

# COVID-19 Workforce Survey

Research Report

Relating to the week ending 8 January 2021





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# Summary

## Background

This report is part of a series of monthly surveys of all councils in England and Wales collecting key workforce data on how the sector is responding to COVID-19. An online survey is emailed to heads of human resources, or a nominated contact, in councils from England and Wales on the second Wednesday of the month. The data requested relates to the week ending the preceding Friday. The intention is that this collection is the single national source through which such data is gathered, and it will, as appropriate, be shared with government departments and others in addition to providing comparator information for councils.

This report relates to the survey sent out on 13 January 2021 and covers the week ending 8 January 2021. The overall response rate was 57 per cent and covered around a third of the total workforce.

## Key findings

- Some 38 per cent of councils reported recruiting additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc) in the week ending 8 January 2021. In total 1,625 additional staff had been recruited in responding authorities: the median number of staff per authority was four and the mean was 19.
- More than half of respondent councils (129) have recorded deaths in service since lockdown. A total of 476 deaths in service were reported by respondents since the start of lockdown (cause not specified).
- Twenty nine per cent of councils reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff. In total, responding authorities reported there were 6,262 staff furloughed in the week ending 8 January 2021, which was 1.2 per cent of the current workforce.
- The main reason given for furloughing staff was that the service had stopped (69 per cent) or that funding had stopped (29 per cent).
- Some 63 per cent of councils had redeployed staff. In total, in the responding authorities there were 7,493 staff redeployed in the week ending 8 January 2021, which was one per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff redeployed was six and the mean was 43.
- Nine in ten councils (90 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable for work. In total, respondents reported there were 29,636 staff unavailable for work in the week ending 8 January 2021, six per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 48 and the mean was 155.
- Twenty two per cent of staff were unavailable through 'self-isolation (other)' and 46 per cent were unavailable due to 'non-COVID sickness'.

- When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the worst affected services were schools and public health: 17 per cent and 12 per cent of single tier and county councils, respectively, reported these services were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 35 per cent of single tier and county councils reported that adult social care were operating with moderate disruption.
- When asked to assess the council overall, in terms of whether there are enough staff to run services normally or not, 64 per cent reported they were not operating normally.
- Councils were asked about the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing for staff. Eighty nine per cent reported they had about the right amount of PPE. Eighty three per cent said all the staff who need testing can access it.
- Looking ahead, councils were asked if they were experiencing significant difficulties recruiting for some posts or not: 85 (41 per cent) said they were. Councils were subsequently asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations where they were experiencing difficulties: 75 per cent of councils were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers, 43 per cent were having difficulties recruiting adult social workers.
- Councils were asked to choose the five occupations or roles where recruitment difficulties were most acute. Fifty nine per cent of the councils who answered the question had acute difficulties recruiting children's social workers.
- Out of the councils who had said they had acute difficulties in recruiting children's social workers, 43 per cent said they had both difficulty recruiting generally and difficulty recruiting the required expertise, experience or qualification.
- Councils were asked if they are likely to recruit additional staff specifically to COVID-19 and/or the EU transition or not: 28 per cent said they were not likely recruit additional staff and a further 27 per cent said they did not know. Ninety two (45 per cent) councils said yes, they were likely to be recruiting additional staff. Of these, 40 per cent said it was 'in response to COVID-19', three per cent said it was 'in response to both' and one per cent said it was 'in response to EU transition'.
- Councils were asked to look ahead and think about staff and what they were considering doing in this current financial year and in the next one (2021/22). Out of the councils that answered this question 63 per cent said they were thinking of making no substantive changes within this financial year, and 51 per cent said they were not thinking it for 2021/22. Seventeen per cent of those that answered this question said that they were thinking of reducing

staff numbers overall in 2020/21, and 24 per cent said they were thinking to do this in 2021/22.

- Councils were asked to think about the COVID-19 vaccination and would they say that the staff who need the vaccine have had them or not. A total of 200 (97 per cent who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 33 per cent reported that some of the staff who need the vaccine. Forty two per cent of councils said they didn't know and 14 per cent said none of their staff who need vaccine have had it.

## Introduction

Councils face significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has required a joined-up approach between government departments, health agencies, local resilience fora and national agencies like the Local Government Association (LGA), all working with and trying to support councils. The LGA, National Association of Regional Employers (the collective body comprising all the regional employers organisations) and PPMA (the membership association for HR and OD professionals in the public sector) joined forces to coordinate an approach to workforce data collection in the sector.

To provide councils with the intelligence to effectively compare progress and plan locally, regionally and nationally a short workforce survey was sent out to all heads of human resources in England and Wales. Findings from the survey will give councils a stronger position to build capacity in partnership with others; give the LGA and associations the evidence needed to ask government for support and resources; and help shape government thinking as we emerge from lockdown.

## Methodology

On 13 January 2021, the LGA's Research and Information Team sent an online survey to all heads of human resources in England and Wales (a total of 361 councils). The survey was in the field for one week. A total of 206 councils responded, which is a response rate of 57 per cent.

**Table 1** and **Table 2** provide a breakdown of responses by authority type and region. Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this group of respondents, rather than representative of all heads of human resources, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the position of the sector more widely.

Type of authority	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
District	188	98	52
County	25	18	72
London borough	33	23	70
Metropolitan district	36	23	64
Unitary	57	34	60
Welsh unitary	22	10	45
All	361	206	57



**Table 2: Response rate by region**

Region	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
Eastern	50	35	70
East Midlands	45	21	47
London	33	23	70
North East	12	10	83
North West	41	26	63
South East	70	32	46
South West	33	14	42
Wales	22	10	45
West Midlands	33	15	45
Yorkshire and Humber	22	20	91

**Technical notes**

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the number of respondents who answered each question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey.
- Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.

# COVID-19 Workforce Survey: week ending 8 January 2021

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

## Size of local authority workforce

### Workforce as at 1 March 2020

In order to establish a baseline, councils were asked the number of staff employed by the council on the 1 March 2020, pre-lockdown. The councils that responded to the survey employed 516,523 staff or approximately a third of the total local government workforce.

There are 173 single tier and county councils that have responsibility for schools. As it is not always possible to separate out school-based staff from human resources (HR) systems, a supplementary question was asked to determine how many returns included school-based staff.

Of the 108 councils that responded to the survey and had responsibility for schools, 20 (10 per cent) reported that their return included school-based staff. For expediency this report doesn't separate those that included/excluded schools-based staff as it was felt that it would add significantly to the burden on councils returning the data and would have little effect on the overall findings.

### Recruitment week ending 8 January 2021

Councils are at the forefront of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to continue to deliver vital services to their communities they have had to be flexible in how they deploy their workforce in order to increase capacity in high demand services or to fill gaps in services caused by the pandemic.

One option available to councils is the recruitment of additional staff. To understand the scale of recruitment, councils were asked whether they had recruited additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc) during the week 8 January 2021.

Of the councils that responded 79 (38 per cent) reported recruiting additional staff. In total 1,625 additional staff were recruited during the week ending 8 January 2021. The median number of staff per council was four and the mean was 19.

**Table 3: Has the council recruited additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc during week ending 8 January 2021)?**

	Yes	%	Total	Median	Mean
County	8	44	70	7	10
District	24	24	85	2	4
London borough	14	61	642	14	21
Metropolitan borough	13	57	352	4	39
Unitary	16	47	138	2	11
Welsh unitary	4	40	338	2	4
English single tier	41	51	1,128	5	33
All councils	79	38	1,625	4	19

Base: all respondents (206 councils – 18 counties, 98 districts, 23 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan borough, 34 unitary, 10 Welsh unitary, 80 English single tier)

### Current headcount as at 8 January 2021

The total headcount for those councils that responded had increased by 1.1 per cent since the 1 March 2020 and now stands at 522,192 on the 8 January 2021.

**Table 4: Change in headcount from 1 March – 8 January 2021**

	At 1 March	At 8 January	% change
County	118,461	121,090	2.2
District	42,920	43,598	1.6
London borough	73,488	75,842	3.2
Metropolitan borough	119,591	119,907	0.3
Unitary	105,681	105,427	-0.2
Welsh unitary	56,382	56,328	-0.1
English single tier	280,361	282,974	0.9
All councils	516,523	522,192	1.1

Base: all respondents (206 councils – 18 counties, 98 districts, 23 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 34 unitary, 10 Welsh unitary, 80 English single tier)

## Death in service

Councils were asked to provide details on the number of staff that have died in service since 24 March 2020 (lockdown). Of the 201 councils that answered this question 129 (64 per cent) recorded deaths in service as of 8 January 2021, totalling 476 staff. Councils were not asked the cause of death, so this figure relates to all causes, not only COVID-19 deaths.

**Table 5: Since 24 March when lockdown started, how many local authority staff, if any, have died in service?**

	<b>No. deaths</b>	<b>No. of councils recording one or more deaths</b>
County	78	16
District	49	35
London borough	75	22
Metropolitan borough	132	21
Unitary	104	26
Welsh unitary	38	9
English single tier	298	69
All councils	476	129

Base: all respondents (201 councils – 18 counties, 96 districts, 23 London boroughs, 21 metropolitan boroughs, 33 unitary, 10 Welsh unitary, 77 English single tier)

## Furloughed staff

Councils were asked to provide details of staff that were furloughed in the week ending 8 January 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 56 (29 per cent) reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 6,262 staff furloughed in responding councils in the week ending 8 January, 1.2 per cent of their current workforce. Of those councils that had furloughed staff, the median number was 49 and the mean was 110; but this varied considerably across different types of authority.

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Of those councils with furloughed staff	
				Median	Mean
County	6	33	1,492	220	249
District	20	21	2,016	46	101
London borough	4	21	60	13	15
Metropolitan borough	7	35	185	18	26
Unitary	11	34	1,390	72	128
Welsh unitary	8	80	1,119	114	137
English single tier	22	31	1,635	34	87
All councils	56	29	6,262	49	110

Base: all respondents (196 councils – 18 counties, 96 districts, 19 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 32 unitary, 10 Welsh unitary, 71 English single tier)

### Reason staff were furloughed

The councils that had furloughed staff in the week ending 8 January 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason the member of staff had been furloughed, and 52 were able to provide the reason or reasons.

In the week ending 8 January 2021, 69 per cent of staff furloughed as 'Service has been stopped' and 29 per cent of staff were furloughed because the 'Funding has stopped' and. The pattern varied across authority types: in metropolitan boroughs 71 per cent of staff were furloughed due to 'Service has been stopped', while in counties 71 per cent of staff were furloughed because 'Funding has stopped'.

**Table 7: For those staff furloughed, what is/are the reason/s?**

	Funding has stopped	Staff are shielding	Caring responsibilities	Service has been stopped	Other reasons
	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff
County	71	0	0	29	0
District	11	1	0	88	0
London borough	43	0	0	57	0
Metropolitan borough	29	0	0	71	0
Unitary	31	0	0	68	0
Welsh unitary	0	10	0	90	0
English single tier	32	0	0	68	0
All councils	29	2	0	69	0

Base: respondents with furloughed staff (52 councils – six counties, 19 districts, four London boroughs, seven metropolitan boroughs, nine unitary, seven Welsh unitary, 20 English single tier)

## Redeployed staff

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that had been redeployed in the week ending 8 January 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 110 (63 per cent) reported that they had redeployed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 7,493 staff redeployed in the week ending 8 January, one per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff redeployed was six and the mean was 43.

**Table 8: No. of staff redeployed (week ending 8 January)**

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	11	73	3,075	26	205
District	46	51	921	1	10
London borough	13	68	649	10	34
Metropolitan borough	16	94	1,376	50	81
Unitary	17	71	996	15	42
Welsh unitary	7	78	476	0	53
English single tier	46	77	3,021	23	50
All councils	110	63	7,493	6	43

Base: all respondents (174 councils – 15 counties, 90 districts, 19 London boroughs, 17 metropolitan boroughs, 24 unitary, nine Welsh unitary, 60 English single tier)

## Unavailable for work

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that were unavailable for work in the week ending 8 January 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 171 (90 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable.

In total there were 29,636 staff unavailable for work in responding authorities in the week ending 8 January, six per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 48 and the mean was 155.

**Table 9: No. of staff unavailable for work (week ending 8 January)**

	<b>No. of councils</b>	<b>% of councils</b>	<b>Total no. staff</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>
County	17	100	6,128	308	360
District	74	81	1,607	14	18
London borough	19	95	4,136	117	207
Metropolitan borough	23	100	8,294	364	361
Unitary	29	94	6,625	151	214
Welsh unitary	9	100	2,846	273	316
English single tier	71	96	19,055	179	258
All councils	171	90	29,636	48	155

Base: all respondents (191 councils – 17 counties, 91 districts, 20 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 31 unitary, nine Welsh unitary, 74 English single tier)

## Reason staff were unavailable for work

The 171 councils that reported they had one or more member of staff unavailable for work in the week ending 8 January 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason for them being unavailable, and 166 were able to provide the reason.

In the week ending 8 January 2021, 46 per cent of staff were unavailable because of 'Non-COVID sickness' and 22 per cent were unavailable due to 'Self-isolation (other)'. Reasons for self-isolation (other) included being in an at-risk group, because the staff member believed they were symptomatic or because the staff member shared a household with someone who was symptomatic.

**Table 10: For those staff currently unavailable for work, what is/are the reason/s?**

	<b>Non- COVID sickness</b>	<b>Confirmed/ Suspected COVID</b>	<b>Self- isolation (Track and trace)</b>	<b>Self- isolation (Other)</b>	<b>Caring for dependents/ at risk relative/som eone who is sick</b>	<b>Other reason</b>
	<b>% staff</b>	<b>% staff</b>	<b>% staff</b>	<b>% staff</b>	<b>% staff</b>	<b>% staff</b>
County	37	14	1	42	1	6
District	45	17	5	21	1	11
London borough	31	14	0	10	0	44
Metropolitan borough	53	11	0	17	0	18
Unitary	48	11	3	19	1	19
Welsh unitary	59	15	6	10	1	9
English single tier	47	12	1	16	1	24
All councils	46	13	2	22	1	17

Base: respondents with unavailable staff (166 councils – 15 counties, 74 districts, 17 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 29 unitary, nine Welsh unitary, 68 English single tier)



## Service disruption

When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the worst affected services were schools and public health, with 17 and 12 per cent of councils with these services reported they were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 32 per cent of single tier and county councils reported that schools were operating with moderate disruption. Also badly affected was adult social care (directly employed, with 35 per cent reporting moderate disruption).

When asked to assess the council overall, in terms of whether there are enough staff to run services normally or not, 64 per cent of councils reported they were not operating normally.

**Table 11: Please select the status of the services to the show if there are enough staff to run the service normally or not.**

	<b>Base</b>	<b>Operating normally</b>	<b>Operating with minor disruption</b>	<b>Operating with moderate disruption</b>	<b>Operating with severe disruption</b>
	<b>No. councils</b>	<b>% councils</b>	<b>% councils</b>	<b>% councils</b>	<b>% councils</b>
Adult social care (directly employed)	107	31	29	35	6
Bereavement services	137	61	24	14	1
Children's services	102	39	30	28	2
Environment health	179	46	30	20	5
Household waste (doorstep collection)	158	62	20	15	3
Housing and homelessness services	179	59	26	13	2
Planning	189	65	27	8	0
Public Health	120	45	24	19	12
Revenue and Benefits	172	58	24	15	2
Schools	77	27	23	32	17
Trading standards	98	47	34	16	3
Overall council	199	37	41	22	1

Base: all respondents dependent on category applicable to the council; categories presented varied by authority type.

## Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Councils were asked to indicate whether they had enough of the correct type of PPE for those staff that needed it. A total of 188 (91 per cent of councils who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 89 per cent reported they had about the right amount of PPE; whilst one per cent had less than they needed.

**Table 12: At present, do you have enough of the correct PPE for those local authority staff who need it or not?**

	<b>More than we need</b>	<b>About what we need</b>	<b>Less than we need</b>	<b>We don't need it</b>
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	6	89	6	0
District	8	89	0	2
London borough	14	81	5	0
Metropolitan borough	5	95	0	0
Unitary	16	84	0	0
Welsh unitary	0	100	0	0
English single tier	12	87	1	0
All councils	9	89	1	1

Base: all respondents (188 councils – 18 counties, 85 districts, 21 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 32 unitaries, 10 Welsh unitaries, 75 English single tier)

## Availability of testing

Councils were asked to indicate whether staff who needed it were able to access testing or not. A total of 197 (95 per cent of councils who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 16 per cent said most of the staff that need testing can access it, with one per cent saying only some of the staff that need testing can access it.

**Table 13: And would you say that, currently, the staff who need testing are able to access it or not?**

	<b>All the staff that need testing can access it</b>	<b>Most of the staff that need testing can access it</b>	<b>Some of the staff that need testing can access it</b>	<b>None of the staff that need testing can access it</b>	<b>None of our staff need testing</b>
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	67	33	0	0	0
District	89	9	2	0	0
London borough	62	38	0	0	0
Metropolitan borough	82	18	0	0	0
Unitary	88	12	0	0	0
Welsh unitary	90	10	0	0	0
English single tier	79	21	0	0	0
All councils	83	16	1	0	0

Base: all respondents (197 councils – 18 counties, 92 districts, 21 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 34 unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 77 English single tier)

## Planning ahead

### **Recruitment difficulties**

Councils were asked if they were experiencing significant difficulties recruiting for some occupations and roles: 85 (41 per cent) said they were. Those that had answered yes to this question were then subsequently asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations where they were experiencing difficulties. Table 14 shows 75 per cent of English single tier councils were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers. In district councils 57 per cent of those that responded to the question said they were having problems recruiting planning officers.

From the specialist occupations and roles, they were having difficulties recruiting, councils were asked to choose the five where difficulties are most acute. This is either if their council has a large number of staff vacancies for some posts or it has a small number of vacancies that have a big impact. Fifty nine per cent of councils who answered the question had acute difficulties recruiting children's social workers. This can be seen in Table 15.

**Table 14: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties**

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	English single tier	All councils
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Accountants	7	26	8	25	5	0	11	14
Adult's social workers	80	0	50	33	45	33	43	38
Building control officers	0	35	17	0	20	33	14	18
Chartered surveyors	20	22	17	17	20	0	18	19
Children's social workers	87	0	75	83	70	33	75	55
Economic development officers	20	13	0	0	0	0	0	7
Educational psychologists	60	0	25	17	20	0	20	21
Engineers	47	4	8	33	20	0	20	20
Environmental health officers	0	57	25	25	35	33	30	32
Health visitors	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Homelessness officers	0	9	0	0	10	0	5	5
ICT professionals	20	9	25	8	20	33	18	16
Legal professionals	27	26	33	42	15	0	27	26
Mental health social workers	53	0	17	8	25	0	18	19
Occupational therapists (adults')	67	0	17	17	35	0	25	25
Occupational therapists (children's)	33	0	25	8	15	0	16	14
Regulatory services officers	0	0	8	8	5	0	7	4
Planning officers	47	57	25	8	15	0	16	32
Public health officers	27	9	17	17	15	33	16	16
School nurses	7	0	0	0	5	0	2	2
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	8	8	5	0	7	4
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	8	17	10	0	11	6
Trading standards officers	27	0	17	0	10	0	9	9
Youth workers	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	20	0	17	8	10	33	11	11

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (85 councils – 15 counties, 23 districts, 12 London boroughs, 12 metropolitan boroughs, 20 unitary, three Welsh unitary, 44 English single tier)

**Table 15: For those specialist occupations and roles where you have difficulties recruiting, below, please tick up to five where the difficulties are most acute.**

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	English single tier	All councils
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Accountants	7	26	9	25	6	0	13	15
Adult's social workers	86	0	55	33	53	33	48	40
Building control officers	0	35	18	0	24	33	15	19
Chartered surveyors	21	22	18	17	24	0	20	20
Children's social workers	93	0	82	83	82	33	83	59
Economic development officers	21	13	0	0	0	0	0	8
Educational psychologists	64	0	27	17	24	0	23	23
Engineers	50	4	9	33	24	0	23	21
Environmental health officers	0	57	27	25	41	33	33	34
Health visitors	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Homelessness officers	0	9	0	0	12	0	5	5
ICT professionals	21	9	27	8	24	33	20	18
Legal professionals	29	26	36	42	18	0	30	28
Mental health social workers	57	0	18	8	29	0	20	20
Occupational therapists (adults')	71	0	18	17	41	0	28	26
Occupational therapists (children's)	36	0	27	8	18	0	18	15
Regulatory services officers	0	0	9	8	6	0	8	4
Planning officers	50	57	27	8	18	0	18	34
Public health officers	29	9	18	17	18	33	18	18
School nurses	7	0	0	0	6	0	3	3
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	9	8	6	0	8	4
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	9	17	12	0	13	6
Trading standards officers	29	0	18	0	12	0	10	10
Youth workers	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other	21	0	18	8	12	33	13	11

Base: authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (80 councils – 14 counties, 23 districts, 11 London boroughs, 12 metropolitan boroughs, 17 unitary, three Welsh unitary, 40 English single tier)

**Table 16: For each of these roles where you have acute difficulties, please indicate whether the recruitment difficulty is in recruiting generally, or recruiting at the required level of expertise/experience/qualification?**

	Base	Difficulty recruiting generally	Difficulty recruiting required expertise, experience or qualification	Both	Don't know
	No. councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
Accountants	8	13	25	63	0
Adult's social workers	21	24	19	48	10
Building control officers	7	14	29	57	0
Chartered surveyors	5	80	0	20	0
Children's social workers	44	23	30	43	5
Economic development officers	2	50	0	50	0
Educational psychologists	13	15	38	38	8
Engineers	6	17	33	50	0
Environmental health officers	24	17	17	67	0
Health visitors	1	0	0	100	0
Homelessness officers	3	0	33	67	0
ICT professionals	8	38	50	13	0
Legal professionals	16	19	19	63	0
Mental health social workers	12	8	17	75	0
Occupational therapists (adults')	9	22	22	56	0
Occupational therapists (children's)	4	25	50	25	0
Regulatory services officers	17	35	6	59	0
Planning officers	7	43	14	43	0
Public health officers	1	0	0	100	0
School nurses	1	0	100	0	0
Test and trace team leaders	1	100	0	0	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	2	50	0	50	0
Trading standards officers	3	0	0	100	0
Youth workers	0	-	-	-	-
Other	8	38	38	25	0

Base: all respondents who were experiencing recruitment difficulties (80). Columns do not total to 100 per cent as respondents were able to pick more than one option.

Where councils had ticked that they had acute difficulties recruiting certain roles, they were then asked to indicate whether the difficulty is in recruiting generally or recruiting at the required level of expertise/experience/qualification. Out of the 44 councils who had said they had acute difficulties in recruiting Children's social workers, 43 per cent said they had both difficulty recruiting generally and difficulty recruiting the required expertise, experience or qualification.

## COVID-19 / EU transition recruitment

Councils were asked if they were likely to recruit additional staff specifically in response to COVID-19 and/or the EU transition or not. Of the 205 councils who responded to the question, 28 per cent said they were not likely recruit additional staff and a further 27 per cent said they did not know. Ninety two (45 per cent) council said they would be likely to recruit additional staff. Of these, 40 per cent of councils said it was 'in response to COVID-19', three per cent said it was 'in response to both' and one per cent said it was 'in response to EU transition'.

**Table 17: Are you likely to recruit additional staff specifically in response to COVID-19 and/or the EU transition, or not?**

	Yes, in response to COVID-19	Yes, in response both to COVID-19 and EU transition	Yes, in response to EU transition	No	Don't know
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	44	6	6	17	28
District	30	0	1	42	28
London borough	48	0	0	9	43
Metropolitan borough	68	5	0	9	18
Unitary	47	15	0	18	21
Welsh unitary	40	0	0	40	20
English single tier	53	8	0	13	27
All councils	40	3	1	28	27

Base: all respondents (205 councils – 18 counties, 98 districts, 23 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 34 unitary, 10 Welsh unitary, 79 English single tier)

## Thinking about staffing

Councils were asked about staffing and what they were currently considering doing within this financial year (2020/21) and next year, 142 (69 per cent) of councils were able to answer this question, a further 49 councils answered, 'Don't know'.

Out of the councils that answered this question 63 per cent said they were thinking of making no substantive changes within this financial year, and 51 per cent said they were not thinking it for 2021/22. Seventeen per cent of those that answered this question said that they were thinking of reducing staff numbers overall in 2020/21, and 24 per cent said they were thinking to do this in 2021/22. When thinking about increasing the use of apprenticeships, 32 per cent of councils said they were considering doing this in this financial year and 38 per cent said they were considering it for 2021/22.



**Table 18: Thinking about staffing, is your council currently considering doing any of the following within 2020/21 (current financial year) and in 2021/22?**

	<b>2020/21 (current financial year)</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>% councils</b>	<b>% councils</b>
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	63	51
Recruiting more staff overall	8	2
Reducing staff numbers overall	17	24
Recruitment freeze	15	12
Recruiting more staff in specialist roles	11	12
Increasing use of contractors or agencies	7	4
Reducing use of contractors or agencies	32	30
Increasing apprenticeships	32	38
Decreasing apprenticeships	1	2

Base: all respondents (142), excludes Don't knows (49). Columns do not total to 100 per cent as respondents were able to pick more than one option.

## **COVID-19 Vaccines**

Councils were asked to think about the COVID-19 vaccination and would they say that the staff who need the vaccine have had them or not. A total of 200 (97 per cent who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 33 per cent reported that some of the staff who need the vaccine. Forty two per cent of councils said they didn't know and 14 per cent said none of their staff who need vaccine have had it. We had asked council if they knew how many staff had refused to have the vaccine, the figures are very small therefore we cannot report it due to confidentiality.

**Table 19: Thinking about vaccinations, would you say that the staff who need vaccinations have had them or not?**

	All the staff who need vaccinations have had them	Most of the staff who need vaccinations have had them	Some of the staff who need vaccinations have had them	None of the staff who need vaccinations have had them	None of our staff need vaccinations	Don't know
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	0	0	69	19	0	13
District	1	0	8	20	15	56
London borough	0	9	48	0	0	43
Metropolitan borough	5	5	55	5	0	32
Unitary	0	9	47	12	0	32
Welsh unitary	0	10	80	0	0	10
English single tier	1	8	49	6	0	35
All councils	1	4	33	14	7	42

Base: all respondents (205 councils – 18 counties, 98 districts, 23 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 34 unitary, 10 Welsh unitary, 79 English single tier)

## Annex A: Questionnaire

# COVID - 19 Workforce Collection

Q1.1 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you would like to see **an overview of the questions** before completing the survey online, you can access a PDF here: [Covid 19 workforce collection](#)

You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. If you stop before completing the return, you can come back to this page using the link supplied in the email and you will be able to continue where you left off.

All responses will be treated confidentially. In order that councils do not get multiple requests for such data, the Local Government Association will share the data provided by you in this survey in confidence with the following organisations:

- Other councils (including in LG Inform, via sign-in)
- Regional employers' organisations
- Welsh Local Government Association
- Northern Ireland Local Government Association
- Relevant government departments
- Welsh Government
- Northern Ireland Assembly
- All local resilience fora (LRFs) (through the medium of the LRF dashboard)
- Bain and Company (purely for the purpose of updating the LRF dashboard)

Any information that is published or shared outside of that arrangement will be aggregated, and no authority will be identified without your consent. The information used within the LGA will be held and processed in accordance with our [privacy statement](#); and we will not share it with the organisations listed above unless we have ensured they have the right controls in place to use your information responsibly and only for the reasons for which we have given permission. We are

undertaking this survey in line with the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities. It will also:

- allow you to compare key data with other authorities
- minimise the number of data requests you respond to from other organisations
- assist in recovery planning, workforce testing and risk profiling, and
- help the LGA evidence our government asks for support and resources.

If you have any queries or problems, please contact [research@local.gov.uk](mailto:research@local.gov.uk).

Q2.1 How many staff did you have on 1 March 2020 (that is the usual headcount before COVID -19) and how many staff in the week ending 8 January 2021

*Please enter a whole number without a comma or decimal place. Please only include permanent and fixed term staff. If you answered this question for 1 March previously, your answer is already added below.*

	Number of staff (headcount)
Headcount of staff at 1 March 2020	
Headcount of staff week ending 8 January 2021	

Q2.2 Do the figures you are providing for this return include or exclude school staff?

- Includes school staff
- Excludes school staff
- Don't know

Q2.3 Have you recruited any additional excluding permanent and fixed term staff in the week ending 8 January?

Yes

- No

Q2.4 How many additional staff have you recruited excluding permanent and fixed term staff?

*Please enter a whole number. If you do not know please leave blank. If you answered this question previously, your answer is already added below.*

	Number of staff (headcount)
Additional staff week ending 8 January	

Q2.5 Since 24 March when lockdown started, how many local authority staff, if any, have died in service (from all causes)?

*Please enter the number of staff. If none, please enter "0". If you do not know please leave blank.*

	Number of staff (headcount)
Number of staff died in service	

Q3.1 How many staff, if any, do you currently (week ending 8 January 2021) have in the categories below?

*Please enter the headcount. If none, please enter zero. If you do not know please leave blank.*

	Number of staff (headcount)
Number of staff furloughed – full time	
Number of staff furloughed – part time	
Number of staff redeployed (both formal and informal, and either internally or externally)	
Number of staff unavailable for work	

Q4.1 For those staff furloughed, what is/are the reason/s?

*Please provide the number of staff furloughed broken down by reason for week ending 8 January 2021. If zero please enter "0". If you do not know please leave blank.*

	Number of staff (headcount)
Total number of staff furloughed	
Funding has stopped	
Number of staff unavailable for work	
Shielding (or relevant health reasons)	
Caring responsibilities	
Service has been stopped	
Other	

Q5.1 For those staff currently unavailable for work, what is the primary reason?

*Please provide the number of staff unavailable broken down by reason for week ending 8 January 2021.*

*If zero please enter "0". If you do not know please leave blank.*

*\*Self-isolating can be due to any of the following:*

*Being in an at-risk group*

*Believe they are symptomatic*

*Share a household with someone who is symptomatic*

	Number of staff (headcount)
Total number of staff unavailable for work	
Non-COVID sicknesses	
Confirmed / Suspected COVID	
Self-isolation (Test and trace)	
Self Isolation (Other)	
Caring for dependants/at-risk relative/someone who is sick	
Other	



Q6.1 Please select the status of the services to show if there are enough of the right staff to run the service normally or not (at the current level of demand).  
*This is to allow us to understand whether staff capacity (including redeployed staff) is enough to run the service. It will give us a feel of the pressure points for some of the highest profile service areas.*

	Operating normally	Minor disruption	Moderate disruption	Severe disruption	Don't know	Not applicable
Adult social care (directly employed)						
Bereavement services (cemeteries and crematoria)						
Children's services						
Environmental health						
Household waste (doorstep collection)						
Housing and homelessness services						
Planning						
Public health						
Revenue and benefits						
Schools						
Trading standards						

Q6.2 In summary, how would you assess the council overall, in terms of whether there are enough staff overall to run services normally or not?

- Operating normally
- Minor disruption
- Moderate disruption
- Severe disruption
- Don't know

Q7.1 At present, do you have enough of the correct PPE for those local authority staff who need it or not?

- More than we need
- About what we need
- Less than we need
- We don't need it
- Don't know

Q7.2 And would you say that, currently, the staff who need testing are able to access it or not?

- All the staff who need testing can access it
- Most of the staff who need testing can access it
- Some of the staff who need testing can access it
- None of the staff who need testing can access it
- None of our staff need testing
- Don't know

## Q8.1 Looking ahead

Over the next few fortnights we shall be asking questions to help us understand where councils may need some guidance and support in certain areas. These questions won't be asked every fortnight, but they will be asked maybe every other fortnight as you may want to change your answer as your council's circumstances may change.

Q8.2 We have heard from some councils that there are significant difficulties recruiting for certain posts.

Is your authority experiencing recruitment difficulties for some posts or not? *Difficulties may be in the form of a high number of staff vacancies for some posts, or a small number of vacancies that have a big impact.*

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q8.3 From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties.

*This is whether your council either has a large number of staff vacancies for some posts or it has a small number of vacancies that have a big impact.*

Accountants
Adult's social workers
Building control officers
Chartered surveyors
Children's social workers
Economic development officers
Educational psychologists
Engineers
Environmental health officers
Health visitors
Homelessness officers
ICT professionals
Legal professionals
Mental health social workers
Occupational therapists (adults')
Occupational therapists (children's)
Regulatory services officers
Planning officers
Public health officers
School nurses
Social care commissioners
Test and trace team leaders
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)
Trading standards officers
Youth workers
Other (please specify)

Q8.4 For those specialist occupations and roles where you have difficulties recruiting, below, please tick up to five where the difficulties are most acute.

*This is whether your council either has a large number of staff vacancies for some posts or it has a small number of vacancies that have a big impact.*

Accountants
Adult's social workers
Building control officers
Chartered surveyors
Children's social workers
Economic development officers
Educational psychologists
Engineers
Environmental health officers
Health visitors
Homelessness officers
ICT professionals
Legal professionals
Mental health social workers
Occupational therapists (adults')
Occupational therapists (children's)
Regulatory services officers
Planning officers
Public health officers
School nurses
Social care commissioners
Test and trace team leaders
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)
Trading standards officers
Youth workers
Other (please specify)

Q8.5 For each of these roles where you have acute difficulties, please indicate whether the recruitment difficulty is in recruiting generally, or recruiting at the required level of expertise/experience/qualification?

	Difficulty recruiting generally	Difficulty recruiting required expertise, experience or qualification	Both	Don't know
Accountants				
Adult's social workers				
Building control officers				
Chartered surveyors				
Children's social workers				
Economic development officers				
Educational psychologists				
Engineers				
Environmental health officers				
Health visitors				
Homelessness officers				
ICT professionals				
Legal professionals				
Mental health social workers				
Occupational therapists (adults')				
Occupational therapists (children's)				
Regulatory services officers				
Planning officers				
Public health officers				
School nurses				
Social care commissioners				
Test and trace team leaders				
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)				
Trading standards officers				
Youth workers				
Other (please specify)				

**Q9.1 COVID-19 / EU Transition recruitment**

Are you likely to recruit additional staff specifically in response to COVID-19 and/or the EU transition, or not?

- Yes, in response to COVID-19
- Yes, in response to EU transition
- Yes, in response both to COVID-19 and EU transition
- No
- Don't know

Q9.2 Can you please tell us what job roles these are?

---

Q10.1 And thinking about staffing, is your council currently considering doing any of the following with this financial year (2020/21) and in 2021/21?

	2020/21 (current financial year)	2021/22
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiting more staff overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing staff numbers overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruitment freeze	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruiting more staff in specialist roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing use of contractors or agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing use of contractors or agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing apprenticeships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decreasing apprenticeships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q10.2 Can you please tell us what these specialist roles are?

*Please enter in the space below*

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**Q11.1 COVID-19 Vaccine**

And now, thinking about vaccinations, would you say that the staff who need vaccinations have had them or not?

- All the staff who need vaccinations have had them
- Most of the staff who need vaccinations have had them
- Some of the staff who need vaccinations have had them
- None of the staff who need vaccinations have had them
- None of our staff need vaccinations
- Don't know

Q11.2 Approximately how many staff have had the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Total headcount number of staff (approximately)

---

-----

Q11.3 As far as you are aware, how many staff have refused to have the vaccine?

Total headcount number of staff

\_\_\_\_\_

Don't know

Q9.1 Please enter the details of the person nominated to provide this data for your authority or amend the details we hold below if necessary.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Authority \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Q30 Please provide details of a secondary contact who we can email any notifications and reports which they might find useful.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Authority \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Q10.1

Once you press the 'Submit' button below, you will have completed the survey.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. You are in control of any personal data that you have provided to us in your response. You can contact us at all times to have the information changed or deleted. You can find our full privacy policy here: [click here to see our privacy policy](#)



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