



Series 2 Issue 1: Report on Local Authority Historic Environment Staff Resources 2020

Produced by Historic England, Place Services at Essex County Council and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Fieldwork conducted in late 2020 surveyed local authorities on their historic environment team staffing levels in April 2020 and October 2020ⁱ. The data gathered from the 90% of local authorities that responded showed that in April 2020 there were 734.47 full-time equivalent (FTE) historic environment specialists providing advice to local authorities in England. This comprised:

- 461.87 FTEs working on building and area conservation; and
- 272.6 FTEs providing archaeological advice.

The figures given above include:

- 84.73 FTEs Historic Environment Record staff.

In addition to these figures, the survey identified separately:

- 25.9 FTEs funded by Heritage Action Zone fundingⁱⁱ.

1.2 The survey data showed that by October 2020, overall historic environment specialist staffing levels was 728.46. This comprised:

- 458.16 working on building and area conservation; and
- 270.3 providing archaeological advice.

1.3 This evidence suggests that the slight increase in staffing numbers found in the last similar survey in 2018ⁱⁱⁱ is not indicative of a wider recovery, but that gradual decline that has been the established trend since 2006 may be continuing. However, a new methodology employed in 2020 (see below) means that conclusions drawn from direct comparisons with previous datasets should be made with caution.

2 A New Methodology for Series 2

2.1 The Local Authority Staffing Resources survey 2020 is the first of a five-year series of surveys to monitor staffing levels in local authority historic environment teams, funded by Historic England and undertaken by Place Services at Essex County Council, in association with the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers. 'Series 2' is used to differentiate these surveys from the ten published annual surveys of local authority staffing published by Historic England (previously English Heritage) up until 2018.



- 2.1 Historic England has adopted the methodology set out in the Heritage Labour Market Intelligence Toolkit to collect the data for series 2^{iv}. The adoption of this new methodology will make data from this survey comparable with data gathered about other parts of the heritage sector in future.
- 2.2 However, it means that comparison of Series 2 datasets with local authority staffing survey data from previous years should be made with caution. This is because the new methodology may have produced slightly lower numbers of conservation staff than the previous methodology, for the following reasons:
- Previous surveys used different questions to collect conservation staffing numbers, which may have led to a wider definition of ‘conservation staff’ than used in 2020.
 - It is possible that the 2020 survey did not identify all management time for conservation teams, given the change in methodology and survey questions.
 - The previous methodology involved surveying conservation staff and archaeology staff separately. Because the aim this year was to contact a single contact in each authority, members of the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers were prioritised. This may mean some local authorities – particularly those where conservation and archaeology services are located separately – mis or under-reported building conservation staff numbers.
 - The new methodology records 0 staff numbers for authorities that did not respond. Pre-2020 data extrapolated missing data from previous survey returns (i.e. if an authority did not respond there was assumed to be no change).
- This means that comparison of the data from the 2018 and 2020 survey should be made with caution.
- 2.3 Due to the exceptional circumstances of the 2020 covid-19 pandemic, data for the 2020 survey of staffing resource was collected for two reference dates, April 1st 2020 and October 1st 2020. The survey will revert to a single data reference point of 1st April for subsequent years.
- 2.4 360 Local Authorities and National Park Authorities were considered, including 6 new local authorities established since 2018, and 11 local authority owned or affiliated organisations providing heritage services. 9 organisations were removed from the survey to avoid counting shared services twice, for a total sample size of n=351. 316 responses were returned, a 90% return rate^v.

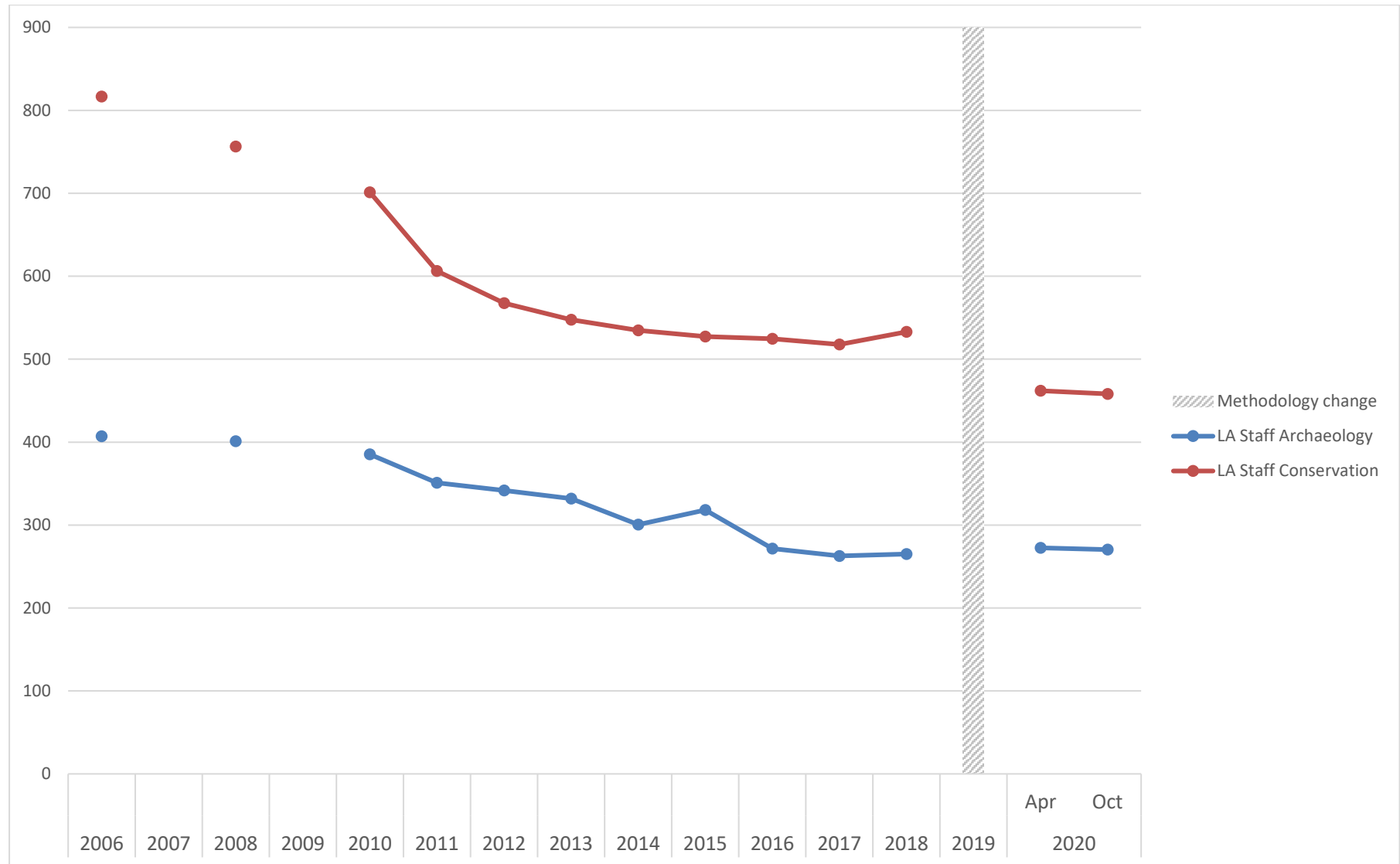
3. Results

- 3.1 Although the figures from 2018 and 2020 must be compared with caution, the slight reduction in staffing levels between April 2020 and October 2020 within the scope of the 2020 survey is suggestive of the previous decade’s trend of decline:
- FTEs working on building and area conservation had reduced by 0.80% (3.71 FTE).
 - FTEs providing archaeological advice had fallen by 0.84% (2.3 FTE).
 - Overall levels of historic environment staffing had reduced by 0.8% (6.01 FTE), from 734.47 to 728.46.



- 3.2 It is therefore possible to say that:
- Between 2006 and 2018 the number of conservation specialists fell by 35% (283.4FTE). The number of archaeological specialists advising local authorities in England also fell by 35% (142.5 FTE).
 - The greatest decrease in staffing occurred between 2006 and 2012, with more gradual decline recorded thereafter (see graph 1 and table 1).
 - Building and area conservation staff numbers have followed this pattern, but numbers of archaeology staffing are more variable with significant fluctuations between 2014 and 2016.
 - Together the datasets therefore suggest that building and area conservation staffing has been stable but in gradual decline for 10 years, whereas archaeology staffing is less predictable on an annual basis but also in decline.

Chart 1 shows the national reduction in local authority historic environment services since 2006^{vi}, showing both Series 1 data (pre 2019) and Series 2 data. Note that Series 2 data is based upon a 90% return rate, less than that reported for Series 1 (see section 2.2 in the report).



Staff type	Measure	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total reduction	Break	Apr-20	Oct-20	
		Earlier surveys				Series 1 data												Series 2 data	
LA Staff Conservation	FTE	816.77		756.34		701.2	606.46	567.64	547.7	534.6	527.37	524.6	517.7	533			461.87	458.16	
LA Staff Conservation	%age			-7%		-7%	-14%	-6%	-4%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%	3%	-35%			-1%	
LA Staff Archaeology	FTE	407.15		401.14		385.25	351.05	341.8	332.01	300.5	318.18	271.7	262.8	265			272.6	270.3	
LA Staff Archaeology	%age			-1%		-4%	-9%	-3%	-3%	-9%	6%	-15%	-3%	1%	-35%			-1%	
Total	FTE	1223.92		1157.48		1086.45	957.51	909.44	879.71	835.1	845.55	796.3	780.5	798			734.47	728.46	
Total	%age			-5%		-6%	-12%	-5%	-3%	-5%	1%	-6%	-2%	2%	-35%			-1%	

Table 1 shows the reduction in local authority historic environment services since 2006^{vii}. Note that Series 2 data is based upon a 90% return rate, less than that reported for Series 1 (see section 2.2 in the report).



ⁱ Place Services at Essex County Council conducted the fieldwork on behalf of Historic England between 1st October 2020 and 1st February 2021.

ⁱⁱ Historic England collected data on Heritage Action Zone staffing in April 2020 to monitor the effect of this funding initiative on local authority capacity. It does not align with staffing data collected in previous years and so is not discussed in this report.

ⁱⁱⁱ Historic England, ALGAO and IHBC (2018). *The Tenth report on Local Authority Staff Resources*. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/tenth-report-la-staff-resources/tenth-report-la-staff-resources/>.

^{iv} Historic England and CiFA (2019). *Heritage Labour Market Intelligence Toolkit*. Available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/social-and-economic-research/heritage-labour-market-intelligence/#:~:text=The%20Heritage%20LM%20Toolkit%20enables,intelligence%20across%20the%20heritage%20space>.

^v The figures in this report are based on the 90% local authority response rate achieved at the end of 2020. In conducting fieldwork for later years, Place Services were able to gather conjectural responses from those local authorities that did not complete during the 2020 fieldwork period. This data is not taken into account here but will be reflected in later reports and Heritage Counts datasets.

^{vi} In Autumn 2020, staffing data for both April and October 2020 figures were collected using a new methodology. We expect the new methodology to produce slightly lower numbers of conservation staff than the previous methodology (see section 2). Comparisons between figures obtained by the old and new methodologies should be made with caution. In particular, the new methodology (2020 onwards) does not include staff numbers for authorities that did not respond. Pre-2020 data extrapolated missing data from previous survey returns (i.e. if an authority did not respond there was assumed to be no change).

^{vii} In Autumn 2020, staffing data for both April 2020 and October 2020 were collected using a new methodology. We expect the new methodology to produce slightly lower numbers of conservation staff than the previous methodology (see section 2). Comparisons between figures obtained by the old and new methodologies should be made with caution.