarbonise social housing. This is intended to lower annual energy bills for low income households.

### Future Government Plans for Devolution

The Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke MP, gave a speech looking at a new deal for the north and looking forward to the Devolution White Paper this September.

In his speech he strongly backs a Mayoral approach and states that the Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper will establish “the **unitarisation of councils** as a vital first step for negotiating these mayoral devolution deals in the future”.

The LGA have long called for greater devolution to councils, for local leaders to have the powers and resources they need to better deliver locally determined and democratically accountable outcomes. This message was underlined in our recent conference publication, [Re-thinking local](#).

The LGA have also been consistent in our argument that just as the challenges and opportunities differ across the country there is no one-size-fits-all model of local governance. If local areas are in agreement, then they are already able to put forward proposals for reorganisation.

It is not yet clear what the full extent of these proposals are likely to mean in practice. We will continue to press for greater clarity on these issues and to argue for genuine devolution led by local councils and driven by the priorities of residents.

### Addressing Skills Shortages - New Package of Measures for Technical Education (HNC/HND)

The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, announced a new package of measures for higher technical education. The measures will introduce newly approved higher technical qualifications from September 2022, ensure the quality of courses is consistent across FE and HE sectors and raise awareness of higher technical qualifications. This is good news as it will provide progression routes for technical qualifications and could help address the skills gaps in councils boost progression for some technician roles into more senior graduate based jobs.

## LGA SUPPORT UPDATE

### [LGA Schools Workforce Update 17th July](#)

The latest LGA Schools Workforce update includes employer relevant clarification on the [DfE published guidance for the full opening of schools](#) with regards to the use of face coverings and more to support councils and schools planning for the full restart in September.

### [New LGA Improvement Peer support offer](#)

We have launched a new Remote Peer Support Offer, designed to support councils to reflect on your responses to COVID-19 and to engage in open and collaborative conversations about recovery and renewal plans. It comes as our newly published Sector-led Improvement report highlights work supporting councils in the last year, delivering 129 peer challenges and enrolling nearly 1,000 councillors on leadership programmes. The LGA's wider Sector-led Improvement offer has been rapidly refocused to ensure its resources are best placed to help with immediate challenges presenting now and in the future. For this reason, the vast majority of the LGA's activity is now focused on supporting local government and communities to address COVID-19 and its consequences. Our new Recovery and Renewal Panel and Remote Peer Support Offer will build on our well-established improvement support programme. For more information about the new Remote Peer Support Offer, [visit our website](#) or get in touch with [your Principal Adviser](#).

### [COVID-19 councillor guidance](#)

The LGA have published an [updated version of the COVID-19 councillor guidance](#), originally published back in March. As things have moved on significantly since then, our new [councillor guidance on reset and recovery](#) looks at the role that councillors can play as we move out of lockdown and focus on supporting our places and communities through the process of recovery.

### [Managing your employees' joint pain – during lockdown and beyond – Webinar 22<sup>nd</sup> July](#)

Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions are a leading cause of workplace sickness, set to get worse due to increased home working. The LGA are providing a webinar from NHS experts and local government case studies about an evidence-based, inexpensive model to support your employees to better manage their joint pain.

### [Reset and Recovery: Place Based Approach Webinar 20th July](#)

Thinking Place is hosting a webinar, bringing together leading business and educational organisations to discuss the importance of all partners in a place coming together to support the place. The event, which is being held at midday on **Monday 20 July will include** speakers from Lancaster University, Anglian Water and Knowsley Hall/Knowsley Safari Park.

### [LGA / SOLACE Senior Manager Coaching Support](#)

This offer, funded by the LGA, and delivered in partnership with Solace, has been providing support to chief executives, directors and professional leads working directly on managing the response to COVID-19 since April. There are still a limited number of coaching hours available.

In normal times, work can be a safe place for those suffering domestic abuse, but remote working and working in more isolation on the frontline has changed this. As part of our support for the Domestic Abuse Bill currently working its way through Parliament, we have produced new resources to help local authorities to raise or respond to issues of domestic abuse for their staff.

### **LG Inform council area reports on COVID-19**

There has been a lot of discussion recently about how the COVID-19 data published by Public Health England (PHE) for local authority areas does not tell the full story. Late last week, PHE improved their data publication and our LG Inform reports on COVID-19 have now been updated to take this into account. Previously, figures on cases at a local authority level only included those confirmed by public sector testing facilities ('Pillar 1' tests), and this caused problems in areas where a majority of recent cases were confirmed by tests run by commercial partners ('Pillar 2' tests), as it meant that large numbers of cases were not included. The number of cases published by PHE now includes those from both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 tests, and our LG Inform reports reflect this, showing a much larger number of cases than previously.

The updated reports are available below:

- [Local authority quick view](#) – local authority report showing the number and rates of all confirmed COVID-19 cases by authority, compared to others (select your authority at the top of the report)
- [England overview](#) – showing the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths across England as a whole, and the top ten councils for number and rate of cases

### **COVID-19 Local Authority Workforce Data latest report**

Thanks again to all those councils who complete the fortnightly COVID-19 Workforce survey. The data is still a key part of LRF dashboards. The latest headlines from the most recent survey are **available here**. The **COVID-19 Workforce Data collection** will continue throughout the summer and the LGA thanks all councils for their continued support in completing the data returns.

### **National OD Support Project: Respond & Renew**

Thank you to all the councils who have contacted the national OD project to date. Discussions have taken place in the North West, East of England and West Midlands regions. Further regional discussions are due to take place over the coming weeks. If you want to register your interest in support this work please contact **Kash Haroon** at North West Employers or **Nigel Carruthers** at the LGA.

### Sharing Practise – Council HR Response

LGA has further examples of practice from local authorities across all elements of the Covid-19 response.

#### **LGA COVID-19 WORKFORCE ADVICE**

The LGA is providing COVID-19 advice which can be accessed via our [home page](#) you will see a range of information explaining our work with government on the [COVID-19 Hub](#).

LGA workforce Team continues to provide workforce advice on COVID-19 [here](#)

Employment Advice can be accessed via the LGA Workforce Employee Relations Unit (ERU) the [latest bulletin](#) provides updates on a range of COVID-19 issues.