

LG/NARE: COVID-19 Workforce Update Issue 32: Week Ending 2nd July 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 General Update

The national vaccination programme continues at an impressive rate, with almost 45 million people having received at least one dose of a vaccine now. We are beginning to see a real impact of this in the much-reduced number of hospitalisations and deaths as the Delta variant unfortunately continues to cause a rise in cases. To ensure protection remains over the winter, the NHS plans to offer a [booster vaccine to the most vulnerable people](#) from September, alongside the annual flu vaccination programme. This is likely to include all adults over 50 and anyone younger who qualifies for a flu jab. Following the guidance, [NHS England and NHS Improvement sent a system planning letter](#) to all local partners in the vaccine programme yesterday to set out next steps and support local planning. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) will provide final advice before September. [The LGA media response](#) to this announcement highlights the support from councils and their directors of public health in our collective national effort to end the pandemic.

COVID Local Support Grant

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Thérèse Coffey MP has [announced that the COVID Local Support Grant arrangements will be extended](#) for a final time, with a further investment of £160 million, to cover the period up to 30 September.. The LGA [welcomed this latest continuation of funding which will help councils to provide much-needed support to low income households](#) at risk of poverty and financial hardship.

PPE and heat stress

Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in warm environments increases the risk of heat stress, which occurs when the body is unable to cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature. Heat stress can cause heat exhaustion and can lead to heat stroke if the person is unable to cool down. To counter this, staff may require more frequent breaks and need to change PPE more frequently, which will of course increase demand on supplies. [Further information and actions are available on the Central Alerting System \(CAS\), run by the NHS and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.](#)

Applying behavioural insights to improve COVID vaccination uptake

If you are looking to use behavioural insights to help encourage local uptake of the vaccine, you may find a new LGA resource useful. Funded by the Government, it highlights ways to [apply behavioural insights to improve vaccination uptake](#) and includes case studies on targeting specific communities.

Long COVID

Over two million people in England are thought to have had one or more COVID-19 symptoms lasting at least 12 weeks. Around a fifth of those surveyed through the [REACT-2 studies](#), reported having had a COVID-19 symptom previously, with over a third reporting persistent symptoms lasting at least 12 weeks. Around a tenth of those with symptoms said they lasted at least 12 weeks and were severe. Findings from the study suggests prevalence of persistent symptoms, or long COVID, increases with age, with a 3.5 per cent increase in likelihood in each decade of life. It shows long COVID is higher among women, people who are overweight or obese, who smoke, live in deprived areas, or had been admitted to hospital.

Reminder of NJC Foreign travel employers' guidance

As we enter the summer months, I just wanted to remind you of guidance issued in June last year by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services which [provides advice about foreign travel and quarantine requirements and sets out the issues employers should think about when considering requests for annual leave](#). The relevant advice can be found from halfway down page two.

Mental health impacts webinar

As we begin to consider the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of our communities, the LGA and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) are hosting a joint webinar on [Grief not Grievance: supporting community recovery from the mental health impacts of COVID-19](#) on Monday 12 July from 3.00 - 4.30pm. You may also be interested in [the Centre for Mental Health's latest report on COVID-19 and the nation's mental health](#).

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.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Adult social care guidance

DHSC has [updated the guidance for adult social care providers on COVID-19 guidance and support](#). The update includes information on funding for social care, defining and reporting outbreaks, testing for recipients of social care, information for care staff, updated contact information for the National Supply Disruption Response (NSDR) and information on the capacity tracker.

Care home workers mandatory vaccinations

In response to its consultation on making vaccination a condition of deployment in care homes, the Government has laid [draft amended Regulations](#) under Section 162 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 before Parliament, with the intention these will be debated before the summer recess on 22 July. The draft Regulations include extending the vaccination requirement to all CQC-registered care homes accommodating people requiring nursing or personal care, and to everyone entering a care home, regardless of their role, unless they meet specified exemptions.

Assuming the draft regulations are voted through, there will be a 16-week grace period for staff to take up vaccination. Operational guidance to support implementation is planned, and the LGA being given an opportunity to comment as the drafting takes place. DHSC has also published [Stakeholder Questions and Answers](#) about the policy and its implementation. You can also read [the LGA response to the Government's original consultation on the proposals](#).

Burnout in social care staff

On 8th June the Health and Social Care Committee [published a report into workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care](#). The report highlights the recruitment and retention challenges in social care and recommends that adult social care gets its own people plan, which is something [the LGA called for in their written evidence](#). The report also reiterated the call for long-term reform of adult social care and said reducing the turnover rate in the adult social care workforce will require long term funding certainty. [The LGA media response](#), urged government to bring forward introducing a clear plan before the summer parliamentary recess.

£250 million for adult social care COVID support

The [Government announced that people in care homes or those being cared for at home will benefit from additional financial support](#) to continue to protect them from COVID-19 transmission. This new funding will be a continuation of [Infection Control and Testing Fund](#), which was due to expire at the end of the month and will now last until the end of September.

PAC report on adult social care market

[A Public Accounts Committee report on the adult social care market](#) has called for a comprehensive, cross-government reform plan for care and a national care workforce strategy. Social care has been on the frontline throughout the pandemic, supporting people of all ages to be safe and well, but still faces significant financial pressures despite helpful short-term support. The LGA's [media response](#), said social care deserves parity of esteem with the NHS and action is urgently needed for the care workforce including on pay, conditions, professionalisation, skills and training. The LGA has again stressed the need for a sustainable, long-term funding solution for social care and asked the government to bring forward its proposals, including a timetable for reform, as soon as possible and before the summer parliamentary recess.

Use Social Work Together to support recruitment for COVID-19

The LGA is encouraging councils to [use Social Work Together to recruit qualified and registered social workers](#). The service is free to all councils to quickly find the help they need to support their response to COVID-19. Please let us know of your experiences with this service [Contact us](#) here.

Integrated Care Systems (ICS) Design Framework

NHS England and NHS Improvement have published the [Integrated Care Systems \(ICS\) Design Framework](#), which is intended to support ICSs' progression and development and sets out some of the main ways NHS leaders and organisations will operate with their partners in ICSs from April 2022. Subject to legislation, which is expected to begin passage through Parliament before the end of summer, the framework will help ICSs and the organisations within them to put in place practical measures to prepare for their new functions. This document has been produced through close collaboration with the LGA, ICS leaders, NHS and voluntary sector organisations, as well as representatives of people who use services, professional and clinical leaders.

The LGA [response to the publication of the framework](#) said it is good to see this inclusive approach and that many of our concerns have been addressed. The LGA support the broad objectives of ICSs and hope this way of working will also be adopted by NHS leaders at regional and system level, in developing ICSs as a partnership of equals with local government and others to deliver more effective care and support for our populations.

EDUCATION

Testing arrangements for education settings

DfE has confirmed that regular asymptomatic rapid testing will stay in place until the end of the summer term. Regular testing will then pause over the summer, except for educational settings that remain open such as summer schools. DfE also confirmed that [education settings should use the online reordering platform](#) to place orders for further test kits to enable testing over the summer holidays. The guidance for children in year 6 and below remains the same and DfE will not be advising them to test. DfE will provide all schools and colleges with refreshed guidance, test kits, and PPE so that they can set up on-site Asymptomatic Test Sites (ATS) from the start of the autumn term for the first few tests to be undertaken at school, before reverting to at-home testing. Test kits for ATS will be delivered from Tuesday 29 June to Friday 23 July. More information is available on the [school and college document sharing platform](#).

Term-time only employees

The National Joint Council for local government services has issued an [update to Part 4.12 of the 'Green Book'](#). The guidance has been amended to reflect the one-day increase to the minimum annual leave entitlement, that affected some employees including those who work term-time only, which was agreed as part of the 2020 pay deal. The example calculations in the guidance have been amended accordingly.

Newly qualified teachers

In recognition of the challenges newly qualified teachers (NQTs) have experienced this year, all state funded schools that currently have an NQT who is due to complete their induction this summer, will have access to a one-off payment to fund an additional 5 per cent off timetable for the next academic year. This will give these teachers additional time to invest in their development. This time off timetable is not statutory but has been designed to be used flexibly so that as many new teachers as possible can benefit. The relevant GOV.UK [induction page](#) has been updated.

Virtual School Head role extension

The [DfE has announced that £16 million has been allocated for councils to extend the role of Virtual School Heads from September](#), meaning there will be a local champion for children with a social worker in every council in England. A further £3 million in funding has also been confirmed for a new pilot, launching in October, where Virtual School Heads will support looked-after children and care leavers in post-16 education.

WORKFORCE - PAY

Youth and community workers: pay 2021

The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Youth and Community Staff Side has submitted its [pay and conditions claim for 2021](#). The headline element is for a ten per cent increase. The National Employers will shortly undertake a consultation on this.

Teachers' pay 2021 (England)

We will consult councils on the draft School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPCD) and the School Teachers' Review Body's (STRB) report as soon as published. To help you prepare ahead of the end of the school year, we will have the Department for Education (DfE) pay lead give us the latest at the [13 July school staff pay webinar](#). All relevant information is available via our [National Employers Organisation for School Teachers \(NEOST\) webpage](#).

NJC for brigade managers

The National Joint Council for Brigade Managers is a UK-wide negotiating body for senior fire service managers such as chief fire officers, deputy chief fire officers and assistant chief fire officers. The [2021 pay award](#) for this group has now been agreed with an increase of 1.5 per cent to be applied to basic pay.

NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services covers uniformed employees ranging from firefighters to middle managers across the UK. The 2021 pay award for this group has now been agreed. An increase of 1.5 per cent will be applied to [all pay rates](#) and [continual professional development payments](#) with effect from 1 July.

The LG Inform gender pay gap report has been updated

Gender Pay Gap Statistics are published by the HM Government Gender Pay Gap Service from data supplied by employers with 250 or more employees. These published figures compare men and women's average pay across their organisation.

The [Gender Pay Gap Report](#) in LG Inform has been updated with the latest 2020/21 figures for just under half of English and Welsh local authorities. This report summarises the mean and median pay gaps in local authorities, as well as the distribution of staff across pay quartiles for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20. A second update with data for the remaining authorities will be available later this year. For more information, contact lginform@local.gov.uk

WORKFORCE – Other news

Diverse by Design – a new workforce equalities guide

The LGA have published a [new guide](#) which captures 15 key steps that we believe are fundamental in helping local government employers to embed fair values, systems and behaviours throughout their organisation. For more information please [contact us](#)

Workforce data update

The LGA has provided an updated [workforce data summary](#), available in an Infographic as well as accessible format. Updates include workforce numbers and some information on social care. The aim of which is provide quick access to the various sources of workforce data provided by the LGA.

Queen’s Platinum Jubilee – additional bank holiday (Fire)

Following Government decisions, an additional bank holiday on Friday 3 June 2022 to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was announced across the UK. There's no automatic entitlement to such a bank holiday on this day under the terms of the NJC Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book). At its most recent meeting, the [NJC agreed to award the bank holiday](#) and that it be treated in the same way as other such holidays in the Grey Book for leave and pay purposes.

T Level incentives and council support

The DfE have announced that employers will be able to [claim £1k for every T Level student they host on a high-quality industry placement](#), as part of a new incentive scheme. The LGA is providing [support to councils on T Level industry placement](#).

Diversity, inclusion and the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)

Read what steps the LGA has been taking to ensure the [NGDP programme has equality and inclusion at the heart of every step of the process](#) so that graduates are representative of the communities they serve, and that every candidate has a fair chance to succeed.

NGDP Green Network Careers Event

Local Government's national graduate development programme ([NGDP](#)) is hosting a careers event on Wednesday 7 July, 2-3:30pm with a panel of four fantastic speakers. The event has been opened up to invite any early years local government officers outside of the NGDP. You can find out more and [sign up to the event here](#).

Does your council's Disability Confident status needs renewing?

If yes, please take the following action:

- [renew Disability Confident Committed \(Level 1\)](#) on the Disability Confident website
- renew Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) and [Disability Confident Leader \(Level 3\)](#) on Gov.uk

For help, please contact the [Disability Confident Central Team](#).

Community health and wellbeing Level 3 apprenticeship standard: demand scoping for employers

To support the national uptake of the Community Health Wellbeing Apprenticeship, [Health Education England](#) will run a national procurement to source national/regional providers. They are asking [employers to indicate future workforce demand via this survey](#) by midday 19 July 2021.

Send any queries to sp-phskf@phe.gov.uk. A full occupation overview is available at [gov.uk](#).

Hybrid Working – Blog

Naomi Cooke, LGA's Head of Workforce, in her [new blog "Hybrid working will be the new normal . . . sort of"](#) reflects on lessons we can learn from ways of working that the national lockdowns imposed on us, but wonders if focusing on hybrid working as home v office means local government missing out on developing attractive workplaces and innovative services? Naomi reflects positively on what councils told us at our recent roundtable events on hybrid working.

Inclusive leadership

The Staff College has published ['Leading in colour: The fierce urgency of now'](#), an urgent call for action to tackle racism. It is a helpful resource for councillors, chief executives and other senior leaders to help them create fairer workplaces and communities where staff and residents of all ages can live, learn, work, grow up and grow older, free from discrimination, knowing their voices and views are heard, matter and shape local policies and practice.

OTHER NEWS

Funding for higher-level skills training

The Government has launched a new funding package to boost opportunities for adults to access Higher Technical Education. The funding aims to help colleges and universities invest in new equipment that will support technical studies, and increase training in sectors with skills shortages such as digital and construction. It will also create new, shorter courses for working adults in STEM subjects, to support people to study more flexibly. From September 2022, the Government will start to roll out newly approved Higher Technical Qualifications, starting with Digital, with Construction and Health and Science following in 2023 and a full suite of qualifications rolled out by 2025. Ahead of [the Second Reading of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#), the LGA continue to make the case that Government should accelerate and expand opportunities for people to train at every level, alongside investment in higher-technical qualifications, to deliver an inclusive recovery.

Public Sector pension costs

The Public Accounts Committee published a [report on public sector pensions](#). The report highlights the estimated cost of putting right the age discrimination that led to the McCloud judgment. We continue to liaise with the Government to press for an effective implementation of the judgment and await the publication of the Public Service Pensions Bill.

Council Data breaches

[New findings](#) have shown that more than 700 data breaches were reported by councils in 2020. The findings, which follow a freedom of information request, highlight the incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the importance of cyber security for councils across the UK. See the [National Cyber Security Centre's notice](#) for relevant guidance to help organisations to improve cyber security.

Financial Independent reviewers appointed to 8 councils

The Government has [appointed independent reviewers](#) to undertake assurance reviews into 8 councils, following decisions earlier this year to provide exceptional financial support to Bexley, Copeland, Eastbourne, Luton, Peterborough, Redcar & Cleveland, Slough and Wirral councils. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) will undertake the financial element and will provide a detailed assessment of each councils' financial position and management.

Behavioral Insights programme

The LGA's Behavioural Insights phase 7 programme is now open for expressions of interest. If you're keen to use your existing partnership of local councils to address a behavioural challenge in your community, please visit the LGAs [Behavioural Insights webpage](#) to find out how this year's programme could support you, and register your interest by 12pm **Monday 26 July** to be considered for this year's programme.

Economic growth roundtable

The LGA is organising a roundtable session on Tuesday 13 July between 10am and 12pm, to discuss how councils can engage with businesses to generate growth and investment. This will be an inclusive discussion for council officers working on economic growth and development to share learning and best practice. For further information please visit our [Economic Growth support hub](#) and to book a space please email productivity@local.gov.uk if you have any questions.

LGA Sector-led improvement report 2020/21

LGA published their sector-led improvement (SLI) annual report for 2020/21, which has [an overview and summary of highlights from the 2020/21 support programme](#).

EU Settlement Scheme

The Government has thanked councils for their contributions in helping raise awareness of the final few days of the deadline to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). A range of [information and resources](#) remains available for councils to support awareness and applications to the scheme, particularly for supporting groups and individuals that may not have been reached by national communications.

Government remains keen to work with councils to stress the wish to still receive applications and have asked councils to signpost updated [guidance](#) and [support](#) for those who were unable to apply [within the deadline](#) for a range of reasons. Councils will also wish to reassure those that have yet to have decisions on their applications or those that have yet to apply of their ongoing rights to access local services during the grace period.

Public sector exit payments update

MHCLG has today published [Local authority exit payments \(first estimates\), England, 2019-20 and 2020-21](#) (please note that the file on the site is in OpenDocument format which you may need to convert into Excel in order to see all the data).

This is the first summary of the exit payment data submitted by councils and will be followed by a further publication in the coming weeks. Initial indications are that the average exit payment made in 2020-21 across local authorities was £26,000.

Following the publication by HMT of guidance for central government departments in respect of special severance payments on 28 May, MHCLG have today issued a consultation, which runs until 13 August 2021, on guidance to cover similar payments in local authorities. Copies of the [guidance](#) and [cover letter](#) can be downloaded in PDF format from the [LGPS Advisory Board website](#).

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