

# LGA Refocused Sector-Led Improvement Offer: Highlights and Summary

## April-November 2020



### Peer support

#### Headlines

- **Remote Peer Support:** Following the onset of COVID-19, we introduced and started delivering two new remote peer-based programmes to support councils in responding to the pandemic and planning for recovery and renewal:
  - **Recovery and renewal panels**, which provide councils an opportunity to reflect on their response to COVID-19 through a remote panel discussion, involving an open and collaborative conversation about recovery and renewal plans, capturing and sharing learning about developing practice from across the sector; and
  - **Remote Bespoke Peer Support**, which gives councils the option to review a specific issue or set of issues in greater depth. This process involves a more detailed series of remote interviews and discussions with the council and uses a similar approach to the traditional peer challenges, being delivered over 2-3 days.

Since our remote peer support was launched in late July, 36 councils have already benefited from these programmes and the feedback has been positive. There continues to be strong interest from the sector: sessions with a further 41 councils are planned over the next 4 months.

- **Remote Corporate Health Check (RCHC):** RCHCs offer a flexible framework and process for councils to focus on key corporate issues—such as priority setting, place leadership and financial planning—over a period of days. We have begun engaging with councils to pilot this approach. This offer was developed in response to sector identified needs and does not replace the flagship Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) programme (which will recommence when appropriate to do so, given the importance of onsite engagement).
- **Bespoke Support:** Bespoke support, including **mentoring support**, has been provided to a large number of councils since April and has been a key focus for our COVID activity. Example of the support has included extensive support to a new Leader who took on the role during the pandemic, mentoring of several leaders and cabinet members, and secondment of staff to two authorities who needed additional strategic capacity. In addition, bespoke support is being provided on issues ranging from workforce, overview and scrutiny, change of leader, finance matters and interpretation of legislation.
- **Engagement and wider support:** Principal Advisors and regional teams have continued to support councils in responding to COVID 19 through extensive engagement in CEX meetings, one-to-one meetings and by answering queries. We engaged or provided information to every council during the first quarter and this level of activity has been maintained in subsequent months.

# Housing and Homelessness

## Headlines

- **Next Steps Accommodation Programme Peer Support (NSAP):** MHCLG set up NSAP to provide additional financial resources to support councils and their partners with the next stage of the COVID-19 rough sleeping response. As part of the overall funding criteria for the NSAP, MHCLG invited councils in receipt of this funding to engage in a peer support process. The LGA are working with MHCLG to facilitate this through the delivery of a programme of up to 35 dynamic and inclusive 'Delivery & Impact Panels' in the coming months. The approach involves an online 'Delivery and Impact Panel' facilitated by the LGA, which will provide a structured conversation to explore and stretch current thinking and provide an opportunity to share good practice and learning across the sector, helping inform the 'rough sleeping' response.
- **Housing Advisors Programme:** In November, we have launched the Housing Advisors Programme, which will fund the provision of bespoke expert support to councils – or groups of councils – wanting to transform the delivery of homes and places, the quality and security of existing homes and/or to prevent and reduce homelessness. This will help to make a significant difference to the housing crisis and help to build capacity in councils by ensuring that great sustainability of projects in the longer term. The programme also helps to create learning about what works, so that the wider sector can benefit from that knowledge.
- **Digital Housing Programme:** The digital housing programme funds councils to reuse the assets and learning from the Kent Home Choice Partnership Project to support local government respond to the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and scale up across other councils the resource and assets from this project. A case study series from this work is now being finalised. This financial year, the programme has predicted projected savings of £430,000 for four of the councils involved.
- **One Public Estate (OPE):** We have supported councils and MHCLG through a range of activities activity undertaken through our OPE programme:
  - In August our regional OPE teams have input into the moderation of bids submitted to the Future High Streets Fund
  - In October we supported MHCLG to engage with relevant local authorities regarding the approach to refreshing the Right to Contest
  - At the time of writing, we are supporting MHCLG's Housing Delivery team with project delivery intelligence from the OPE programme, and with the design of future place-based housing delivery funds. We are also working with new Heads of Place, sharing regional intelligence and expertise from the programme, and offering access to OPE networks.

# Finance and commercialisation support

## Headlines

- **Support via the Finance Improvement Support Advisers (FISAs):** Finance associates (FISAs) have now directly supported 46 councils since the start of the financial year, with support ranging from helping to understand and monitor the impact of COVID on their finances, options for seeking in-year savings and alternative funding strategies and support for individual CFOs in undertaking their duties. FISAs have also been working to provide

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assurance to MHCLG on councils, which have applied for exceptional financial support in 2020/21.

- **Webinar on Review of Local Authority Financial Reporting and Audit (Redmond Review):** In October, we ran an online webinar to cover recommendations and explore learning from the Redmond Review.
- **Commercialisation:** Delivered a Commercialisation Conference on 13 October, covering the future of commercial activity post COVID-19. The event was extremely popular and was attended by 180 officers and councillors. We also delivered 7 masterclasses during October and November (6 for officers, and another for councillors).

### Other activity

- **Finance Leadership Essentials:** We have delivered 3 courses – two online and one face-to-face, benefitting 20-30 elected members with financial responsibilities.
- **Finance Portfolio Holder Guidance:** Published and shared via social media, bulletins and website. The guide offers context, strategic questions and guidance to senior councillors with responsibility for council finances to help them respond effectively to the present context.
- **Collaborative finance panels:** These panels, developed in June, bring small groups of councils together to reflect on their responses to COVID-19, presenting an opportunity for councils to compare notes and good practice and build resilience through this process. The first of these panels took place on July 15, involving several councils from the North East, East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber.
- **Case studies:** We have created ten case studies to support understanding around the typical financial impact of COVID-19 across a range of councils.
- **Chief executive Finance Roundtable:** In May we brought together a group of Chief Executive's from some of the most financially challenged councils to explore their issues and to share good practice.

## Economic Growth and Recovery Support

### Headlines

- **Economic Growth Advisors Programme:** We have launched a new programme to source Economic Growth Advisors on behalf of councils. Councils are supported on a targeted need basis and receive support on projects concerning economic recovery from COVID-19. An initial 10 councils have been identified for support and preliminary conversations have been arranged to take the programme forward. We are also planning **Economic Growth webinars** to discuss key themes emerging from this programme including issues pertinent to recovery and renewal over the next 4 months.
- **Supporting locally led jobs and skills recovery:** We engaged with member authorities to inform views and policies relating to COVID-19, including with the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Network. We also organised a roundtable between local authorities from non-devolved areas with DfE, DWP and MHCLG officials to address challenges relating to the present environment.
- **Business Support:** We have continued to support councils in the distribution of the Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund (RHLCGF) schemes, promoting the efforts of councils and raising issues relating to the schemes and interpretation of the Government guidance.

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- **Town centres toolkit**: This toolkit has been updated to reflect present challenges and national guidance, including guidance to help local authorities and place partnerships to develop COVID-19 recovery planning as part of wider revitalisation.
- **Culture, Tourism and Sport (CTS)**: We have developed or contributed to a **range of COVID-19 centred publications** in this area, including **guidance on parks management** and a **joint statement on working together during COVID-19**; held and 10 **webinars** for councillors and officers on all aspects of CTS (with a further 16 planned); and contributed to DCMS working groups that are drawing up reopening guidance for libraries, museums, and leisure centre. We also carried out **interviews** with 20 councils to help gauge the **financial impact of COVID-19 on their cultural, tourism and leisure provision**. Following increased concern from councils about operating leisure facilities under restrictions, we have published a case study report entitled **Leisure under lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19**.
- **Local Partnerships** have also been working closely with councils to support them with their leisure providers. In addition, they worked closely with Sport England, DCMS and MHCLG to help pull together the funding bid to HMT to rescue councils and their providers.

## Leadership

### Headlines

- **Coaching for CEXs and senior officers**: We created a brand-new offer to provide coaching for chief executives and other senior officers in the COVID context and by July individuals from 88 councils were engaged in coaching and some councils have signed up for group coaching. In November, 444 individual coaching hours had been completed. Evaluation will cover the difference coaching has made to the leadership experience of coaches and will feed into a piece on what we've learnt about leadership through COVID-19.
- **Coaching for councillors**: We also launched a similar programme for councillors, and for leaders in particular. In November, there were 65 signed coaching agreements.
- **COVID-19 Knowledge Hub (KHub)**: Councillors can access key COVID-19 documents on a newly launched KHub group and are also signposted to the full COVID-19 pages and support package for councils on the LGA's website. We have added a range of councillor workbooks including 'Changes to Local Authority Powers and Duties Resulting from the Coronavirus Act 2020', 'Protecting the Local Government Supply Chain from Fraud' and 'Tackling Domestic Abuse'.
- **Learning resources**: We have produced a range of **webinars**, **workbooks** and **e-learning modules** on COVID-19 related topics in order to build skills and capacity. These include:
  - An e-learning module on **handling intimidation**
  - A Workbook and e-learning module on **mentally healthier communities**
  - A webinar on **chairing of remote meetings**
  - A webinar series on the **role of the ward councillor in responding to COVID-19**
  - A webinar series on **effective opposition** during COVID-19
  - A webinar on **rapid innovation** to support councils working toward recovery/renewal
  - A webinar on **presentation skills** to build skills and confidence for virtual presentations
  - A webinar on **Coalition Administrations**, identifying how to ensure robust, stable coalition working during Covid-19 and beyond.

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- **Attracting greater diversity of talent to engage in civic life and stand for election:** The LGA's Be a Councillor campaign aims at increasing the pool of talent from which councillors are elected – a key task for local government. In line with key commitments of this campaign, the LGA is planning events with partners such as The Parliament Project and Operation Black Vote focussed on encouraging people from under-represented groups to stand for election.

### Other activity

- **Planning for training session on leading more inclusive communities:** This session is intended as part of a broader package of leadership support on equality, diversity and inclusion to help supply councils with tools and understanding to address unconscious bias and discrimination and to provide more representative leadership in their communities.
- **Planning for Finance workshops for portfolio holders:** Preparation is underway for two half-day online workshops, which will provide finance portfolio holders, leaders and deputy leaders an opportunity to share best practice and learn from sector experts in the current COVID 19 context.
- **Developing a programme on equality, diversity and inclusion for councillors:** This package of leadership support will help councils understand unconscious bias, provide more representative leadership and find tools to help challenge bias and discrimination. Designed in context of impact that COVID-19 on BAME communities and BLM.
- **NGDP online:** Established new virtual learning programme and recruitment process to ensure that councils can continue to access the NGDP during COVID-19 and during recovery phase. The NGDP recruits high calibre and diverse graduates, with the right skills to help councils recover.

## Productivity and Innovation

### Headlines

- **Provision of support relating to supply chain issues:**
  - The LGA, supported by the National Advisory Group, has worked with Cabinet Office, MHCLG and others at pace, to get three **PPNs** and various additional guidance documents published (PPN deal directly with emerging procurement issues councils are continuing to face, particularly the increased flexibility afforded to councils with supplier relief) and to address emerging supply chain issues. We have also been representing the sector in the development of procurement rules reform. The Procurement Green Paper, which sets out a new National Policy Statement, is due to be published in December.
  - We have ensured procurement officers and commissioner remain updated on key issues via our [weekly COVID-19 Supply Chain Bulletin](#). Whilst the focus has shifted to transition and recovery a lot of councils have also had to cope with the changing restrictions of the tier system and gearing ourselves up for the second lockdown. The direct readership of this bulletin remains buoyant at 1,500 from a scope of over 3,000.
  - We continue to work with councils to understand issues relating to markets in **Adult Social care and Children's services** and the effect COVID-19 has had on the supply and demand.

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- **PPE procurement:** Worked with MHCLG, Cabinet Office and others specifically to develop sustainable supplies of PPE for councils and their partners. We have also held two workshops on the increasing environmental impact of the production and use of disposable and single use face coverings since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Remote meetings:** Our [Remote Council Meetings Hub](#) has helped to ensure the democratically elected voice of communities continues to be heard during this crisis, including advice, case studies and a hybrid meeting section, with guidance from partners in line with social distancing regulations. The Hub was developed in 2 weeks, retweeted by the Secretary of State (incl. 3 tweets that reached around 28,000 people) and has now been viewed more than 44,580 times. We have also launched a [Remote Council Meeting interactive map](#), to help members, officers and residents explore which video conferencing software all local authorities across England are using, how the meetings are streamed to the public and press while also collating all authority's council meeting calendars in one place for the most up to date information on local democracy around the country.
- **Digital Showcase Conference:** This annual digital event was hosted on 24 November, with over 175 attendees registered to participate. This event offered a range of presentations to share learning around some of the excellent and innovative work that councils are doing to redesign and improve their services and ways of working (including flexible working arrangements), using digital tools and solutions.

## Other activity

- **Social value:** The procurement team has teamed up with the Social Value Taskforce to develop a [Social Value Statement template](#) for councils to use to set out their key messages and Social Value commitments. Since COVID-19, it has become clear that the need for social value is greater than ever – having a clear, committed Social Value Statement will help communicate this to their key stakeholders.
- **Digital Inclusion:** We recently launched a council led Digital Inclusion Network, which provides participating councils an avenue to network and collaborate on digital inclusion development – and opportunity for councils to help less developed councils with their digital inclusion projects.
- **Waste management:** We have provided guidance and support for waste authorities with significant private sector partnerships that are experiencing difficulties in balancing waste services resources as a consequence of contracting arrangements that are coming under stress because of COVID-19.
- **Behavioural Insights:** The LGA was oversubscribed for the programme again this year. This time, it focuses on changing and or sustaining behaviours which communities have experienced and seen during the pandemic. All projects will produce tools, which councils can use nationwide. Podcast recordings have taken place to highlight COVID-related learning (some topics include supporting councils to increase their [revenue collection](#), supporting home workers and on evolving 'green behaviours') and are available to all councils via [the LGA Behavioural Insights podcast series](#).

# Test, trace and outbreak management, shielding and enforcement

## Headlines

- **Stakeholder Engagement Forum:** We have been involved in the Stakeholder Engagement Forum, and its sub-groups on data, local lockdowns and food supply, working with MHCLG and councils to share local learning to inform the future system. We have worked with councils, MHCLG and Defra on the delivery and development of the shielded programme, including input into the development of the Adult Social Care COVID-19 Sector Assurance Framework’.
- **Specific support to MHCLG:** We have provided support and guidance, including leadership and administrative support to the Nine Regional Chief Executives group, with LGA Chief Executive Mark Lloyd chairing weekly meetings, as well as support to their associated networks and groups. Further support has been provided in form of a member of staff seconded to MHCLG Shielding team. Regular meetings with various MHCLG teams have been held to provide support, to share local learning and inform the future system and CEV framework – including with the MHCLG chaired Stakeholder Engagement Forum and its sub-groups on data, local lockdowns and food supply. We have also supported discussions between councils and MHCLG/Government Digital Service to develop a minimum viable product for the new framework and better data flows to and from councils.
- **National Partnerships:** We have helped convene roundtable discussions with national partners including, ADPH, ADASS, ADCS, SOLACE and Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers (CEHO), to support councils in their work with vulnerable and shielded communities.
- **Local Outbreak Control Plans Advisory Board:** The Advisory Board has drawn together expertise from local government to support national arrangements in ways that build on local capabilities and to provide opportunities to share knowledge so that outbreaks can be managed most effectively. It was established in May and has met 22 times at last count.
- **Cross Whitehall Working Group for Assurance of COVID Local Outbreak Management:** Participation in this forum has led to the LGA being positioned as a key part of the regional architecture, to lead on sector led improvement and with the remit of sharing insights, identifying council support needs. Further discussion on resources to facilitate and enable this required.

## Other activity

- **TTOM Knowledge Hub:** This network brings together a range of resources, including presentations and case studies from the Advisory Board, which help to inform local developments and insights, including support on shielded residents. There are currently 463 members of which 62 are DPHs.
- **Supporting councils to support shielded groups:** We have facilitated the sharing of learning, practice and updates on shielded groups, with a focus food provision, through case studies, webinars, bulletins and engagement to ensure councils are well prepared to deliver local responses
- **Enforcement:** We have had regular engagement with councils and government officials to support in the development of effective policy approaches on compliance and enforcement. We also brought together more than 30 tier 3 authorities to help shape consistent approach

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to interpreting key issues in the regulation and have supported ongoing discussions between Government and councils on the resources required to ensure ongoing compliance, enforcement, and bolster capacity in key professions such as environmental health.

- **TTOM, Shielded Groups and Enforcement Webinars:** Facilitated well received and attended webinars between MHCLG officials and councils to share and prepare for changes to support for the shielded group. We have hosted webinars on topics including **Food Processing** (405 attendees), **Testing Prototypes, Communications and Engagement** (147 attendees) and with the **Contain Team** (203 attendees) and further sessions on **data and enforcement** (attendee numbers not yet available).
- **TTOM Leading and Learning Together Sessions for chief executives:** These action learning sets provide a safe space for reflection, exchange of experiences, learning and a mutually supportive peer network. We have supported 10 places, in 2 cohorts with 3 sessions. Feedback has been very positive. Insights are being gathered to share with the sector and feed into practice and policy development.

## Workforce

### Headlines

- **Return to... programmes:** We are working with Government departments and national partners to run a series of programmes to help councils shore up resilience, fill vacancies and attract people back to the sector within planning, ICT and social work - with Return to Legal launching soon. The [Return to Social Work programme](#) has provided councils with increased access to a pool of qualified social workers. Training has commenced for 200 participants. We have also launched Environmental Health together to help councils more easily fill EHO vacancies.
- **Bi-weekly surveys on sector response to COVID-19:** Surveys collect key workforce data –size of LA workforce, recruitment, deaths in service, furloughed staff, redeployment, unavailability, service disruption, PPE and testing with a participation rate of 60% of councils (i.e. a third of the workforce). Reports are offered to or shared with LRFs, MHCLG, DHSC and are available through LG Inform.
- **Regular, ongoing guidance for councils on workforce implications of COVID-19:** These resources support councils to navigate and understand government guidance and cover themes including H&S, funding issues and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Also includes guidance and engagement with employers and trade unions on extended opening of schools and COVID-secure workplaces.
- **Provision of joint guidance on workforce issues relating to COVID-19:**
  - Continued work with **trade unions** to help maintain positive industrial relations and limits to workplace disruption by producing guidance around sick pay, quarantine, contractual treatment of self-isolation and home working. Following extensive negotiations, agreement was reached between the National Employers and the NJC Trade Union Side on rates of Local Government Services' pay for 2020-21 applicable from 1 April 2020.
  - We produced guidance on the further opening of schools in the Summer term and on the full re-opening of schools in the Autumn term. The support ensures councils and schools are able to interpret Government guidance on a complex area.
- **'Social Work Together' campaign:** We have continued to support this campaign with partners: DfE, Social Work England and DHSC. The campaign has attracted



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1000+ expressions of interest from social workers. We are encouraging councils to use the talent pool to cover need, specifically responding to the impact of COVID-19 on the profession.

- **Wellbeing support:** Working with councils, professional partners and Government departments to provide advice, resources and other support for HR leads dealing with wellbeing and mental health issues stemming from COVID-19, including managing front line staff during the pandemic, responding to muscular skeletal injuries and providing employer guidance and advice on **domestic abuse**. Workforce and Policy colleagues are helping to **provide evidence** to MPs/ Parliament **on wellbeing issues for social care workforce** on the potential long-term wellbeing and mental health issues arising from working conditions during coronavirus.
- **Equality and diversity:** We continue to work with Government departments and national partners on developing and implement the Workforce Race Equality Standard for social care in local government, with the first cohort of councils on target to commence working with the WRES in April 2021. We are also preparing a range of webinars, guidance and other materials for councils wishing to respond appropriately to workforce equality, diversity and inclusion issues for black and ethnic minority staff highlighted by COVID-19 and BLM.
- **T-Level Qualification support for councils:** We are working with DfE to launch a campaign to promote the new T-Level qualification, which includes a 45-day industrial placement. Councils as employers will be encouraged to provide at least one placement from September 2021 and we are helping councils to work with T-Level providers (FE and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Colleges) to meet this responsibility.

### Other activities

- **Negotiations:** As agreed with MHCLG, the LGA acts as the secretariat and officer function for National Employers for various collective bargaining units within the local government workforce:
  - We continue to **work with the unions to reach NJC agreements on pay and allowances for the sector**, the latest being the successfully concluded pay negotiations for craft workers, youth and community workers and Soulbury officers and for Teachers in residential establishments. In addition, our work for the Home Office in **negotiating pay for police staff** reached a pay agreement for an increase for 2020.
  - Following the introduction of national restrictions across England, we have been **working with the unions to agree working arrangements to support shielded or clinically extremely vulnerable local government staff**. In addition, our Fire Negotiations Team **continue to work with the unions under the Fire Tripartate Agreement** to put in place any further work activities needed in the fire service to support the response to COVID-19.
- **Sharing of workforce centred best practice:** Covering issues encountered by councils and facilitating planning and preparedness in the light of changed mechanisms for working and delivering services resulting from COVID-19. Topics include **skills shortages, redeployment, remote teams and more integrated ways of working**. Lessons build on agile/smart working progress that improves efficiency and capacity, workforce planning and organisational design.

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- **Workforce bulletin:** Provision of general and specific assistance to councils, schools and others on workforce issues. Council engagement with these publications has increased significantly as a result of the demands of the COVID challenge as councils seek to manage their staff and new service delivery demands.

## Communications

### Headlines

- **Direct support:** We have worked with several councils, including Herefordshire Council and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LRF (via Portsmouth Council) to develop COVID-19 and recovery communication strategies, campaigns and messaging. This feeds into the creation of [our recovery communications resource](#), which gives practical advice/guidance on communicating the move to recovery and living with COVID-19.
- **COVID-19 communications good practice hub:** This hub holds a range of good practice examples around the public sector in response to COVID-19 and provides key information to enable communications teams to use and adapt content for their own channels and audiences.
- **Communications Health Check:** We have launched a virtual health check offer to support councils to review their recovery communications plans and learnings from the COVID-19 response. This direct support focuses on ensuring councils have the right capacity, strategies and plans in place to engage with their communities around adhering to any new local lockdown rules and recovery from the pandemic. Since launching at the end of August, we have conducted 15 virtual communications health checks,
- **Workshops for directors of Public Health:** We have organised media training workshops for directors of public health in conjunction with the ADPH, to ensure they are well equipped to provide clear communication to residents during the pandemic.
- **Virtual events programme:** We have now held over 100 virtual events since the beginning of the year, with an events programme that carries a focus on COVID-19, including an event on **supporting mental health of communities during COVID-19**, which was attended by 350 attendees and another on [Asset Based Community Development and Local Area Coordination](#) during COVID-19, which attracted 324 attendees. Throughout October and November, we have held five events focussed on COVID-19 recovery and renewal.

### Other activity

- **Communicating improvement at the virtual LGA conference:** The conference programme included speakers from across local and central government and focused in on the local government response to COVID-19 and recovery. The launch event alone was attended by over 600 people. Overall, over 5,000 attendees took part, including in a series of improvement sessions, putting a spotlight on the fantastic work councils have been doing in response to COVID-19 and providing learning and advice to councils (See below for more information).
- **Chief Executive briefings:** These regular briefings, hosted by Mark Lloyd, are for council chief executives and directors of public health and have concentrated on Local Outbreak Plans and the Test and Trace service. Numbers attending have ranged between 299-430. In addition, the Chief Executive bulletins provide updates on the latest COVID-19 guidance

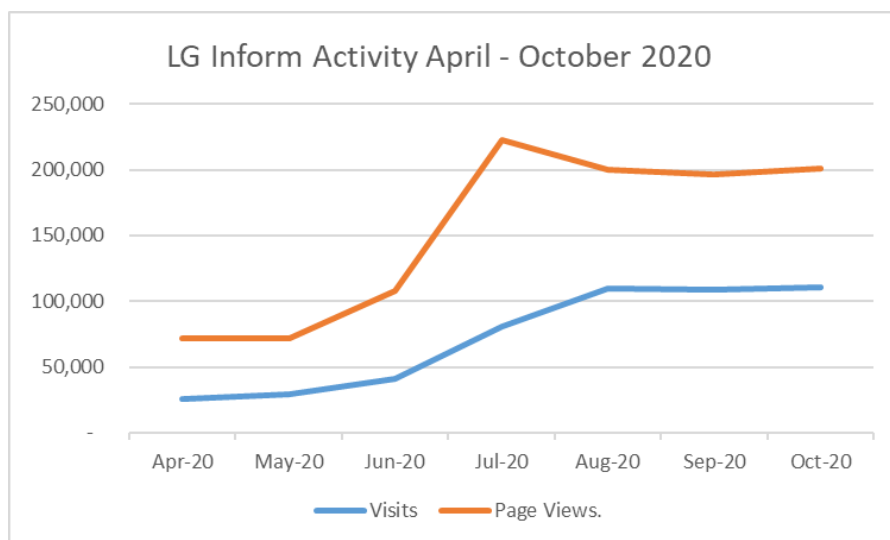
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from central government and support offers within the LGA. These bulletins were sent to councils each day between April and June. Now we are moving from the response phase, bulletins are sent 3 times per week. A similar bulletin is sent from the LGA Chairman to all council leaders.

## Research, LG Inform and LG Inform Plus

### Headlines

- **Predictive analytics:** In November, we published [a guide to using predictive analytics in local public services](#) which draws together contributions from councils and national organisations with policy and technical expertise. A new practitioners' network for local government, undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI) and MHCLG, will be launched in December to connect information managers, analysts and invited experts who want to make better use of vast amounts of linked data and improve and speed-up earlier interventions to aid people's lives.
- **LG Inform:** As shown by the graph below, this platform is a very well used council resource. Spurred on by our **COVID-19 reports**, which provide information on the number of cases and deaths across England and in specific contexts (e.g. council areas, hospitals, care homes), recent reports show the current average number of page views per month is over 200,000 per month. Our COVID-19 reports have received over 600,000 downloads since launch and average over 100,000 downloads per month. Reports on Financial Hardship and Universal Credit are also being well used.



- **LG Inform Recovery and Renewal Panel reports:** We have produced two LG Inform reports to support Recovery and Renewal panels for councils. The first report provides recent contextual information about a local area since the first lockdown, such as COVID-19 cases and deaths, and statistics on employment rates, unemployment benefit claimants and crime figures. The other report provides a demographic overview of a local area.
- **LG Inform Plus:** LG Inform Plus provides information for each ward and smaller areas of geography, so that councils can compare with wards within other regions and nationally. **Reports** published on this platform cover topics including changes resulting from the **Coronavirus Act; school admissions changes; fostering, adoption and care; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; and planning and road traffic orders**. There have been over 3,800 downloads of LG Inform Plus reports between April and August. We have

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recently relaunched LG Inform Plus with a redesigned platform that is more accessible and user-friendly.

### Other activity

- **[Find My Area Tool](#)**: This tool allows councils to link locations with parliamentary constituencies, local authorities, wards and more. Launched at the same time as the newly designed LG Inform Plus site, this tool is designed to help with requests like “In what parliamentary constituencies are businesses affected by a government scheme?”.

## Climate Change and Environment

### Headlines

- **[Net Zero Innovation and Design in the Public Sector \(DiPS\)](#)**: The new DiPs programme was launched on 10 August for councils to gain skills in design to tackle local climate change challenges. The Net Zero Innovation Network was launched in September and is delivered through a collaboration between the LGA and University College London (UCL) It brings together local authorities, universities and other stakeholders to address climate challenges at the local level and seek routes to achieve council’s net zero commitments. Partnerships, funding support and a ‘train the trainer’ model are all key parts of this programme. There were 96 applications for these two programmes, which are now fully underway to support councils in reaching their local climate action plans.
- **[Carbon accounting tool](#)**: With support from Local Partnerships we launched our tool to baseline carbon emissions for councils. This took place in September, along with a webinar on how to use it. The tool collates data to consistently measure greenhouse gas emissions across the country, in order to measure and compare impacts in a standardised way. Latest figures show 138 councils have downloaded the tool and there have been more than 220 downloads in total.
- **[Climate Change Web Hub](#)**: Regularly updated with new offers of support and good practice. The hub currently offers 15 case studies, 44 pieces of notable practice. In the past year, the Hub has received 15,826 views.
- **[Green webinars series](#)**: We have delivered a series of webinars including **renewable energy, decarbonisation of transport, green reset, scrutinising climate action and locking in green behaviours from the pandemic**.

### Other activity

- **[Green finance](#)**: The LGA is working with Local Partnerships to develop support for councils on green finance as part of their green economic recovery. The support offer will provide innovative approaches to accessing green finance and practical guidance, by looking at domestic and international best practice.
- **[Publications](#)**: We have developed a [renewable energy good practice guide](#), which considers the risks and opportunities for councils in developing large scale wind and solar energy generation projects. We are also developing a Sustainable procurement guide, to provide guidance for councils on how to procure sustainably. Our [Climate change ebulletin](#) continues to provide councils with regular news, support offers and good practice.

# Service Specific Support and Other Developments

## Headlines

- **Collection and sharing of COVID-19 related good practice:** We have shared 150+ examples covering nearly 20 themes on our COVID-19 good council practice webpage, which had received 39,494 views in November. The focus of case study collection efforts are now concentrated around unlocking and recovery and renewal examples so that this database remains a valuable tool for councils as they respond to current challenges. **Topics include:** communications; adult social care; children; young people and education; culture, entertainment and other activities; cyber and digital solutions; deaths management; emergency food provision; finances and economy; governance; health and wellbeing; personal protective equipment (PPE); procurement; unlocking; supporting vulnerable residents; waste and recycling.
- **Coronavirus enquires helpline and issues log:** Established to provide an online enquiries helpline with national coverage to receive, categorise, consider and answer issues and ideas relating to pandemic support in local government. Between March and June the enquiries and issues log managed 2,500 complex cases involving over 15,000 email communications.
- **Frequently Asked Questions hub:** At the beginning of the outbreak we launched a FAQ hub to help provide councils with the most up to date responses to their enquiries on an ongoing basis. The hub currently contains over 150 answers to questions on 22 different topics, ranging from Business rate relief and support for business to Waste and Recycling.
- **COVID-19 role-specific support:** we have developed a web hub containing guidance, training and tools for councillors and officers, including on workforce and HR, leadership, virtual meetings, communications, and more, to ensure councils are well equipped to respond to existing and emerging challenges relating to COVID-19, including guidance on [Very High Alert Level Regulations](#).
- **Top tips for Chief Executives:** We have published resource for council chief executives experiencing local intervention due to the coronavirus pandemic on responding to extra restrictions. This includes advice and guidance on how the new alert system works, lessons learnt, as well as video case studies from chief executives with direct experience of tier three restrictions.

## Other activity

- **Other publications, guidance and support:** In addition to the support outlined in above sections, the LGA has provided councils with support to interpret government guidance and legislation on topics including regulatory services, scams, beach safety, mortuary services.
- **A list of publications produced by the LGA is available on page 10 of this document:** We offer guidance on topics such as **role of a councillor role during COVID-19** has been downloaded more than 10,000 times and guidance on **COVID-19 Domestic Abuse Support** has been downloaded over 1,500 times. This list also holds links to new publications, including **lessons learnt from councils' respond to rough sleeping during COVID-19**, **Leisure under lockdown** and on the **Workforce COVID-19 response**.

## Conference ‘Spotlight on’ sessions

During the LGA virtual Annual conference we delivered a programme of improvement focused webinars, putting the spotlight on councils and their officers that have been doing incredible work during the pandemic and beyond. The sessions were very well received and included:

- **Spotlight on Learning Through Crisis:** Brought together councils that have done remarkable work in response to the COVID-19, providing an opportunity to reflect and learn from programmes relating to the use of data and analytics to provide targeted support to vulnerable groups; homelessness; mental health in young people; organisational flex and leadership. It was attended by an audience of 185 and can be watched on our website.
- **Spotlight on Green Reset:** Provided lessons on how new ‘green’ behaviours and a renewed focus on the environment can achieve a more sustainable recovery: This session achieved an audience of 388, with presentations from the session available on our website.
- **Spotlight on the Chief Executive (COVID 19):** Brought together Chief Executives from across the country to reflect on individual responses to COVID-19. It was a closed session, attended by 118 council chief executives, which helped to facilitate open and honest reflections on responses and ways forward.
- **Spotlight on the Councillor:** This session gathered a panel of councillors to discuss what they have done differently, innovatively and what they have learnt about their role as a community leader during COVID-19. It also highlighted good practice and shared learning around how councillors can continue to affect positive change during recovery and beyond.
- **Spotlight on Sector-led Improvement:** This session was attended by 150 people and involved virtual Q&A/polling exercise, allowing the audience to provide views on the future direction of SLI to ensure it reflects councils needs over the next three years.
- **Separate sessions were held with Chief Executives** who took up their role since last summer, and another private session with MHCLG Permanent Secretary and Directors to provide briefing to all Chief Executives and provide them with the opportunity to ask questions.

Recordings and other resources from these sessions are available on the [LGA website](#).

## Resident Satisfaction Polling Survey

We have been tracking people’s perceptions of their local council every 3-4 months since 2012. Our last survey in June saw record levels of satisfaction after the response of local government to the pandemic. The results from the [October \(2020\) survey](#) remain encouraging as they sit above the average recorded over the last eight years.

Summary of positive responses for key measures			
	Feb-20	Jun-20	October-20
Round	25	26	27
	%	%	%
Satisfied with local area as a place to live	81	87	83
Satisfied with way local council runs things	63	75	68

## Appendix 1

Trusts the council	59	71	64
Feel well informed about council's services and benefits	60	69	64
Agree council acts on residents' concerns	57	68	64
Agree council provides value for money	48	57	53

The poll shows 68 per cent of people are satisfied with the way their local council runs things, 64 per cent trust it and 64 per cent feel they are kept informed by the services and benefits it provides. The informed rating – one of the key indicators for us as communicators – has fell from 69 per cent in June, but still stands at its highest level in several years.

Compared to national politicians, those polled were far more likely to say they trusted local councillors to make decisions about how decisions are made in their area. The survey showed 74 per cent trusted councillors, in contrast to 12 per cent who selected MPs and eight per cent for government ministers.

We also included questions in this poll about the crucial issues of how local restrictions to control the pandemic are decided and who should oversee contact tracing. It found 64 per cent of people think local government is best placed to decide on what restrictions are needed to control coronavirus in their local area, and 58 per cent believe councils should be responsible for contact tracing.

## COVID-19 Related Publications and Guidance on the LGA Website

- [Councillor workbook on creating mentally healthy places](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties: Adoption, fostering and care planning and health protection resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020: school admissions](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from the Coronavirus Act](#)
- [COVID-19: a leadership workbook for cabinet members](#)
- [Councillor guidance on emergency response structures](#)
- [Key questions and issues for finance portfolio holders during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Councillor guidance: COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Protecting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Tackling domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [A councillor's workbook on effective opposition during COVID-19, reset and recovery](#)
- [The impact of COVID-19 on culture, leisure tourism and sport](#)
- [Fiscal devolution: adopting an international approach](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties covering special educational needs, planning and road traffic orders resulting from Coronavirus Regulations 2020](#)
- [Councillor guidance: COVID-19 reset and recovery](#)
- [Councillor workbook on creating mentally healthy places](#)
- [Managing the wellbeing of furloughed staff during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Loneliness, social isolation and COVID-19: practical advice](#)
- [Changes to local authority powers and duties resulting from the Coronavirus Act](#)
- [Approaches to managing licensing and related issues during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

## Appendix 1

- [Councillor workbook: Health in All Policies and COVID-19](#)
- [Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Leisure under lockdown: how culture and leisure services responded to COVID-19](#)
- [React, Respond, Renew – Workforce COVID-19 response](#)