

Building Cleaning: Trend Analysis 2021 / 2022

Key trends

- The cost per square metre for all areas cleaned (excluding CEC) (LA only) has increased to a five year high of £17.77.
- The total square metres cleaned per FTE employee (excluding outdoor areas) (LA only) is 1,501 square metres.
- Leavers as a percentage of total operational staff has increased to a five year high of 13.12%

Overview

The APSE performance networks programme for building cleaning provides performance indicators for key cost indicators, productivity and qualitative measures for the service throughout the UK. The following executive summary aims to provide participating authorities with an overview of service trends, what this infers, and what further activity and analysis individual authorities and their benchmarking groups could consider. The analysis is based on the data for the end of the preceding year hence the reference to 2021-2022.

This trend analysis is based on 'service wide averages' across all family groups for the past 5 years. These averages across all returns to the programme can contain spikes or variations caused by any change in the profile or number of subscribers making returns to the programme. However, separate analysis of those authorities who have consistently made returns over the last 5 years, suggest validity in the observations and particular points of interest which follow below.

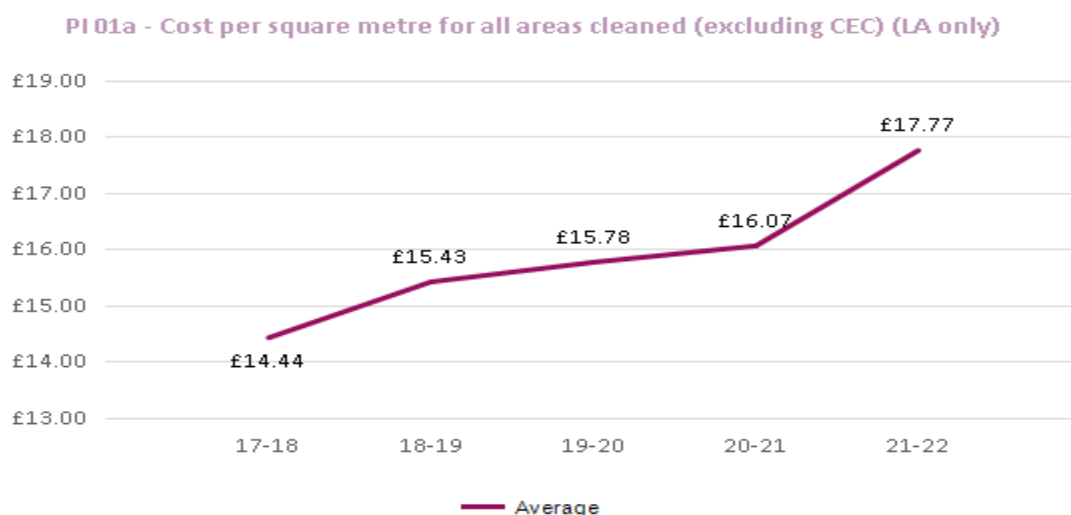
Trend Analysis

A summary of the observations and particular points of interest are outlined below.

Costs

Since the low in the cost per square metre cleaned reported in 2017/18 at £14.44, there has been a steady increase to the high reported in 2021/22 at £17.77. Staffing costs make up a high proportion of the overall cost for the cleaning service, therefore costs are impacted by the increases in the minimum wage and employer pension contributions. Therefore, the rise in the cost per square metre cleaned directly correlates with these increases, with the vast majority of councils reporting that they are now paying the higher living wage.

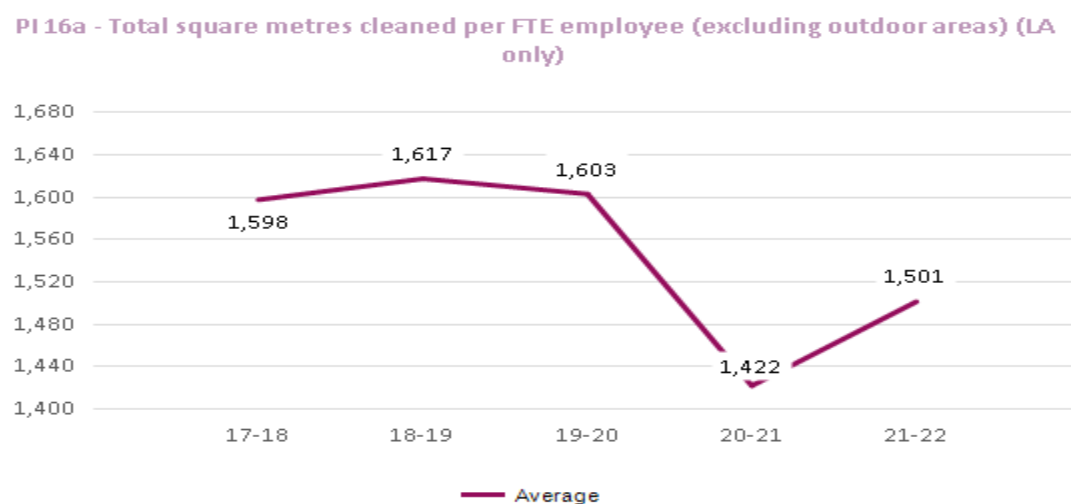
The service has seen significant productivity gains over the last five years which has undoubtedly assisted in mitigating the impact of increased staffing cost on the cost per square metre cleaned.



Productivity

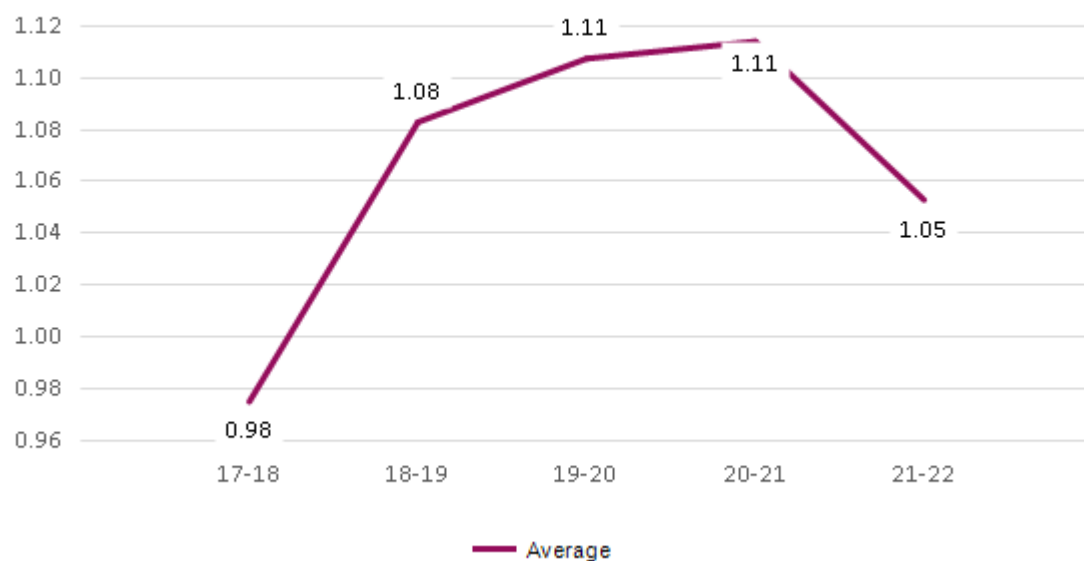
The total square metres cleaned has been rising gradually since 2017/18. The data for 2020/21 showed that there has been a significant decrease which could be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and a result of the revised cleaning specifications adopted. In addition, the reduced occupancy of buildings required reduced cleaning, and where they were occupied the focus of cleaning changed from cosmetic cleaning to infection control; for example, the cleaning of touchpoints multiple times. This in turn could have resulted in the reduction in the total square metres cleaned.

However, the data for 2021/22 has shown an increase to 1,501 total square metres cleaned from the low reported last year of 1,422 total square metres cleaned indicating that the service is returning back to productivity.



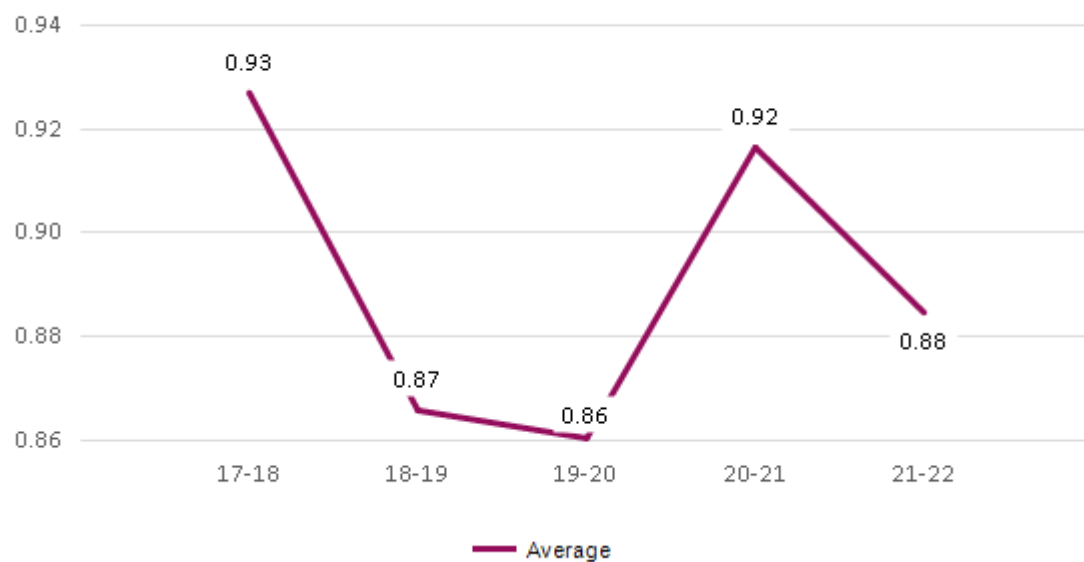
The ratio of square metres cleaned to annual scheduled hours (all offices) remains the same for 2020/21 and 2019/20. For 2021/22 the ratio has reduced to 1.05 square metres cleaned. This could indicate that with the continuation of home working and local authorities rationalising their estate, has resulted in the square metres per FTE being below the high of 1,617 reported in 2018/19.

PI 13a - Ratio of square metres to annual scheduled hours (all offices) (LA only)



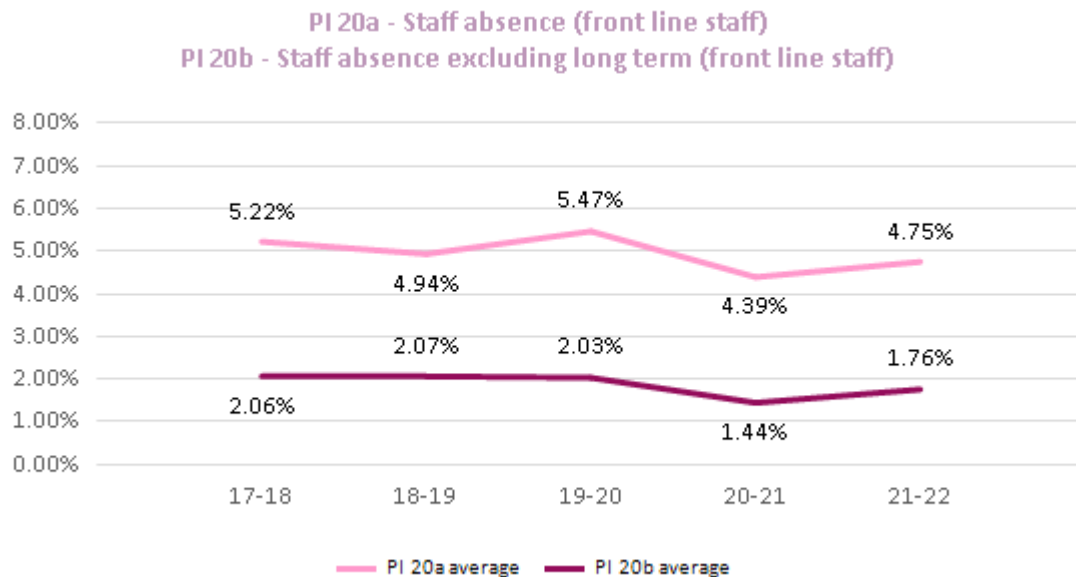
In comparison with offices, the ratio of square metres to annual scheduled hours (primary schools) has also seen a decrease from 0.92 last year to 0.88. Although the decrease in ratio remains consistent at circa 0.87 and 0.86 with the data reported in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

PI 23a - Ratio of square metres to annual scheduled hours (primary schools) (LA only)



Staff absence

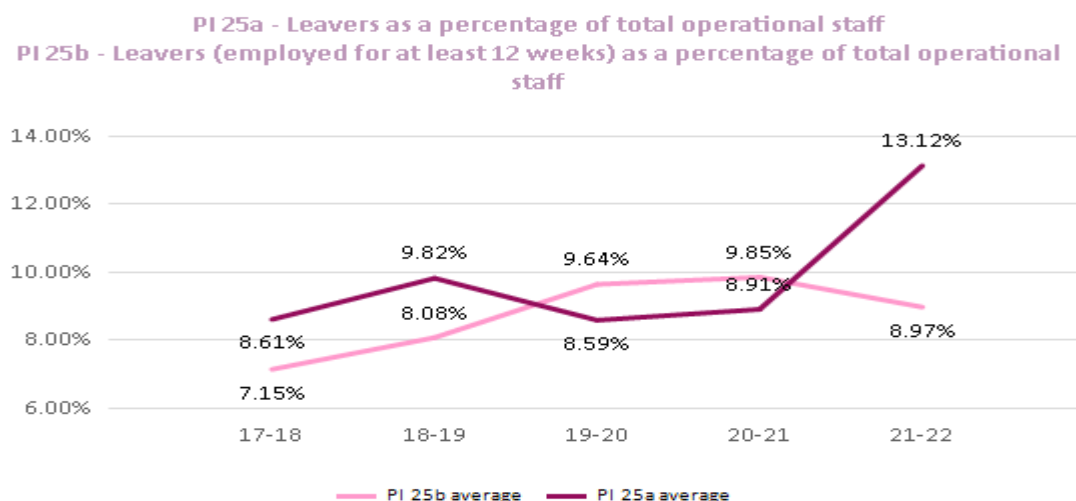
The percentage average staff absence for PI20a and PI20b has remained consistent for the past five years. The data for both PI's in 2021/22 shows an increase from the low reported in 2020/21. This could be attributed to the increased social mixing following the reduction of COVID-19 restrictions.



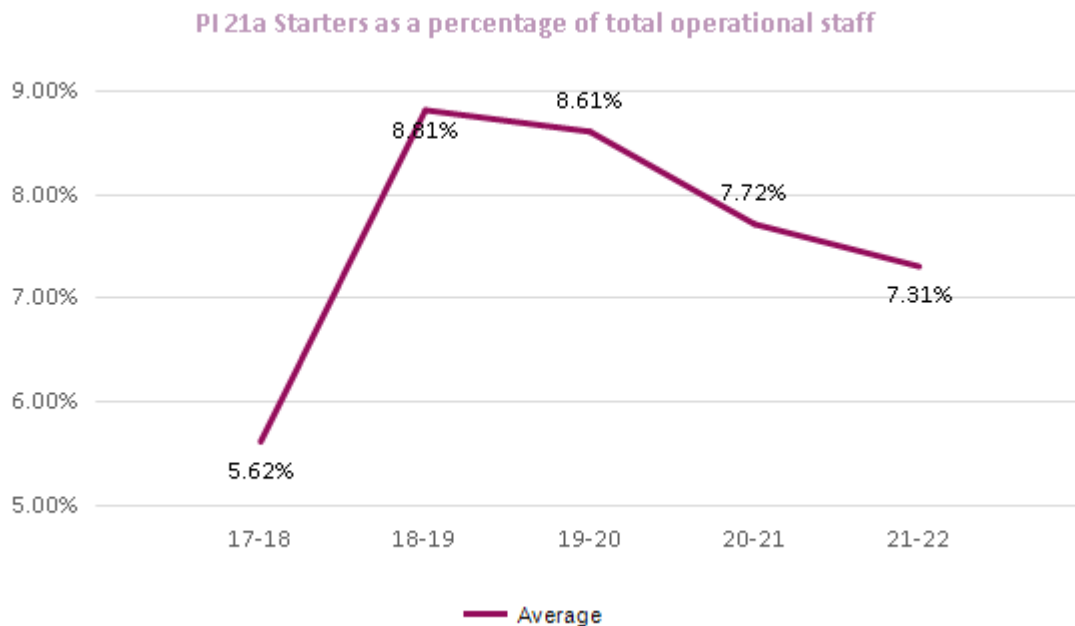
Starters and leavers

For PI25a, leavers as a percentage of total operational staff has increased by 4.21% from 2020/21 to a five year high of 13.12%. Councils are reporting a variety of reasons for staff leaving the workforce including workers opting not to return to work following the pandemic and competition from other employers such as supermarkets who can offer higher hourly rates and flexible hours.

The leavers (employed for at least 12 weeks) as a percentage of operational staff has seen a slight decrease from 9.85% reported in 2020/21 to 2021/22 to 8.97%. This could indicate that there has been a stabilisation in long serving employees opting to leave the service.

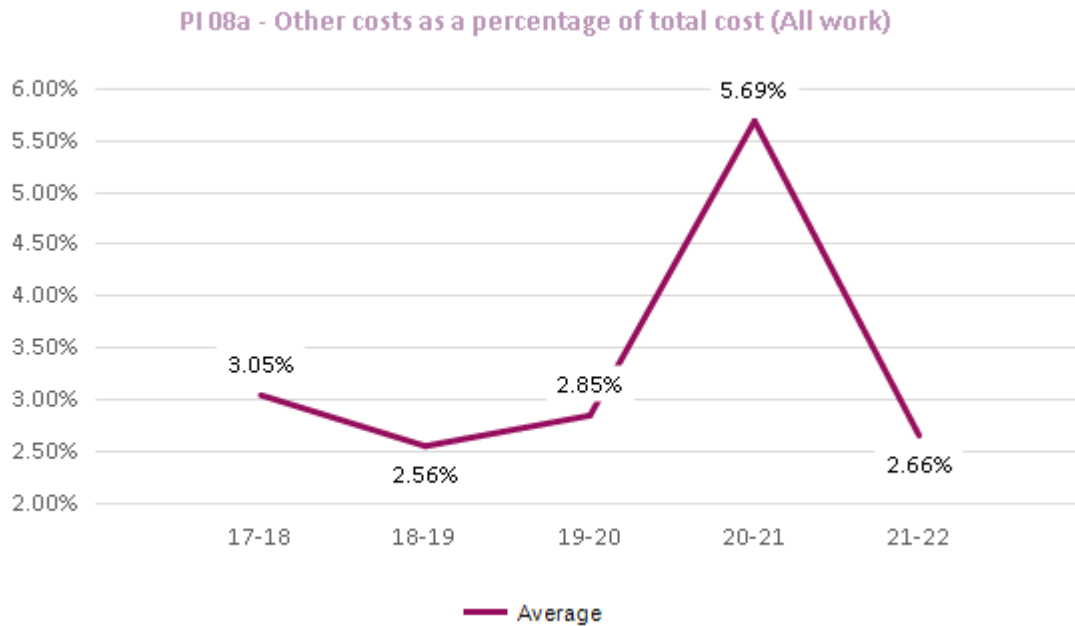


Starters as a percentage of total operational staff has been steadily decreasing since 2018/19, from the high of 8.81% to 7.31% in 2021/22. Councils have reported difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff and the data clearly shows that the gap between the starters and leavers is increasing.

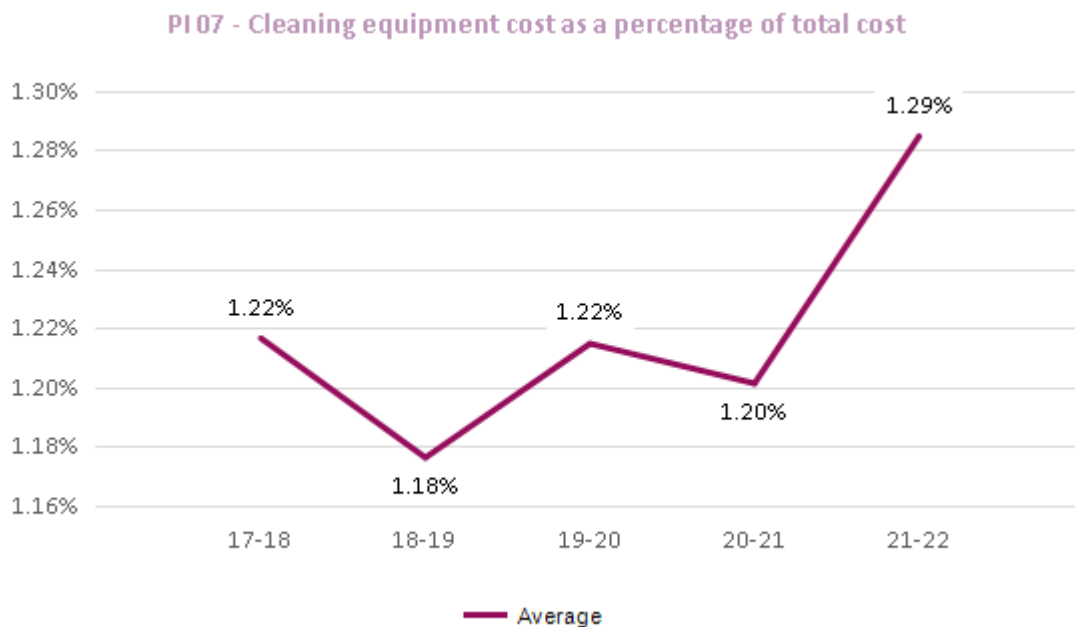


Other cost and ratio indicators

The other costs as a percentage of total cost (All work) saw an increase to a five year high in 2020/21 of 5.69%. It is evident that this was a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic as the percentage for 2021/22 has reduced to 2.66% which is consistent with the figures report in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20.



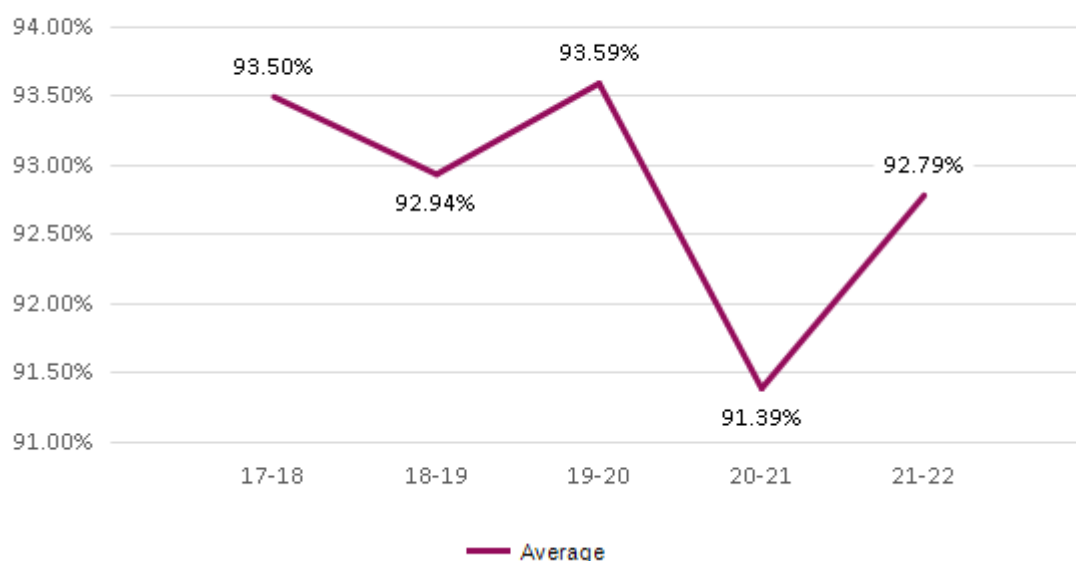
The average cleaning materials cost as a percentage of total cost remained consistent between 2017/18 to 2020/21 at circa 1.22%. However, the cost of cleaning equipment has reached a five year high for 2021/22 of 1.29%. This could be a direct result of the inflationary increases being experienced due to supply shortages and the increased cost of production.



All staff cost as a percentage of total costs reached a four year high in 2019/20 of 93.59% which is in line with the rises in wages and employer pension contributions. However, for 2020/21 the cost fell by 2.2%, which could be due to a variety of reasons, including the changes in the buildings cleaned, the reduction in starters and the increase in leavers in the service. For 2021/22, the staff cost has seen an increase to 92.79% which could be a reflection of the increase

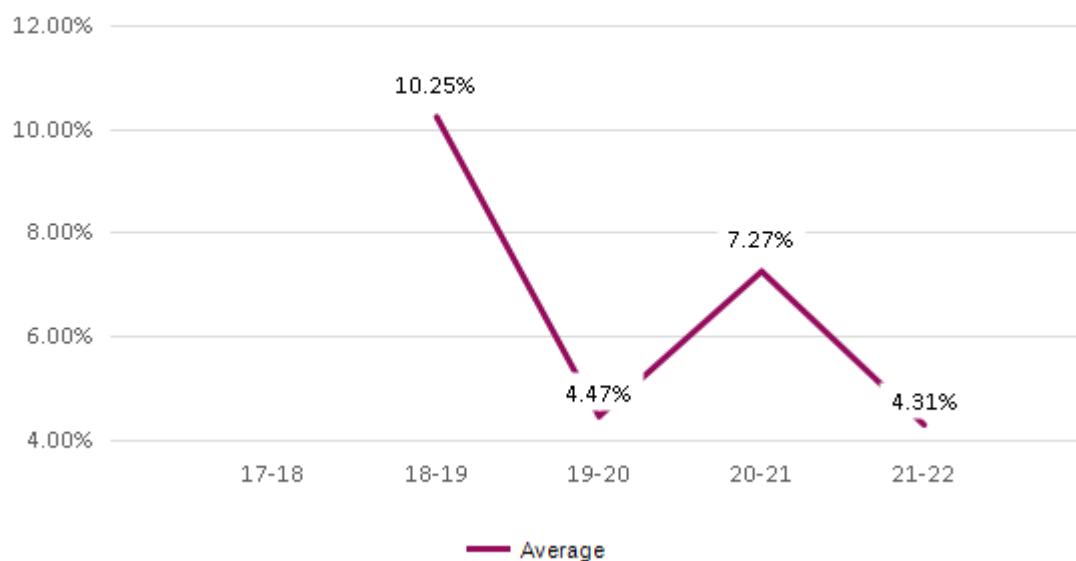
in staff wages.

PI 05a - All staff costs as a percentage of total cost (All work)



Commercial work as a percentage of all work was a performance indicator introduced in 2018/19 to recognise that local authority building cleaning services are adopting a more commercial approach and to track the work undertaken. The percentage of commercial work for 2021/22 has decreased from 7.27% in 2020/21 to 4.31% in 2021/22. This could be in part due to fact that councils took on additional work during the pandemic that other contractors were unable to undertake. However, now that we have emerged from the pandemic, there is not the same requirement for this work and the decrease could also be attributed to increased homeworking and a reduction in commercial office buildings.

PI 39a - Commercial work as a percentage of all work (turnover)



APSE Comment

APSE's network for building cleaning services allows members to debate the challenges and opportunities within the service. Building cleaning is an area dominated by part-time women workers and increasingly there is a recognition that the service can contribute to fair standards of employment across the sector, and within local economies. The fragmentation of schools, education funding, and academisation, continues to exacerbate issues of employment practices, competition for staff within the FM sector, and the reliability of services.

Well-run building cleaning services provide opportunities for local employment, apprenticeships and innovations in the service. Indeed, many schools during the pandemic increased their reliance on public sector providers for service quality and reliability. There remain however barriers to address in procurement processes, which often place price above quality, and impact upon the socio-economic factors, such as fair local employment opportunities. Many APSE member councils are actively promoting a more ethical approach with school clients as to how they procure building cleaning services, particularly within education establishments. If you would like to get involved in the Building Cleaning network, please contact me Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk

Membership to enjoy a whole range of benefits.

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The advisory groups are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area, please email enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national advisory groups include:-

- Building cleaning
- Catering
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- **Cost of Living / Cost of Providing Network**
- Environmental Health
- Commercialisation network: Local authority trading, charging and income generation
- Housing, construction and building maintenance
- Parks, horticultural and ground maintenance
- Renewables and climate change
- Roads, highways and street lighting

- Sports and leisure management
- Vehicle maintenance and transport
- Waste management, refuse collection and street cleansing

Visit www.apse.org.uk for more detail