# COVID-19 Workforce Survey

## Research Report

Relating to the week ending 14 January 2022

To view more research from the Local Government Association Research and Information Team please visit: https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/research

# Contents

# Summary

## Background

This report is part of a series of surveys of all councils in England and Wales, collecting key workforce data on how the sector is responding to COVID-19. An online survey was emailed to heads of human resources, or a nominated contact, in councils from England and Wales. The data requested related 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 19 January 2022 and covers the week ending 14 January 2022. The overall response rate was 42 per cent and covered around a third of the total workforce.

## Key findings

- Of councils with unavailable staff, two-thirds (66 per cent) were unavailable because of non-COVID related sickness (or four per cent of all staff). Twenty-five per cent were unavailable because confirmed/suspected COVID (one per cent of all staff).
- There were 1,914 members of staff reported in the survey who were absent with symptoms that could be classified as long COVID. Just over nine out of 10 of these (93 per cent) had been off work for less than six months.
- When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the top three worst affected areas were adult social care (directly employed), with 74 per cent of councils reporting some level of disruption, schools with 70 per cent reporting some level of disruption, and children's services, 58 per cent of whom reported some level of disruption.
- When asked to assess the council overall, in terms of whether they had enough staff to run services normally or not, 53 per cent of councils reported they were not operating normally.
- Forty per cent of councils said there was a moderate risk that workforce capacity may negatively affect the council's ability to deliver services. Eleven per cent said there was a high risk.

# 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 and the National Association of Regional Employers (the collective body comprising all the regional employers organisations) 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. 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 19 January 2022, the LGA's Research and Information Team sent an online survey to all heads of human resources in England and Wales, or their nominated contact (a total of 355 councils). The survey was in the field for four weeks. A total of 150 councils responded, which is a response rate of 42 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.

| Table 1: Response rate by type of authority | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Type of authority | Total number | Number of responses | Response rate % |
| District | 181 | 69 | 38 |
| County | 24 | 14 | 58 |
| London borough | 33 | 13 | 39 |
| Metropolitan district | 36 | 18 | 50 |
| Unitary | 59 | 29 | 49 |
| Wales | 22 | 7 | 32 |
| All | 355 | 150 | 42 |

## Table 2: Response rate by region

| Region | Total number | Number of responses | Response rate % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eastern | 50 | 32 | 64 |
| East Midlands | 39 | 14 | 36 |
| London | 33 | 13 | 39 |
| North East | 12 | 8 | 67 |
| North West | 41 | 15 | 37 |
| South East | 70 | 24 | 34 |
| South West | 33 | 9 | 27 |
| Wales | 22 | 7 | 32 |
| West Midlands | 33 | 9 | 27 |
| Yorkshire and Humber | 22 | 19 | 86 |

**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 14 January 2022

This section contains analysis of the full results from the survey.

## Size of local authority workforce

The total headcount for those councils that responded summed to 414,192 on 14 January 2022. The headcount figure includes all permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual staff.

| Table 3: Headcount as at 14 January 2022 | Headcount |
|---|---|
| County | 105,762 |
| District | 31,727 |
| London borough | 39,002 |
| Metropolitan borough | 98,853 |
| Unitary | 86,522 |
| Wales | 52,326 |
| **All councils** | **414,192** |
| English single tier | 224,377 |

Base: all respondents (144 councils – 14 counties, 64 districts, 13 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 28 English unitaries, 59 English single tier, seven Welsh unitaries)

## Unavailable for work

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that were unavailable for work in the week ending 14 January 2022. Of councils that answered the question, 137 (95 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable.

In total there were 22,862 staff unavailable for work in responding authorities in the week ending 14 January, six per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 58 per authority and the mean was 159.

| Table 4: No. of staff unavailable for work (week ending 14 January 2022) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of councils with unavailable staff | % of councils with unavailable staff | Total no. of staff unavailable | Median no. unavailable | Mean no. unavailable |
| County | 13 | 100 | 4,642 | 291 | 357 |
| District | 61 | 94 | 1,648 | 16 | 25 |
| London borough | 12 | 92 | 1,729 | 123 | 133 |
| Metropolitan borough | 17 | 94 | 6,835 | 337 | 380 |
| Unitary | 27 | 96 | 5,309 | 143 | 190 |
| Wales | 7 | 100 | 2,699 | 322 | 386 |
| **All councils** | **137** | **95** | **22,862** | **58** | **159** |
| English single tier | 56 | 95 | 13,873 | 176 | 235 |

Base: all respondents (144 councils – 13 counties, 65 districts, 13 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 28 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 59 English single tier)

**Reason staff were unavailable for work**

The 146 councils that reported they had one or more members of staff unavailable for work in the week ending 14 January 2022 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason for them being unavailable, and 135 (99 per cent) were able to provide the reason.

In the week ending 14 January, two-thirds (66 per cent) of staff were unavailable because of 'Non-COVID sickness' (four per cent of all staff) and 25 per cent were unavailable due to 'Confirmed/suspected COVID' (one per cent of all staff). Reasons for 'Confirmed/suspected COVID' 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.

| Table 5: 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 | 65 | 21 | 1 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| District | 63 | 31 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| London borough | 67 | 27 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Metropolitan district | 62 | 26 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 3 |
| English unitary | 68 | 26 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Welsh unitary | 74 | 21 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| **All councils** | **66** | **25** | **1** | **8** | **0** | **1** |
| English single tier | 65 | 26 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 2 |

Base: respondents with unavailable staff (135 councils –13 counties, 61 districts, 11 London boroughs, 17 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 55 English single tier)

## Long COVID

Councils were asked how many of their staff had, in the previous week, been off work with symptoms that may be classified as 'long COVID', and 95 councils were able to answer this. In total 1,914 staff had been off work with long COVID. This is 0.8 per cent of all staff from councils responding to this question. The median number of staff off work with long COVID per council was one and the mean was 20.

| Table 6: How many staff have been off work with symptoms that may be classified as 'long COVID' (as at 14 January 2022)? | No. of councils with staff absent due to long COVID | % of councils with staff absent due to long COVID | Total no. of staff absent due to long COVID | Median no. absent | Mean no. absent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | 6 | 75 | 621 | 4 | 78 |
| District | 16 | 32 | 33 | 0 | 1 |
| London borough | 6 | 100 | 216 | 11 | 36 |
| Metropolitan district | 10 | 83 | 785 | 24 | 65 |
| English unitary | 11 | 73 | 84 | 2 | 6 |
| Welsh unitary | 4 | 100 | 175 | 44 | 44 |
| **All councils** | **53** | **63** | **1914** | **1** | **20** |
| English single tier | 27 | 82 | 1085 | 6 | 33 |

Base: all respondents (95 councils – eight counties, 50 districts, six London boroughs, 12 metropolitan boroughs, 15 English unitaries, four Welsh unitaries, 33 English single tier)

The majority of staff (93 per cent) who had been off work with long COVID had been absent for less than six months.

| Table 7: No. of staff off work with 'long COVID' | Staff off for less than six months | Staff off for at least six months but less than 12 months | Staff off for 12 months or more |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % staff | % staff | % staff |
| County | 99.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| District | 78.8 | 18.2 | 3.0 |
| London borough | 95.8 | 3.2 | 0.9 |
| Metropolitan district | 89.8 | 7.3 | 2.9 |
| English unitary | 77.4 | 15.5 | 7.1 |
| Welsh unitary | 93.1 | 1.7 | 5.1 |
| **All councils** | **93.1** | **4.5** | **2.4** |
| English single tier | 90.0 | 7.1 | 2.9 |

Base: all respondents (95 councils – eight counties, 50 districts, six London boroughs, 12 metropolitan boroughs, 15 English unitaries, four Welsh unitaries, 33 English single tier)

The small number of councils who had staff off with long COVID symptoms for six months or more were asked if they were being paid. Nearly nine out of 10 (88 per cent) paid these staff in line with the normal sick pay scheme.

| Table 8: No. of staff off work with 'long COVID' | They are paid in line with the normal sick pay scheme | They are paid by means of another discretionary payment | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| County | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| District | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| London borough | 75 | 25 | 0 |
| Metropolitan district | 88 | 13 | 0 |
| English unitary | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Welsh unitary | 33 | 33 | 33 |
| **All councils** | **88** | **9** | **3** |
| English single tier | 90 | 10 | 0 |

Base: respondents with staff off work with long COVID for at least six months (32 councils – three counties, six districts, four London boroughs, eight metropolitan boroughs, eight English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 20 English single tier)

## Service disruption

When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the worst affected areas were adult social care (directly employed), with 74 per cent of councils reporting some level of disruption, schools with 70 per cent reporting some level of disruption, children's services with 58 per cent reporting some disruption and public health with 52 per cent reporting disruption.

When asked to assess the council overall, in terms of whether they had enough staff to run services normally or not, 53 per cent of councils reported they were not operating normally.

| Table 9: 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) | 76 | 26 | 30 | 34 | 9 |
| Bereavement services | 102 | 71 | 23 | 7 | 0 |
| Children's services | 77 | 42 | 29 | 27 | 3 |
| Environment health | 128 | 67 | 20 | 12 | 2 |
| Highways and gritting | 71 | 61 | 31 | 8 | 0 |
| Household waste (doorstep collection) | 113 | 55 | 30 | 13 | 2 |
| Housing and homelessness services | 129 | 73 | 17 | 8 | 2 |
| Planning | 140 | 69 | 23 | 7 | 1 |
| Public health | 75 | 48 | 28 | 19 | 5 |
| Revenue and benefits | 127 | 73 | 19 | 7 | 1 |
| Schools | 63 | 30 | 30 | 38 | 2 |
| Trading standards | 72 | 60 | 28 | 11 | 1 |
| Overall council | 76 | 47 | 39 | 14 | 0 |

Base: all respondents which run the relevant service (base varies by service).

Councils were asked what contingencies/mitigations they had used in case of high rates of absences due to COVID-19. The most common mitigation was hiring

temporary or casual staff, which was being used in 50 per cent of councils. Four out of 10 councils (40 per cent) were also using staff overtime.

| Table 10: During the pandemic, what workforce contingencies/mitigations, if any, have been used already, are currently being used, or are planned in case of high rates of absence due to COVID-19 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Base | Used previously, but not currently | Used currently | Planned if needed | Don't know |
| | No. councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| Reducing services | 137 | 40 | 9 | 22 | 29 |
| Staff overtime | 141 | 16 | 40 | 26 | 18 |
| Redeployment (both formal and informal) | 144 | 44 | 26 | 17 | 13 |
| Hiring temporary/casual staff | 141 | 9 | 50 | 23 | 18 |
| Borrowing staff from partner organisations | 127 | 14 | 4 | 29 | 53 |

Base: all respondents (base varies by contingency).

Councils were asked what, if anything, they were currently considering for staffing within this financial year (2021/2022). A total of 146 (97 per cent) answered the question, of which 51 per cent said they were making no substantive changes and 42 per cent said they were increasing apprenticeships. Fifteen per cent were considering 'reducing staff numbers overall'. See Table 11.

| Table 11: 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 | All councils | English single tier |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers | 50 | 69 | 8 | 44 | 25 | 86 | **51** | 28 |
| Recruiting more staff overall | 21 | 4 | 8 | 11 | 18 | 14 | **10** | 14 |
| Reducing staff numbers overall | 7 | 7 | 42 | 28 | 21 | 0 | **15** | 28 |
| Recruitment freeze | 0 | 6 | 25 | 17 | 11 | 0 | **9** | 16 |
| Recruiting more staff in specialist roles | 79 | 9 | 25 | 56 | 32 | 29 | **28** | 38 |
| Increasing use of contractors or agencies | 21 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 7 | 0 | **6** | 5 |
| Reducing use of contractors or agencies | 21 | 7 | 42 | 67 | 32 | 14 | **24** | 45 |
| Increasing apprentice-ships | 57 | 22 | 50 | 83 | 57 | 29 | **42** | 64 |
| Decreasing apprentice-ships | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** | 0 |

Base: all respondents (146 councils – 14 counties, 67 districts, 12 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 28 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 58 English single tier)

## Workforce capacity

Councils were asked to consider, over the coming six months, to what extent the capacity of their council to continue to deliver services was a concern, either overall or within specific teams. Councils were asked to consider not only the impact of COVID-19 and workforce absences but also the ability to recruit and retain staff with the required levels of skills and experience. Three-fifths (60 per cent) said this was a moderate or large concern.

| Table 12: How big a concern or not is the capacity of your council to continue delivering services, either overall or within specific teams? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A large concern | A moderate concern | A small concern | No concern at all | Don't know |
| | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| County | 43 | 36 | 14 | 0 | 7 |
| District | 13 | 41 | 25 | 4 | 17 |
| London borough | 8 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 42 |
| Metropolitan borough | 33 | 39 | 22 | 0 | 6 |
| Unitary | 10 | 55 | 21 | 0 | 14 |
| Wales | 29 | 57 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| **All councils** | **18** | **42** | **21** | **3** | **15** |
| English single tier | 17 | 42 | 20 | 3 | 17 |

Base: all respondents (149 councils – 14 counties, 69 districts, 12 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 59 English single tier)

Asked about the risk that workforce capacity may negatively affect their council's ability to deliver services, 40 per cent of respondents said this was a moderate risk and 11 per cent said this was a high risk.

| Table 13: And how high or low is the risk that workforce capacity may negatively affect your council's ability to deliver services, either generally or specific services? Workforce capacity presents... | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | a high risk | a moderate risk | a low risk | no risk at all | don't know |
| | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| County | 14 | 57 | 21 | 0 | 7 |
| District | 9 | 33 | 35 | 3 | 20 |
| London borough | 0 | 8 | 42 | 8 | 42 |
| Metropolitan borough | 17 | 56 | 22 | 0 | 6 |
| Unitary | 10 | 48 | 28 | 0 | 14 |
| Wales | 29 | 43 | 29 | 0 | 0 |
| **All councils** | **11** | **40** | **31** | **2** | **17** |
| English single tier | 10 | 42 | 29 | 2 | 17 |

Base: all respondents (149 councils – 14 counties, 69 districts, 12 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 59 English single tier)

Councils were asked to select up to five areas where they felt the lack of workforce capacity presented the greatest risk. The service area seen most often as at the greatest risk was adult social care (directly employed), seen as one of the greatest risks by 73 per cent, followed by children's services at 69 per cent.

| Table 14: To which service areas, if any, does a lack of workforce capacity present the greatest risk? | County | District | London borough | Metropolitan borough | Unitary | Welsh unitary | All councils | English single tier |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| Adult social care (directly employed) | 92 | - | 80 | 88 | 88 | 100 | **73** | 87 |
| Bereavement services (cemeteries and crematoria) | - | 10 | 40 | 0 | 4 | 0 | **6** | 7 |
| Children's services | 85 | - | 80 | 75 | 92 | 86 | **69** | 85 |
| Environmental health | - | 49 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 29 | **23** | 9 |
| Highways and gritting | 23 | - | 0 | 19 | 8 | 0 | **10** | 11 |
| Household waste (doorstep collection) | - | 53 | 0 | 19 | 20 | 43 | **28** | 17 |
| Housing and homelessness services | - | 27 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | **13** | 7 |
| Planning | 8 | 61 | 0 | 19 | 32 | 14 | **29** | 24 |
| Public health | 31 | - | 20 | 25 | 16 | 0 | **16** | 20 |
| Revenue and benefits | - | 16 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | **7** | 4 |
| Schools | 23 | - | 20 | 19 | 16 | 43 | **17** | 17 |
| Trading standards | 23 | - | 0 | 6 | 0 | 14 | **6** | 2 |

Base: all respondents (150 councils – 14 counties, 69 districts, 13 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 60 English single tier)

## Heavy goods vehicle drivers

Councils were asked in some detail about the number and availability of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers in their councils.

Nearly two-thirds of councils (65 per cent) said they used HGV drivers to deliver services, whether directly employed or through outsourced contracts. The remainder of the survey questions reported in this section were only displayed to the 98 councils who reported that they used HGV drivers.

| Table 15: Does your council use HGV drivers to deliver any services, either employed directly or through out-sourced contracts? | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| County | 50 | 21 | 29 |
| District | 58 | 29 | 13 |
| London borough | 46 | 0 | 54 |
| Metropolitan borough | 89 | 6 | 6 |
| Unitary | 76 | 10 | 14 |
| Wales | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| **All councils** | **65** | **18** | **17** |
| English single tier | 73 | 7 | 20 |

Base: all respondents (150 councils – 14 counties, 69 districts, 13 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 60 English single tier)

There were in total 2,302 HGV drivers **directly employed** by councils who responded to this question. The median number of directly employed HGV drivers per council was 24 and the mean was 30.

| Table 16: How many directly employed HGV driver posts does your council have? | No. of HGV drivers | Median no. HGV | Mean no. HGV |
|---|---|---|---|
| County | 81 | 0 | 16 |
| District | 709 | 20 | 20 |
| London borough | 102 | 0 | 17 |
| Metropolitan borough | 424 | 49 | 47 |
| Unitary | 672 | 37 | 40 |
| Wales | 315 | 66 | 63 |
| **All councils** | **2,302** | **24** | **30** |
| English single tier | 1,197 | 38 | 37 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (77 councils – four counties, 35 districts, six London boroughs, nine metropolitan boroughs, 17 English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 32 English single tier)

Nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of directly employed HGV drivers provided waste services, 13 per cent provided gritting and related services and 13 per cent provided other services. Examples of other services provided by HGV drivers included street cleansing, neighbourhood services, highway services and parks services. Some councils stated that they had HGV drivers working across more than one service.

Please note that county councils do not provide household waste collection and so the numbers of HGV drivers employed in waste services is expected to be low or zero. Similarly, district councils do not provide gritting services.

| Table 17: How many directly employed HGV driver posts does your council have? | HGV drivers (directly employed) - waste services | HGV drivers (directly employed) - gritting and related services | HGV drivers (directly employed) - other |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % HGV drivers | % HGV drivers | % HGV drivers |
| County | 0 | 98 | 2 |
| District | 94 | 3 | 3 |
| London borough | 76 | 0 | 24 |
| Metropolitan borough | 70 | 18 | 12 |
| Unitary | 66 | 4 | 30 |
| Wales | 67 | 30 | 3 |
| **All councils** | **74** | **13** | **13** |
| English single tier | 68 | 9 | 23 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (77 councils – four counties, 35 districts, six London boroughs, nine metropolitan boroughs, 17 English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 32 English single tier)

There were in total 596 **outsourced** HGV drivers delivering services for councils who answered this set of questions. The median number of outsourced HGV drivers per council was zero (since the majority said there were no outsourced drivers) and the mean was eight.

| Table 18: How many outsourced HGV driver posts does your council have? | No. of HGV drivers | Median no. HGV | Mean no. HGV |
|---|---|---|---|
| County | 366 | 70 | 92 |
| District | 90 | 0 | 3 |
| London borough | 100 | 28 | 20 |
| Metropolitan borough | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| Unitary | 21 | 0 | 2 |
| Wales | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| **All councils** | **596** | **0** | **8** |
| English single tier | 128 | 0 | 5 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (71 councils – four counties, 35 districts, five London boroughs, eight metropolitan boroughs, 13 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 26 English single tier)

Just over three-fifths (61 per cent) of outsourced HGV drivers provided gritting and related services. The remainder provided waste services (35 per cent) and other services (three per cent).

| Table 19: How many outsourced HGV driver posts does your council have? | HGV drivers (directly employed) - waste services | HGV drivers (directly employed) - gritting and related services | HGV drivers (directly employed) - other |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % HGV drivers | % HGV drivers | % HGV drivers |
| County | 5 | 95 | 0 |
| District | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| London borough | 66 | 14 | 20 |
| Metropolitan borough | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Unitary | 95 | 5 | 0 |
| Wales | 83 | 17 | 0 |
| **All councils** | **35** | **61** | **3** |
| English single tier | 73 | 12 | 16 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (71 councils – four counties, 35 districts, five London boroughs, eight metropolitan boroughs, 13 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 26 English single tier)

Councils were asked about difficulties they may be having with the availability of HGV drivers (whether directly employed or outsourced). Nearly half of all councils (49 per cent) said they had vacant posts, and just over a third (34 per cent) said they were struggling to get agency staff to fill vacant HGV posts.

**Table 20: Is your council currently having any difficulties with the availability of HGV drivers (either directly employed or outsourced) or not?**

|  | We have vacant HGV posts | | | We are struggling to get agency staff to fill vacant HGV posts | | |
|  | Yes % | No % | Don't know % | Yes % | No % | Don't know % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | 43 | 43 | 14 | 14 | 57 | 29 |
| District | 55 | 33 | 13 | 39 | 39 | 22 |
| London borough | 33 | 50 | 17 | 33 | 50 | 17 |
| Metropolitan borough | 47 | 47 | 7 | 29 | 57 | 14 |
| Unitary | 52 | 33 | 14 | 32 | 45 | 23 |
| Wales | 29 | 57 | 14 | 50 | 17 | 33 |
| **All councils** | **49** | **39** | **13** | **34** | **44** | **22** |
| English single tier | 48 | 40 | 12 | 31 | 50 | 19 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (91 councils – seven counties,36 districts, six London boroughs, 14 metropolitan boroughs, 22 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 42 English single tier)

Councils were asked whether they paid market supplements to HGV drivers in waste services and gritting and related services. Just under a fifth (18 per cent) said they paid market supplements for HGV drivers in waste services, while only four per cent paid market supplements for drivers in gritting and related services.

**Table 21: Does your authority pay market supplements for any of the following HGV posts?**

|  | Waste services | | | Gritting and related services | | |
|  | Yes % | No % | Don't know % | Yes % | No % | Don't know % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | 14 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 86 | 14 |
| District | 26 | 59 | 15 | 0 | 28 | 72 |
| London borough | 50 | 33 | 17 | 33 | 33 | 33 |
| Metropolitan borough | 0 | 80 | 20 | 0 | 80 | 20 |
| Unitary | 14 | 64 | 23 | 9 | 59 | 32 |
| Wales | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 86 | 14 |
| **All councils** | **18** | **60** | **22** | **4** | **53** | **43** |
| English single tier | 14 | 65 | 21 | 9 | 63 | 28 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (96 councils – seven counties, 39 districts, six London boroughs, 15 metropolitan boroughs, 22 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 43 English single tier)

When asked what disruption they were experiencing because of HGV driver difficulties, 47 per cent of councils said waste services were operating normally and 44 per cent were not operating normally. In terms of gritting and related services, 71 per cent were operating normally.

| Table 22: What disruption, if any, are you currently experiencing to the following services, specifically due to HGV driver difficulties? | Waste services | Gritting and related | Other |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| Operating normally | 47 | 71 | 55 |
| Minor disruption | 30 | 7 | 5 |
| Moderate disruption | 13 | 4 | 5 |
| Severe disruption | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Don't know | 9 | 16 | 35 |
| Bases | 87 | 56 | 20 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (bases displayed in table above)

Councils were asked what contingency arrangements they were using to minimise disruption to **waste** services caused by a lack of HGV drivers. The most common mitigation planned was to use a pool of ex-HGV drivers, which 47 per cent said was planned if needed. Also common was reducing services, which 35 per cent had planned if needed, and a further 22 per cent had used. Nearly a quarter of councils (23 per cent) had used overtime to mitigate disruption.

| Table 23: Which, if any, contingency arrangements have you used or do you have planned to minimise the disruption to services caused by a lack of HGV drivers for <u>waste</u>? | Base | Used | Planned if needed | Neither used nor planned | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| Training staff internally | 87 | 14 | 13 | 25 | 48 |
| A pool of ex-HGV drivers | 81 | 9 | 47 | 37 | 7 |
| Reducing services | 77 | 22 | 35 | 26 | 17 |
| Overtime | 88 | 23 | 3 | 22 | 52 |
| Agency staff | 90 | 13 | 4 | 20 | 62 |
| Other | 36 | 6 | 3 | 69 | 22 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (bases vary by contingency).

Councils were asked what contingency arrangements they were using to minimise disruption to **gritting** services caused by a lack of HGV drivers. The most common mitigation stated was overtime, which had been used by just over a third (36 per cent), followed by training staff internally (31 per cent) and using agency staff (26 per cent).

**Table 24: Which, if any, contingency arrangements have you used or do you have planned to minimise the disruption to services caused by a lack of HGV drivers for gritting?**

|  | Base | Used | Planned if needed | Neither used nor planned | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | No. councils | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| Training staff internally | 65 | 31 | 11 | 14 | 45 |
| A pool of ex-HGV drivers | 60 | 3 | 5 | 42 | 50 |
| Reducing services | 61 | 2 | 15 | 36 | 48 |
| Overtime | 69 | 36 | 14 | 10 | 39 |
| Agency staff | 68 | 26 | 18 | 15 | 41 |
| Other | 31 | 16 | 6 | 6 | 71 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (bases vary by contingency).

The majority of councils (61 per cent) anticipated the availability of drivers would remain about the same in the coming month, however nearly a fifth (20 per cent) were uncertain, saying they don't know.

**Table 25: In your opinion, do you anticipate the availability of HGV drivers to your authority will improve, worsen or remain the same in the coming month?**

|  | Improve signif-icantly | Improve slightly | Remain about the same | Worsen slightly | Worsen signif-icantly | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | 0 | 17 | 50 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| District | 0 | 10 | 58 | 13 | 0 | 20 |
| London borough | 0 | 50 | 17 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| Metropolitan borough | 7 | 0 | 73 | 7 | 0 | 13 |
| Unitary | 0 | 0 | 64 | 5 | 0 | 32 |
| Wales | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **All councils** | **1** | **8** | **61** | **9** | **0** | **20** |
| English single tier | 2 | 7 | 60 | 7 | 0 | 23 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (96 councils – six counties, 40 districts, six London boroughs, 15 metropolitan boroughs, 22 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 43 English single tier)

Councils were asked which, if any, of a list of actions by central government would alleviate HGV driver shortages for their council. Forty-one per cent of councils felt allowing renewal of the certificate of professional competence (CPC) at no extra cost to drivers would help alleviate HGV driver shortages, while 12 per cent felt temporarily allowing HGV drivers to drive without a CPC would help. Examples of other actions suggested by councils were:

- training incentives
- increase testing capacity for drivers
- lifting some Brexit restrictions
- pay-related actions.

| Table 26: Finally, which, if any, of the following actions by central government do you think would help alleviate HGV driver shortages for your authority? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Temporarily allow HGV drivers to drive without a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) | Allow renewal of CPC at no cost to HGV drivers | Other | No shortages currently |
| | % councils | % councils | % councils | % councils |
| County | 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 |
| District | 10 | 45 | 13 | 39 |
| London borough | 20 | 20 | 0 | 60 |
| Metropolitan borough | 15 | 38 | 15 | 38 |
| Unitary | 13 | 44 | 0 | 56 |
| Wales | 17 | 50 | 17 | 33 |
| **All councils** | **12** | **41** | **12** | **45** |
| English single tier | 15 | 38 | 6 | 50 |

Base: respondents who used HGV drivers (93 councils – six counties, 38 districts, six London boroughs, 14 metropolitan boroughs, 22 English unitaries, seven Welsh unitaries, 42 English single

## Annex A: Questionnaire

# COVID - 19 Workforce Collection

Q2 How many staff did you have on 14 January 2022?

*Please enter a whole number without a comma or decimal place.  Please include all staff including temporary, casual, full-time and fixed term.*

| | Number of staff (headcount) |
|---|---|
| Headcount of staff on 14 January 2022 (including temporary/casual staff) | |

Q3 How many staff, if any, are currently (as at 14 January 2022) unavailable for work?

*Please enter the headcount. If none, please enter zero. If you do not know please leave bank.* **For staff unavailable for work please only include staff who are off sick (non-COVID and COVID), or unavailable due to self-isolation.** *Please* **do not** *include staff who are on annual leave, maternity/paternity leave and other non-sickness or COVID-19-related leave.*

|  | Number of staff (headcount) |
|---|---|
| Number of staff unavailable for work |  |

Q4 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 14 January 2022.

If none please enter "0". If you do not know please leave bank.

*Self-isolating (other) 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.  **For staff unavailable for work please only include staff who are off sick (non-COVID and COVID), or unavailable due to self-isolation.**

Please do not include staff who are on annual leave, maternity/paternity leave and other non-sickness or COVID-19-related leave.

| | Number of staff (Headcount) |
| --- | --- |
| Total staff unavailable | |
| Non-COVID sicknesses | |
| Confirmed / Suspected COVID | |
| Self- isolation (contacted by track and trace) | |
| Self-isolation (other - see above) | |
| Caring for dependants/at-risk relative/someone who is sick | |

Other (please enter below)

Q4.2 How many staff have been off work with symptoms that may be classified as 'long COVID' (as at 14 January 2022)?

(See https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/)

*If you don't know please write DK*

- Number of staff off for less than 6 months (headcount)
  _____

- Number of staff off work for between 6 months but less than 12 months (headcount) _____
- Number of staff off work for 12 months or more (headcount)
  _____

---

Q4.3 For those absent with symptoms of long COVID for six months or more, how are they being paid?

- They are paid in line with the normal sick pay scheme
- They are paid by means of another discretionary payment
- Don't know

Q5 Please select the status of the services below to show if there are <u>enough of the right staff</u> 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 | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Highways and gritting | • | • | • | • | • | • |

Q6 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 During the pandemic, what workforce contingencies/mitigations, if any, have been used already, are currently being used, or are planned in case of high rates of absence due to COVID-19?

| | Used previously, but not currently | Used currently | Planned if needed | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reducing services (stopping/reducing non-statutory services) | • | • | • | • |
| Staff overtime | • | • | • | • |
| Redeployment (both formal and informal) | • | • | • | • |
| Hiring temporary/casual staff | • | • | • | • |
| Borrowing staff from partner organisations | • | • | • | • |
| Other (please specify) | • | • | • | • |

Q8 Thinking about staffing, is your council <u>currently</u> considering doing any of the following this financial year?

*Please tick all that apply*

❍ Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers
❍ Recruiting more staff overall
❍ Reducing staff numbers overall
❍ Recruitment freeze
❍ Recruiting more staff in specialist roles
❍ Increasing use of contractors or agencies
❍ Reducing use of contractors or agencies
❍ Increasing apprenticeships
❍ Decreasing apprenticeships

❍ ⊗Don't know

**Workforce capacity**

The following questions ask about workforce capacity. In answering them, please consider not only the **impact of COVID-19 and workforce absences**, but also **the ability to recruit and retain staff** with the required levels of skills and experience.

Q9 Thinking longer term about your council's workforce in the coming six months, how big a concern or not is the capacity of your council to continue delivering services, either overall or within specific teams?

*Please consider not only the impact of COVID-19 and workforce absences, but also the ability to recruit and retain staff with the required levels of skills and experience.*

Workforce capacity is...

- a large concern
- a moderate concern
- a small concern
- no concern at all
- don't know

Q10 And how high or low is the risk that workforce capacity may negatively affect your council's ability to deliver services, either generally or specific services?

Workforce capacity presents...

- a high risk
- a moderate risk
- a low risk
- no risk at all
- don't know

Q11 To which service areas, if any, does a lack of workforce capacity present <u>the greatest risk</u>?

*Please select up to five service areas.*

○ 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
○ Highways and gritting

Q12 Do you have any other comments or views about the issue of workforce capacity, either short- or long-term, which you would like to share with us?

*Optional. Please write in.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

HGV
**Heavy goods vehicle drivers**

This section asks in some detail about the number and availability of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers in your council.

Q13 Does your council use HGV drivers to deliver any services, either employed directly or through out-sourced contracts?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q14 How many <u>directly employed</u> HGV driver posts does your council have?

*Please write in using full-time equivalent (FTE).  If none, please enter a zero.  If don't know, please enter 'DK'.*

- Waste service _____
- Gritting and related services
  _____
- Other _____

---

Q15 For which 'other' services do you have <u>directly employed </u>HGV drivers?

*Please write in*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

---

Q16 How many <u>outsourced</u> HGV driver posts does your council have?

*Please write in using full-time equivalent (FTE).  If none, please enter a zero.  If don't know, please enter 'DK'.*

- Waste service _____
- Gritting and related services
  _____
- Other _____

Q17 For which 'other' services do you have <u>outsourced</u> HGV drivers?

*Please write in*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q18 Is your council currently having any difficulties with the availability of HGV drivers (either directly employed or outsourced) or not?

|  | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| We have vacant HGV posts | • | • | • |
| We are struggling to get agency staff to fill vacant HGV posts | • | • | • |

Q19 Does your authority pay market supplements for any of the following HGV posts?

| | Yes | No | Don't know/not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|
| Waste | • | • | • |
| Gritting and related services | • | • | • |
| Other (please specify) | • | • | • |

Q21 What disruption, if any, are you currently experiencing to the following services, specifically due to HGV driver difficulties?

| | Operating normally | Minor disruption | Moderate disruption | Severe disruption | Don't know | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Waste | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Gritting and related services | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Other (please specify) | • | • | • | • | • | • |

Q22 Which, if any, contingency arrangements have you used or do you have planned in order to minimise the disruption to services caused by a lack of HGV drivers for **waste**?

| | Used | Planned if needed | Neither used nor planned | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Training staff internally | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| A pool of ex-HGV drivers | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Reducing services | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Overtime | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Agency staff | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Other (please specify) | ● | ● | ● | ● |

Q23 Which, if any, contingency arrangements have you used or do you have planned in order to minimise the disruption to services caused by a lack of HGV drivers for **gritting**?

| | Used | Planned if needed | Neither used nor planned | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Training staff internally | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| A pool of ex-HGV drivers | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Reducing services | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Overtime | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Agency staff | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Other (please specify) | ● | ● | ● | ● |

Q24 In your opinion, do you anticipate the availability of HGV drivers to your authority will improve, worsen or remain the same in the coming month?

- Improve significantly
- Improve slightly
- Remain about the same
- Worsen slightly
- Worsen significantly
- Don't know

Q25 Why do you say that?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q26 Has your council experienced any delays or blockages caused by national/central processes for HGV drivers or not?

|  | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Delays in drivers receiving test certificates | • | • | • |
| Delays in medical clearances for drivers | • | • | • |
| Other | • | • | • |

Q28 Finally, which, if any, of the following actions by central government do you think would help alleviate HGV driver shortages for your authority?

❍ Temporarily allow HGV drivers to drive without a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC)
❍ Allow renewal of CPC at no cost to HGV drivers
❍ Other _____

❍ ⊗ No shortages currently

QDEM 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 _____

Q2ND Please provide details of a secondary contact who we can email any notifications and reports which they might find useful.

- Name _____
- Job title _____
- Email Address _____

QOutro
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