

COVID-19 Workforce Survey

Research Report

Relating to the week ending 8 October 2021



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Contents

Summary.....	4
Background	4
Key findings	4
Introduction	5
Methodology.....	5
Technical notes	6
COVID-19 Workforce Survey: week ending 8 October 2021.....	7
Size of local authority workforce	7
Current headcount as at 8 October 2021	7
Unavailable for work	8
Reason staff were unavailable for work	8
Service disruption	10
Recruitment and retention	12
Recruitment difficulties	12
Retention difficulties	18
Market supplements.....	20
Senior officers	22
Planning ahead.....	23
Thinking about staffing	23
Annex A: Questionnaire	24

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 13 October 2021 and covers the week ending 8 October 2021. The overall response rate was 46 per cent and covered around a third of the total workforce.

Key findings

- Just over nine out of 10 councils (92 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable for work. In total, respondents reported there were 22,064 staff unavailable for work in the week ending 8 October 2021, four per cent of the current workforce.
- Of councils with unavailable staff, the majority (79 per cent) were unavailable because of non-COVID related sickness (or four per cent of all staff). Twelve per cent were unavailable because confirmed/suspected COVID (one per cent of all staff)
- 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 63 per cent of councils reporting some level of disruption, children's services, with 58 per cent reporting some level of disruption, and schools, with 57 per cent reporting 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, 51 per cent of councils reported they were operating normally.
- More than seven out of 10 councils (74 per cent) had either previously used or were currently using redeployment (both formal and informal) in cases of high absence due to COVID-19. More than three-fifths (63 per cent), had also hired, or were currently hiring temporary/casual staff.

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 13 October 2021, the LGA's Research and Information Team sent an online survey to all heads of human resources in England and, or their nominated contact, in England (a total of 355 councils). The survey was in the field for four weeks. A total of 176 councils responded, which is a response rate of 53 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	81	45
County	24	18	75
London borough	33	16	48
Metropolitan district	36	21	58
Unitary	59	33	56
Wales	22	7	32
All	355	176	53

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Total number	Number of responses	Response rate %
Eastern	50	37	74
East Midlands	39	16	41
London	33	16	48
North East	12	9	75
North West	41	21	51
South East	70	28	40
South West	33	13	39
Wales	22	7	32
West Midlands	33	12	36
Yorkshire and Humber	22	17	77

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 8 October 2021

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

Size of local authority workforce

Current headcount as at 8 October 2021

The total headcount for those councils that responded stood at 502,716 on 8 October 2021. The headcount figure includes all permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual staff.

Table 3: Change in headcount from 1 March 2020 – 8 October 2021	
	At 8 October
County	127,949
District	38,247
London borough	60,947
Metropolitan borough	116,248
Unitary	108,375
Wales	50,950
All councils	502,716
English single tier	285,570

Base: all respondents (176 councils – 18 counties, 81 districts, 16 London boroughs, 21 metropolitan boroughs, 33 English unitaries, 70 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 8 October 2021. Of councils that answered the question, 146 (92 per cent) reported that they had at least one member of staff unavailable.

In total there were 22,064 staff unavailable for work in responding authorities in the week ending 8 October, four per cent of their current workforce. The median number of staff unavailable for work was 40 and the mean was 139.

	No. of councils	% of councils	Total no. staff	Median	Mean
County	16	100	5,349	263	334
District	65	87	1,398	11	19
London borough	13	87	1,785	104	119
Metropolitan borough	20	100	5,896	261	295
Unitary	26	96	4,618	129	171
Wales	6	100	3,018	485	503
All councils	146	92	22,064	40	139
English single tier	59	95	12,299	149	198

Base: all respondents (159 councils – 16 counties, 75 districts, 15 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 62 English single tier)

Reason staff were unavailable for work

The 146 councils that reported they had one or more member of staff unavailable for work in the week ending 8 October 2021 were subsequently asked to indicate the reason for them being unavailable, and 142 (97 per cent) were able to provide the reason.

In the week ending 8 October, 79 per cent of staff were unavailable because of 'Non-COVID sickness' (three per cent of all staff) and 12 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	81	9	1	8	0	0
District	85	10	1	3	0	0
London borough	82	7	0	3	0	8
Metropolitan borough	82	9	0	5	0	4
Unitary	78	11	1	2	0	8
English single tier	69	25	2	2	2	0
All councils	79	12	1	4	0	3

Base: respondents with unavailable staff (142 councils –16 counties, 63 districts, 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 English single tier)

Service disruption

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 63 per cent of councils reporting some level of disruption, children's services, with 58 per cent reporting some level of disruption, and schools, with 57 per cent reporting 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, 51 per cent of councils reported they were operating normally.

Table 6: 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)	94	36	37	20	6
Bereavement services	120	78	17	6	0
Children's services	92	42	36	21	1
Environment health	152	62	25	11	3
Household waste (doorstep collection)	126	60	28	10	2
Housing and homelessness services	151	72	21	7	1
Planning	164	70	22	7	1
Public health	110	55	24	18	3
Revenue and benefits	148	72	21	7	1
Schools	73	42	27	29	1
Trading standards	89	58	31	8	2
Overall council	51%	51	38	11	1

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. More than seven out of 10 councils (74 per cent) had either previously used or were currently using redeployment (both formal and informal). More than three fifths (63 per cent), had also hired, or were currently hiring temporary/casual staff.

Table 7: 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	158	35	7	30	28
Staff Overtime	164	27	35	21	16
Redeployment (both formal and informal)	170	52	22	15	11
Hiring temporary/casual staff	167	16	47	20	17
Borrowing staff from partner organisations	143	15	2	24	59
Other	44	2	0	2	95

Base: all respondents (base varies by contingency).

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment difficulties

Councils were asked if they were experiencing difficulties recruiting for some occupations and roles: 131 (74 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 8 shows that, of councils with children's social care responsibilities and that had reported recruitment difficulties, 93 per cent were having difficulties recruiting children's social workers.

Table 8: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties – single and upper tier roles

	County	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Adult social workers	81	63	61	56	100	66	58
Children's social workers	100	75	94	93	100	93	91
Educational psychologists	56	38	33	26	0	34	30
Health visitors	19	0	0	0	0	4	0
Mental health social workers	50	13	50	33	80	42	36
Occupational therapists (adults')	44	50	33	26	20	34	32
Occupational therapists (children's)	38	38	6	19	0	20	17
Public health officers	38	0	22	15	20	20	15
School nurses	13	0	0	4	0	4	2
Test and trace team leaders	6	0	0	4	20	4	2
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	6	0	6	4	0	4	4
Trading standards officers	25	0	11	11	20	14	9
Youth workers	13	0	6	0	20	5	2

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (142 councils – 16 counties, 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 English single tier)

In district councils, 62 per cent of those with recruitment difficulties said they were having problems recruiting environmental health officers (table 9) and 76 per cent were having problems recruiting planning officers (table 10).

Table 9: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties – district and single tier roles

	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Building control officers	36	50	67	58	25	43	60
Economic development officers	10	0	33	17	0	13	20
Environmental health officers	62	0	67	58	100	62	55
Homelessness officers	33	50	17	25	25	30	25

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (142 councils – 63 districts 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 English single tier)

Nine out of 10 county councils were also having problems recruiting IT professionals (table 10).

Table 10: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties – roles present in all councils

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Accountants	30	22	0	14	33	0	23	22
Chartered surveyors	30	27	0	36	33	0	28	31
Engineers	60	7	25	50	28	0	24	36
ICT professionals	70	22	75	36	28	100	34	36
Legal professionals	90	44	50	50	44	0	50	47
Regulatory services officers'	10	4	0	21	11	0	9	14
Planning officers	60	76	25	36	39	0	58	36

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (142 councils – 16 counties, 63 districts 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 English single tier)

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. Nearly nine out of 10 councils with social care responsibilities (88 per cent) with recruitment problems said acute difficulties recruiting children’s social workers, and 96 per cent of English unitaries. This can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11: For those specialist occupations and roles where you have difficulties recruiting, below, please tick up to five where the difficulties are most acute – *single and upper tier roles*

	County	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Adult social workers	56	63	59	43	100	57	52
Children’s social workers	81	75	88	96	100	88	90
Educational psychologists	31	25	18	17	0	20	19
Health visitors	6	0	0	0	0	1	0
Mental health social workers	44	13	41	22	80	35	27
Occupational therapists (adults’)	25	38	18	9	0	17	17
Occupational therapists (children’s)	19	25	0	4	0	9	6
Public health officers	6	0	18	17	0	12	15
School nurses	6	0	6	9	0	6	6
Test and trace team leaders	6	0	0	0	0	1	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	4	20	3	2
Trading standards officers	0	0	0	4	0	1	2
Youth workers	0	0	6	9	20	6	6

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (142 councils – 16 counties, 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 English single tier)

Table 12: For those specialist occupations and roles where you have difficulties recruiting, below, please tick up to five where the difficulties are most acute – *district and single tier roles*

	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Building control officers	38	50	33	67	25	40	55
Economic development officers	9	0	0	17	0	9	9
Environmental health officers	53	0	67	50	100	55	45
Homelessness officers	28	50	0	17	0	23	18

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (142 councils – 63 districts 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 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 – *roles present in all councils*

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Accountants	33	20	0	8	45	0	21	22
Chartered surveyors	0	24	0	8	18	0	18	11
Engineers	67	7	0	25	18	0	14	19
ICT professionals	67	17	75	17	18	0	23	26
Legal professionals	67	44	50	42	36	0	44	41
Regulatory services officers'	0	0	0	17	9	0	4	11
Planning officers	33	78	0	25	36	0	56	26

Base: all authorities experiencing recruitment difficulties (142 councils – 16 counties, 63 districts 12 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 25 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 57 English single tier)

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-one 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. See Table 14, below.

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	20	53	27	0	20
Adult's social workers	33	5	59	3	33
Building control officers	58	0	42	0	58
Chartered surveyors	46	23	31	0	46
Children's social workers	33	13	51	3	33
Economic development officers	50	25	25	0	50
Educational psychologists	43	7	43	7	43
Engineers	22	22	56	0	22
Environmental health officers	31	15	54	0	31
Health visitors	100	0	0	0	100
Homelessness officers	73	0	27	0	73
ICT professionals	25	38	38	0	25
Legal professionals	35	26	39	0	35
Mental health social workers	25	13	63	0	25
Occupational therapists (adults')	25	8	67	0	25
Occupational therapists (children's)	33	17	50	0	33
Planning officers	33	20	45	3	33
Public health officers	20	20	60	0	20
Regulatory services officers	0	33	67	0	0
School nurses	0	100	0	0	0
Test and trace team leaders	100	0	0	0	100
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	100	0	0	0	100
Trading standards officers	0	25	75	0	0
Youth workers	100	0	0	0	100

Base: respondents experiencing acute recruitment difficulties (bases vary depending on whether the respondent was experiencing acute recruitment difficulties for particular the role)

Retention difficulties

Councils were asked if they were experiencing staff retention difficulties for some occupations and roles: 77 (44 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 15 shows that, of councils with children's social care responsibilities and that had reported recruitment difficulties, 85 per cent were having difficulties recruiting retaining children's social workers, including 100 per cent of county councils.

Table 15: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing staff retention difficulties – single and upper tier roles

	County	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Adult social workers	58	50	33	37	60	45	37
Children's social workers	100	100	78	79	80	85	80
Educational psychologists	33	100	0	5	0	15	10
Health visitors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mental health social workers	25	50	11	11	60	21	13
Occupational therapists (adults')	33	100	0	11	20	19	13
Occupational therapists (children's)	33	50	0	5	0	13	7
Public health officers	25	100	0	5	0	13	10
School nurses	0	0	11	0	0	2	3
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	8	0	0	0	0	2	0
Trading standards officers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth workers	8	50	0	5	0	6	7

Base: all authorities experiencing retention difficulties (77 councils – 12 counties, 3 London boroughs, nine metropolitan boroughs, 20 English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 32 English single tier)

In district councils, 56 per cent of those with staff retention difficulties said they were having problems retaining environmental health officers (table 16) and 73 per cent were having problems retaining planning officers (table 16).

Table 16: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing staff retention difficulties – district and single tier roles

	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Building control officers	22	33	33	25	0	26	30
Economic development officers	11	0	33	0	0	11	10
Environmental health officers	56	33	67	25	0	47	40
Homelessness officers	22	33	0	50	0	26	30

Base: all authorities experiencing retention difficulties (77 councils – 28 districts, 3 London boroughs, nine metropolitan boroughs, 20 English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 32 English single tier)

Eight out of 10 county councils (80 per cent) were also having problems recruiting IT professionals (table 17).

Table 17: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing staff retention difficulties – roles present in all councils

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Accountants	40	18	0	0	40	0	21	18
Chartered surveyors	20	9	33	33	20	0	16	27
Engineers	80	0	67	33	20	0	21	36
ICT professionals	80	18	100	0	20	0	32	36
Legal professionals	60	18	67	67	0	0	29	36
Regulatory services officers'	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planning officers	60	73	67	0	20	0	58	27

Base: all authorities experiencing retention difficulties (77 councils – 12 counties, 28 districts, 3 London boroughs, nine metropolitan boroughs, 20 English unitaries, five Welsh unitaries, 32 English single tier)

Market supplements

Respondents were asked whether any occupations in their council received market supplements: 111 (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 receiving market supplements.

Table 18 shows that 52 per cent of councils with social care responsibilities gave market supplements to children's social workers.

Table 18: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those that receive market supplements– single and upper tier roles

	County	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Adult social workers	23	38	18	44	50	34	37
Children's social workers	54	50	36	63	0	52	54
Educational psychologists	8	0	18	7	0	8	9
Health visitors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mental health social workers	31	0	9	11	0	13	9
Occupational therapists (adults')	15	0	18	15	0	13	13
Occupational therapists (children's)	15	0	0	11	0	8	7
Public health officers	15	25	9	22	0	18	20
School nurses	23	0	18	11	0	13	11
Test and trace team leaders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trading standards officers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth workers	0	13	9	7	0	7	9

Base: all councils who have occupations that receive market supplements (111 councils – 13 counties, 11 London boroughs, 14 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 52 English single tier)

Sixty-one per cent district councils gave market supplements to building control officers as did 65 per cent of all councils (table 19). Sixty per cent of district councils also gave market supplements to planning officers (table 20).

Table 19: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those that receive market supplements – district and single tier roles

	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Building control officers	61	67	0	78	0	65	69
Economic development officers	6	33	0	22	0	13	23
Environmental health officers	44	33	100	22	0	39	31
Homelessness officers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Base: all councils who have occupations that receive market supplements (111 councils – 43 districts, 11 London boroughs, 14 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 52 English single tier)

Table 20: From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those that receive market supplements – roles present in all councils

	County	District	London borough	Metropolitan borough	Unitary	Welsh unitary	All councils	English single tier
Accountants	0	34	38	29	38	0	32	36
Chartered surveyors	0	11	13	0	54	0	17	29
Engineers	60	3	25	29	31	100	19	29
ICT professionals	0	17	63	57	23	100	28	43
Legal professionals	60	26	25	43	23	0	29	29
Regulatory services officers'	0	6	0	0	0	0	3	0
Planning officers	40	60	25	14	46	0	46	32

Base: all councils who have occupations that receive market supplements (111 councils – 13 counties, 43 districts, 11 London boroughs, 14 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, three Welsh unitaries, 52 English single tier)

Senior officers

Councils were also asked whether they had any recruitment or retention difficulties for senior management roles. These were the head of paid service (reports only to an elected mayor or the council executive committee eg chief executive), first tier managers (reporting to the head of paid service e.g. Director, Chief Officer or Strategic Director) and second tier managers (reporting to a 1st tier manager e.g. Assistant Director, Head of Service, Deputy Chief Officer).

Three per cent of councils had difficulty recruiting heads of paid service, four per cent had difficulty recruiting first tier managers and nine per cent had difficulty recruiting second tier managers.

One per cent of councils had difficulty retaining heads of paid service, three per cent had difficulty retaining first tier managers and seven per cent had difficulty retaining second tier managers.

Table 21: Please also let us know whether or not your council is experiencing any recruitment and/or retention difficulties in any of the following senior management roles.

	Yes	No	Don't know
	% councils	% councils	% councils
Recruitment difficulties			
Head of paid service	3	80	17
1st tier managers	4	76	20
2nd tier managers	9	72	20
Retention difficulties			
Head of paid service	1	79	20
1st tier managers	3	77	20
2nd tier managers	7	73	20

Base: all respondents (166 councils)

Planning ahead

Thinking about staffing

Councils were asked what they were currently considering for staffing within this financial year (2021/22). A total of 159 (90 per cent) answered the question, of which 47 per cent said they were 'making no substantive changes'. Fifty-nine per cent said they were currently considering 'increasing apprenticeships', 50 per cent were considering 'reducing the use of contractors or agencies' and 29 per cent were considering 'reducing staff numbers overall'.

Table 16: 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
Making no substantive changes to staffing numbers	53	69	31	56	48	71	59	47
Recruiting more staff overall	12	6	8	6	7	0	7	7
Reducing staff numbers overall	6	12	38	28	26	0	18	29
Recruitment freeze	6	5	23	11	11	0	8	14
Recruiting more staff in specialist roles	47	12	23	28	33	43	24	29
Increasing use of contractors or agencies	24	6	0	6	4	0	7	3
Reducing use of contractors or agencies	24	15	69	56	37	0	29	50
Increasing apprenticeships	65	32	62	61	56	71	48	59
Decreasing apprenticeships	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0

Base: all respondents (159 councils – 16 counties, 75 districts, 15 London boroughs, 20 metropolitan boroughs, 27 English unitaries, six Welsh unitaries, 62 English single tier)

Annex A: Questionnaire

COVID - 19 Workforce Collection

Start of Block: Block 3



Q2 How many staff did you have on 8 October 2021?

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 8 October 2021 (including temporary/casual staff)	

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 7



Q3 How many staff, if any, are currently (8 October 2021) 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	

Display This Question:

If How many staff, if any, are currently (8 October 2021) unavailable for work? Please enter the headcount. If none, please enter zero. If you do not know please leave bank. For staff unavailabl... Text Response Is Greater Than 0



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 8 October 2021.

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)	

End of Block: Block 7

Start of Block: Block 4

Q5 Please select the status of the services to the 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)	<input type="radio"/>					
Bereavement services (cemeteries and crematoria)	<input type="radio"/>					
Children's services	<input type="radio"/>					
Environmental health	<input type="radio"/>					
Household waste (doorstep collection)	<input type="radio"/>					
Housing and homelessness services	<input type="radio"/>					
Planning	<input type="radio"/>					
Public health	<input type="radio"/>					
Revenue and benefits	<input type="radio"/>					
Schools	<input type="radio"/>					
Trading standards	<input type="radio"/>					

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

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 12

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)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff overtime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Redeployment (both formal and informal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring temporary/casual staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Borrowing staff from partner organisations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 12

Start of Block: Block 9

Q8 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?

Recruitment 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

Display This Question:

*If We have heard from some councils that there are significant difficulties recruiting for certain p...
= Yes*

Q9 From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing **recruitment difficulties**.

Tick all that apply

- Accountants
- Adult 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)
- Planning officers
- Public health officers
- Regulatory services officers'
- School nurses
- Test and trace team leaders
- Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)
- Trading standards officers
- Youth workers
- Other (Please specify below)

Don't know

Display This Question:

If From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties. Tick all that apply q://QID74/SelectedChoicesCount Is Greater Than 0

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing recruitment difficulties. Tick all that apply"



Q10 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.

Tick up to five

- Accountants
- Adult 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)
- Planning officers
- Public health officers
- Other enforcement officers (e.g. licensing)
- School nurses
- Test and trace team leaders
- Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)
- Trading standards officers
- Youth workers
- Other (Please specify) _____
- Don't know

Display This Question:

If For those specialist occupations and roles where you have difficulties recruiting, below, please... q://QID75/SelectedChoicesCount Is Greater Than 0

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "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. Tick up to five"



Q11 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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult social workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building control officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chartered surveyors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children's social workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic development officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educational psychologists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engineers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental health officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health visitors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homelessness officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ICT professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal professionals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health social workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupational therapists (adults')	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupational therapists (children's)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Public health officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other enforcement officers (e.g. licensing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School nurses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Test and trace team leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trading standards officers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 9

Start of Block: Block 10

Q12 We have heard from some councils that there are significant difficulties **retaining** staff in certain posts.

Is your authority experiencing staff **retention difficulties** for some posts or not?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Display This Question:

If We have heard from some councils that there are significant difficulties retaining staff in certa... = Yes

Q13 From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those where your council is experiencing **retention** difficulties.

Tick all that apply

- 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)
- Planning officers
- Public health officers
- Regulatory services officers'
- School nurses
- Test and trace team leaders
- Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)
- Trading standards officers
- Youth workers
- Other (Please specify below)

Don't know

End of Block: Block 10

Start of Block: Block 11

Q14 Please also let us know whether or not your council is experiencing any recruitment and/or retention difficulties in any of the following **senior management roles**.

	Recruitment difficulties			Retention difficulties		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes`	No	Don't know
Head of paid service (reports only to an elected mayor or the council executive committee eg chief executive)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1st tier managers (reporting to the head of paid service e.g. Director, Chief Officer or Strategic Director.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2nd tier managers, reporting to a 1st tier manager e.g. Assistant Director, Head of Service, Deputy Chief Officer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 11

Start of Block: Block 12

Q15 Do any occupations in your council receive **market supplements**?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Display This Question:

If Do any occupations in your council receive market supplements? = Yes

Q16 From the list of specialist occupations and roles below, please tick those that receive **market supplements**.

Tick all that apply

- 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)
 - Planning officers
 - Public health officers
 - Regulatory services officers'
 - School nurses
 - Test and trace team leaders
 - Test and trace officers (clinical case officers)
 - Trading standards officers
 - Youth workers
 - Other (Please specify below)
-

- Don't know

End of Block: Block 12

Start of Block: Block 13

Q15 And thinking about staffing, is your council currently 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

End of Block: Block 13

Start of Block: Demographics question



Q16 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 _____



Q17 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 _____

End of Block: Demographics question

Start of Block: Survey end and privacy statement text

Q18

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](#)

End of Block: Survey end and privacy statement text



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