

COVID-19 Workforce Survey

Research Report

Relating to the week ending 7 May 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 12 May 2021 and covers the week ending 7 May 2021. The overall response rate was 54 per cent and covered around a third of the total workforce.

Key findings

- Some 38 per cent of councils reported recruiting additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc) in the week ending 7 May 2021. In total 1,533 additional staff had been recruited in responding authorities: the median number of staff per authority was three and the mean was 18.
- Over two-thirds of responding councils (137 respondents) had recorded deaths in service since lockdown. A total of 715 deaths in service were reported by respondents since the start of lockdown (cause not specified).
- Twenty-four per cent of councils reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff. In total, responding authorities reported there were 3,938 staff furloughed in the week ending 7 May 2021, which was 0.8 per cent of the current workforce.
- The main reason given for furloughing staff was that the service had stopped (59 per cent) or that funding had stopped (33 per cent).
- Some 50 per cent of councils had redeployed staff. In total, in the responding authorities, there were 3,112 staff redeployed in the week ending 7 May 2021, which was one per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff redeployed was zero and the mean was 18.
- Just over four out of five councils (81 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable for work. In total, respondents reported there were 20,286 staff unavailable for work in the week ending 7 May 2021, four per cent of the current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 24 and the mean was 111.
- Sixty-eight per cent of staff were unavailable due to 'non-COVID sickness' and seven per cent were unavailable through 'self-isolation (other)'.

- When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the worst affected service was public health, with nine per cent of councils with this service reporting they were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 17 per cent reported that public health 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, 53 per cent of councils reported they were not operating normally.
- Councils were asked about the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing for staff. Ninety-nine per cent reported they had about the right amount of PPE or more than they need. Ninety-one 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: 167 (87 per cent) said they were. Councils were subsequently asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations where they were experiencing difficulties: 93 per cent of county councils experiencing problems were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers.
- In district councils, 49 per cent of those with recruitment difficulties said they were having problems recruiting planning officers and 38 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, 45 per cent said they had both difficulty recruiting generally and difficulty recruiting the required expertise, experience or qualification.
- 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 193 councils who responded to the question, 31 per cent said they were likely recruit additional staff in response to COVID-19, while 42 per cent said they were not likely to recruit additional staff at all. Twenty-four per cent of respondents said they did not know.
- Councils were asked to think about what they were considering doing with staffing in the current financial year. Twenty per cent of those that answered this question said that they were thinking of reducing staff numbers overall in 2021/22. Thirty-eight per cent of those that answered this question said they were thinking to increase apprenticeships 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: 62 per cent reported that all or most of the staff who need the vaccine had received it.
- Councils were also asked what they were currently considering about staff locations. Sixty-seven per cent said they were considering 'increasing flexible working options'; 66 per cent answered they were considering 'increasing home working'; and 35 per cent said they were considering 'changing models of service delivery'.

Introduction

Councils face significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, trying to support vulnerable people, their wider communities and businesses. It 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 through 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 compare progress effectively and plan locally, regionally and nationally, a workforce survey was sent out to all heads of human resources in England and Wales. Findings from the survey give councils a stronger position to build capacity in partnership with others; help the LGA and associations understand the workforce situation in authorities and give them the evidence needed to ask government for support and resources; and help shape government thinking as we emerge from lockdown.

Methodology

On 12 May 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 355 councils). The survey was in the field for two weeks. A total of 193 councils responded, which is a response rate of 54 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	181	89	49
County	24	17	71
London borough	33	20	61
Metropolitan district	36	23	64
Unitary	59	35	59
Welsh unitary	22	9	41
All	355	193	54

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
Eastern	50	38	76
East Midlands	39	18	46
London	33	20	61
North East	12	9	75
North West	41	23	56
South East	70	33	47
South West	33	12	36
Wales	22	9	41
West Midlands	33	11	33
Yorkshire and Humber	22	20	91

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 7 May 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 502,618 staff or approximately a third of the total local government workforce.

There are 174 single tier and county councils in England and Wales 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 104 councils that responded to the survey and had responsibility for schools, 22 (11 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 7 May 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 of 7 May 2021.

Of the councils that responded, 74 (38 per cent) reported recruiting additional staff. In total 1,533 additional staff were recruited by responding authorities during the week ending 7 May 2021. The median number of staff per council was three and the mean was 18.

Table 3: Has the council recruited additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc during week ending 7 May 2021)?

	Yes		No. of additional staff		
	No.	%	Total	Median	Mean
County	10	59	80	10	9
District	22	25	59	2	5
London borough	11	55	686	8	124
Metropolitan borough	13	57	163	2	3
Unitary	12	34	103	4	13
Welsh unitary	6	67	442	2	9
English single tier	32	41	897	4	35
All councils	74	38	1533	3	18

Base: all respondents (193 councils – 17 counties, 89 districts, 20 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan borough, 35 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 78 English single tier)

Current headcount as at 7 May 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 510,317 on the 7 May 2021.

Table 4: Change in headcount from 1 March 2020 – 7 May 2021

	At 1 March	At 7 May	% change
County	114,535	117,591	2.7
District	39,775	39,897	0.3
London borough	64,664	66,446	2.8
Metropolitan borough	118,060	120,885	2.4
Unitary	104,783	104,242	-0.5
Welsh unitary	60,801	61,256	0.7
English single tier	254,365	258,567	1.7
All councils	502,618	510,317	1.5

Base: all respondents (193 councils – 17 counties, 89 districts, 20 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan borough, 35 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 78 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). 137 recorded one or more deaths in service as of 7 May 2021, totalling 715 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	131	16
District	59	41
London borough	93	20
Metropolitan borough	202	22
Unitary	156	29
Welsh unitary	74	9
English single tier	407	71
All councils	715	137

Base: all respondents (137 councils – 16 counties, 41 districts, 20 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 71 English single tier)

Furloughed staff

Councils were asked to provide details of staff that were furloughed in the week ending 7 May 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 44 (24 per cent) reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 3,938 staff furloughed in responding councils in the week ending 7 May, 0.8 per cent of their current workforce. This was 39 per cent less than reported in the previous survey. Of those councils that had furloughed staff, the median number was 44 and the mean was 91; 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	6	38	1,266	197	211
District	11	13	803	46	68
London borough	5	28	102	17	22
Metropolitan borough	7	35	190	13	29
Unitary	9	27	716	44	65
Welsh unitary	6	67	861	99	163
English single tier	21	30	1,008	18	48
All councils	44	24	3,938	44	91

Base: all respondents (183 councils – 16 counties, 87 districts, 18 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 71 English single tier)

Reason staff were furloughed

The councils that had furloughed staff in the week ending 7 May 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason the member of staff had been furloughed, and 43 (98 per cent) were able to provide the reason or reasons.

In the week ending 7 May 2021, 59 per cent of staff were furloughed because 'Service has been stopped' and 33 per cent of staff were furloughed because the 'Funding has stopped'. The pattern varied across authority types: in Welsh unitaries, 98 per cent of staff were furloughed due to 'Service has been stopped'; while in counties, 64 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	64	0	0	18	18
District	8	0	0	92	0
London borough	66	0	0	34	0
Metropolitan borough	29	0	0	71	0
Unitary	39	0	0	57	4
Welsh unitary	0	2	0	98	0
English single tier	40	0	0	57	3
All councils	33	0	0	59	7

Base: respondents with furloughed staff (43 councils – six counties, 11 districts, five London boroughs, seven metropolitan boroughs, nine English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 21 English single tier)

Redeployed staff

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that had been redeployed in the week ending 7 May 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 81 (50 per cent) reported that they had redeployed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 3,112 staff redeployed by responding authorities in the week ending 7 May, one per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff redeployed was zero and the mean was 18.

Table 8: No. of staff redeployed (week ending 7 May)

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	8	57	426	6	30
District	26	32	406	0	6
London borough	9	60	449	18	26
Metropolitan borough	16	94	792	22	51
Unitary	14	54	576	4	22
Welsh unitary	8	89	463	0	51
English single tier	39	67	1,817	15	30
All councils	81	50	3,112	0	18

Base: all respondents (163 councils – 14 counties, 82 districts, 15 London boroughs, 17 metropolitan boroughs, 26 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 58 English single tier)

Unavailable for work

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that were unavailable for work in the week ending 7 May 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 149 (81 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable.

In total there were 20,286 staff unavailable for work in responding authorities in the week ending 7 May, four per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 24 and the mean was 111.

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	16	100	4,046	190	253
District	59	68	1,030	7	17
London borough	17	94	2,327	104	151
Metropolitan borough	21	95	5,002	255	232
Unitary	29	91	5,018	88	159
Welsh unitary	7	88	2,863	336	358
English single tier	67	93	12,347	126	175
All councils	149	81	20,286	24	111

Base: all respondents (183 councils – 16 counties, 87 districts, 18 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 32 English unitaries, eight Welsh unitaries, 72 English single tier)

Reason staff were unavailable for work

The 149 councils that reported they had one or more member of staff unavailable for work in the week ending 7 May 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason for them being unavailable, and 145 (97 per cent) were able to provide the reason.

In the week ending 7 May 2021, 68 per cent of staff were unavailable because of 'Non-COVID sickness' and seven 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. Four per cent of staff were unavailable due to 'Confirmed/suspected COVID'.

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/ someone who is sick	Other reason
	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff	% staff
County	70	4	1	15	1	8
District	71	6	0	1	0	22
London borough	60	7	0	3	0	29
Metropolitan borough	70	4	0	8	0	17
Unitary	63	4	1	7	0	26
Welsh unitary	78	4	1	5	1	11
English single tier	65	5	0	6	0	23
All councils	68	4	1	7	1	18

Base: respondents with unavailable staff (145 councils –15 counties, 59 districts, 17 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 28 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 64 English single tier)

Service disruption

When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the worst affected service was public health, with nine per cent of councils with this service reporting they were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 17 per cent reported that public health services were operating with moderate disruption. Also badly affected was adult social care (directly employed), with 25 per cent reporting moderate disruption; and schools, with 23 per cent 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, 53 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)	97	36	36	25	3
Bereavement services	131	64	27	8	0
Children's services	97	47	32	19	2
Environment health	168	49	32	15	4
Household waste (doorstep collection)	148	72	20	5	3
Housing and homelessness services	166	64	25	10	1
Planning	178	64	27	8	1
Public health	112	48	26	17	9
Revenue and benefits	161	61	24	12	2
Schools	77	43	30	23	4
Trading standards	93	51	33	13	3
Overall council	187	47	39	13	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 177 (91 per cent of councils who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 99 per cent reported they had about the right amount of PPE or more than they needed; whilst one per cent said they didn't need it.

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	7	93	0	0
District	12	85	0	2
London borough	12	88	0	0
Metropolitan borough	9	91	0	0
Unitary	30	70	0	0
Welsh unitary	0	100	0	0
English single tier	19	81	0	0
All councils	14	85	0	1

Base: all respondents (177 councils – 15 counties, 81 districts, 17 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 72 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 180 (93 per cent of councils who responded to the survey) answered the question, of which 91 per cent said all the staff that need testing can access it, and seven per cent that most of the staff that need testing can access it. London boroughs were slightly less likely to say that all staff can access testing, compared to other types of authority.

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	81	19	0	0	0
District	93	1	1	0	5
London borough	78	22	0	0	0
Metropolitan borough	91	9	0	0	0
Unitary	94	6	0	0	0
Welsh unitary	100	0	0	0	0
English single tier	89	11	0	0	0
All councils	91	7	1	0	2

Base: all respondents (180 councils – 16 counties, 80 districts, 18 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 75 English single tier)

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 193 councils answered the question, of which 62 per cent reported that all or most of the staff who needed the vaccine had received it. A further 26 per cent of councils said they didn't know; and four per cent of councils reported that none of their staff need the vaccine.

Within the 44 councils (23 per cent) who were able to provide a figure, a total of 64,579 staff had received the vaccine. Within the 28 councils (15 per cent) who were able to provide a figure, 1,982 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	24	53	6	0	0	18
District	25	44	13	0	3	17
London borough	5	45	5	0	0	45
Metropolitan borough	17	39	9	0	4	30
Unitary	26	23	9	0	9	34
Welsh unitary	22	33	0	0	11	44
English single tier	18	33	8	0	5	36
All councils	22	40	10	0	4	26

Base: all respondents (193 councils – 17 counties, 89 districts, 20 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 78 English single tier)

Planning ahead

Recruitment difficulties

Councils were asked if they were experiencing difficulties recruiting for some occupations and roles: 167 (87 per cent) said they were. Those that had answered yes to this question were then asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations to show where they were experiencing difficulties. Table 14 shows 77 per cent of English single tier councils and 93 per cent of county councils were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers. In district councils, 49 per cent of those that responded to the question said they were having problems recruiting planning officers and 38 per cent said they were having problems recruiting environmental health officers.

From the specialist occupations and roles to which they were having difficulties recruiting, councils were asked to choose the five where difficulties were 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. Almost all county councils (93 per cent) 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-five 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	22	20	6	4	0	8	12
Adult's social workers	71	0	50	31	48	67	43	50
Building control officers	7	24	20	0	15	67	11	19
Chartered surveyors	29	22	20	25	11	33	17	21
Children's social workers	93	0	60	69	89	67	77	80
Economic development officers	21	5	0	0	4	0	2	6
Educational psychologists	79	0	50	19	26	0	28	37
Engineers	50	3	20	19	19	33	19	18
Environmental health officers	0	38	20	44	22	33	28	32
Health visitors	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Homelessness officers	0	11	10	6	7	0	8	9
ICT professionals	21	3	40	6	19	33	19	14
Legal professionals	50	22	50	31	19	0	28	28
Mental health social workers	50	0	30	25	26	33	26	31
Occupational therapists (adults')	43	0	40	38	33	0	36	36
Occupational therapists (children's)	36	0	40	6	15	0	17	20
Planning officers	50	49	20	25	11	33	17	33
Public health officers	21	3	10	13	15	33	13	17
Regulatory services officers	7	0	20	19	7	0	13	7
School nurses	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	1
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	1
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	13	4	0	6	3
Trading standards officers	36	3	30	6	11	0	13	19
Youth workers	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other	14	8	20	13	7	0	11	10

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (107 councils – 14 counties, 37 districts, 10 London boroughs, 16 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, three Welsh unitary, 53 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	21	0	7	4	0	8	9
Adult's social workers	57	0	38	13	42	67	47	39
Building control officers	0	24	13	0	0	33	12	12
Chartered surveyors	0	24	13	7	8	0	18	12
Children's social workers	93	0	63	67	88	67	84	80
Economic development officers	0	3	0	0	4	0	2	2
Educational psychologists	50	0	38	20	15	0	31	26
Engineers	14	0	13	7	8	33	20	7
Environmental health officers	0	38	25	27	12	33	31	27
Health visitors	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Homelessness officers	0	12	13	7	8	0	8	12
ICT professionals	7	3	13	7	12	33	20	8
Legal professionals	21	24	25	33	12	0	31	21
Mental health social workers	29	0	38	13	23	33	29	24
Occupational therapists (adults')	21	0	0	13	15	0	39	14
Occupational therapists (children's)	21	0	0	0	8	0	18	8
Planning officers	7	41	13	20	4	33	18	21
Public health officers	14	0	0	7	12	33	14	11
Regulatory services officers	0	0	0	0	4	0	14	1
School nurses	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Social care commissioners	0	0	0	7	0	0	2	1
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	7	0	13	0	12	0	8	8
Trading standards officers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth workers	14	6	13	7	8	0	12	8
Other	0	21	0	7	4	0	8	9

Base: authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (100 councils – 14 counties, 34 districts, eight London boroughs, 15 metropolitan boroughs, 26 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 49 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
Accountants	0	-	-	-	-
Adult's social workers	26	38	23	38	0
Building control officers	10	50	10	40	0
Chartered surveyors	12	75	8	17	0
Children's social workers	53	36	17	45	2
Economic development officers	2	50	50	0	0
Educational psychologists	17	41	24	35	0
Engineers	7	29	29	43	0
Environmental health officers	23	35	4	57	4
Health visitors	1	0	0	100	0
Homelessness officers	8	50	0	38	13
ICT professionals	8	38	13	50	0
Legal professionals	21	19	29	48	5
Mental health social workers	16	19	25	50	6
Occupational therapists (adults')	9	22	22	56	0
Occupational therapists (children's)	5	20	60	20	0
Planning officers	21	33	10	48	10
Public health officers	7	57	29	14	0
Regulatory services officers	1	0	0	100	0
School nurses	0	-	-	-	-
Test and trace team leaders	1	0	100	0	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	-	-	-	-
Trading standards officers	5	0	0	100	0
Youth workers	0	-	-	-	-
Other	8	25	25	50	0

Base: respondents experiencing acute recruitment 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 193 councils who responded to the question, 31 per cent said they were likely recruit additional staff in response to COVID-19, while 42 per cent said they were not likely to recruit additional staff at all. Twenty-four per cent of respondents 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	41	6	0	29	24
District	22	0	2	52	24
London borough	45	0	0	15	40
Metropolitan borough	39	0	0	30	30
Unitary	37	11	0	40	11
Welsh unitary	11	0	0	67	22
English single tier	40	5	0	31	24
All councils	31	3	1	42	24

Base: all respondents (193 councils – 17 counties, 89 districts, 20 London boroughs, 23 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 78 English single tier)

Thinking about staffing

Councils were asked about what they were currently considering doing with staffing within this financial year (2021/22). A total of 166 (86 per cent) answered the question, of which 57 per cent said they were 'making no substantive changes'. Thirty-eight per cent said they were currently considering 'increasing apprenticeships', 29 per cent were considering 'reducing the use of contractors or agencies' and 20 per cent were considering 'reducing staff numbers overall'

Table 15: Thinking about staffing, is your council currently considering doing any of the following within this financial year?

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	English single tier	All councils
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
Recruiting more staff in specialist roles	20	5	13	16	18	0	16	11
Recruiting more staff overall	0	3	7	0	9	0	6	4
Reducing staff numbers overall	7	12	53	26	30	0	34	20
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	47	75	27	47	36	63	37	57
Increasing use of contractors or agencies	7	0	7	5	15	13	10	5
Reducing use of contractors or agencies	40	14	73	42	36	0	46	29
Increasing apprenticeships	67	24	80	47	36	25	49	38
Decreasing apprenticeships	0	3	0	0	3	0	1	2
Recruitment freeze	0	3	33	21	15	0	21	10

Base: all respondents (166 councils – 15 counties, 76 districts, 15 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, eight Welsh unitaries, 67 English single tier)

Staffing locations

Councils were also asked what they were currently considering about staff locations. A total of 193 answered the question, of which 67 per cent said they were considering 'increasing flexible working options', 66 per cent answered they were considering 'increasing home working' and 35 per cent said they were considering 'changing models of service delivery'.

Table 20: Is your council currently considering any of the following, or not, affecting staff locations?

	Changing models of service delivery	Increasing home working	Reducing the number of physical workplaces	Increasing flexible working options	None of these	Don't know
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	35	53	47	71	0	18
District	24	63	21	60	6	17
London borough	40	65	45	60	0	30
Metropolitan borough	43	61	61	70	0	26
Unitary	49	80	54	83	0	9
Welsh unitary	67	78	67	78	0	11
English single tier	45	71	54	73	0	19
All councils	35	66	39	67	3	18

Base: all respondents (193 councils – 17 counties, 89 districts, 20 London boroughs, 22 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, nine Welsh unitaries, 78 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 7 May 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 7 May 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 7 May?

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 7 May	

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 7 May 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 7 May 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 7 May 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 (2021/22)?

	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

Q12 Is your council currently considering any of the following, or not, affecting staff locations?

Reducing the number of physical workplaces

Increasing flexible working options

Changing models of service delivery

Increasing home working

None of these

Don't know

Q12.1 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 _____

Q12.2 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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