

LGA/NARE: COVID-19 Workforce Update

Issue 24: 8th January to 29th January 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 General Update

The number of people infected with coronavirus is at the highest level recorded in England since May, according to [findings from the latest React Study from Imperial College London](#). Regional prevalence was highest in London at 2.83 per cent per 100,000 people, while in the South West it was 0.87 per cent. Prevalence increased nationally in all adult age groups and was highest in 18 to 24-year-olds at 2.44 per cent per 100,000 people, while prevalence in the over-65s is 0.93 per cent.

Figures out today show the [reproduction number \(R rate\) of coronavirus transmission across the UK is between 0.7 and 1.1](#). Last week, it was between 0.8 and 1. The growth rate, which estimates how quickly the number of infections is changing day by day, shows the number of new infections is broadly flat or shrinking by up to 5 per cent every day.

COVID-19 immunity

A [Public Health England \(PHE\) Siren study](#) found that antibodies from past COVID infection provides some immunity for at least five months, but people may still be able carry the virus and transmit it to others. The study suggests that people who contracted the disease in the first wave may now be vulnerable to catching it again. These results are a reminder of the need for us to continue to reinforce the stay at home message within our communities.

CEV Update

The Department for Health and Social Care has identified more people who are [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable](#) (CEV) to COVID-19 due to a combination of factors such as age, sex, ethnicity and the range of underlying health conditions or treatments in addition to specific clinical conditions as currently. Employers can check a shielding note on the [NHS link here](#). A shielding note is proof an employee is on the shielded patients list and cannot work.

NHS England: Social Care workers SOP for Vaccinations

NHS England has published the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for [vaccinations to frontline health and social care workers](#) identified as priority cohort two. Developed collaboratively between NHS, DHSC, LGA and ADASS, councils have the lead role in identifying and notifying social care workers eligible for vaccination, and for working with their local care providers and their NHS vaccination programme to ensure all eligible frontline care workers have been offered vaccination by mid-February. The SOP asks employers of social care workers to contact their local council with details of eligible employees so we can anticipate a significant step-up in pressure on councils as they work at pace to facilitate this next vital stage in the national vaccination programme. The SOP has been co-badged with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

NHSEI Letter on vaccination for frontline H&S care workers

NHSEI has circulated a [letter to frontline health and social care workers](#) encouraging them to help protect themselves and others by getting the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. NHSEI have clarified that staff do not have to have an NHS number or be registered with a GP.

DHSC Vaccination Update Communications Toolkit

The attached updated COVID-19 Q&A from Department of Health and Social Care includes further details on the vaccine delivery plan. New resources have been added to the [DHSC COVID-19 communications toolkit](#) and additional useful links are listed below:

- [Vaccine Delivery Plan](#)
- [Latest vaccination data](#)
- [Bristol University "Global experts urge everyone to talk about COVID-19 vaccines responsibly"](#)
- [Covid-19 PHE The Green Book](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine easy read leaflet](#)
- [National lockdown: stay at home easy read](#)

Further resources are available on PHE's [campaign resource centre](#).

ADASS/LGA Top Tips for social care workforce vaccination

ADASS/LGA have produced the [attached](#) top tips document for directors of adult social care to support the vaccine roll out to the frontline social care workforce.

Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) Claim Back Social Care

People who work in social care roles and have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) may be able to claim their money back from HM Government. Applicants must be working for at least 16 hours per week during that period, but this can be in more than one eligible job. Eligible applicants can now [apply online](#) and [find out more about the scheme](#).

Workforce Capacity Fund for Adult Social Care

Councils have received [a letter from Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\)](#) providing further details on the recently announced [£120 million Workforce Capacity Fund](#). This is a ringfenced adult social care grant for measures that provide additional staffing for adult social care providers, including those with whom the local authority does not have a contract, and maintain continuity of care. The letter calls on councils to use this funding to target providers with the most urgent staffing shortages. We have worked with DHSC on the [guidance to accompany the funding](#) which includes examples of strategies used by some local authorities and providers to supplement and strengthen adult social care workforce capacity.

It is expected that the Government will announce a national recruitment campaign alongside the funding. Further information should be released in the coming days.

ADASS / LGA Webinars: learning from local recruitment

Councils and partner organisations have been creative in taking new approaches to attract people to consider social care as a long-term career opportunity. Skills for Care, the Care Provider Alliance, ADASS and the LGA have been working with the sector to gather examples of these innovative solutions, which they will be sharing in 3 webinars from 14:00-15:00 on 2, 4, 5 Feb. To join, please register via CHIP@local.gov.uk.

Social workers stand ready for councils through Social Work Together

Registered social workers are available to rapidly respond to councils in need during COVID-19 – [apply to use the Social Work Together service today](#).

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](#).

School return

[It will not be possible for pupils to return to schools immediately after the February half-term, the Government has confirmed](#). If the target to vaccinate the first four priority groups by February 15 is met, the Prime Minister has said he hopes that the reopening of England's schools can begin from March 8. Boris Johnson has confirmed that children eligible for food parcels or vouchers will receive these until they return to school and said a further £300 million will be spent on tutoring as part of a programme of catch-up over the next financial year. Specific initiatives for summer schools will also be developed.

Schools Workforce Update

Department for Education (DfE) guidance for schools in England was published after the January 4 lockdown announcement: [Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools](#). The [LGA issued a round-up](#) to flag the key workforce issues. The DfE has also published [additional guidance for special schools, specialist post-16 providers, and alternative schools \(including hospital schools\)](#)

Teachers' pay 2021

The [School Teachers' Review Body \(STRB\) remit for 2021](#) was published on 15 December. We launched an online consultation of local authorities in December 2020 which closed on 18 January. The results will inform the national employers' response which will be published once approved by NEOST members and submitted to the STRB by noon on 10 February.

Skills for Jobs white paper

The Government has published its plans to reform post-16 education and training in England in its [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth white paper](#). The paper sets out how giving employers a greater say in the development of skills will ensure more have access to the skills needed for the economy to grow. Ministers are also proposing to overhaul the accountability system so that funding is better targeted at supporting high-quality education and training provision which is relevant to the labour market. Further education (FE) institutions, working together with their local councils, have a vital role to play in levelling up the country and local communities. [In the LGA's response](#), it was stressed it is also important for all parts of the FE system to work in partnership across a community, including with independent training providers and adult and community learning provision run by councils and others. If you have any views on this issue please email jasbir.jhas@local.gov.uk.

T Levels: appeal to councils to offer industry placements to young people from September 2021

The LGA are asking councils to provide one young person with a [T Level industry placement](#) from September 2021. This forms part of a [national programme](#) where you can attract talented young people and boost the long-term employability of local young people. It forms part of series of initiatives to help people into employment and skills development to aid economic recovery brought on by the pandemic. For information on other schemes (see below) as well as other [government incentives](#).

Traineeship Employer Incentives

Employers can now [apply for a £1,000 cash boost](#) to help them take on new trainees. [The scheme – available until July 31 - is designed to help support young people to gain the skills and experience they need](#) from the very start, helping them to get a job, an apprenticeship, or pursue further study.

Environmental Health Together: your first port of call for COVID-19 response

Councils and local authorities can [apply to bolster their front line services](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

The NGDP programme has recruited its biggest and most diverse cohort to date in 2020, with 149 graduate places around the country, of whom 28 per cent identified as BAME and of whom more than ever before felt able to disclose a disability. We have now received a record of over 7,400 applications for 2021 placements. If your council is interested in signing up and hosting graduates, please visit our [National Graduate Development Programme](#) page or email helen.reeves@local.gov.uk for an informal conversation.

LGA Webinar Supporting Front Line Staff 11th February

The webinar will explore the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of the local government workforce and in particular the social care staff. Participants will learn from examples about the crucial role line managers have had in supporting good mental health and what tools and campaigns are available to help all managers and their staff to stay emotionally well during COVID-19 and beyond.

[Delivering under pressure: supporting the wellbeing of frontline staff](#)
Thursday 11 February 2021, 2.00pm - 3.30pm

A wellbeing approach to managing musculoskeletal conditions

The LGA are working with the NHS Health Innovation Network (HIN) to offer a [wellbeing approach to supporting employees with joint pain advice during lockdown and beyond](#). HIN advise employers on what changes could be made in the workplace according to your employees' and your organisational needs.

Employers support for survivors of domestic abuse

An open letter from the Business Minister Paul Scully to employers on how they can [support survivors of domestic abuse](#).

EU Settlement Scheme

With less than six months to go before the EU Settlement Scheme's application deadline of 30 June 2021, European citizens are being urged to [apply now](#) to secure their rights in UK law. The [latest official statistics](#) show that up to 31 December 2020 there had been almost 4.9 million applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Celebrate your Public Health Heroes

UKPHR is inviting employers to nominate their very own 'Public Health Heroes' – those practitioners who have not only stepped up during the COVID-19 crisis, but whose ongoing contributions have helped make the UK a safer, healthier, better place to live. [Find out more or nominate a practitioner.](#)

LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

The LGA have developed a [Model Councillor Code of Conduct](#), in association with key partners and after [extensive consultation](#) with the sector, as part of our work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance.

Local elections

Constitution and Devolution Minister, Chloe Smith, confirmed that the Government still intends to [proceed with elections in May 2021](#), although this **decision will be kept under constant review** and based on robust evidence. If a decision to postpone the elections is made, it is key that this is made earlier rather than later. When the elections go ahead, Government will need to take steps to ensure that they can be held safely and that candidates can campaign safely. The LGA is continuing to make the argument that government will also need to meet any additional costs to councils of holding these elections in these extraordinary circumstances.

Latest Workforce Bulletins from the LGA

[LGA employment law update - advisory bulletin 686](#)

Equal Pay Material Factor Defence, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, further advice on £95K exit payment cap, new statutory rates for National Minimum Wage, Statutory Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Pay and Statutory Sick Pay from April 2021, update on Criminal Record Disclosure regime, consultation on reforming non-compete clauses in employment contracts, employment law timetable.

[FPS bulletin 40 – December 2020](#)

Our [final bulletin of 2020](#) contains updates on various matters of interest relating to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Joanne Livingstone reflects on her first months as Scheme Advisory Board chair in a year-end message to stakeholders.

LGPS bulletin 204 – December 2020

Our monthly bulletin updates employers and administering authorities on current issues affecting the LGPS. [Bulletin 204](#) contains important updates on the exit payment cap and wider exit payment reform.

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