

Workforce team update

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COVID and workforce equalities

- Years of initiatives but not as much progress as hoped in creating diverse and fair local government workplaces
- COVID message “We’re all in this together” – but same storm and different boats
- COVID forced a structural shift on organisations and fundamentally disrupted our people model
- Exposed the high numbers of BAME staff working in lower paid frontline jobs
- Presented an opportunity – and requirement - to redefine what it means to be a good and fair employer

Diverse by Design guide



- Looking at EDI through the lens of business strategy and organisational design, values and behaviours
- Less focus on individual need (although important) and more on systemic change, creating workplaces where individuals can thrive
- Employers choose from 15 steps of practical ideas and insights to rethink taken for granted systems and processes

Our EDI support

- Supporting leaders to champion equity and manage EDI as a business strategy
- Sharing insights and practice (webinars, case studies, roundtables) to accelerate diversity and inclusion in local government workplaces
- Working with national partners on creating resources for local government
- Continue to promote diversity and inclusion in local government

Resources

- Workforce equalities hub <https://local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-workforce>
- Workforce wellbeing hub <https://local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/wellbeing>
- Sign up for our monthly Workforce E-bulletins <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/e-bulletins>
- Follow us on Twitter @LGAWorkforce for updates on our work

Removal of COVID rules

- 24 February:
 - self-isolation requirements ended (although still advised to self-isolate) as did obligation to tell employer if tested positive
- 24 March:
 - COVID SSP rules end
- 1 April:
 - Removal of free testing, except to social care staff and at risk groups
 - COVID-19 will not have to be explicitly considered in risk assessments
 - New public health guidance will replace current ‘Working safely’ guidance

Issues for employers

- Health and safety duties
- Managing removal of mandatory self-isolation requirements
- Managing sickness absence
- CEV

Exit pay restrictions

- £95k cap came into force 4 November 2020, removed in Feb 2021, legislation revoked March 2021
- Recovery of exit payments for high earners who return to the public sector within 12 months of leaving: wasn't brought into force
- DLUHC (MHCLG) reform proposals: further restrictions were expected early 2021, not introduced

What next?

- HMT stated in Spring 2021 that they will legislate again to ‘tackle unjustified exit payments’ and will do so ‘at pace’...
- It remains DLUHC’s intention to also introduce some form of further reform to exit payments
- DLUHC exit pay data request April/May 2021
- Reforms will be preceded by consultation

LGA concerns remain as before

- Restriction on councils' ability to manage workforce
- Impact on lower and mid range employees
- Complexity of any waiver process
- Administrative burden on employers and LGPS authorities
- Possibility of legal challenge

Disability workforce reporting

- Consultation on making disability workforce reporting mandatory for employers of 250+
- Currently there is a voluntary regime
- Consultation seeks views on current landscape and potential benefits and barriers to reporting
- Closes 25 March 2022

Further information

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/employment-relations>

<https://local.gov.uk/developing-hybrid-working-local-government>