



performance networks

Public authority transport network benchmarking survey 2011/12

State of the market analysis

Briefing 13/17

May 2013

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 5th annual exercise aimed at allowing members to share best practice and KPIs.

This survey is the third 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 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.
- To provide results which demonstrate value for money based on strategic rather than operational costs.
- To complete the questionnaire within one hour. This 'on-line' desk-top based questionnaire can be saved and re-visited if necessary.

About the survey

The survey was issued in January 2013 and related to the financial year 2011-12. Individual benchmarking results and a summary report were issued to participating authorities in April 2013. 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, please contact djohns@apse.org.uk

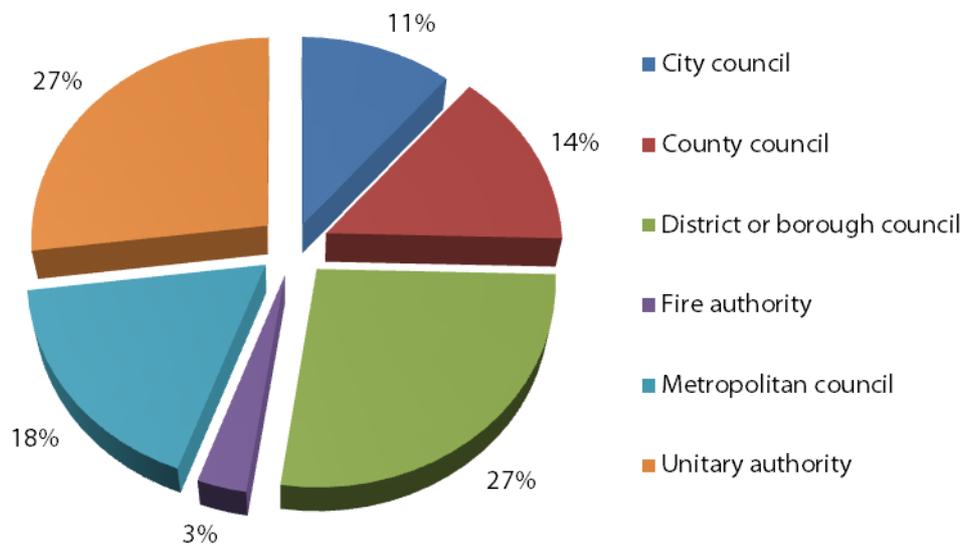
Participation summary

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

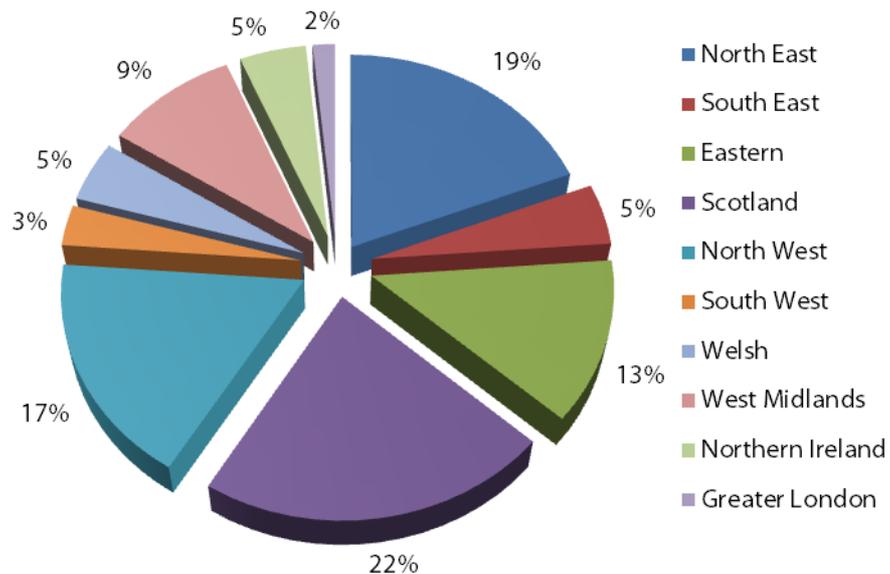
Initially the survey sought general information about the participants' authority. This included the type of authority they were from, and where they are geographically situated within the United Kingdom.

In total, 63 authorities completed the survey and these can be categorised into the following types.

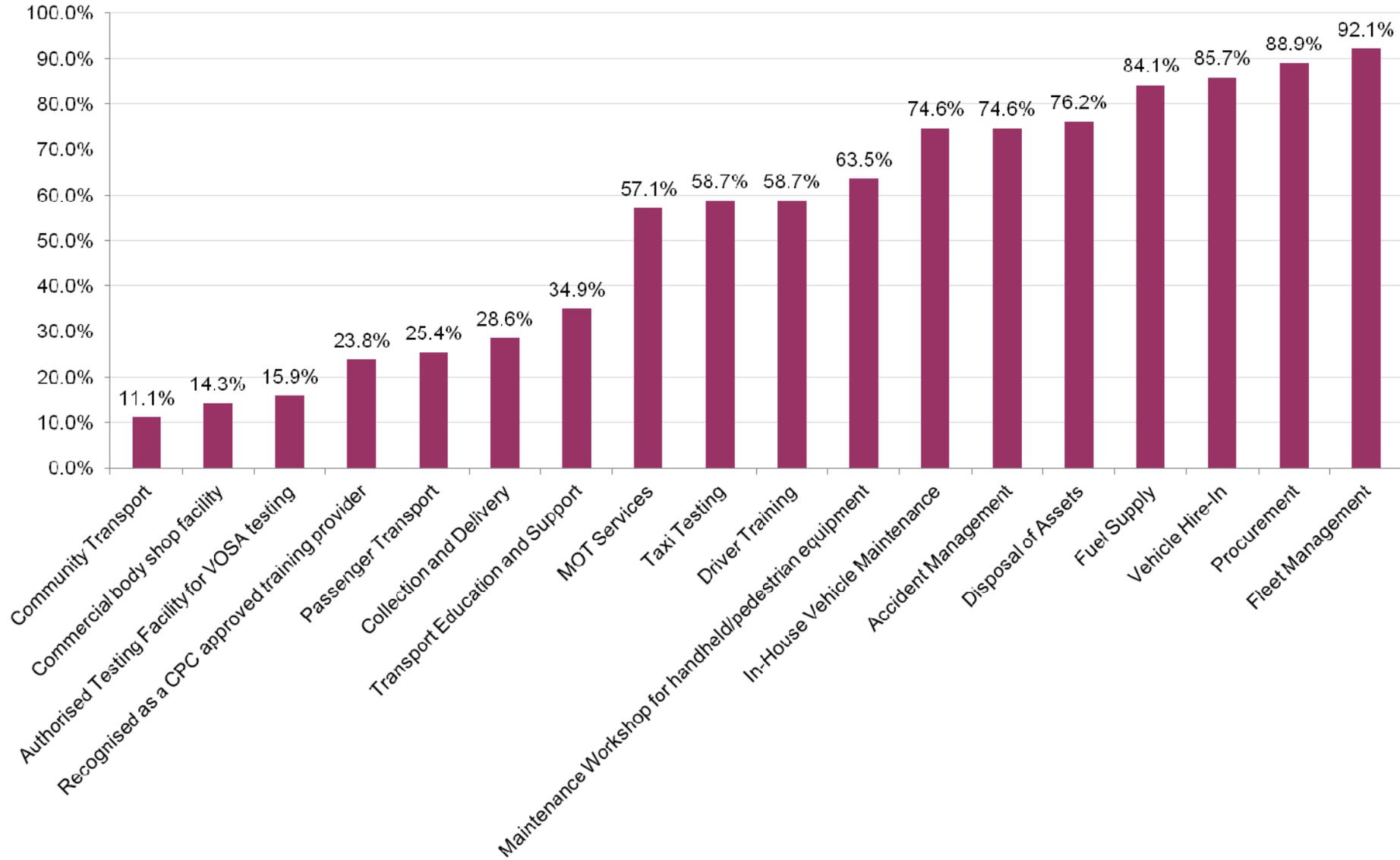
Type of authority



Geographical regions of authorities



Types of services provided by participants

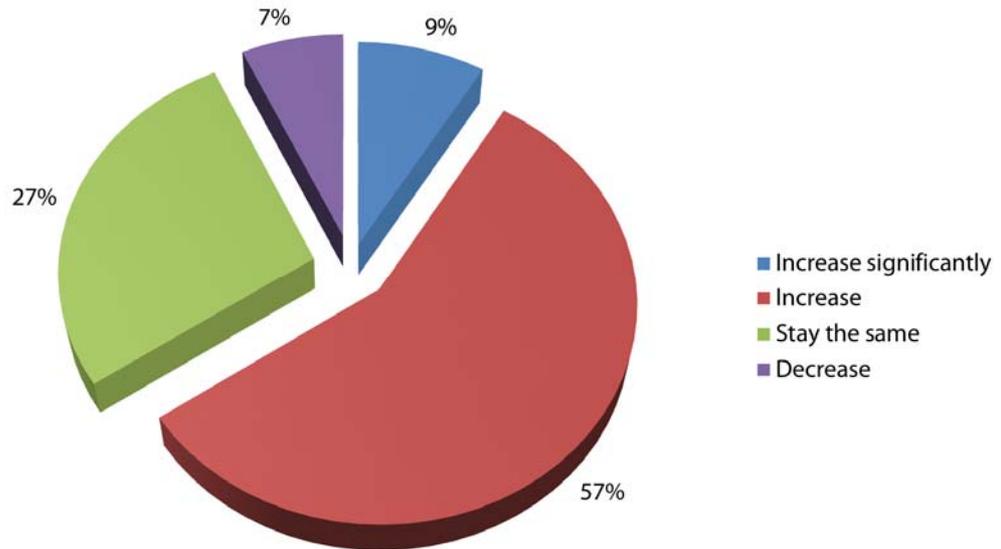


Results summary

a) Workload

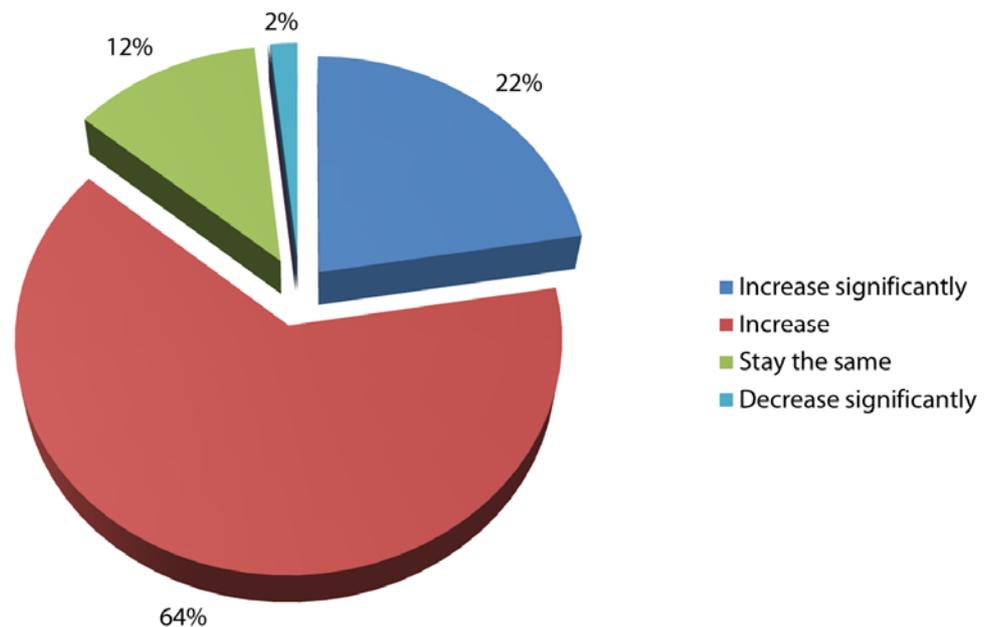
The survey asked how authorities expect the workload of the transport section to change over the next 12 months and the responses are shown in the chart below.

Transport section workload expectations for the next 12 months



Therefore, 66% expected the workload of the transport section to increase or increase significantly within the next 12 months, which is an increase from 54% when this survey was conducted last year and a further increase from 41% when the survey was done the year before. 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 (86%) 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 the same as the levels recorded last year. 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. 45% expected this to decrease, 38% expected it to stay the same and 10% 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 (55% expected it to decrease in 2010-11).

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 including staff, general public and external businesses
- Training, including CPC and training private sector drivers
- Working with other public bodies and partnership working
- External/private work and trading, including maintenance contracts with the third sector
- Vehicle downtime due to ageing fleets and financial constraints prohibiting the procurement of new fleet
- Vehicle maintenance and repairs work
- Bringing services back in-house including refuse collection and home to school transport
- Taxi testing
- Pool vehicles to reduce grey fleet usage
- Advice and enforcement work
- Maximising the assets and infrastructure though offering the use of these to third parties
- School minibus, academy schools and social care
- New housing impacting on higher demand for environmental services

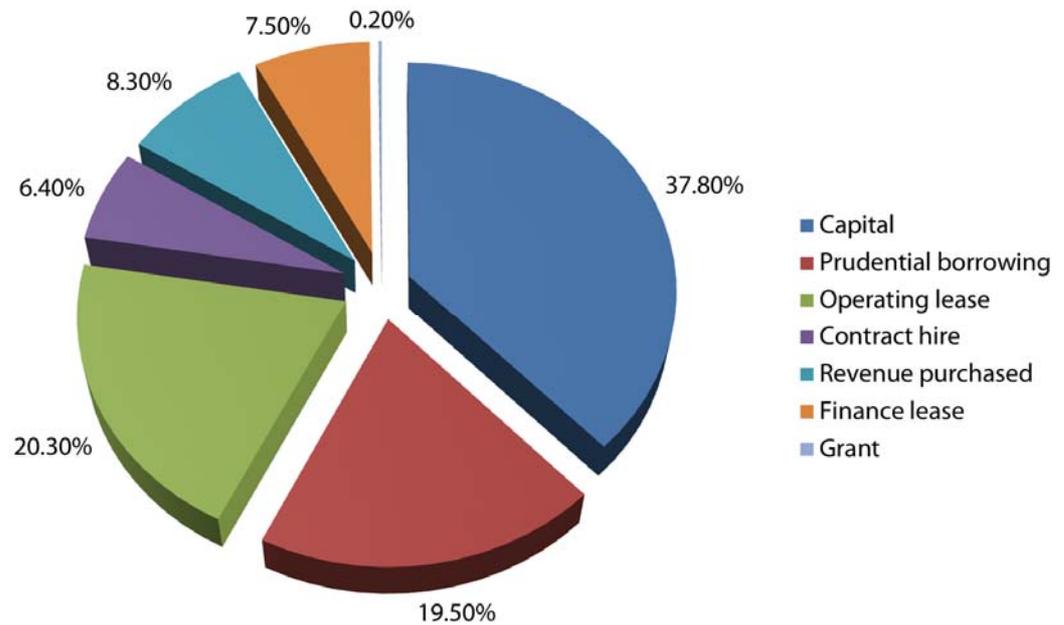
Areas where work may decrease

- Councils core fleet numbers and expansion of contract hire
- Reduction in fleet will reduce internal planned maintenance work
- Horticultural fleet management, mobile library, schools, passenger transport and social care transport
- Fleet inspections – reduction in service visits
- Fewer hired in vehicles
- New vehicles with increased warranties may have an impact on workshop workload
- Specialist services

c) Fleet profile

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

Trends in fleet financing in 2011-12

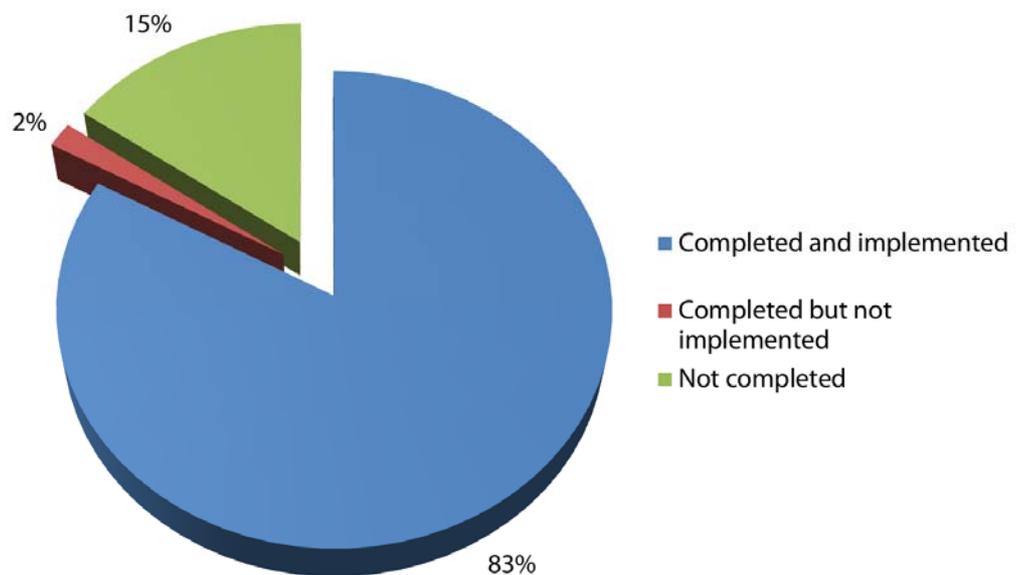


The survey also asked whether respondents utilise any vehicle tracking systems and 88% answered 'yes', which has increased from 79% last year.

d) Job evaluation

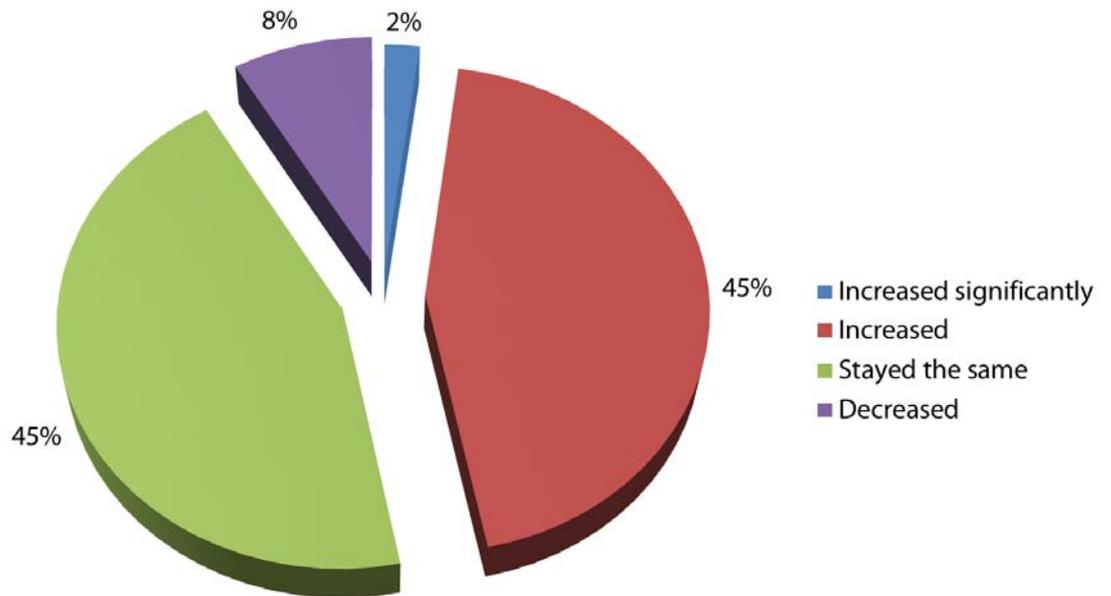
The survey found that 83% of organisations had completed and implemented job evaluation.

Job evaluation trends in 2011-12



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

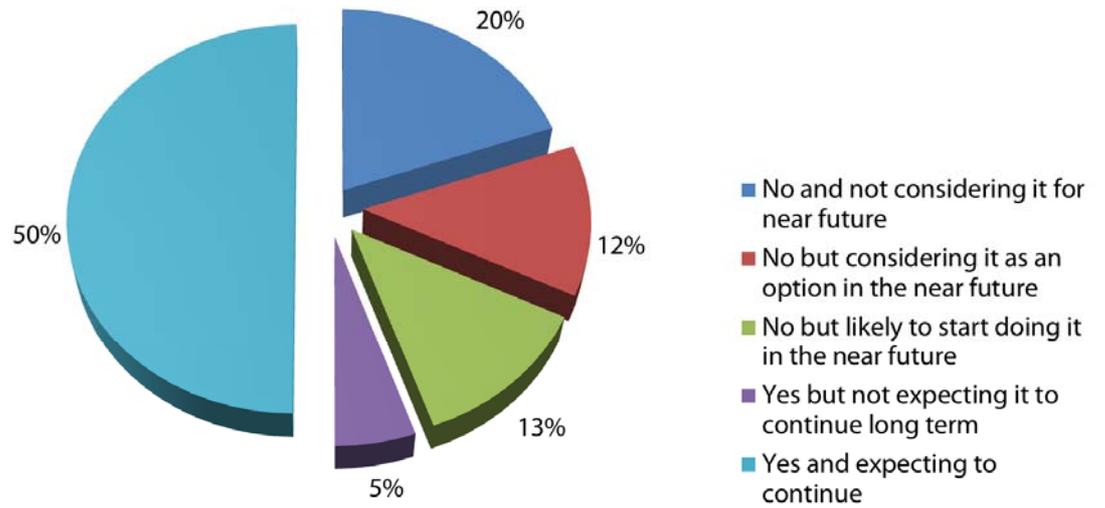
The survey asked 'irrespective of any recruitment freezes your authority has in place, do you have trouble recruiting staff?' 66% of respondents answered 'no' to this question. The majority of respondents (95%) did not have any trouble retaining trained staff as well.

87% of respondents thought that staff absence levels were at an acceptable level. [APSE performance networks](#) data has demonstrated that actual absence levels for fitters/tradespersons have declined in 2011-12 to an average of 2.95%. The majority of respondents (70%) run an apprenticeship scheme, which has increased significantly from 53% last year.

e) Selling services outside of the local authority

There has been an increase in the number of respondents who currently sell their services outside of the local authority this year to 50% from 39% last year, which may be as a result of budget reductions within local government and the need to source external income to offset the cost. The breakdown of the responses is shown in the chart overleaf.

Trends in selling services outside of local authorities



Therefore, a further 25% 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.