COVID-19 Workforce Survey

Research Report

Relating to the week ending 9 July 2021

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Contents

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 was 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 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 9 June 2021 and covers the week ending 9 July 2021. The overall response rate was 52 per cent and covered around a third of the total workforce.

Key findings

- Of those councils with at least one member of staff unavailable, a little over two-fifths (42 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff off sick with 'long COVID'.
- Councils were asked, to the best of their knowledge, how many staff had refused the COVID-19 vaccine. The majority of councils did not know this information. Fourteen per cent said fewer than one in 20 staff working in high risk areas had refused. Six per cent said one in 20 of public facing staff had refused; and nine per cent said one in 20 of all staff had refused.
- Councils were also asked what they were currently considering about staff working practices. Eighty-seven per cent said they were considering 'increasing hybrid working'.
- Twenty-two per cent of councils reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff. In total, responding authorities reported there were 2,175 staff furloughed in the week ending 9 July 2021. This is 0.5 per cent of their current workforce – the same proportion reported last.
- Councils were asked if they were experiencing significant difficulties recruiting for some posts or not: 115 (63 per cent) said they were. Councils were subsequently asked to choose from a list of specialist occupations where they were experiencing difficulties: 90 per cent of councils with children's social care responsibilities and had reported recruitment difficulties had difficulties recruiting children's social workers.

Additional findings

- Some 39 per cent of councils reported recruiting additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc) in the week ending 9 July 2021. In total 1,918 additional staff had been recruited in responding authorities.

- Just over four out of five councils (85 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable for work. In total, respondents reported there were 21,882 staff unavailable for work in the week ending 9 July 2021, five per cent of the current workforce.

- When asked whether individual services had enough staff to run them normally or not, the worst affected service was public health, with six per cent of councils with this service reporting they were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 20 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, 57 per cent of councils reported they were not operating normally.

- In In district councils, 57 per cent of those with recruitment difficulties said they were having problems recruiting planning officers and 45 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. Almost 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, 56 per cent said they had difficulty both recruiting generally and 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 183 councils who responded to the question, 29 per cent said they were likely recruit additional staff in response to COVID-19.

- Councils were asked to think about what they were considering doing with staffing in the current financial year. Twenty-four per cent of those that answered this question said that they were thinking of reducing staff numbers overall in 2021/22. Forty-six per cent of those that answered this question said they were thinking of increasing apprenticeships in 2021/22.

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 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 9 June 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 183 councils responded, which is a response rate of 52 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	87	48
County	24	17	71
London borough	33	19	58
Metropolitan district	36	19	53
Unitary	59	35	59
Welsh unitary	22	6	27
All	355	183	52

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	19	58
North East	12	8	67
North West	41	22	54
South East	70	25	36
South West	33	16	48
Wales	22	6	27
West Midlands	33	13	39
Yorkshire and Humber	22	18	82

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 9 July 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 466,778 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 96 councils that responded to the survey and had responsibility for schools, 15 (eight 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 9 July 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 9 July 2021.

Of the councils that responded, 72 (39 per cent) reported recruiting additional staff. In total 1,910 additional staff were recruited by responding authorities during the week ending 9 July 2021. The median number of staff per council was five and the mean was 31.

Table 3: Has the council recruited additional staff (of any type including casual, agency, contingent, etc during week ending 9 July 2021)?

	Yes		No. of additional staff		
	No.	%	Total	Median	Mean
County	11	65	100	4	10
District	22	25	690	2	34
London borough	12	63	811	16	122
Metropolitan borough	11	58	168	3	5
Unitary	13	37	114	6	14
Welsh unitary	4	50	35	5	9
English single tier	34	47	1,035	7	40
All councils	72	39	1,918	5	31

Base: all respondents (183 councils – 17 counties, 87 districts, 19 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 73 English single tier)

Current headcount as at 9 July 2021

The total headcount for those councils that responded had increased by 0.9 per cent since 1 March 2020 and stood at 471,020 on 9 July 2021.

Table 4: Change in headcount from 1 March 2020 – 9 July 2021

	At 1 March	At 9 July	% change
County	114,281	116,377	1.8
District	40,122	39,999	-0.3
London borough	62,883	64,619	2.8
Metropolitan borough	92,669	93,217	0.6
Unitary	111,480	111,382	-0.1
Welsh unitary	45,343	45,426	0.2
English single tier	253,331	255,110	0.7
All councils	466,778	471,020	0.9

Base: all respondents (183 councils – 17 counties, 87 districts, 19 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 73 English single tier)

Furloughed staff

Councils were asked to provide details of staff that were furloughed in the week ending 9 July 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 38 (22 per cent) reported that they had furloughed at least one member of staff.

In total there were 2,151 staff furloughed in responding councils in the week ending 9 July, 0.5 per cent of their current workforce, this is the proportion of the workforce reported last month. Of those councils that had furloughed staff, the median number was 26 and the mean was 153; but this varied considerably across different types of authority.

Table 5: No. of staff furloughed (week ending 9 July)					
				Of those councils with furloughed staff	
	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	6	38	777	102	130
District	12	14	532	31	44
London borough	3	18	28	7	9
Metropolitan borough	4	24	32	7	8
Unitary	9	30	189	26	65
Welsh unitary	4	67	593	1	1
English single tier	16	25	249	17	44
All councils	38	22	2,151	26	153

Base: all respondents (172 councils – 16 counties, 86 districts, 17 London boroughs, 17 metropolitan boroughs, 30 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 64 English single tier)

Unavailable for work

Councils were asked to indicate the number of staff that were unavailable for work in the week ending 9 July 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 143 (85 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable.

In total there were 21,882 staff unavailable for work in responding authorities in the week ending 9 July, five per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 61 and the mean was 153.

Table 6: No. of staff unavailable for work (week ending 9 July)					
	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	16	100	5,285	257	330
District	62	76	1,191	18	19
London borough	17	94	2,365	105	133
Metropolitan borough	15	88	4,931	366	323
Unitary	28	97	5,426	138	250
Welsh unitary	5	83	2,684	571	571
English single tier	60	94	12,722	156	223
All councils	143	85	21,882	61	153

Base: all respondents (168 councils – 16 counties, 82 districts, 18 London boroughs, 17 metropolitan boroughs, 29 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 64 English single tier)

Those councils that had staff unavailable were asked how many had been unable to work for more than six months as a result of what has been termed 'long COVID'[1]. Of the 102 councils that answered the question, 43 (42 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff off work with long COVID. When considered as a proportion of all authorities, that was 12 per cent of councils which reported at least one member of staff off sick with 'long COVID'. In total there were 285 staff unavailable due to being off with long COVID. The median number per authority was three and the mean was seven.

In the United Kingdom it is estimated that 945,000 people living in private households (1.46% of the population) were experiencing self-reported "long COVID" symptoms as of 4 July 2021. Of those, 380,000 (40.2%) first had (or suspected they had) COVID-19 at least a year previously.[2]

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[1] Respondents were directed to the following link in order to help them define what was meant by 'long COVID': https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/)

[2] Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest insights - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Table 7: No. of staff unavailable for work due to 'long COVID' (week ending 9 July)					
	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	11	85	40	1	4
District	4	8	7	2	2
London borough	7	78	155	3	22
Metropolitan borough	8	89	32	3	4
Unitary	9	53	19	2	4
Welsh unitary	4	80	32	7	7
English single tier	24	69	206	3	9
All councils	43	42	285	3	7

Base: respondents with unavailable staff (102 councils –13 counties, 49 districts, nine London boroughs, nine metropolitan boroughs, 17 English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 35 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 six per cent of councils with this service reporting they were operating with severe disruption due to staffing numbers. A further 20 per cent reported that public health services were operating with moderate disruption. Also badly affected was adult social care (directly employed), with 23 per cent reporting moderate disruption; and schools, with 24 per cent operating with moderate disruption.

When asked to assess the council overall, in terms of whether they had enough staff to run services normally or not, 57 per cent of councils reported they were not operating normally.

Table 8: 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)	93	35	38	23	4
Bereavement services	122	69	25	7	0
Children's services	91	42	36	21	1
Environment health	155	50	32	13	5
Household waste (doorstep collection)	137	54	29	14	3
Housing and homelessness services	155	66	25	8	1
Planning	165	65	25	10	0
Public health	108	49	24	20	6
Revenue and benefits	148	68	23	9	1
Schools	68	44	29	24	3
Trading standards	86	55	33	10	2
Overall council	177	43	42	14	1

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

COVID-19 vaccines

Councils were asked to think about the COVID-19 vaccination and to tell us, to the best of their knowledge, approximately how many directly employed staff who had been offered the COVID-19 vaccine had refused it. They were asked to think about three groups: all staff working in high risk areas (adults' and children's care homes and domiciliary care), all public facing staff and all staff. The majority of councils answered that they did not know, or that no data was gathered, for any of those groups.

Out of the 171 that answered the question for all staff working in high risk areas, 14 per cent reported fewer than five per cent had refused. This varied by type of authority: counties were most likely to say that a few staff (fewer than five per cent) had refused (29 per cent) and a further 12 per cent reported between five and 20 per cent of their staff had refused. Also, nearly a fifth (24 per cent) of English unitaries said a few staff had refused, and 11 per cent of London boroughs reported between five and 20 per cent of their staff had refused. See table 9.

Out of the 174 councils that answered the question with reference to all public facing staff, six per cent answered that a few staff refused. In Welsh unitaries 17 per cent answered that a few staff had refused. Sixteen per cent of London boroughs also said as few staff had refused. See table 10.

Table 11 shows, out of the 178 councils that answered the question regarding all staff, nine per cent of them said a few staff (fewer than five per cent) refused. Seventeen per cent of Welsh unitaries said a few staff had refused.

Table 9: To the best of your knowledge can you tell us approximately how many directly employed staff that have been offered the COVID-19 vaccine have refused: for all staff working high risk areas (for example, adults' and children's' care homes and domiciliary care)						
	Many staff refused (more than 20 per cent, or one in five staff)	Some staff refused (between 5 and 20 per cent)	Few staff refused (fewer than 5 per cent, or 1 in 20 staff)	No staff refused	Don't know	No data gathered
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	0	12	29	0	35	24
District	0	1	8	6	32	53
London borough	5	11	5	5	63	11
Metropolitan borough	0	6	18	0	53	24
Unitary	0	6	24	3	36	30
Welsh unitary	0	0	17	0	33	50
English single tier	1	7	17	3	48	23
All councils	1	5	14	4	39	38

Base: all respondents (171 councils – 17 counties, 79 districts, 19 London boroughs, 17 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 69 English single tier)

Table 10: To the best of your knowledge can you tell us approximately how many directly employed staff that have been offered the COVID-19 vaccine have refused: for all public facing staff						
	Many staff refused (more than 20 per cent, or one in five staff)	Some staff refused (between 5 and 20 per cent)	Few staff refused (fewer than 5 per cent, or 1 in 20 staff)	No staff refused	Don't know	No data gathered
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	0	0	13	0	63	25
District	0	0	1	4	37	59
London borough	0	0	16	0	63	21
Metropolitan borough	0	6	6	0	67	22
Unitary	0	0	9	0	45	45
Welsh unitary	0	0	17	0	33	50
English single tier	0	1	10	0	56	33
All councils	0	1	6	2	47	45

Base: all respondents (174 councils – 16 counties, 82 districts, 19 London boroughs, 18 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 70 English single tier)

Table 11: To the best of your knowledge can you tell us approximately how many directly employed staff that have been offered the COVID-19 vaccine have refused: for all staff					
	Many staff refused (more than 20 per cent, or one in five staff)	**Some staff refused (between 5 and 20 per cent)**	**Few staff refused (fewer than 5 per cent, or 1 in 20 staff)**	**No staff refused**	**Don't know**
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
County	0	0	13	0	63
District	0	0	6	2	36
London borough	0	11	11	0	63
Metropolitan borough	0	5	11	0	68
Unitary	0	0	12	0	42
Welsh unitary	0	0	17	0	33
English single tier	0	4	11	0	55
All councils	0	2	9	1	46

Base: all respondents (178 councils – 16 counties, 85 districts, 19 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 71 English single tier)

Planning ahead

Recruitment difficulties

Councils were asked if they were experiencing difficulties recruiting for some occupations and roles: 115 (63 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 12 shows that, of councils with children's social care responsibilities and that had reported recruitment difficulties, 90 per cent were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers.

In district councils, 57 per cent of those with recruitment difficulties said they were having problems recruiting planning officers and 45 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. More than nine out of 10 county councils (93 per cent) that had recruitment problems said they had acute difficulties recruiting children's social workers; and 88 per cent of English single tier authorities reported the same. This can be seen in Table 13.

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. Fifty-six 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 12: 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	15	22	13	12	0	14	13
Adult's social workers	67	0	78	47	46	100	52	57
Building control officers	0	21	22	7	8	0	10	15
Chartered surveyors	20	21	22	27	15	0	20	20
Children's social workers	93	0	78	87	92	100	88	90
Economic development officers	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Educational psychologists	67	0	67	20	15	33	26	35
Engineers	27	0	22	47	15	0	26	15
Environmental health officers	0	45	33	47	31	33	36	40
Health visitors	13	0	11	0	0	0	2	4
Homelessness officers	0	17	11	7	4	0	6	11
ICT professionals	27	13	44	13	15	33	20	18
Legal professionals	40	19	44	40	27	0	34	28
Mental health social workers	47	0	44	27	23	100	28	35
Occupational therapists (adults')	47	0	44	27	23	0	28	31
Occupational therapists (children's)	40	0	44	0	15	0	16	21
Planning officers	40	57	22	20	19	0	20	37
Public health officers	27	2	11	7	31	0	20	22
Regulatory services officers	0	2	11	7	4	0	6	3
School nurses	7	0	0	0	4	0	2	3
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trading standards officers	0	0	0	7	4	0	4	2
Youth workers	27	0	33	20	8	0	16	18
Other	7	0	0	0	0	33	0	3

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (115 councils – 15 counties, 47 districts, nine London boroughs, 15 metropolitan boroughs, 26 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 50 English single tier)

Table 13: 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	14	0	13	12	0	14	10
Adult's social workers	47	0	56	47	35	67	52	44
Building control officers	0	18	0	0	0	0	10	8
Chartered surveyors	0	20	11	7	8	0	20	12
Children's social workers	93	0	67	80	88	67	88	84
Economic development officers	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Educational psychologists	33	0	44	13	4	33	26	19
Engineers	0	0	11	13	8	0	26	4
Environmental health officers	0	41	22	27	19	33	36	31
Health visitors	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Homelessness officers	0	11	11	7	4	0	6	8
ICT professionals	7	14	22	0	12	33	20	12
Legal professionals	13	20	11	40	12	0	34	19
Mental health social workers	33	0	33	13	15	100	28	25
Occupational therapists (adults')	27	0	22	20	8	0	28	16
Occupational therapists (children's)	20	0	11	0	8	0	16	9
Planning officers	7	52	11	20	15	0	20	29
Public health officers	13	2	0	7	19	0	20	13
Regulatory services officers	0	2	0	0	4	0	6	2
School nurses	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Social care commissioners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Trading standards officers	0	0	11	13	8	0	10	7
Youth workers	0	0	0	0	0	33	0	1
Other	13	23	11	7	19	0	16	17

Base: authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (112 councils – 15 counties, 44 districts, nine London boroughs, 15 metropolitan boroughs, 26 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 50 English single tier)

Table 14: 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	11	0	45	55	0
Adult's social workers	31	35	13	48	0
Building control officers	9	22	0	67	0
Chartered surveyors	13	23	31	46	0
Children's social workers	57	32	11	56	2
Economic development officers	1	0	0	100	0
Educational psychologists	13	23	15	62	0
Engineers	5	40	0	60	0
Environmental health officers	31	16	16	65	0
Health visitors	1	0	0	100	0
Homelessness officers	8	25	0	75	0
ICT professionals	14	14	43	36	0
Legal professionals	21	10	19	71	0
Mental health social workers	18	28	11	56	0
Occupational therapists (adults')	11	27	9	64	0
Occupational therapists (children's)	6	33	17	50	0
Planning officers	30	37	13	50	7
Public health officers	9	44	11	44	0
Regulatory services officers	2	0	50	50	0
School nurses	1	0	100	0	0
Test and trace team leaders	0	-	-	-	-
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	1	0	0	0	0
Trading standards officers	4	25	0	75	25
Youth workers	1	100	0	0	0
Other	19	42	16	42	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 183 councils who responded to the question, 29 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-six per cent of respondents said they did not know.

Table 15: 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	35	6	0	35	24
District	25	0	1	48	25
London borough	42	0	0	32	26
Metropolitan borough	47	5	0	26	21
Unitary	20	11	0	40	29
Welsh unitary	17	0	0	50	33
English single tier	33	7	0	34	26
All councils	29	3	1	42	26

Base: all respondents (183 councils – 17 counties, 87 districts, 19 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 73 English single tier)

Thinking about staffing

Councils were asked what they were currently considering for staffing within this financial year (2021/22). A total of 156 (84 per cent) answered the question, of which 53 per cent said they were 'making no substantive changes'. Forty-six per cent said they were currently considering 'increasing apprenticeships', 30 per cent were considering 'reducing the use of contractors or agencies' and 24 per cent were considering 'reducing staff numbers overall'.

Table 16: Thinking about staffing, is your council <u>currently</u> 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	25	6	13	19	19	0	18	12
Recruiting more staff overall	0	4	13	0	10	0	8	5
Reducing staff numbers overall	13	19	53	31	32	0	37	24
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	44	69	20	50	39	50	37	53
Increasing use of contractors or agencies	6	3	0	6	13	13	8	6
Reducing use of contractors or agencies	38	9	67	69	45	0	56	30
Increasing apprenticeships	63	29	87	56	52	38	61	46
Decreasing apprenticeships	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	1
Recruitment freeze	0	3	20	25	16	0	19	9

Base: all respondents (156 councils – 16 counties, 70 districts, 15 London boroughs, 15 metropolitan boroughs, 31 English unitaries, eight Welsh unitaries, 62 English single tier)

Staffing working practices

Councils were also asked what they were changes they were considering in relation to staff working practices. A total of 182 answered the question, of which 87 per cent said they were considering 'increasing hybrid working (working in the office and at home', 59 per cent answered they were considering 'increasing flexible working options (flexible working hours)' and 42 per cent said they were considering 'reducing the number of physical workplaces'.

Table 17: Is your council currently considering any of the following, or not, affecting staff working practices	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	English single tier	All councils
	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils	% councils
Reducing the number of physical workplaces	65	21	58	58	57	83	58	42
Increasing flexible working options (flexible working hours)	71	47	79	63	66	83	68	59
Changing models of service delivery	29	30	63	47	46	50	51	39
Increasing hybrid working (working in the office and at home)	88	91	84	68	89	100	82	87
Increasing homeworking (working at home only)	24	17	47	53	29	33	40	27
Other	0	1	0	5	0	0	1	1
None of these	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't know	6	6	5	16	6	0	8	7

Base: all respondents (182 councils – 17 counties, 86 districts, 19 London boroughs, 19 metropolitan boroughs, 35 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 73 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 9 July 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 9 July 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 <u>excluding permanent and fixed term staff</u> in the week ending 9 July?

❍ 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 9 July	

Q3.1 How many staff, if any, do you currently (week ending 9 July 2021) have in the categories below?

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) and self isolation.

	Number of staff (headcount)
Number of staff furloughed	
Number of staff unavailable for work	

Q3.2 As far as you are aware, in the week ending 9 July, how many staff have been unable to work for more than six months as a result of what has been termed 'long COVID' (see https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/)

❍ Number of staff
(headcount)_____

Q4.1 Please select the status of the services to the 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	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.2 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

Q5.1 COVID-19 Vaccine
And now, thinking about vaccinations, to the best of your knowledge can you tell us approximately how many directly employed staff that have been offered the COVID-19 vaccine have refused.

	Many staff refused (more than 20 per cent, or one in five staff)	Some staff refused (between 5 and 20 per cent)	Few staff refused (fewer that 5 per cent, or 1 in 20 staff)	No staff refused	Don't know
All staff working high risk areas (for example, adults' and children's' care homes domiciliary care)	○	○	○	○	○
All public facing staff	○	○	○	○	○
All staff	○	○	○	○	○

Q6.1 **Looking ahead**

As you will be aware, we have asked the question below a number of times now to help us understand the issues where councils may need some guidance and support. This is because we are aware that plans are at an early stage, and may change.

Q6.2 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

Q6.3 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 <u>up to five</u> 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)				

Q7.1 **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

Q8.1 And thinking about staffing, is your council <u>currently</u> 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	❑	❑
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	❑	❑

Q8.2 Can you please tell us what these specialist roles are?

Please enter in the space below

_____

_____

Q8.3 Is your council <u>currently</u> considering any of the following, or not, affecting staff working practices?

- ❑ Reducing the number of physical workplaces
- ❑ Increasing flexible working options (flexible working hours)
- ❑ Changing models of service delivery
- ❑ Increasing hybrid working (working in the office and at home)
- ❑ Increasing homeworking (working at home only)
- ❑ Other (please specify below)

_____

- ❑ ⊗None of these

- ❑ ⊗Don't know

Q9.1 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 _____

Q9.2 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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We consider requests on an individual basis.