

## LGA/NARE: COVID-19 Workforce Update

Issue 25: 1<sup>st</sup> February to 12<sup>th</sup> February

The LGA is providing COVID-19 advice which can be accessed via our [home page](#) you will see a range of information explaining our work with government on the [COVID19 Hub](#).

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

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

### COVID General Update

[COVID-19 rates are continuing to fall in all regions of England, according to the latest weekly surveillance report from Public Health England](#). In the West Midlands, the rate of new cases stood at 237.6 per 100,000 people in the seven days to 7 February – the highest rate of any region, but down from 326.8 in the previous week. South West England recorded the lowest rate of 120.3, down from 176.5.

The COVID-19 reproduction number, or R value, has fallen below one for the first time since July and is now [estimated to be between 0.7 and 0.9 across the UK](#).

### COVID-19 deaths

[New figures from the Office for National Statistics also show that six out of 10 people who have died from COVID-19 are disabled with the risk of death three times greater for more severely disabled people](#). Every death from this dreadful virus is a tragedy and it is particularly harrowing to see that disabled people have been so disproportionately affected.

### Vaccinations

Latest figures show 14,542,318 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine have now been administered in the UK, this is an increase of 503,116 in the past 24 hours. A total of 14,012,224 people have received their first dose, with 530,094 also having received a second dose.

The LGA have [produced a briefing on the rationale behind the way people are currently being prioritized to receive COVID-19 vaccinations](#)

## Vaccinating social care workers

An [online National Booking Service for vaccinations is being made available for employers and eligible staff to book an appointment for the next two weeks](#). A separate [letter this week from Sir David and Emily Lawson, NHS Chief Commercial Officer](#) has asked councils to work with their Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that this ability for social care workers to self-refer themselves for a COVID-19 vaccine has been shared with all Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered domiciliary care providers and care homes, as well as those employed in non-CQC registered settings.

Some providers of registered and unregistered social care services have reported difficulties in identifying their local authority vaccination lead. To help, DHSC has created a consolidated list of all [public points of contact](#) that will be shared with providers. It has also produced a [toolkit listing all of the resources available](#) to help employers address any concerns that staff may have about having the vaccine.

## Test and trace Update

A total of 148,809 people tested positive for COVID-19 in England at least once in the week to 3 February, according to the [latest NHS Test and Trace figures](#). This is down 24 per cent on the previous week and the lowest number since the week to 9 December. Of the 149,317 people referred to the Test and Trace system in the week to 3 February, 87 per cent were reached and asked to provide details of recent close contacts. This is broadly the same as the week before.

## Workplace testing

The Government has [announced measures to increase workplace testing in sectors that are open during lockdown](#). The criteria for joining the workplace rapid testing programme will be widened from businesses with more than 250 employees, to businesses with more than 50 employees. The Government is working closely with organisations across different sectors where employees cannot work from home during lockdown, from transport networks to food manufacturers, to sign up to rapid testing programmes.

## Community-led testing practice case studies

[Rapid coronavirus tests are being offered to workers even if they do not have symptoms in more than 70 per cent of local authority areas in England, the Department for Health and Social Care has said](#). So far, 2.2 million lateral flow tests have been carried out under the scheme and detected 44,000 positive cases. Councils are working hard to ensure that testing is accessible and available to all in

their communities and the LGA are collating [community testing case studies in the COVID-19 hub](#) on our website.

## Health and Care white paper

The Government has published its [plans to reform health and care services](#) so they can work more closely together. The [Health and Care white paper](#) proposes allowing councils and NHS services to set up joint bodies in every part of England, to make decisions on how to better join-up health and care services.

## Skills for Care wellbeing offer

The attached document from Skills for Care sets out their recent wellbeing activity, providing an update on their support offer. The offer includes the recently launched workforce wellbeing resource finder to help the sector navigate and filter selected resources by category and audience to find trusted resources to support their own or others wellbeing.

## Adult Social Care Workforce Capacity Fund FAQs

On the back of three webinars aimed at helping to inform plans for utilising the Workforce Capacity Fund, the LGA and ADASS have produced an [FAQ in response to issues raised by the sector](#). The webinars shared learning from councils, providers and partners in how they have managed workforce capacity pressures during COVID and winter, focusing on supporting wellbeing, recruitment, redeployment, online training, use of technology and working with the voluntary and community sector. Councils are required to submit plans for the fund by today, Friday 12 February.

## Best practice: building and supporting the Adult Social Care workforce capacity

To help manage surges in demand for staff, providers and local authorities have taken action to build and support workforce capacity to help ensure that high-quality, safe and timely care is provided to everyone who needs it. In partnership with organisations across England, Skills for Care has developed case studies that look at different initiatives, covering: [staff banks \(provider and local authority\), redeployment of local authority staff, intensive support, recruitment campaigns, regional deployment hub](#).

## Wellbeing support: views of the ASC workforce

The LGA is gathering views from across the adult social care (ASC) workforce on the availability, quality and experience of engaging with advice and resources to support wellbeing. It takes just a few minutes to [submit your views](#), and responses will be used to inform the LGA-s ongoing work to support wellbeing and positive mental health among the workforce.

## Social Care Workforce Campaign Guidance

The government launched a [‘Call to Action’ – a campaign to encourage people to join the social care workforce](#). Guidance on this Covid related campaign is attached. It sets out local authorities’ role in ensuring that expressions of interest from the national website are shared through relevant local provider and recruitment networks. The campaign is intended to supplement the [Workforce Capacity Fund](#).

The campaign is called [Every Day is Different](#) encourages the public to find out more about a career in social care and search for jobs in your area.

## LGA Workforce Schools Briefing

Please find attached the latest LGA school’s workforce news - which provides the latest from DfE on testing, polling stations and ITT.

## LG Inform COVID-19 Workforce Survey

Key workforce data has provided councils with intelligence to effectively compare progress and plan locally, regionally and nationally. The LGA has been running a fortnightly [COVID-19 workforce survey](#) since May. You can view how your authority’s data has change over time in the [trend report](#).

## COVID-19: good council practice

The LGA have updated their website so that a wide range of resources focusing on [good council practice can be found in one new hub](#). The LGA will continue to build on this range of resources to help councils as they navigate the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.

## Final Local Government Finance Settlement

The final [Local Government Finance Settlement was debated](#) - and approved – by MPs in Parliament this week. The [LGA’s briefing on the funding pressures facing councils was referenced throughout the debate](#).

## Inspire People Professionals Academy

In order to address some of the capacity and capability workforce issues that have been presented by COVID-19, West Midlands Employers and the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development and the LGA have developed the [Inspire People Professionals Academy](#). It aims to help HR professionals navigate ongoing financial pressures, restructures and skills shortages. [The programme will take participants through eight modules spread over 12 weeks and the first cohort will begin next month](#). The deadline for applications is 15 February.

## Exit payments cap - HMT rule to disapply the regulations

The implementation of a £95,000 cap on public sector exit payments, including employer contributions to pension costs, came into effect on 4 November last year. After an extensive review of the cap, which we have repeatedly raised issues around, the Government has agreed that the cap may have unintended consequences. [The Treasury has today ruled that it will immediately disapply the regulations](#) and effectively scrap the cap. We will update our [guidance](#) next week to reflect the immediate consequence of this for councils.

## Celebrating International Woman's Day 11<sup>th</sup> March - Webinars

The Civil Service College is [hosting a series of webinars](#) and events as part of a week-long celebration of International Woman's Day. The LGA is keen to hear from councils who are making progress on addressing the gender pay gap or supporting women through their wider EDI programmes to share at these events. For more information to showcase your councils work please email [luann.donald@local.gov.uk](mailto:luann.donald@local.gov.uk)

## LGA Webinars

### [Vaccine webinar: Equalities](#)

Thursday 25 February, 10.30am – 12.00pm

This will provide an update on vaccination roll out, and the implications for local authorities in engaging with their communities, with a focus on equalities. It will explore the good work being carried out and what lessons can be learnt. The webinar will be chaired by Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, who will be joined by Kersten England, chief executive of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, and Joanne Yarwood, national immunisation programme manager at Public Health England.

### [Re-opening of schools: arrangements for March 2021](#)

Thursday 25 February 2021, 2.00pm – 3.30pm

This workshop will allow delegates to hear more about the Department for Education's plans for the full re-opening of schools after the latest national lockdown.

### [T Levels workshops](#)

A host of interactive webinars will be held throughout February and March to explore the opportunities new T-Levels present for councils to give young people quality early experience in the workplace and helping them to boost their career prospects. T Levels are a new two-year national qualification which offer young people a 45-day work placement.

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