



Street Cleansing: Trend analysis 2016/17

This briefing provides details on the performance information available from APSE's performance networks service looking at performance indicators and current policy issues for councils who deliver street cleansing services.

Key issues

- Service costs have surprisingly increased for 2016/17 as opposed to a declining level of costs for the last two years. It will be interesting to see in these times of continuing budgets cuts, if this increase in costs will continue to occur in the coming year.
- It is interesting to see spend on education /publicity has risen as has the **number of FPN's issued, which suggest prevention is now becoming a priority** as staff on the ground are being reduced through budget efficiencies.
- Service cuts and increasing workloads on staff may now be having a detrimental effect, as for the first time in 2 years staff absence levels have risen.

Trend analysis

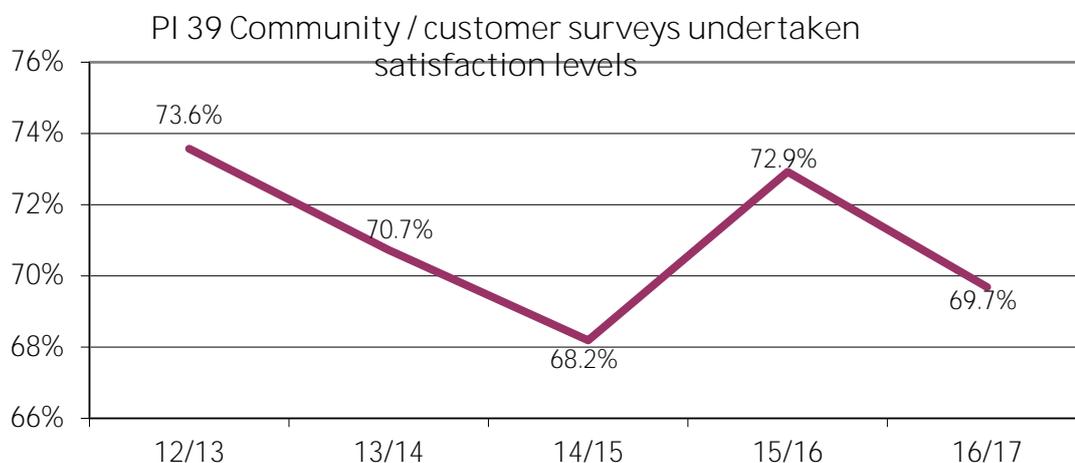
Overview

APSE performance networks is now in its 19th year of providing benchmarking for a wide cross-section of local authorities from throughout the UK. Street cleansing data has been included in the comparison process since 2000/01 with results reported annually across a broad range of performance indicators. The continuing trends across the service are examined each year to provide further evidence for participating councils of how their own service compares against the national picture. The analysis is based on averages across the whole service and compares **this year's figures (2016/17) with previously submitted data.**

Performance indicators for street cleansing continue to be banded, with a balanced set of headline indicators identified across the triangulated themes of cost, quality and customer satisfaction as key performance indicators. This summary deals with each theme in turn using data from 2016/17 against returns from previous 5 years.

Trend analysis

Customer satisfaction levels have decreased year on year which is probably due to the unprecedented cuts to local authority budgets. The exception is 2015/16 when a sharp rise in the average across participating councils was noted. However, as can be seen in the chart below, the first results for 2016/17 has once again seen the average reduce down by 3.2%.



Quality

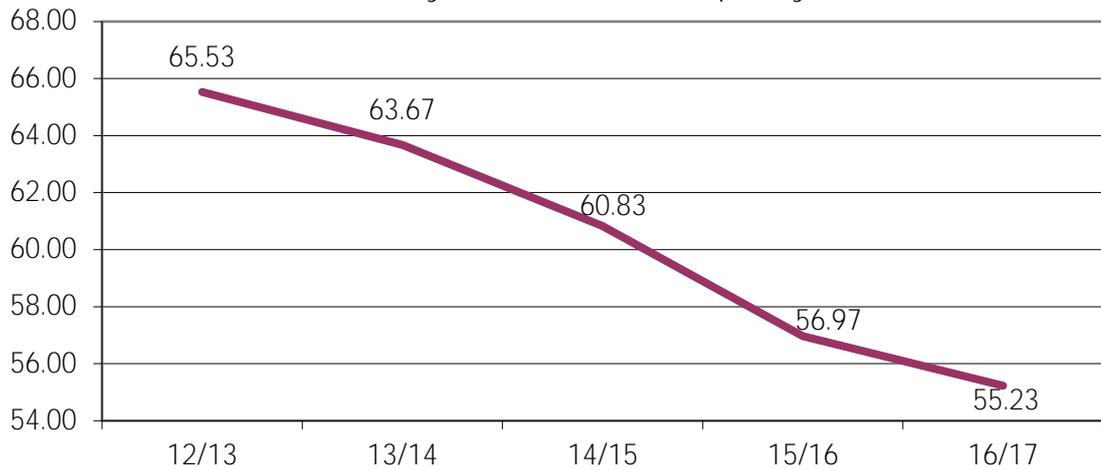
It is some years since the government abolished the national indicator set in England, removing the need for councils to formally report their cleanliness levels for the old NI 195. However, a number of authorities recognised the value of continuing to measure their performance in this area which has enabled APSE to retain it as a key performance indicator (subject to the prerequisite number of inspections still being carried out). APSE have been working with Defra on the Data and Monitoring Working Group to support the Litter Strategy. The aim is to develop a baseline and an affordable, impartial, statistically robust and proportionate methodology for assessing and monitoring the extent of litter in England. One of the indicators we are reviewing is the old NI 195 measure on levels of litter and therefore further updates will be provided on the quality indicators for English local authorities in future reports.

With regard to Scotland returns are separated into urban areas and rural/mixed, in line with Keep Scotland Beautiful who carry out their own inspections for cleanliness under LEAMS (Local Environmental Audit & Management System). The average results for urban councils last year reduced very slightly by 0.8% to 77.33, while rural/mixed improved from 84.97 to 88.22%.

In Wales it is still notable that the average result for PI 37g (LEAMS cleanliness index score from self-inspections) increased by 2.08%, although the same index score from external inspections (PI 37e LEAMS cleanliness index score assessed by Keep Wales Tidy) showed a marginal 0.35% decrease in standard.

Where quality has declined notably, across all UK councils, it is within the internal systems and procedures that support the service. The reduction in the average score for “community consultation and quality assurance” continued in 2016/17, a further 3.1% drop for an indicator that was 33.3% higher just 7 years ago.

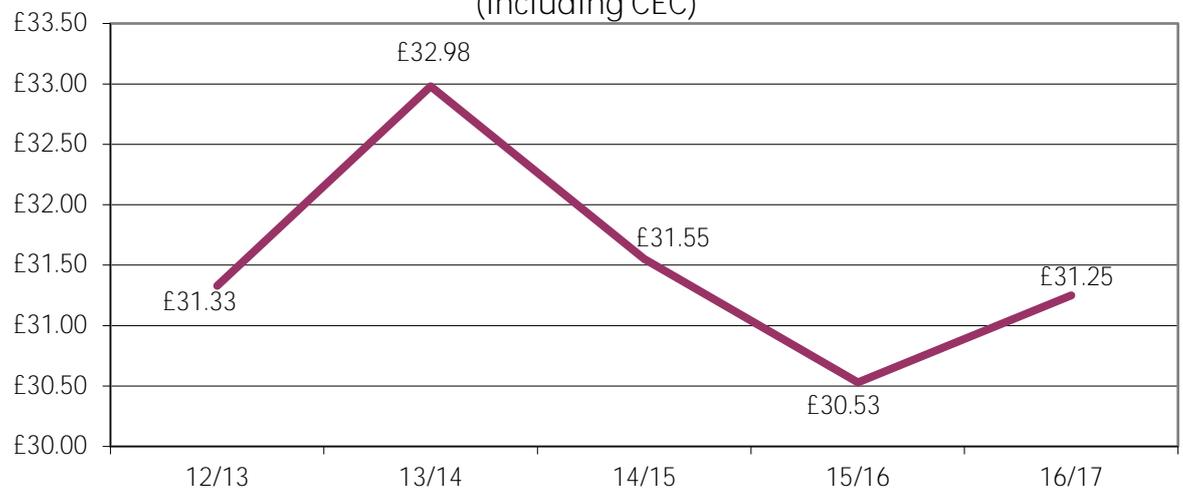
PI 17 Community consultation and quality assurance



Cost

In recent years the cost indicators had begun to show the downward trend that had been envisaged some time before when widespread budget cuts started to be introduced. However, 2016/17 has seen a reversal of the reduction in average cost of street cleansing service per household and a 2.4% increase. Sometimes variances are caused by having a few different participants year to year, but analysis limited to those authorities who supplied cost data for the last two years shows a small increase in the cost per household amongst them as well.

PI 03 Cost of cleansing service per household (including CEC)

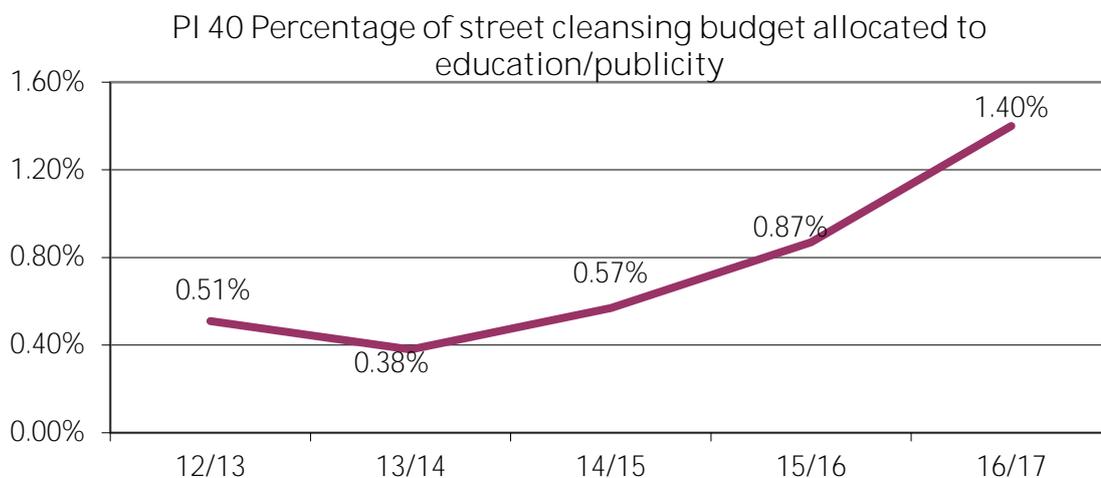


However, it is interesting to note that the average for PI 04 cost per household (excluding CEC) actually continued to reduce last year from £29.31 to £29.12 per household, indicative of the trend noted in previous years of an increasing amount of CEC's being borne by street cleansing and other front-line services. Indeed, the average central establishment charges (PI 38) increased by 2% again last year.

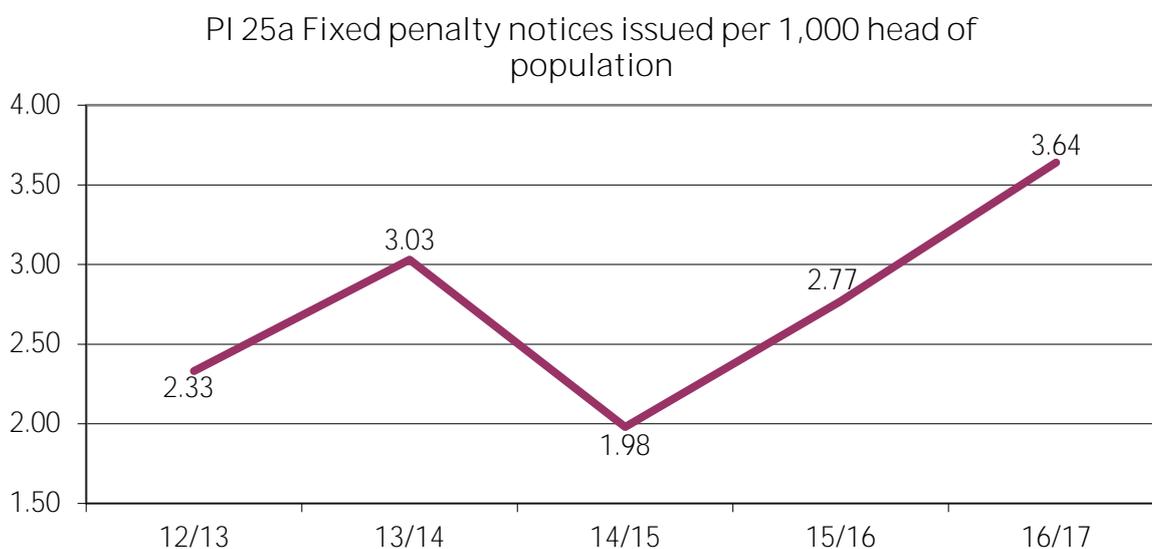
Productivity

APSE have always championed the need for reducing the demand for the street cleansing service through education and publicity campaigns, particularly against littering and dog fouling. When budgets first started tightening under austerity

measures, the amount of budget being set aside for this significantly reduced. It is pleasing to see the reversal continue, a further increase of 61% showing on last year's average taking the percentage figure to 1.40% of street cleansing budget now being allocated to education and publicity, the highest that it has been for 10 years.



Alongside education, enforcement has been viewed as providing a deterrent to further reduce demand on the service, and there has been a notable increase in the amount of fixed penalty notices issued by participating authorities over the past few years. This trend certainly continued last year with a further 56.2% rise in FPN's issued per 1,000 head of population.

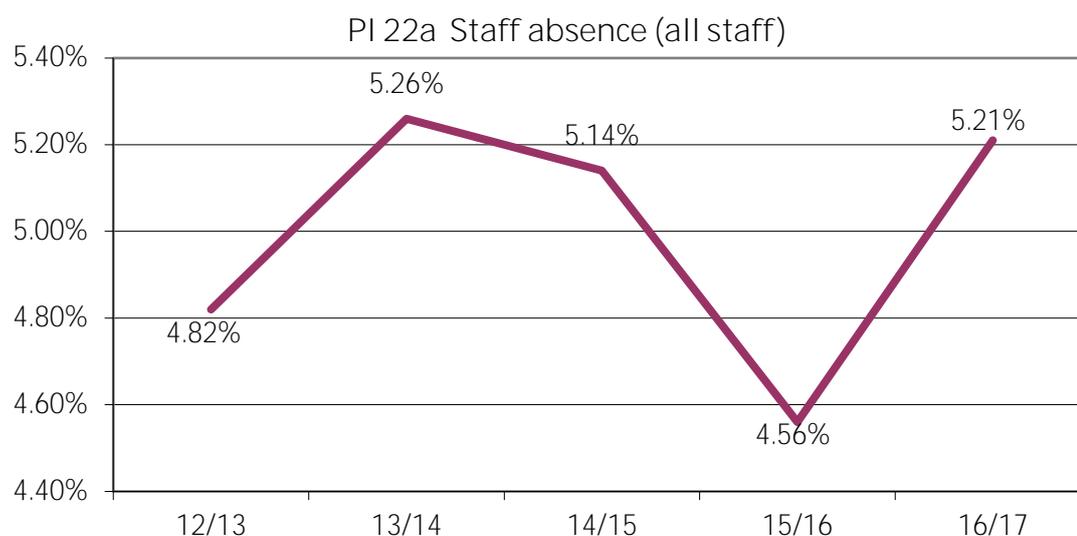


Staffing

One of the other performance indicators that APSE have tracked for street cleansing over a number of years has related to staff absence. This provides a barometer for the state of the industry as a whole and allows individual authorities to see where they stand against the national picture.

Over the past few years there has been a downward trend in the average amount of staff absence in this service, the result of national pressure across all services to reduce public sector absence levels and closer scrutiny from schemes introduced to assist in reducing levels. However, this is offset against the pressures that local

government continues to face in terms of budget pressures that are also affecting staff health. 2016/17 saw an increase in the average, up to 5.21%, the first upturn for three years, although the previous year had seen the lowest level recorded in 17 years of data collection.



Interpretation of data

Although the average cost per household increased last year, this was only for the PI that includes central establishment charges. When these are excluded, the cost has continued to reduce, budget cuts clearly still affecting front-line service provision. This is also starting to have the inevitable repercussions on quality, although councils around the UK are still producing remarkable results as they prioritise their efforts. Staff absence also marginally increased last year to put further strain on managing the service.

Increased use of education and enforcement is showing how authorities are trying to tackle litter and other environmental problems at source. Internally, the ongoing reduction in the scores for community consultation and quality assurance, undoubtedly another area of spending reduction, might also help to explain why customer satisfaction has declined.

Conclusions

Like all neighbourhood services budget pressures will continue to impact on street cleansing services but local authorities are demonstrating resilience and innovation in how services are delivered. APSE continues to work with UK wide government administrations to support developments in areas like litter reduction. APSE is also developing new models of inspections such as the LAMS (Land Audit Management System) which as well as helping the frontline service teams can be used as a tool to engage community volunteers. APSE is also working with BBITS/Love Clean Streets to develop an App for LAMS. The App includes GIS location and photo evidence for the inspections which eliminates the manual input of spreadsheets, providing an effective way to monitor quality. To ensure your authority is submitting data to APSE Performance Networks or to get involved with the LAMS inspection system please contact the [APSE Performance Networks Team using this link](#).

The APSE Street Cleansing Seminar 2018 will also debate the issues of street cleansing services and how we keep our communities clean, green and safe. You can access details about the seminar, which will be held on the 15 February 2018 in Warwick [using this link](#).

APSE member councils can also access support in street cleansing through the free to attend advisory groups. [You can sign up the group using this link](#). We welcome attendance from officers, elected members and trade union representatives.

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