



# The Importance of Data to Providing Quality Bereavement Services





## Is performance data relevant to Bereavement Services?

- Consider the sensitivities of the service.
- The current financial climate/austerity.
- ‘Plugging the gaps’.
- Responsibilities and reputation of the local authority.
- Need to prove VFM.
- What to gather data on.



# Benefits of performance data

## **NEED TO KNOW**

- Whether people know about the service and are choosing to use it
- Does the service allows users to easily use the service it provides
- Are there areas for improvement
- Is there are enough people using the service to make it cost-efficient
- Is the service meeting user needs

## **PERFORMANCE DATA PROVIDES**

- Data to help understand service demand
- Allows an understanding of service costs/ costs per transaction/completion rates
- Information on staff efficiency
- Details on user satisfaction
- Levels of income generation



## What data to collect

- Number of cremations and burials (against total deaths) – market share
- Number of staff and number of burials/ cremations carried out
- Hectares of land maintained per FTE
- Memorial numbers – inspected p.a. / number of remedial actions identified and completed
- Costs of burials/cremations ( net , gross, including CEC's)
- Income from cremations/burials
- Memorial income for burials/cremations
- Grounds maintenance costs
- Cremator maintenance costs
- Crematoria/ cemetery costs per head of population
- Central establishment charges

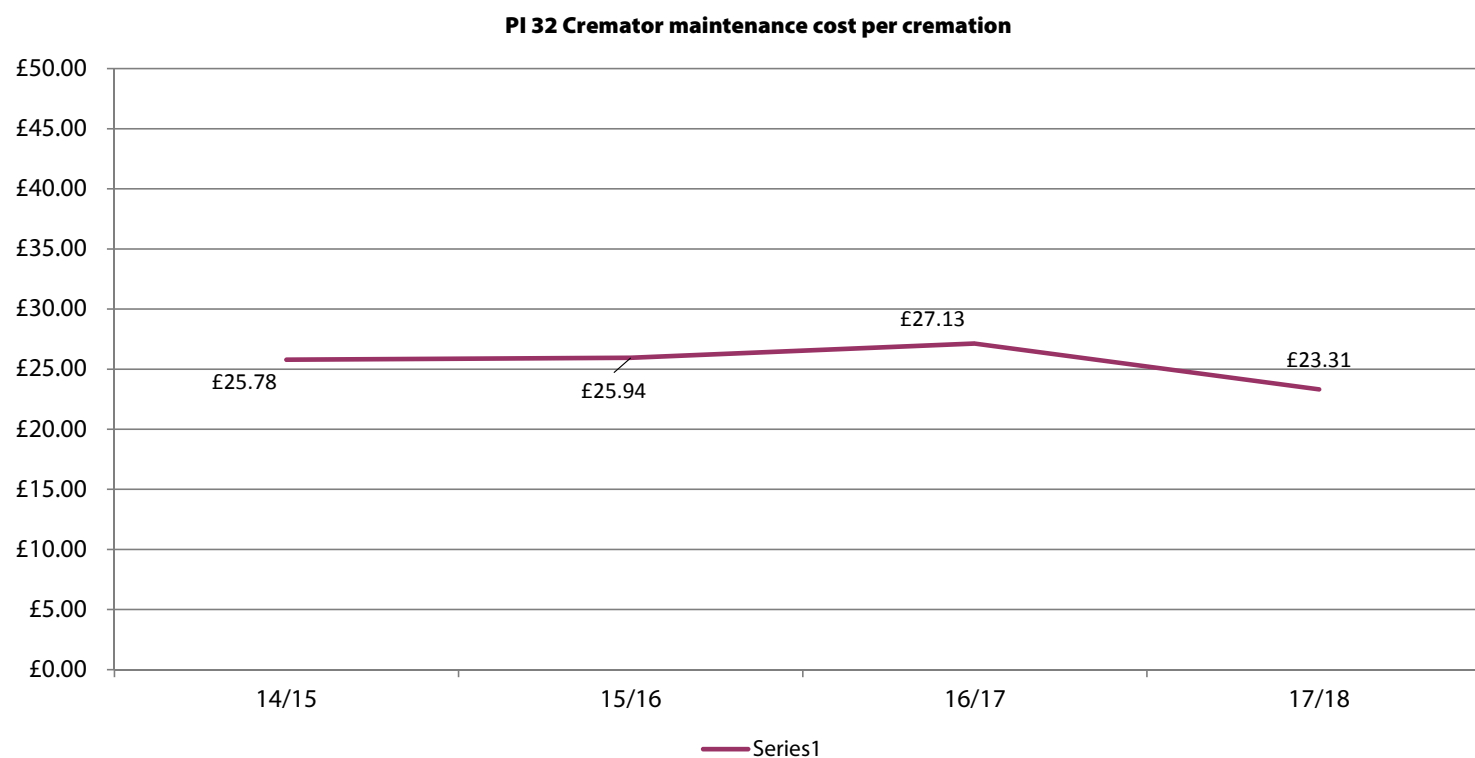


## Examples of APSE Performance Networks data returns

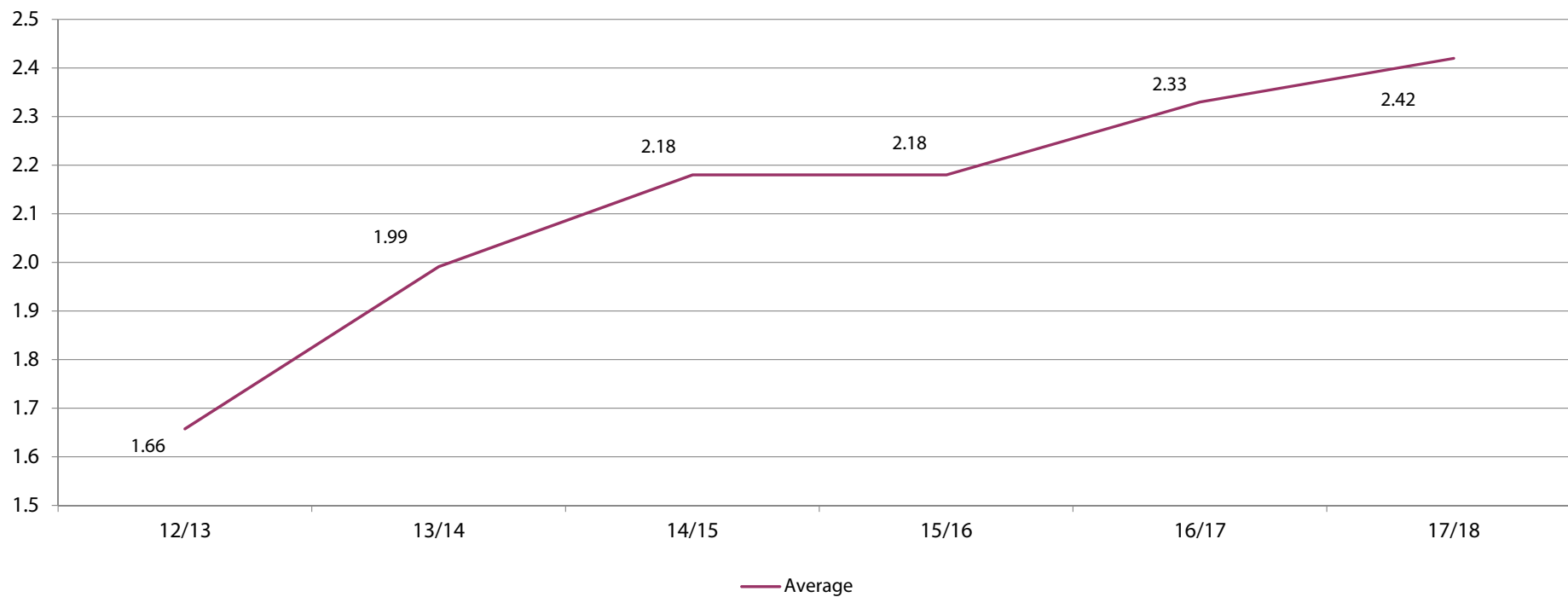
- Operating costs
- Grounds maintenance
- Memorial inspection
- Income generation
- Staffing
- Cremator maintenance costs



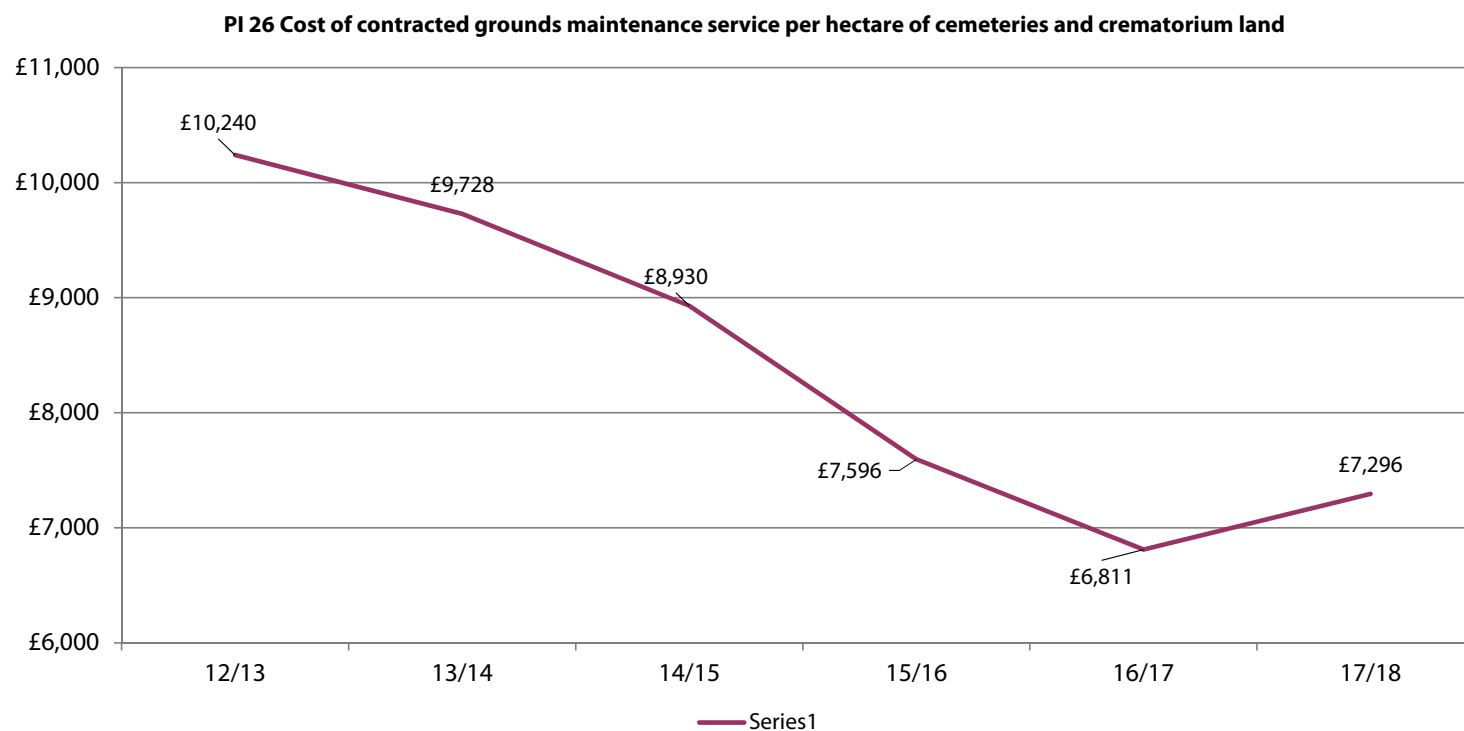
# Operating Costs



**PI 18 Hectares of cemetery land maintained per 10,000 population**



# Grounds maintenance

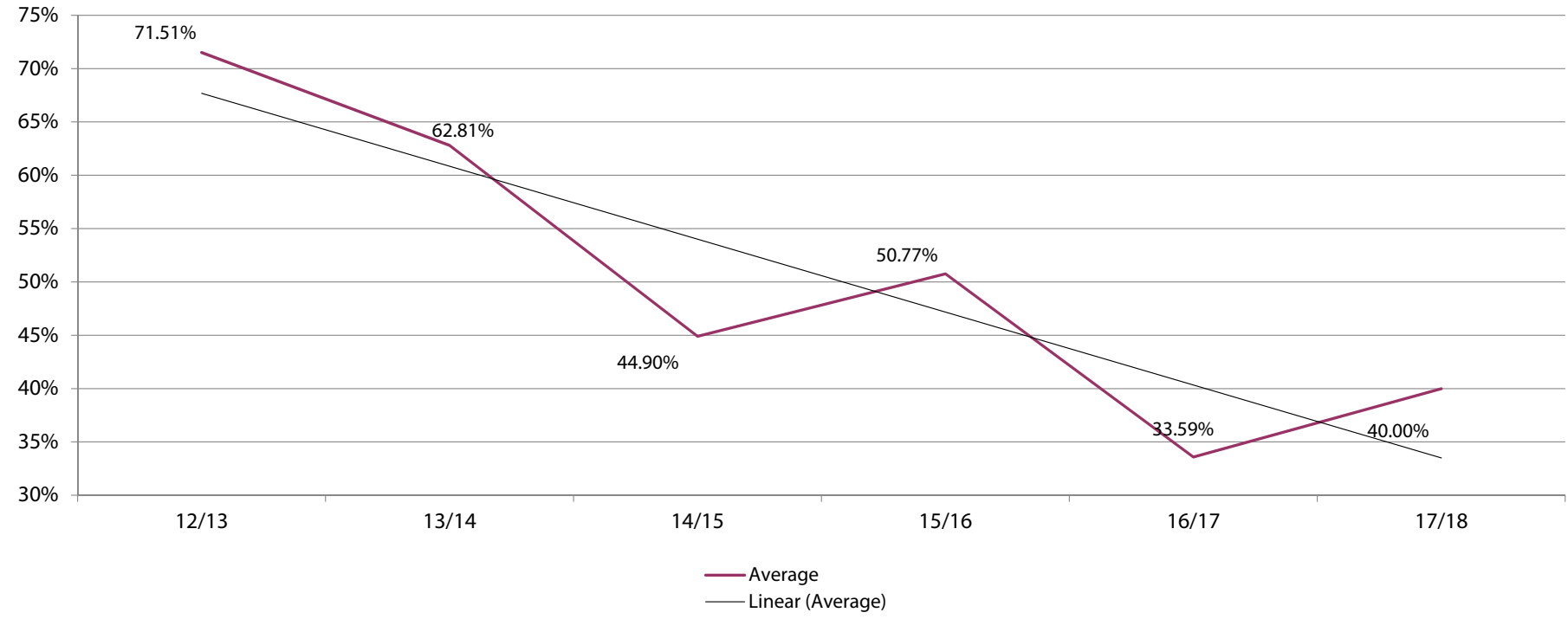






# Memorial inspections

PI 23b Percentage of memorials requiring inspection per year





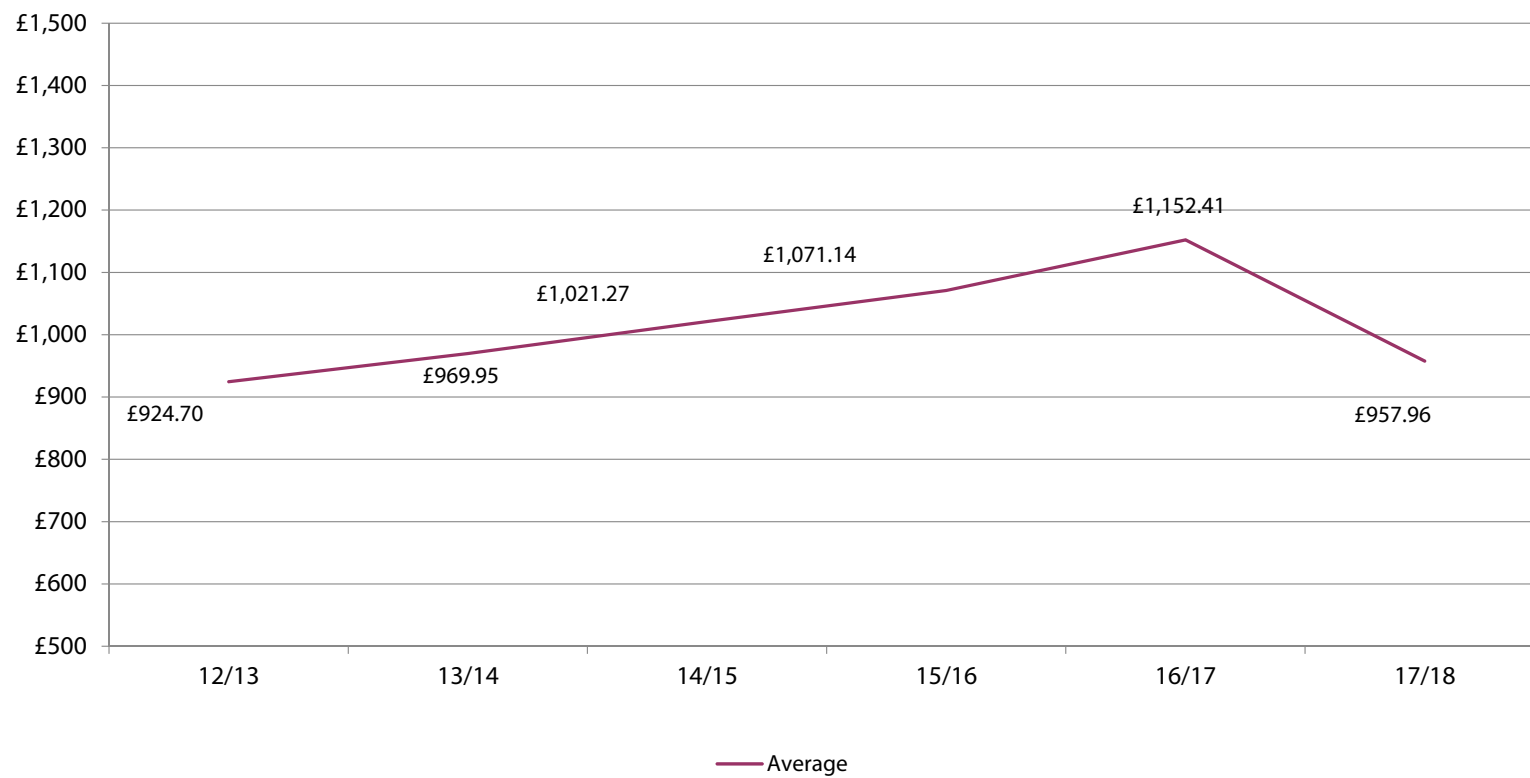
# Income generation

PI 11c Average income from all disposals (cremations)



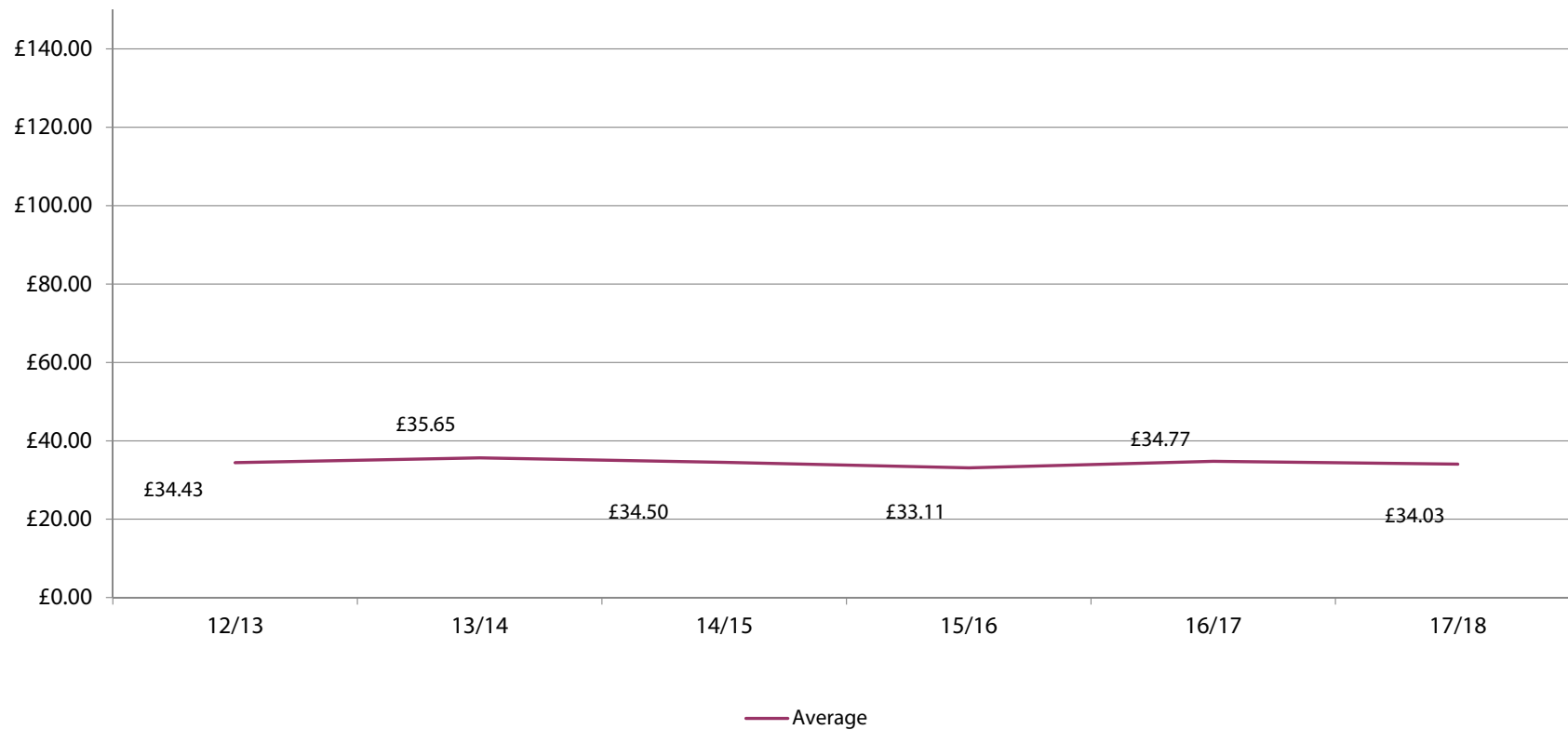


**PI 11b Average income from all disposals (burials)**





**PI 12c Memorial income per disposal (cremations)**



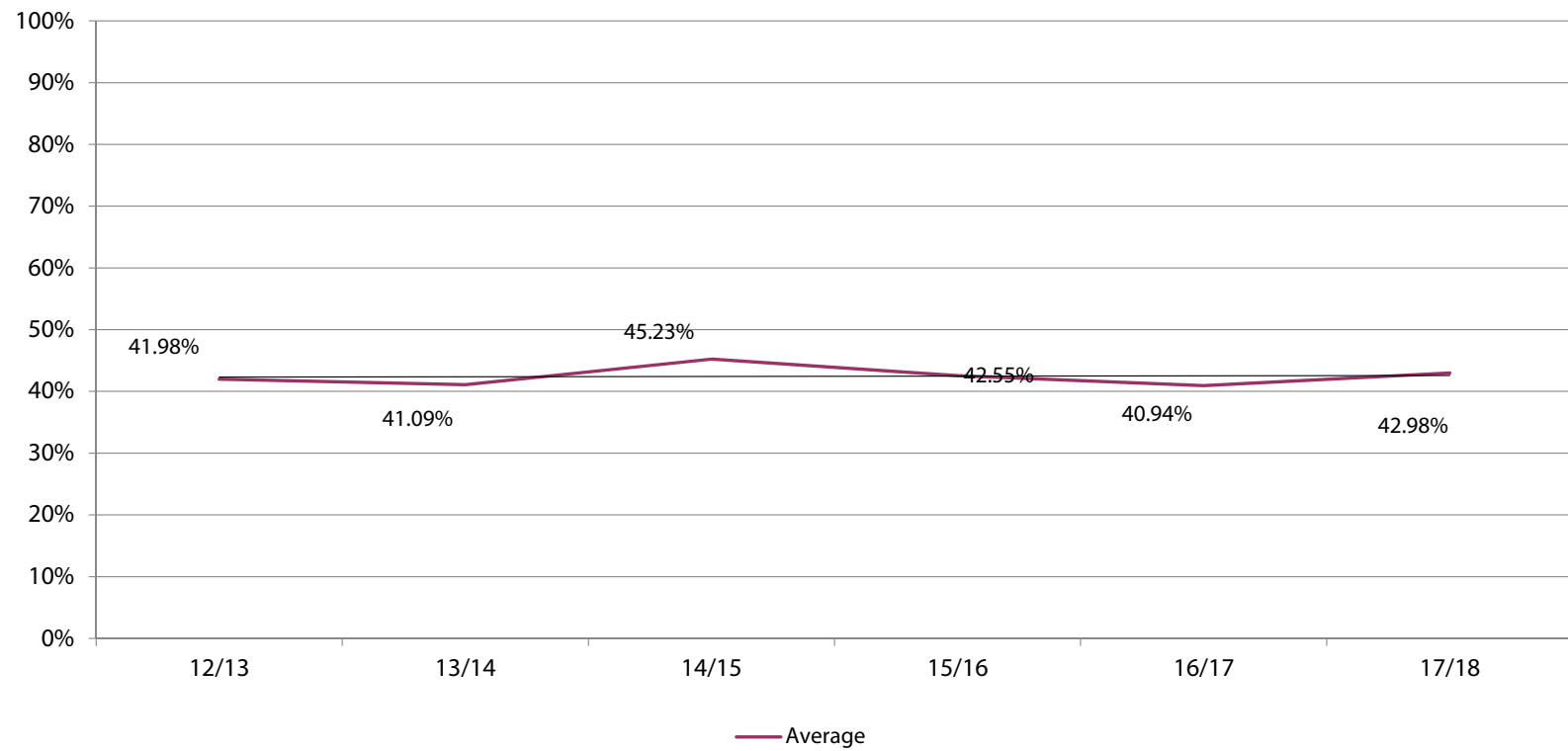


**PI 12b Memorial income per disposal (burials)**



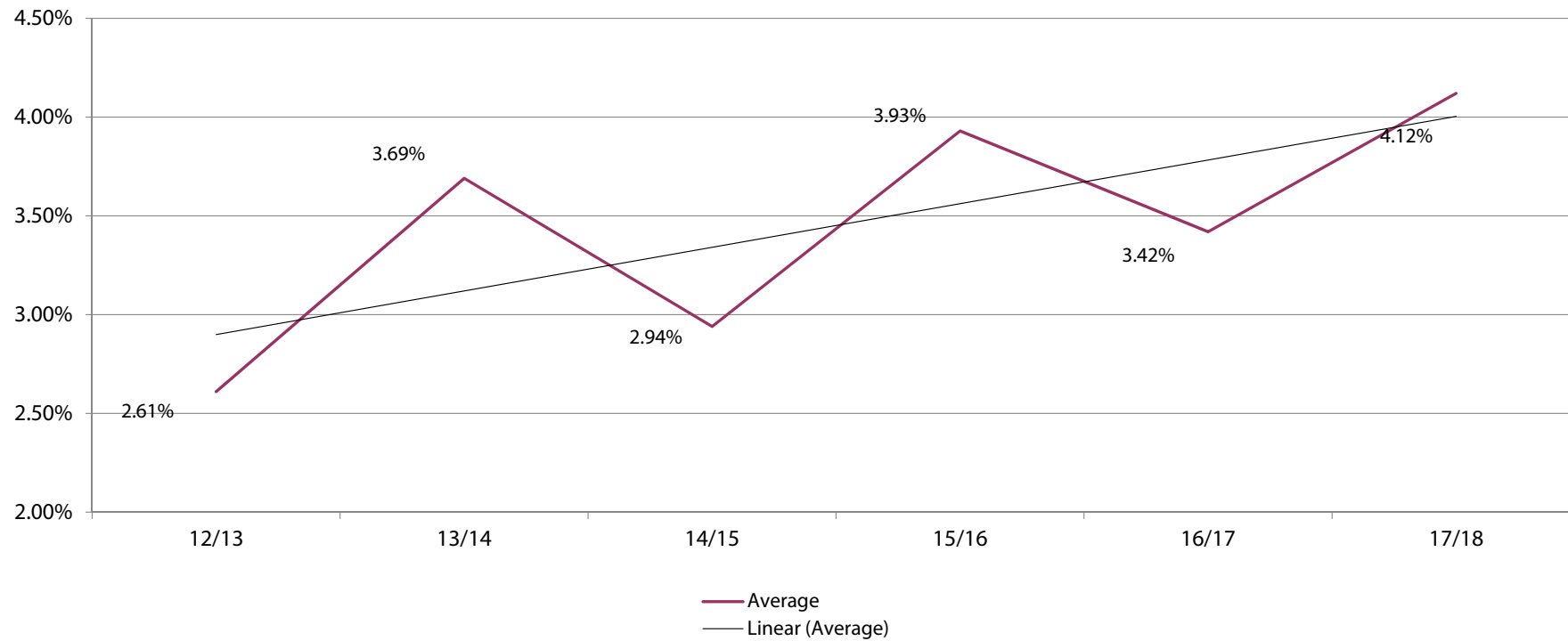
# Staffing

PI 05 All staff costs as a percentage of total cost

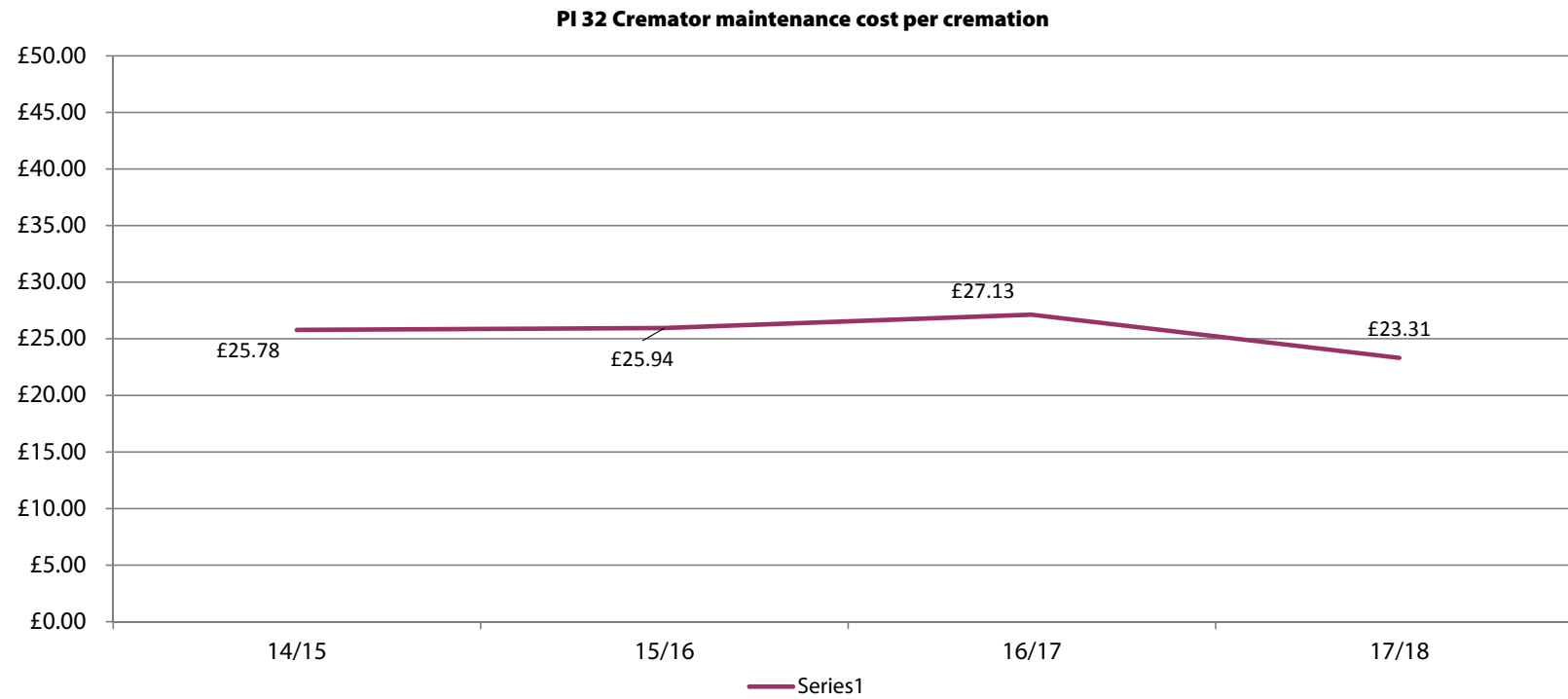




**PI 24a Staff absence (all staff)**



# Cremator Maintenance







# Bereaved family or 'customers'?

- Families often don't have time to think in a measured manner
- Vulnerable to being told what should do - 'the conveyor belt'.
- Need to treat with consideration but also ensure they are aware of all the service options.
- Enhanced communication and generating income can help:
  - keep costs under control for bereaved families
  - increase operational efficiency
  - reduce environmental impact
  - Deliver an improved funeral experience
- **Understanding customer experiences is critical to future improvements**



## Cemeteries and Crematoria Customer satisfaction survey



For each questions, please place a cross (X) within the box that best represents what you think.

### Section 1: What is important?

Please tell us **how important to you** each of the following things are

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Important	Not very Important	Not applicable
<b>Staff and information</b>					
Friendliness and cooperation of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentability of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of obtaining information/help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of reporting deficiencies or complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Services Provided</b>					
Provision of gardens of remembrance for cremated remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of crematorium funeral services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of cemetery burial services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of memorial options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of office reception area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Service Standards</b>					
Standard of litter clearance in horticultural areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard of grave maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard of grounds maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling of personal safety in cemeteries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open days for public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping cemeteries clear of dog fouling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring dogs are kept under control in cemeteries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of toilets for the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section 2: How are we doing?

Please tell us **how you think we are performing** with regard to each of the following aspects

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Not applicable
<b>Staff and information</b>					
Friendliness and cooperation of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentability of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of obtaining information/help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of reporting deficiencies/making complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Provision of gardens of remembrance for cremated remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Provision of cemetery burial services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of memorial options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of office reception area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Case Study – A.N.Other Local Authority



## STARTING POINT

- Understanding their cost base.
- How were they performing compared to others?
- What was, and how strong was the competition (market share)?
- How could they adopt a more sensitive commercialisation approach?
- Where were the opportunities to improve operational efficiency?
- Were they meeting customer needs?



# Service Review

- Collection of financial costs and compared to similar authorities via APSE Performance Networks databases.
- 5 year data table showing number of deaths and how many were either cremated or buried by local authority to establish market share.
- Compared costs for burials and cremations including gas charges with similar authorities (FTE & head of population) – holding over cremations is now being considered in order to reduce crematorium operating costs and reducing environmental impact.
- Investigated staff efficiency regarding burials and cremations per FTE / efficiency level of memorial inspections/ absence levels.
- Option for income generation strategy developed more in line with stronger marketing approach, focused sales arrangements (private sector approach) and wider choice and options – but may be too extreme for local authority ethos.
- Key aim to have ashes buried on site as currently over 70% taken away – further income generation opportunities.
- Details provided by **APSE Solutions**.

# The Benefits of robust Bereavement Services performance management systems



- Clear auditable data on service performance both internally and in comparison to others.
- Identifies areas for improvement and helps develop objectives and targets for future service improvement.
- Use of comparable data can help justify any price increases (or decreases), in relation to service offer.
- Financial and operational data can help show VFM and provide sound evidence for future budget setting discussions.
- Openness to using performance data can allow new and improved levels of monitoring e.g. Land Audit Management System (LAMS), regarding cemetery infrastructure and grounds maintenance quality.
- Auditable and accurate data can be used to gain external recognition via national awards e.g. APSE Best Service Awards.
- **Most importantly re Bereavement Services, it will show that the needs of vulnerable people and their loved ones are being met in a caring and sympathetic manner.**