



Briefing 18-06

January 2018

## Trading Standards Service: Trend Analysis 2016/17

### Key Issues

- This briefing provides information on the cost, quality and performance of trading standards service for the year 2016/17.
- There are significant differences in cost per head for the provision of the service but, there may be clear reasons why there are such differences e.g. geographical size of area, number of premises requiring inspection etc. These differences will be a key area of work to ensure like authorities are grouped together to allow realistic comparisons.
- There is evidence of high degrees of customer satisfaction recorded, and similarly with regards to dealing with customer complaints.
- As more data is received and family groups are created, then more meaningful comparisons will be able to be developed.

### Overview

This year marks the first official year of the benchmarking model for trading standards services. The programme has been further developed by APSE performance networks along with the support and guidance of the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS). The programme provides performance indicators for customer/consumer relations, inspection and intervention, staffing, and financial performance for the service throughout the UK.

The following summary aims to provide participating authorities with an overview of the service performance, what this infers, and what further activity and analysis individual authorities and their benchmarking groups could consider. The analysis in this summary is based on 'service wide averages' across all participating local authorities for 2016/17.

### Trend analysis

As 2016/17 represents the first full year report for trading standards, there is no previous year validated comparative data or trends available currently for analysis.

However the data collected does allow the current state of costs, productivity customer relations and staffing and staff development to be compared amongst the participants.

The benchmarking programme will also need to fine tune any national differences regarding legislation, responsibilities and terminology. Many of these considerations will be subject to working group and advisory group discussions throughout the coming year.

#### The data collected

The data itself shows significant differences across the areas of performance benchmarking, nowhere more clearly can this be seen with regards to costs of service per 1,000 head of population, where costs range from £1,127 to £7,306. Obviously there may be clear reasons why there are such differences e.g. geographical size of area, number of premises requiring inspection etc. But certainly where authorities are of similar sizes and workloads are comparable, then there ought not to be significant differences in costs or productivity levels; where this does occur however this provides a great networking opportunity to share best practice and explore the reason behind these differences.

This year APSE will be placing local authorities into 'family groups' which will be based on population density. Further work will be carried out by the working group to establish other factors which need to be taken into account when defining family group profiles.

With regards to customer relations it is welcome to see that considerable success has been achieved with high degrees of satisfaction recorded, and similarly with regards to dealing with customer complaints. Where a lower score is recorded then it would be interesting to discover the reasons for this.

As time passes and further data is gathered, as with so many other front-line local authority services currently benchmarked, the information provided will help managers to judge the quality and economic efficiency of their own services and where better performance levels are identified, **use APSE's network to share best practice and innovation.**

#### **The following is a list of the current performance indicators 2016-17 for Trading Standards.**

As further developments take place within the service there will be opportunities to refine these PIs and any comments that members wish to make about the current set are of course welcome.

#### Key performance indicators

PI 01a Gross cost of Trading Standards service per 1,000 head of population (excluding CECs)

PI 01b Gross cost of Trading Standards service per 1,000 head of population (including CECs)

PI 02a Net cost of Trading Standards service per 1,000 head of population (excluding CECs)

PI 02b Net cost of Trading Standards service per 1,000 head of population (including CECs)

## Customer / consumer relations

PI 05 Percentage of **customers satisfied with service** ('very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied') provided by the consumer complaint service

PI 06 Percentage of customers who felt that our intervention helped them to better manage their business

PI 07 Percentage of consumer complaints completed within 14 days

PI 08 Percentage of business requests completed within 14 days

## Inspection and intervention

PI 09 Percentage of premises due an inspection that were inspected within the reporting period

PI 10 Percentage of new businesses which have been risk-rated (e.g. by inspection, desk-top assessment, self-audit etc.) within 3 months of coming to the attention of the authority

PI 11 Percentage of tobacco retailers from whom at least one test purchase is made

PI 12 Ratio of tobacco retailers to total test purchases made

PI 13 Percentage of tobacco retailers given advice

PI 19 Percentage of non-compliant businesses brought into compliance within 30 days

## Staffing and staff development

PI 14 Average number of hours per officer per annum on continued professional development

PI 15b Percentage short term staff absence (all trading standards employees) - excluding Scotland

PI 16b Percentage long term staff absence (all trading standards employees) - excluding Scotland

PI 17b Days per employee short term staff absence (all trading standards employees) - Scotland only

PI 18b Staff absence days per employee (all trading standards employees) - Scotland only

To get involved in this service please feel free to contact Wayne Priestley [wpriestley@apse.org.uk](mailto:wpriestley@apse.org.uk) or email [performance.networks@apse.org.uk](mailto:performance.networks@apse.org.uk) to find out if your authority is already a member.

Kindest regards

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