

Trading Standards workforce survey 2017

The Society conducts a regular workforce survey to identify trends and give an overall picture of the officer resource deployed by Scottish local authorities in trading standards services, this is a 100% return from all Scottish councils. In summary, there have been further reductions in capacity to the end of July 2017, an all-staff drop of 5.5% from last year's survey, and a drop of 22% in the last five years. The fall in numbers is fairly consistent across all types of officer, and there is still no sign that councils are attempting to fill the gap through training or new starts. The age demographic remains dangerously high with over 40% of all staff over the age of 50, and nearly half of all TSOs over 50 years old. Without action soon, councils will face catastrophic losses of experienced staff in the next 2-5 years.

1 - DTS or equivalent officers (TSOs)

| Age | 2012 survey | 2014 survey | 2016 survey | 2017 survey |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| <= 24 years | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 25 to 29 years | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 30 to 39 years | 34 | 20.7 | 24 | 22.2 |
| 40 to 49 years | 78 | 64.5 | 55 | 46.45 |
| 50 to 59 years | 45 | 56.2 | 51 | 54.39 |
| 60 plus years | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| Total | 165 | 147.2 | 136 | 130.04 |

The professional officer resource has fallen by just over 21% over five years. This core resource includes a fair percentage of non or semi operational management staff, so the active body of day-to-day frontline operational officers is significantly less.

2 - Other enforcement and advice staff (non-DTS)

| Age | 2012 survey | 2014 survey | 2016 survey | 2017 survey |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| <= 24 years | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 25 to 29 years | 18 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| 30 to 39 years | 33 | 22.2 | 23 | 23.83 |
| 40 to 49 years | 71 | 58.7 | 62 | 52 |
| 50 to 59 years | 43 | 42.4 | 44 | 44.6 |
| 60 plus years | 6 | 7 | 9 | 9.5 |
| Total | 171 | 142.3 | 148 | 140.73 |

The complement of non DTS qualified enforcement officers has decreased this year after a boost between 2014-16. There may be a boost in 2017/18 because of additional grant funding

for NVP enforcement, but the overall trend is downwards, particularly in advice staff, who only make up 12.9FTE of this total.

3 - Other staff (officers with no direct enforcement role)

| <i>Age</i> | <i>2012 survey</i> | <i>2014 survey</i> | <i>2016 survey</i> | <i>2017 survey</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i><= 24 years</i> | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| <i>25 to 29 years</i> | 3 | 3.6 | 6 | 3 |
| <i>30 to 39 years</i> | 11 | 11 | 3 | 1 |
| <i>40 to 49 years</i> | 12 | 8.2 | 7 | 9 |
| <i>50 to 59 years</i> | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| <i>60 plus years</i> | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| <i>Total</i> | 36 | 32.8 | 25 | 21 |

An ever-declining category of staff (e.g. intelligence officers, technical assistants), although it may be that some of these officers have been successful in moving into a more enforcement based role.

4 - Total staff resources

| <i>Year</i> | <i>2012</i> | <i>2014</i> | <i>2016</i> | <i>2017</i> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Staff numbers</i> | 372 | 322.1 | 309 | 291.77 |
| <i>Vacant posts</i> | n/a | 23 | 15 | 25 |

Staff numbers overall have continued to decline as outlined above, despite the profile given to capacity issues within the trading standards service nationally. There is a significant increase in the numbers of established posts which are vacant, despite comments from several members that in their council, vacancies are immediately given up as savings. Part of this may be new posts from current year grant funding for NVP enforcement.

5 - Trainees and staff development

| <i>Age</i> | <i>2012 survey</i> | <i>2014 survey</i> | <i>2016 survey</i> | <i>2017 survey</i> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Trainees in post</i> | 2 | 2 | 7 | 7 |
| <i>Other staff in qualification route</i> | 25 | 21 | 22 | 18 |

Numbers of trainees and other staff studying toward the CTSI qualification remains low, although it may be that changes to the qualification over the next year or so may stimulate some demand. If support given to training and development by councils continues to decline, then there is little chance in maintaining even current levels of enforcement staff in councils, given the existing age demographic.