



Public authority transport network benchmarking survey 2010/11

State of the market analysis

Briefing 12/20

April 2012

Introduction

As part of the ongoing development of the PATN, as a management resource, the concept of online benchmarking was trialled successfully and this survey represents the 4th annual exercise aimed at allowing members to share best practice and KPIs.

This survey is the second joint survey between the FTA and APSE. The aim of this partnership was to enable authorities who participated in the APSE Performance Networks benchmarking exercise not to have to input duplicate data into two separate surveys.

The Public Authority Transport Network (PATN) is an e-enabled discussion forum made available to public sector operators who are members of the Freight Transport Association (FTA).

The PATN has a membership of over 900 individuals representing 428 unique organisations including Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, 'Blue Light' services and other public sector organizations.

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not for profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK, promoting excellence in public services. APSE Performance Networks is the largest voluntary public sector benchmarking service across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and covers 14 frontline service areas including transport operations and vehicle maintenance.

FTA represents the transport interests of companies moving goods by road, rail, sea and air. FTA's 14,000 members operate over 220,000 goods vehicles, around half the UK fleet. In addition, they consign over 90 per cent of freight moved by rail and over 70 per cent of sea and air freight.

Aims of the survey

The survey has three key aims:

- To identify *best practice* for fleet management and vehicle maintenance.
- Results to demonstrate *value for money* based on strategic rather than operational costs.
- Possible to complete the questionnaire within one hour and is an 'on-line' *desk-top based* exercise which can be saved and re-visited if necessary.

About the survey

The survey was issued in winter 2011 and related to the financial year 2010-11. Individual benchmarking results and a summary report were issued to participating authorities in January 2012. The survey asked various questions on the state of market for transport services including workload, recruitment and retention of staff,

job evaluation, staff absence, apprentices and whether services are sold to other organisations. This briefing paper is a resume of these responses received to these questions.

If your authority does not currently participate in this survey and would also like to receive benchmarking analysis for your authority for 2011-12, please contact djohns@apse.org.uk

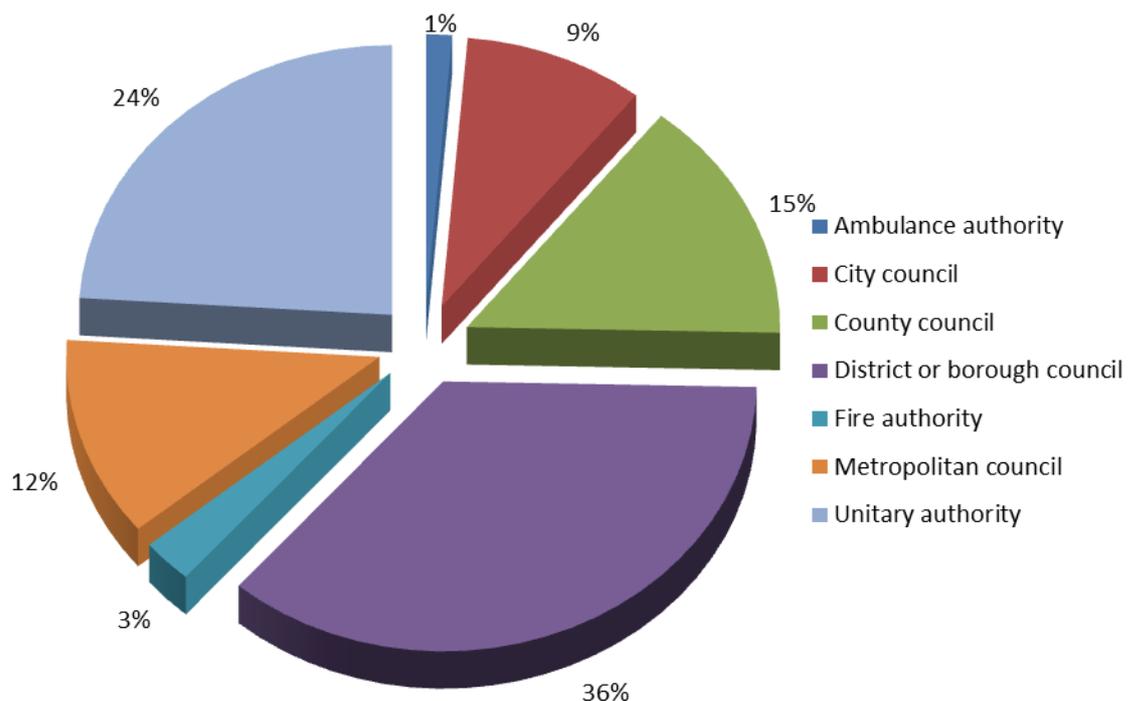
Participation summary

The survey was sent to 428 organisations within the Public Authority Transport Network (PATN) and 219 organisations involved with APSE.

Initially the survey sought general information about the participants' authority. This included the type of authority they were from, and where they are geographically situated within the United Kingdom.

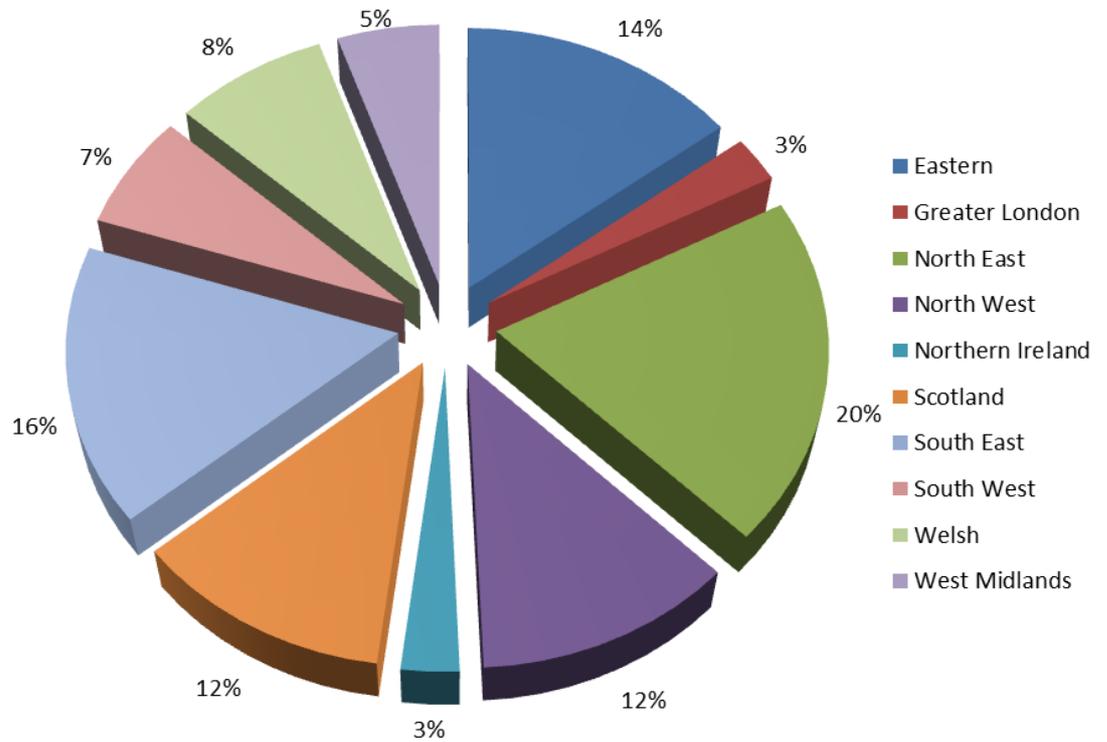
In total, 76 authorities completed the survey and these can be categorised into the following types.

Type of authority

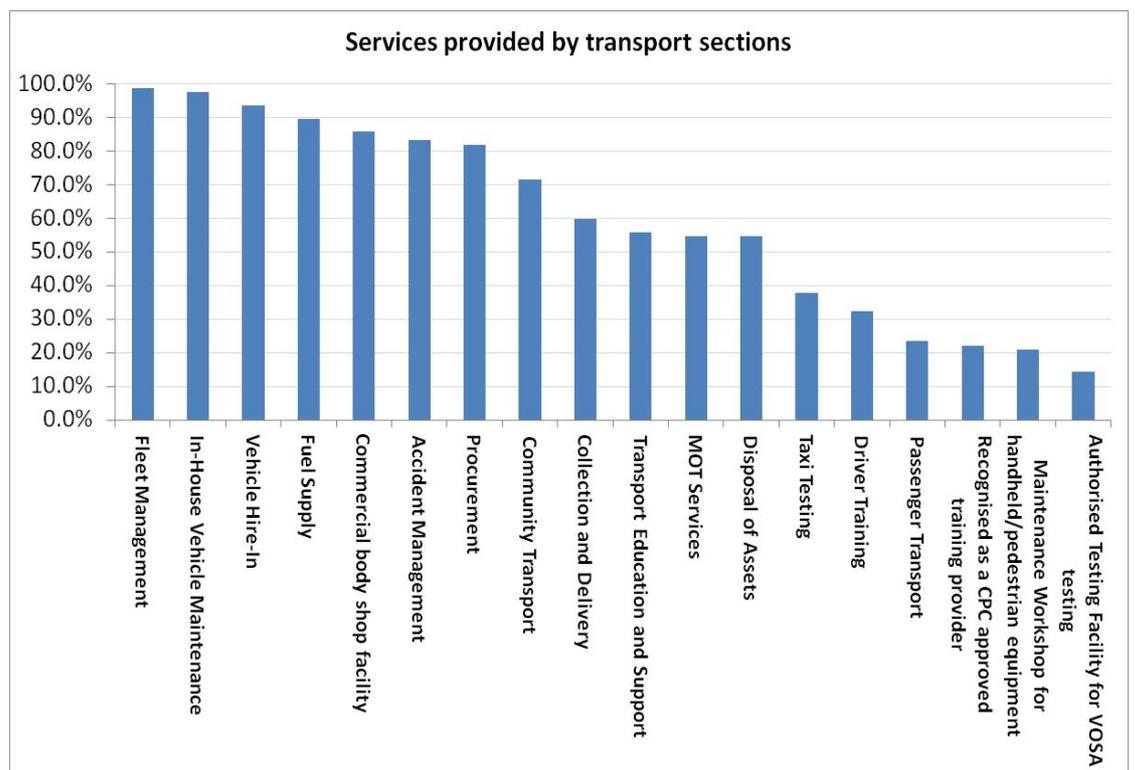


Type of Local Authority	Number of responses
Ambulance authority	1
City council	7
County council	11
District or borough council	27
Fire authority	2
Metropolitan council	9
Unitary authority	18
Total	76

Geographical regions of authorities



Types of services provided by participants

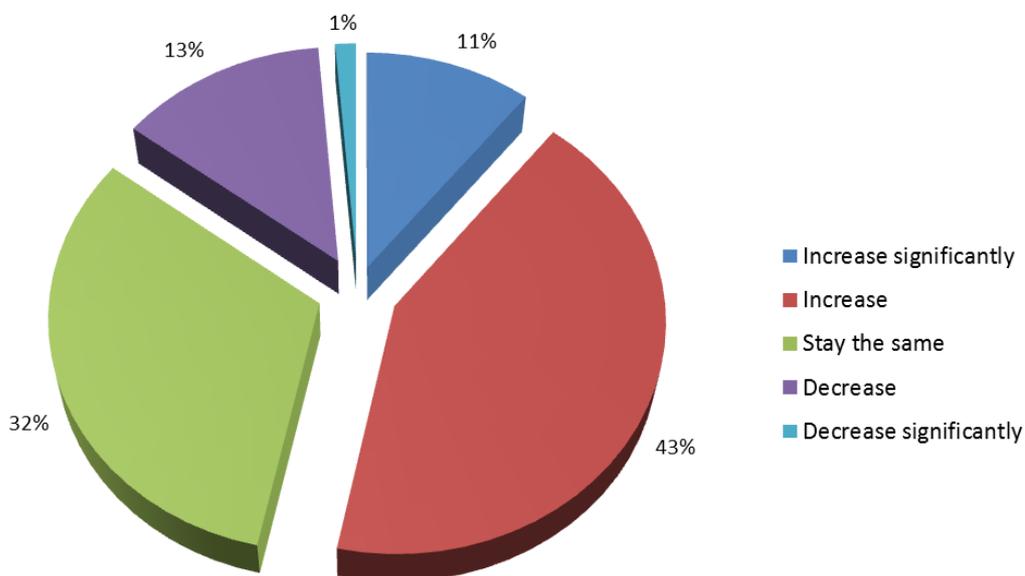


Results summary

a) Workload

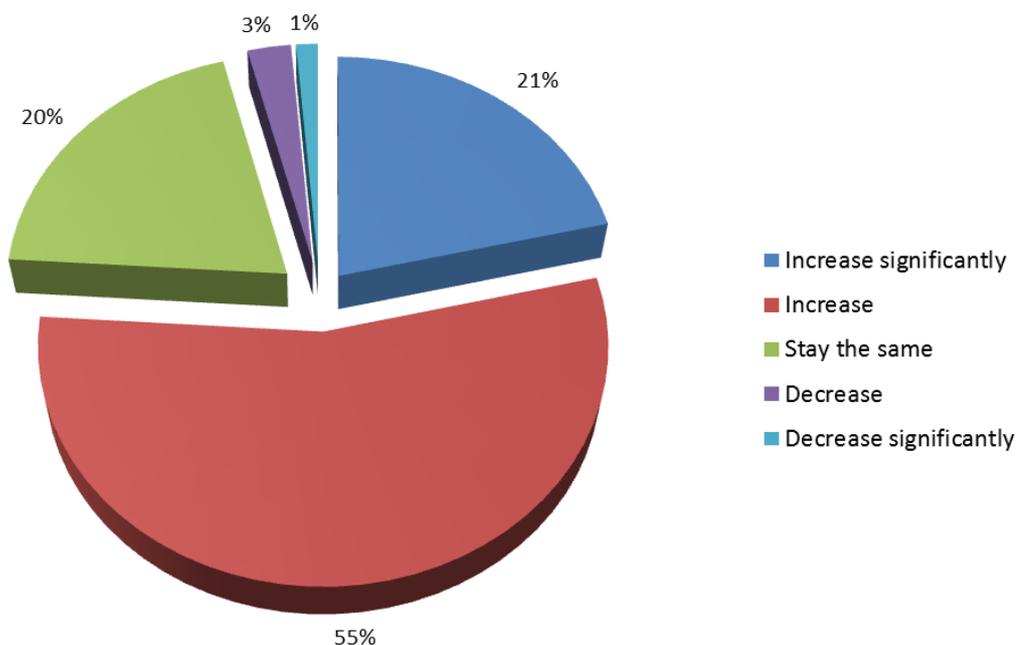
The survey asked how authorities expect the workload of the transport section to change over the next 12 months and the responses are shown in the chart below.

Transport section workload expectations for the next 12 months



Therefore, 54% expected the workload of the transport section to increase or increase significantly within the next 12 months, which is an increase from 41% when this survey was conducted in 2009-10. The survey also asked whether participants expected their personal workload to change over the next 12 months and the results to this question indicate that a greater number of participants (76%) thought that there would be an increase in their personal workload.

Personal workload expectations for the next 12 months



b) Expected changes to the transport service over the next 12 months

93% of respondents expect to remain in-house over the next 12 months, which is a slight increase on the percentage reported during 2009-10. APSE's research on *'Insourcing: a guide to bringing local authority services back in-house'* found that there is mounting evidence that councils have been bringing services back in-house and are continuing to do so. Case studies on in-sourcing fleet services are available in this publication by clicking [here](#).

The survey asked how organisations expected the budget for transport to change over the next 12 months. 55% expected this to decrease, 33% expected it to stay the same and 12% expect this to increase. Compared to the survey in 2009-10, this shows that fewer respondents expected the transport budget to decrease in this survey (67% expected it to decrease in 2009-10).

The survey then explored this further and asked for growth areas and areas where work may decrease over the next 12 months and some of the responses are shown below.

Growth areas for transport services

- MOTs and repair work for Class 4, 7 and HGV's
- Compliance
- Recycling and waste services
- Driver training and development (CPC, NVQ, Permits)
- Working with other councils and partnership working
- Combined utilisation of assets and resources
- External/private work and trading
- In-house work and repairs to equipment
- Approved manufacturer service centre
- Low carbon vehicles
- Tachograph calibration
- Bringing services back in-house
- Taxi testing
- Expansion of the fleet management remit (operational control of the fleet and the ability to enforce)
- Reduction of external contractors and using in-house vehicles
- Community engagement/voluntary sector related work
- Performance & efficiency networking with other councils to share best practice
- Pool vehicles and travel planning will generate more work.

Areas where work may decrease

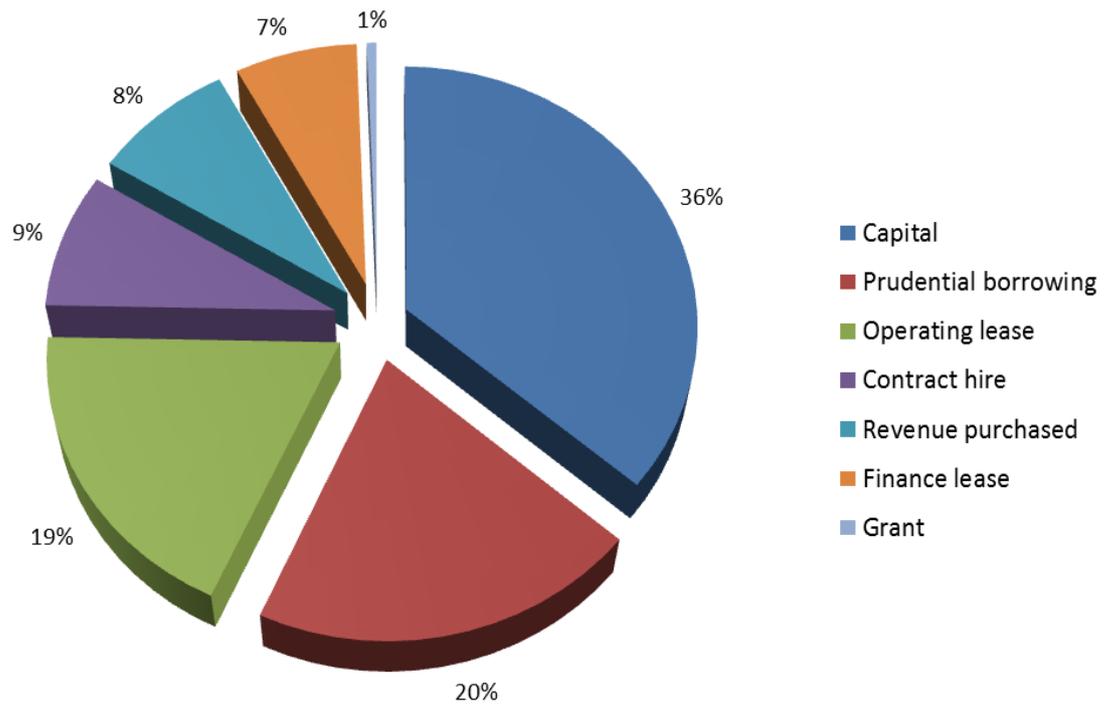
- Councils core fleet numbers
- Reduction in fleet will reduce maintenance work
- Community, social care, educational and health transport
- Fewer hired in vehicles
- Budgets and staff

- Specialist services with high set up costs
- Carbon efficiency programmes
- Reduction in new vehicles covered by warranty
- Refuse collection vehicles e.g. Double shifting

c) Fleet profile

The survey asked how the fleet is financed and the breakdown is in the chart below.

Trends in fleet financing in 2010-11

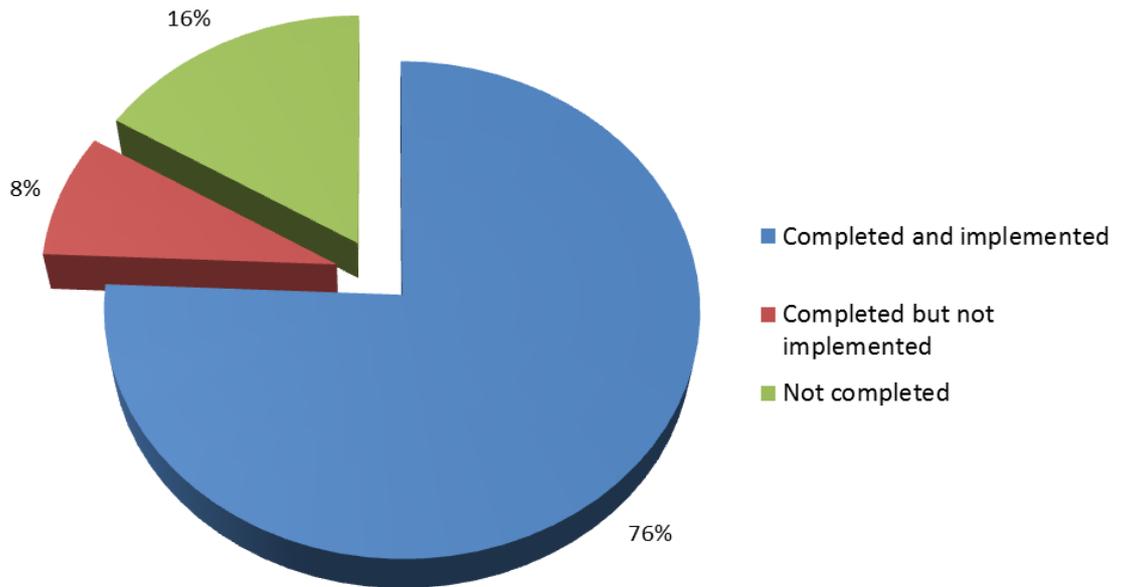


The survey also asked whether respondents utilise any vehicle tracking systems and 79% answered 'yes'.

d) Job evaluation

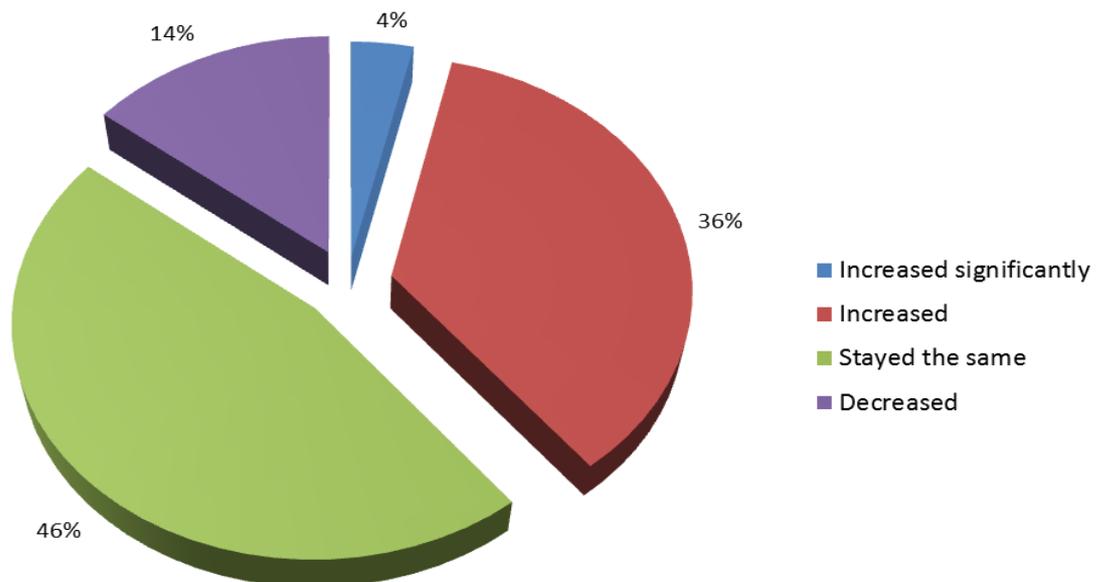
The survey found that 76% of organisations had completed and implemented job evaluation.

Job evaluation trends in 2010-11



For the majority of organisations (which this question applied to), this had resulted in wages increasing or staying the same.

Wage outcomes as a result of job evaluation



d) Staffing issues

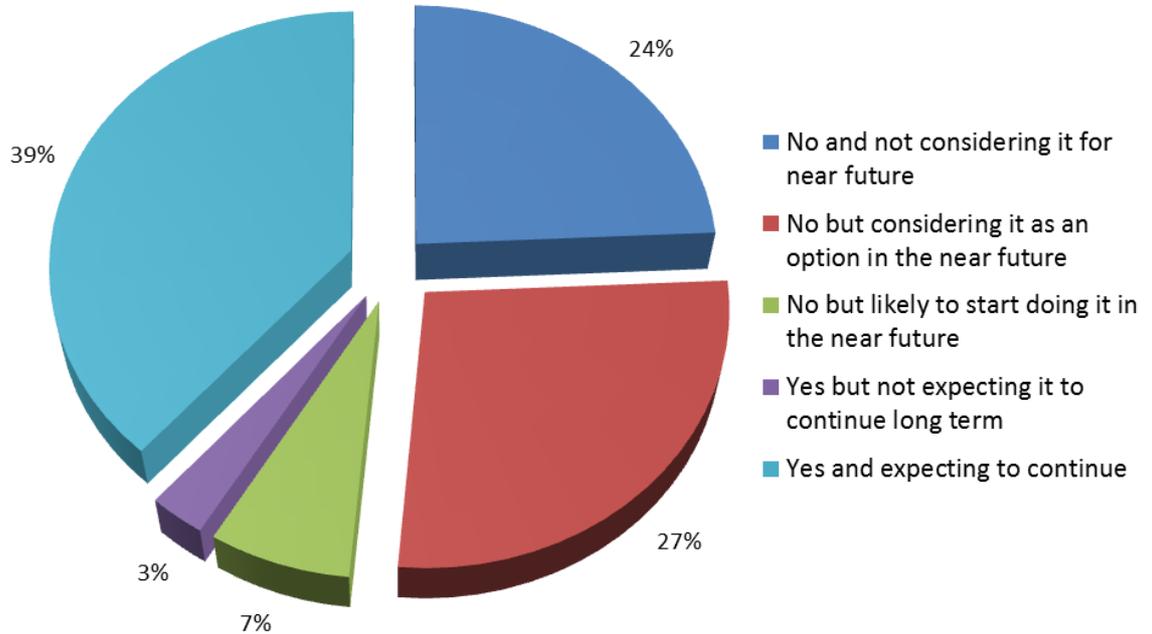
The survey asked 'irrespective of any recruitment freezes your authority has in place, do you have trouble recruiting staff?' 70% of respondents answered 'no' to this question (which is similar to last year's figure). The majority of respondents (90%) did not have any trouble retaining trained staff as well.

81% of respondents thought that staff absence levels were at an acceptable level. Just over half of the respondents (53%) run an apprenticeship scheme.

e) Selling services outside of the local authority

39% of respondents currently sell their services outside of the local authority and expect this to continue. The breakdown of the responses is shown in the chart below.

Trends in selling services outside of local authorities



Therefore, a further 34% of respondents are likely to start selling their services outside of the local authority or are considering it as an option in the near future, which is a 10% increase on last year's figure. This increase reflects how local authorities are trying to achieve efficiencies through generating income.