

COVID-19 Workforce Survey

Research Report

Relating to the week ending 5 February 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 10 February 2021 and covers the week ending 5 February 2021. The overall response rate was 55 per cent and covered around a third of the total workforce.

Key findings

- Some 39 per cent of councils reported recruiting additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc) in the week ending 5 February 2021. In total 3,266 additional staff had been recruited in responding authorities: the median number of staff per authority was five and the mean was 45.
- Just under two-thirds of respondent councils (136 respondents) have recorded deaths in service since lockdown. A total of 593 deaths in service were reported by respondents since the start of lockdown (cause not specified).
- Thirty-four per cent of councils reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff. In total, responding authorities reported there were 9,227 staff furloughed in the week ending 5 February 2021, which was 1.7 per cent of the current workforce, and 48 per cent more than reported in the previous survey.
- The main reason given for furloughing staff was that the service had stopped (61 per cent) or that funding had stopped (37 per cent).
- Some 64 per cent of councils had redeployed staff. In total, in the responding authorities, there were 5,904 staff redeployed in the week ending 5 February 2021, which was one per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff redeployed was seven and the mean was 35.
- Nearly nine in ten councils (87 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable for work. In total, respondents reported there were 30,621 staff unavailable for work in the week ending 5 February 2021, six per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 60 and the mean was 167.

- Twenty-four per cent of staff were unavailable through 'self-isolation (other)' and 47 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: 20 per cent and 15 per cent of single tier and county councils, respectively, reported these services were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 33 per cent of single tier and county councils reported that adult social care services 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, 59 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. Ninety-eight per cent reported they had about the right amount of PPE or more than they need. Eighty-eight 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: 91 (46 per cent) said they were. Councils were subsequently asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations where they were experiencing difficulties: 100 per cent of county councils were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers.
- In district councils, 58 per cent of those that responded to the question said they were having problems recruiting planning officers and 50 per cent said they were having problems recruiting environmental health officers.
- Councils were asked to choose the five occupations or roles where recruitment difficulties were most acute. Again, all respondent county councils reported that they 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, 55 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: 41 per cent said they were likely recruit additional staff in response to COVID-19, 30 per cent said they were not likely to recruit additional staff at all and 26 per cent said they did not know.
- 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, 61 per cent said they were thinking of making no substantive changes within this financial year, and 54 per cent said they were not thinking it for 2021/22. Fifteen per cent of those

that answered this question said that they were thinking of reducing staff numbers overall in 2020/21, and 25 per cent said they were thinking to do this in 2021/22.

- Councils were asked to think about the COVID-19 vaccination and whether they thought that the staff who need the vaccine had received it or not: 49 per cent reported that all or most of the staff who need the vaccine had received 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 10 February 2021, the LGA's Research and Information Team sent an online survey to all heads of human resources, or their nominated contact, in England and Wales (a total of 361 councils). The survey was in the field for two weeks. A total of 199 councils responded, which is a response rate of 55 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	88	47
County	25	17	68
London borough	33	23	70
Metropolitan district	36	24	67
Unitary	57	35	61
Welsh unitary	22	12	55
All	361	199	55

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
Eastern	50	35	70
East Midlands	45	18	40
London	33	23	70
North East	12	10	83
North West	41	24	59
South East	70	27	39
South West	33	14	42
Wales	22	12	55
West Midlands	33	15	45
Yorkshire and Humber	22	21	95

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 5 February 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 545,910 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 111 councils that responded to the survey and had responsibility for schools, 25 (13 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 5 February 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 5 February 2021.

Of the councils that responded, 77 (39 per cent) reported recruiting additional staff. In total 3,266 additional staff were recruited from responding authorities during the week ending 5 February 2021. The median number of staff per council was five and the mean was 45.

Table 3: Has the council recruited additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc during week ending 5 February 2021)?

	Yes		No. of additional staff		
	No.	%	Total	Median	Mean
County	11	65	240	14	24
District	18	20	1591	3	94
London borough	13	57	715	7	23
Metropolitan borough	13	54	159	4	16
Unitary	16	46	128	5	11
Welsh unitary	6	50	433	10	9
English single tier	40	49	992	5	30
All councils	77	39	3266	5	45

Base: all respondents (199 councils – 17 counties, 88 districts, 23 London boroughs, 24 metropolitan borough, 35 English unitaries, 12 Welsh unitaries, 82 English single tier)

Current headcount as at 5 February 2021

The total headcount for those councils that responded had increased by 1.5 per cent since the 1 March 2020 and now stands at 553,948 on the 5 February 2021.

Table 4: Change in headcount from 1 March 2020 – 5 February 2021

	At 1 March	At 5 February	% change
County	112,536	115,605	2.7
District	46,949	48,744	3.8
London borough	73,488	75,758	3.1
Metropolitan borough	126,058	126,088	0.0
Unitary	111,259	111,388	0.1
Welsh unitary	75,620	76,365	1.0
English single tier	291,770	294,156	0.8
All councils	545,910	553,948	1.5

Base: all respondents (199 councils – 17 counties, 88 districts, 23 London boroughs, 24 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, 12 Welsh unitaries, 82 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 192 councils that answered this question, 136 (64 per cent) recorded deaths in service as of 5 February 2021, totalling 593 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?

	No. deaths	No. of councils recording one or more deaths
County	106	17
District	54	35
London borough	87	23
Metropolitan borough	148	22
Unitary	137	30
Welsh unitary	61	9
English single tier	352	75
All councils	593	136

Base: all respondents (192 councils – 17 counties, 86 districts, 23 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, 12 Welsh unitaries, 78 English single tier)

Furloughed staff

Councils were asked to provide details of staff that were furloughed in the week ending 5 February 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 66 (34 per cent) reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 9,227 staff furloughed in responding councils in the week ending 5 February, 1.7 per cent of their current workforce. This was 48 per cent more than reported in the previous survey. Of those councils that had furloughed staff, the median number was 87 and the mean was 140; 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	8	50	2,597	217	325
District	22	25	1,883	36	86
London borough	5	24	229	32	46
Metropolitan borough	9	39	820	87	91
Unitary	13	39	1,678	99	134
Welsh unitary	9	75	2,020	240	242
English single tier	27	35	2,727	87	101
All councils	66	34	9,227	87	140

Base: all respondents (192 councils – 16 counties, 87 districts, 21 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, 12 Welsh unitaries, 77 English single tier)

Reason staff were furloughed

The councils that had furloughed staff in the week ending 5 February 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason the member of staff had been furloughed, and 57 (86 per cent) were able to provide the reason or reasons.

In the week ending 5 February 2021, 61 per cent of staff were furloughed because 'Service has been stopped' and 37 per cent of staff were furloughed because the 'Funding has stopped'. The pattern varied across authority types: in Welsh unitaries, 99 per cent of staff were furloughed due to 'Service has been stopped'; while in counties, 88 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	88	0	0	12	0
District	17	2	0	81	0
London borough	39	8	0	54	0
Metropolitan borough	19	2	0	79	0
Unitary	28	1	0	68	3
Welsh unitary	0	1	0	99	0
English single tier	27	2	0	69	2
All councils	37	1	0	61	0

Base: respondents with furloughed staff (57 councils – six counties, 22 districts, five London boroughs, eight metropolitan boroughs, nine English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 22 English single tier)

Redeployed staff

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that had been redeployed in the week ending 5 February 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 106 (64 per cent) reported that they had redeployed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 5,904 staff redeployed by responding authorities in the week ending 5 February, one per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff redeployed was seven and the mean was 35.

Table 8: No. of staff redeployed (week ending 5 February)

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	10	77	1,094	35	84
District	39	49	853	0	11
London borough	13	68	925	15	49
Metropolitan borough	17	94	1,625	50	90
Unitary	18	72	880	20	35
Welsh unitary	9	82	527	0	48
English single tier	48	77	3,430	35	55
All councils	106	64	5,904	7	35

Base: all respondents (166 councils – 13 counties, 80 districts, 19 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, 11 Welsh unitaries, 62 English single tier)

Unavailable for work

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that were unavailable for work in the week ending 5 February 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 30,621 staff unavailable for work in responding authorities in the week ending 5 February, six per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 60 and the mean was 167.

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	16	100	7,446	275	465
District	63	78	2,381	13	29
London borough	20	95	3,866	104	184
Metropolitan borough	22	96	7,902	390	344
Unitary	28	90	6,130	121	198
Welsh unitary	11	100	2,896	227	263
English single tier	70	93	17,898	164	239
All councils	160	87	30,621	60	167

Base: all respondents (183 councils – 16 counties, 81 districts, 21 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 31 English unitaries, 11 Welsh unitaries, 74 English single tier)

Reason staff were unavailable for work

The 160 councils that reported they had one or more member of staff unavailable for work in the week ending 5 February 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason for them being unavailable, and 145 (91 per cent) were able to provide the reason.

In the week ending 5 February 2021, 47 per cent of staff were unavailable because of 'Non-COVID sickness' and 24 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?

	Non- COVID sickness	Confirmed/ Suspected COVID	Self- isolation (Track and trace)	Self- isolation (Other)	Caring for dependents/ at risk relative/som eone who is sick	Other reason
	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff
County	39	11	1	43	1	5
District	50	12	1	17	3	18
London borough	48	17	1	15	1	18
Metropolitan borough	50	10	3	19	0	17
Unitary	47	12	2	18	2	19
Welsh unitary	59	12	5	21	1	3
English single tier	48	12	2	18	1	18
All councils	47	12	2	24	1	14

Base: respondents with unavailable staff (145 councils – 12 counties, 60 districts, 18 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, eight Welsh unitaries, 65 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 20 and 15 per cent of councils with these services, respectively, reporting they were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 33 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 33 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, 59 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.

	Base	Operating normally	Operating with minor disruption	Operating with moderate disruption	Operating with severe disruption
	No. councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
Adult social care (directly employed)	101	29	32	33	7
Bereavement services	139	59	24	15	1
Children's services	103	38	33	26	3
Environment health	173	46	30	18	6
Household waste (doorstep collection)	150	66	23	9	2
Housing and homelessness services	172	62	23	14	2
Planning	184	64	24	11	1
Public health	100	43	22	20	15
Revenue and benefits	165	58	24	15	4
Schools	82	22	26	33	20
Trading standards	94	46	34	17	3
Overall council	192	41	41	18	1

Base: all respondents which run the relevant service (base varies by service).

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 181 (91 per cent of councils who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 98 per cent reported they had about the right amount of PPE or more than they needed; 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?

	More than we need	About what we need	Less than we need	We don't need it
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	12	88	0	0
District	4	93	0	3
London borough	14	82	5	0
Metropolitan borough	5	95	0	0
Unitary	9	91	0	0
Welsh unitary	8	92	0	0
English single tier	9	90	1	0
All councils	7	91	1	1

Base: all respondents (181 councils – 17 counties, 75 districts, 22 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, 12 Welsh unitaries, 77 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 189 (95 per cent of councils who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 88 per cent said all the staff that need testing can access it, and 11 per cent that most 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?

	All the staff that need testing can access it	Most of the staff that need testing can access it	Some of the staff that need testing can access it	None of the staff that need testing can access it	None of our staff need testing
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	65	29	0	0	6
District	93	5	0	0	2
London borough	81	19	0	0	0
Metropolitan borough	87	13	0	0	0
Unitary	89	11	0	0	0
Welsh unitary	100	0	0	0	0
English single tier	86	14	0	0	0
All councils	88	11	0	0	2

Base: all respondents (189 councils – 17 counties, 81 districts, 21 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, 12 Welsh unitaries, 79 English single tier)

Planning ahead

Recruitment difficulties

Councils were asked if they were experiencing significant difficulties recruiting for some occupations and roles: 91 (46 per cent) said they were. Those that had answered yes to this question were then asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations where they were experiencing difficulties. Table 14 shows 70 per cent of English single tier councils and 100 per cent of county councils were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers. In district councils, 58 per cent of those that responded to the question said they were having problems recruiting planning officers and 50 per cent said they were having problems recruiting environmental health 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. Again, all county councils said they had acute difficulties recruiting children's social workers. This can be seen in Table 15.

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. Forty-six per cent of councils who had acute difficulties recruiting children's social workers, said these were both difficulties recruiting generally, and in terms of recruiting the required expertise, experience or qualification.

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	17	23	14	9	0	14	13
Adult's social workers	86	0	62	36	48	33	48	55
Building control officers	0	21	15	0	22	33	14	17
Chartered surveyors	14	13	8	14	9	0	10	11
Children's social workers	100	0	62	79	70	33	70	75
Economic development officers	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Educational psychologists	57	0	38	14	26	0	26	23
Engineers	43	4	8	21	17	33	16	18
Environmental health officers	0	50	31	29	30	33	30	36
Health visitors	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Homelessness officers	0	13	0	0	4	0	2	5
ICT professionals	14	13	38	0	13	33	16	15
Legal professionals	50	29	38	36	4	0	22	27
Mental health social workers	57	0	38	14	17	33	22	22
Occupational therapists (adults')	50	0	38	14	22	0	24	28
Occupational therapists (children's)	29	0	31	7	17	0	18	19
Planning officers	29	58	23	7	9	0	12	26
Public health officers	21	0	8	21	22	0	18	13
Regulatory services officers	0	0	8	7	4	0	6	3
School nurses	7	0	0	0	4	0	2	3
Social care commissioners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	1
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	7	9	0	6	3
Trading standards officers	21	0	8	0	9	33	6	10
Youth workers	7	0	8	0	0	0	2	3
Other	14	4	15	21	9	0	14	11

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (91 councils – 14 counties, 25 districts, 113 London boroughs, 14 metropolitan boroughs, 23 English unitaries, three Welsh unitary, 50 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	0	14	0	15	9	0	15	8
Adult's social workers	57	0	58	31	41	33	51	45
Building control officers	0	19	0	0	9	33	15	10
Chartered surveyors	0	10	0	0	5	0	11	4
Children's social workers	100	0	58	85	68	33	74	75
Economic development officers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Educational psychologists	50	0	33	15	9	0	28	23
Engineers	21	5	0	15	14	33	17	12
Environmental health officers	0	57	17	31	14	33	32	31
Health visitors	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Homelessness officers	0	14	0	0	5	0	2	10
ICT professionals	7	10	17	0	9	33	17	9
Legal professionals	14	24	25	31	0	0	23	16
Mental health social workers	50	0	33	15	14	33	23	27
Occupational therapists (adults')	36	0	25	8	5	0	26	16
Occupational therapists (children's)	21	0	8	0	5	0	19	8
Planning officers	0	48	17	8	0	0	13	15
Public health officers	14	0	8	15	14	0	19	13
Regulatory services officers	0	0	0	0	5	0	6	1
School nurses	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Social care commissioners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	1
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Trading standards officers	0	0	8	0	9	33	6	0
Youth workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Other	7	5	8	8	9	0	15	7

Base: authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (85 councils – 14 counties, 21 districts, 12 London boroughs, 13 metropolitan boroughs, 22 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 47 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	% councils
Accountants	7	14	29	57	0	
Adult's social workers	29	38	21	38	3	
Building control officers	7	29	14	57	0	
Chartered surveyors	3	67	0	33	0	
Children's social workers	48	33	19	46	2	
Economic development officers	0	0	0	0	0	
Educational psychologists	15	33	27	40	0	
Engineers	10	40	20	40	0	
Environmental health officers	22	27	18	55	0	
Health visitors	1	0	100	0	0	
Homelessness officers	4	25	50	25	0	
ICT professionals	8	25	50	25	0	
Legal professionals	14	21	29	43	7	
Mental health social workers	17	24	18	59	0	
Occupational therapists (adults')	10	30	30	30	10	
Occupational therapists (children's)	5	40	40	20	0	
Regulatory services officers	13	31	31	31	8	
Planning officers	8	38	50	13	0	
Public health officers	1	0	0	100	0	
School nurses	1	0	100	0	0	
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	0	
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	0	0	
Trading standards officers	4	25	0	75	0	
Youth workers	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	6	50	33	17	0	

Base: respondents experiencing acute recruitments difficulties; bases vary depending on whether the respondent was experiencing acute recruitment difficulties for particular the role.

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 198 councils who responded to the question, 41 per cent said they were likely recruit additional staff in response to COVID-19, 30 per cent said they were not likely to recruit additional staff at all and 26 per cent said they did not know.

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	65	6	0	12	18
District	25	0	1	47	26
London borough	57	4	0	13	26
Metropolitan borough	58	0	0	13	29
Unitary	46	9	0	20	26
Welsh unitary	42	0	0	33	25
English single tier	52	5	0	16	27
All councils	41	3	1	30	26

Base: all respondents (198 councils – 17 counties, 87 districts, 23 London boroughs, 24 metropolitan boroughs, 35 unitary, 12 Welsh unitary, 82 English single tier)

Thinking about staffing

Out of the councils that answered this question 61 per cent said they were thinking of making no substantive changes within this financial year, and 54 per cent said they were not thinking it for 2021/22. Fifteen per cent of those that answered this question said that they were thinking of reducing staff numbers overall in 2020/21, and 25 per cent said they were thinking to do this in 2021/22. When thinking about increasing the use of apprenticeships, 28 per cent of councils said they were considering doing this in this financial year and 40 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?

	2020/21 (current financial year)	2021/22
	% councils	% councils
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	61	54
Recruiting more staff overall	5	3
Reducing staff numbers overall	15	25
Recruitment freeze	15	9
Recruiting more staff in specialist roles	12	10
Increasing use of contractors or agencies	4	1
Reducing use of contractors or agencies	24	31
Increasing apprenticeships	28	40
Decreasing apprenticeships	3	1

Base: all respondents (2020/21 (current financial year) = 168; 2021/22 = 158), excludes don't knows (2020/21 (current financial year) = 32; 2021/22 = 45).

Note: 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 whether they thought that the staff who need the vaccine have received it or not. A total of 198 councils answered the question, of which 49 per cent reported that all or most of the staff who needed the vaccine had received it. A further 22 per cent of councils said they didn't know; and three per cent said that none of their staff who need vaccinations had received them.

Within the 54 councils (27 per cent) who were able to provide a figure, a total of 35,347 staff had received the vaccine. Within the 31 councils (16 per cent) who were able to provide a figure, 1,030 staff had refused it.

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	31	44	0	0	25
District	13	30	11	2	6	39
London borough	17	22	35	0	0	26
Metropolitan borough	8	63	13	0	0	17
Unitary	6	49	31	0	0	14
Welsh unitary	42	42	8	0	0	8
English single tier	10	45	27	0	0	18
All councils	12	37	20	1	3	27

Base: all respondents (198 councils – 16 counties, 88 districts, 23 London boroughs, 24 metropolitan boroughs, 35 unitary, 12 Welsh unitary, 82 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.

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 5 February 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 5 February 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 5 February?

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 5 February	

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 5 February 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 5 February 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 5 February 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

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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