

LG/NARE: COVID-19 Workforce Update Issue 28: 12^h March – 26th March 2021

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-19 case rates

COVID-19 case rates appear to be levelling off in some regions of England while Yorkshire and the Humber has recorded a slight rise, according to the [latest weekly surveillance report from Public Health England](#). Regions with rates broadly unchanged week-on-week include the East Midlands, eastern England, south-east England, and the West Midlands. All other regions have recorded a small week-on-week fall.

Vaccine hesitancy

Academic research published this week suggests high numbers of people refusing to take a COVID-19 vaccine could increase the mortality rate by up to eight times compared with ideal vaccination uptake when restrictions are relaxed. The [latest report by the Imperial College London COVID-19 response team](#) evaluates the potential impact of vaccine hesitancy on the control of the pandemic and suggests high vaccine hesitancy could prolong the need for non-pharmaceutical interventions, for example social distancing, to remain in place.

A [study by Public Health England estimates that around 6,100 deaths among those aged 70 and over have been averted due to the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) so far.

Vaccine roll-out podcast

[In the latest episode of the LGA's 'Forget What You Think You Know' podcast](#) series, Jim McManus, director of public health at Hertfordshire County Council, Julie Yates, lead consultant for screening and immunisation at Public Health England and Eleanor Kelly, chief executive of Southwark Council and national adviser on vaccinations, discuss the roll-out of the vaccination programme. They also cover vaccine hesitancy, health inequalities and how councils as local champions can address these issues.

Shielding Update

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people have been told they no longer need to shield from March 31. At the latest Shielding Stakeholder Engagement Forum, chaired by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) this week, the Government said it will remain operationally able to reintroduce shielding until the end of June, for example in the event of local outbreaks. MHCLG also recognised that many councils will be continuing to provide support or take some time to wind down their support to the CEV cohort. It is keen to discuss local transition plans with all councils and to identify and share good practice via their ongoing regional structures. These regional teams will gradually reduce activity and hand over their policy lead on practical support for those self-isolating to the Department of Health and Social Care in April.

Testing in care homes

The Department of Health and Social Care has published [guidance on how to access test kits and step-by-step guides on how to use Polymerase Chain Reaction \(PCR\) and rapid Lateral Flow Test \(LFT\) kits](#) for regular and outbreak testing of care home residents and staff. All Care Quality Commission-registered care homes can [apply for regular COVID-19 testing from NHS Test and Trace](#). If a care home has an outbreak and does not have enough stock to last until their next routine order, they can place an additional order by calling 119.

Easter Schools COVID-19 testing

The Department for Education (DfE) is asking councils to help communicate to schools, staff, parents and pupils the importance of continued testing at home for COVID-19 twice weekly throughout the Easter holidays and into the summer term and [report results as positive, negative or void](#). Tests will be needed to be done before returning to school or college for the summer term, either the night before, or morning of, the first day back, to find and isolate any positive cases.

The [DfE has also published guidance](#) on how staff in early years settings – such as school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools - can access regular rapid coronavirus testing.

LG Inform COVID-19 Workforce Survey now Monthly

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

Weather the Storm – Mental Health Support for front line workers

Throughout 2020, we've been in the same Covid-19 storm – if not the same boat. As lockdown eases it may still feel like a battle for frontline workers. As a free resource please share [Our Frontline](#) to remind employees they can access support online, by call or Text in addition to your existing support.

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.

80 new Temporary JobCentres created to support unemployed

The [Department for Work and Pensions has announced the creation of 80 new temporary Jobcentre Plus sites](#) to try and engage more people through face-to-face services to help them back to work. The LGA is liaising with DWP on the importance that services for the unemployed are joined up at a local level.

Adult Education Budget – Council Providers Update

Local authority adult and community learning provision is part grant funded by the Adult Education Budget (AEB) which is managed by mayoral combined authorities in devolved areas and by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the rest of England. The [Department for Education has announced a policy change](#) for AEB funding rules for the 2020/2021 academic year which will mean that any provider, including a local authority, which delivers less than the new threshold of 90 per cent of their annual AEB target will see their remaining allocations reclaimed by the ESFA.

As a result of the pandemic, DfE relaxed the amount it reclaimed from providers during the 2019/20 academic year, recognising that learner numbers reduced but costs remained. It is disappointing that this has not been carried over given ongoing difficulties and we will be discussing the implication of this change with DfE. If you are affected, please get in touch with jasbir.jhas@local.gov.uk

Local Government Apprentice of the Year - 22 April 2021

Do you have an apprentice who has what it takes to be crowned Local Government Apprentice of the Year 2021? Don't miss this exciting one-day event that will provide apprentices with the opportunity to learn, network and showcase their skills, expertise and initiative. [Booking is open now – don't miss out!](#)

NGDP deadline 31st March 2021

Councils have less than a week left to sign up to this year's [National Graduate Development Programme \(NGDP\) scheme](#). The NGDP offers councils a unique opportunity to grow their own local government leaders. NGDP graduates can offer councils a different perspective, innovative new ideas, and a diverse set of skills to the local government workforce. Applications close 31 March.

Access diverse talent in Planning professionals

Councils looking to diversify the skills and backgrounds of their Planning departments have a chance to share job vacancies with the participants on the [Return to Work - Planning programme at no cost](#). Individuals who have signed up to the programme have undertaken training provided by PAS. [Complete this survey about your current vacancies](#).

Promote your ICT vacancies for free through Return to Work

The Return to Work ICT programme has given people an opportunity to enhance their skills through [Socitm](#) and they are now ready to return to work, seeking roles within local government.

[Councils should complete this survey, to promote their vacancies to this talent pool for free.](#)

DfE Call for Action Supporting 2021 Graduates

The Department for Education (DfE) is working with the HE sector to develop a support pack for 2021 graduates, to signpost them to opportunities to build employability skills, gain work experience and specific job schemes. If you want to promote your council's opportunities via DfE's support pack then please contact claire.butler@education.gov.uk

Hybrid Working

The LGA have produced [an overview of some the key considerations](#) of developing a hybrid working organisation. To enable sharing practice and learning on Hybrid working the LGA have organised a series of round tables to register your interest in attending please click on the following link [Hybrid Working](#)

Local Government OD Network (NODN) Update

The NODN continues to grow with over 127 OD practitioners from councils across the UK. Using BaseCamp technology the network has an active hub with participants sharing learning and practice on the OD topics of the day. The network also has an active national buddy scheme with 25 partnerships set up to date. To join [email here](#).

PAY UPDATE

Teachers' Pay 2021 (England)

The national employers ([NEOST](#)) [written evidence to the STRB can be found on our one stop](#) page for all relevant documents. NEOST officers gave oral evidence in line with those documents on 22 March, ahead of the STRB submitting its pay recommendations to Government 'as soon as is practically possible in May'.

Chief Executives' pay 2021

The Association of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers ([ALACE](#)) has submitted a [pay claim for local authority chief executives that](#) seeks parity with any headline increase that might be agreed for the main bulk of local government staff covered by the '[Green Book](#)' NJC.

Craftworkers' pay 2021

The JNC unions, Unite and GMB, have lodged a [pay claim for 2021](#). The National Employers will respond in due course.

Exit cap information note for employers

The LGA have updated the Exit cap information note for employers to reflect the revocation of the exit cap regulations from 19 March 2021. You can find the information note and other guides for LGPS employers on the [Employer guides and documents](#) page of www.lgpsregs.org.

Workforce Webinars

[LGA T Levels workshops](#)

We are hosting [a series of interactive webinars throughout March/April to help you gain an understanding of T Levels](#) and what they can do for your council.

[Teachers' pensions webinar](#)

31 March 2021 | 10.30am – 12.30pm | Virtual Zoom Webinar

[LGA workforce annual employment law virtual conference](#)

22 April | 9.45am – 12.30pm | Virtual Zoom Webinar

[Teachers' early careers framework](#)

29 April 2021 | Virtual Zoom Webinar

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