

# Summary report

A report on the Socitm  
Improve service findings

May 2019



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**This report is proudly  
sponsored by:**

**littlefish**  
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Littlefish is delighted to sponsor and support this year's Improve benchmark publication as a valued Socitm community partner.

It's great to see the excellent work Socitm is providing through their Policy Themes and Improve activities, supporting councils (and other public sector organisations) to identify and drive their IT organisations towards the elements that will make the greatest positive impact on their IT services, their users and their ultimate customers. We believe that increasing the volume of data provided to Socitm through council adoption and engagement with the service, more efficiently through digital technologies, will enhance the results even further.

The outcome for each participant is a definitive benchmark relative to peer organisations, identification of key areas of focus for delivering future improvements, whilst also getting positive feedback and recognition for their own IT service delivery capability. There is always an opportunity to do better and striving for improvement is a constant challenge but getting a pat on the back for the things that are going well is just as important, and the report and online results can provide participants with this feedback impartially, and in context. In all walks of life #peoplematter and positive affirmation is vital.

There is no doubt that public sector IT must deliver for its consumers - whether they are citizens, organisations or employees - all at a time of increasing pressure on budgets. And yet, there are exciting times ahead through the digital and knowledge economies, with an upsurge in the capability of intelligent automation and robotic process engineering. But ever-changing leadership capabilities and digital skillsets are required within IT service delivery organisations, to keep pace with new opportunities and technologies, whilst simultaneously being expected to 'keep the lights on' as transformation happens.

As a leading provider to the central government IT market, Littlefish is now working with local government bodies to; improve collaboration; redesign and deliver services; drive health and wellbeing for their employees; all in a secure and ethical way. The cornerstone of all our services is User Satisfaction - one of the key modules of the Improve benchmarking service. However, we

would encourage your participation in the other modules for digital transformation, estate, cost and performance. One of the great advantages of the service is that the historical data available stretches back over many years, and in a few years' time, we would want to be able to say the same. Streamlining the service to be constantly updated with data and information can only help drive exponential improvements, for everyone.

One thing that struck a chord with Littlefish from last years' report was the statement; "So, the recipe for an excellent service is clear: just have wonderful staff who fix things first time, operating reliable systems that are fit for purpose and help the organisation!". We totally agree, and as a service provider, Littlefish ensure our staff continually improve their performance: driving up first-time-fix and delivering exceptional rates of user satisfaction. This can only be proven by collating and reviewing performance data within your organisation. What's great to see is the satisfaction staff receive from excellent performance and feedback, encouraging further effort to improve in other areas.

I hope you will engage further in the Improve programme and take the time to thank the Socitm staff behind this report - they do an excellent job!

And if you want to look up Littlefish, we are happy to talk.

# Introduction

This report is intended as summary of the key findings of the Improve service for 2018/19. It is based on financial data and other quantitative data from 2017/18. Those who subscribe to the service will - in addition - benefit from Tableau, a fully interactive online information display tool. They will also be able to participate in workshops where they are able to discuss their data with others.

Tableau’s online presentation allows organisations to view real-time graphs and data, enabling comparisons to other similar authorities and within their own data. It also enables comparison with previous results and subgroups of users or devices. This provides subscribers with a valuable source for strategic reports and business cases.

In response to requests from participants the previous survey (which covered a large expanse of interest areas) the service is now broken down into five more affordable modules:



**Cost**



**Estate**



**Performance**



**User satisfaction**



**Digital**

The overall number of participants has increased this year with 15 organisations taking in at least one of the core modules (Cost, Estate, Performance) and 21 organisations taking part in the Satisfaction and/or Digital module, with some overlap between the two. This gives an overall total of 33 as the basis for this report.

The breakdown of different types of member organisation taking part is also significant in that it covers a spread of both IT service and authority type. Each type of organisation is coded as below:

- › English unitary (**E**)
- › Scottish unitary (**S**)
- › Welsh unitary (**W**)
- › English county (**C**)
- › English district (**D**)
- › London borough (**L**)
- › Metropolitan borough (**M**)
- › Other (**O**)

This year we’ve also introduced the (P) designation to signify partnership, this shows both fully outsourced services and those that are a partnership between one or more public authorities. Therefore L (P) will signify a London Borough that is has its ICT Services supplied via a partnership, with a private sector provider or other local authorities.

## A note on quartiles and the presentation of results

Often with statistical results people assume that first or upper quartile is good and 4th or lower quartile is bad. However, it is the case that for many indicators, having a 4th or lower quartile result could be subjectively good. For instance, those related to costs. However, it is important to view all the indicators in combination. Having a low overall expenditure could be a sign of significant under-investment, especially if this is coupled with other negative indicators. Analysis of the results, often suggests that many indicators are what might be called 'Goldilocks' indicators in that, being somewhere close the average (as in not too hot and not too cold), is the desired place to be and therefore just right.

## Socitm Improve – additional knowledge

For those taking the Cost module, the new Improve service incorporates a site visit from an experienced Socitm consultant. This assists members in completing the process in line with published guidance. It is also to ensure fair play and acts as an informal audit of the data provided. This gives rise to a report for each council detailing the discussion and identifying any issues to be resolved prior to submission. Together with the observations of the consultant, these reports have enabled Socitm to analyse the results in the context of ICT in the public sector in 2018/19.

This Improve Summary Report reviews the vast array of statistics and indicators and attempts to interpret what is happening to Socitm members taking part. Where possible, we have drawn suggestions as to what good values are for some indicators are. It is hoped that those taking part will gain a valuable insight into areas where there is room to improve. The report is intended as a companion to read alongside user's online Tableau representation of their data.



## Confidential

The participants to this study have agreed that the information contained in this report is confidential. For that reason, the information is labelled using letter + number codes (e.g. X125), so that participants may not be identified directly.

When the report, or part of it, is required for use by appropriate external organisations – such as auditors and inspectors – it is permitted on the basis that such persons agree that (i) reference to the report should focus only on the participant concerned and (ii) that no reference to, or commentary about, another participant will be made.

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*Please direct enquiries about this report or the Socitm Improve service to [enquiries@Socitm.net](mailto:enquiries@Socitm.net) (telephone: 01604 709456). Further information may be found on the Socitm website at [www.socitm.net](http://www.socitm.net).*

**2017-18 was again  
a challenging year for  
Socitm members, but those  
engaged with the Improve service  
have shown they can have  
excellent satisfaction ratings.**

*Warwick Andrew, Socitm Improve*

# Executive summary

## Finance

2017/18 saw a drop in the percentage of spend on ICT (1.88%) compared to 2016/17 (2.36%). The overall trend is not clear. For the previous two years there was an increase. The 2016/17 period saw a return to the high-water mark of 2007/8 whereas 2017/18 almost matched the low-water mark of 2014/15. A number of competing factors appear to be in play including the need in some cases to invest in flexible working and more mobile devices while, in others, closing buildings and consolidating on a smaller number of sites and fixed workstations. As stated last year, the need to rectify previous under-investment, often leads to a need to increase expenditure in the short term.

## Cloud computing

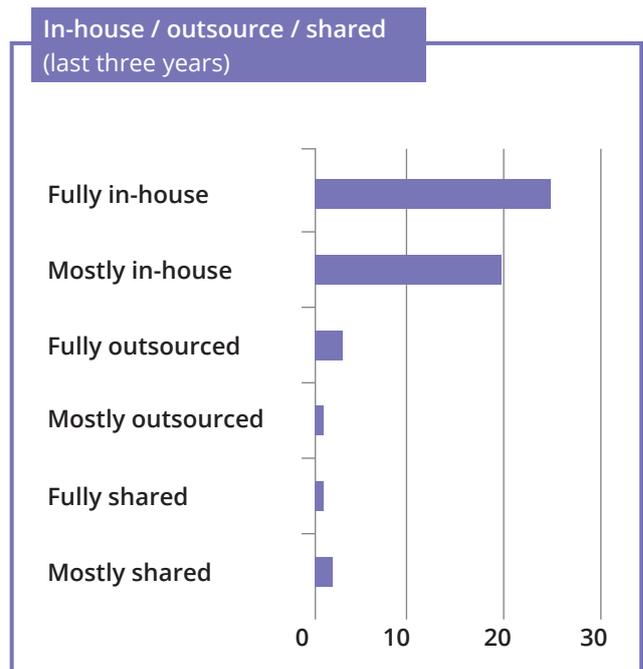
Cloud computing continues to be an area of interest with many more participants describing using some sort of hybrid cloud for some services (mostly remotely hosted applications by the suppliers of those applications). Only one participant who had previously undertaken a wholesale move to a private cloud, hosted by their prime supplier is now considering a complete move to Microsoft Azure. Definitions of cloud computing are still not agreed upon, to some people it means engaging with Office 365 or buying Software as a Service (SaaS). Others see it as Platform as a Service (PaaS) and others still as a complete package (closing onsite data centres). Casual observation suggests like so many instances in the past, that the primary local government application suppliers have been slow to adopt or adapt to a new technology and this is likely to continue for the next few years.

## Cyber security

The shift from PSN compliance, with the changes in the Public Services Network provision in 2019/20, has meant that some of the need to direct funds to specific requirements of that compliance has been removed. Coupled with a shift to Office 365 provision, there has been, for many, an increase in the number and different types of devices to support. The figures provided do not yet show a clear impact of councils shifting to a Cyber Essentials form of security validation. Undoubtedly, the requirement to maintain security and provide frictionless access to services from many different locations, and numerous devices, will continue to be a source of problems for Socitm members.

## Outsourcing

Recent analysis shows an increasing trend to bring services back in-house. Of the 54 participants, 45 describe themselves as in-house or mostly in-house provided. The remaining nine organisations are split between those who are outsourced or operating shared services or a combination of the above.



## Numbers of ICT staff

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The pressure to reduce numbers of ICT staff continues but in one case a shared service has grown in number by taking on-board staff from other public sector partners, they are the largest ICT unit with about 400 staff.

Smaller units with only a few hundred users survive with less than 10 staff. Changes in levels of support offered to users, make a difference to number of ICT staff required to support them. Numbers of users per ICT team member, vary from as few as 30 to over 100. Having approximately 50 users per ICT FTE would appear reasonable, unless significant support is provided outside of that team or the service is highly automated, in which case larger numbers could be also reasonable.

## Size of ICT service desk

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As with the size of the ICT Service overall, the level to which ICT service desk's provide a service makes a significant difference. The Improve service has detected a general move to up-skill service desk staff and many participants now show high levels of fix at first point of contact (over 75% being common). Most participants now split calls between ITIL defined incidents (faults) and requests (starters/leavers, permissions etc.). Many participants have reduced requests, notably through introducing automated password reset and account unlock software. This has helped reduced what a reasonable number of calls per user per year will be.

## ICT service desk calls per user

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Councils with high numbers (over 12 service desk calls per year per user) need to investigate their business processes and the numbers of faults. Those with very low numbers (below four per year) need to check they are fully engaged with their service

users or check their recording processes. Around six to eight calls per user per year would appear to be a good place to be. Other sources quote six calls per user per year as an industry standard.

## Windows 10 roll out

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Not formally part of the Improve service questions, those receiving a consultant visit were asked about their progress with removing older versions of Windows (Windows 7) no longer to be supported by Microsoft. The picture was very mixed, with some having completed the task in 2017 and others scheduled to complete by the time this report is issued in 2019. A few had only just started the process and may not complete until into 2020/21.

## VDI – Virtual Desktop Integration

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Compared to last year, less organisations reported issues with VDI. Many organisations still operate successful Citrix and VM Ware Horizon infrastructures. However, it appears only those that have made recent investments have brought them up to match some user expectations of performance. In all cases, issues with user satisfaction still persist in those participants with older infrastructures, due to the number of people affected by a single failure.

## The end of the desk phone?

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Two participants in this years' Improve service have removed their desk phones and replaced them with what they refer to as 'soft phones' via headsets attached to desktops or laptops, thereby removing a whole IP telephony infrastructure. For those who need to renew IP telephony devices or infrastructure this appears to have a business case worth investigating.

## Schools

With regard to authorities who previously supported ICT within schools, the picture in England and Wales is markedly different than in Scotland. In England and Wales the involvement with schools is now very much either arm's length or non-existent. In contrast, many Scottish respondents still have an active involvement with their schools ICT. For the most part the expenditure and staffing involved in School support have been excluded from the survey so as to compare like with like.

## Feedback from workshops

As part of the Improve process the majority of participants took part in three workshops held in 2018 and 2019 [Birmingham, Glasgow and London]. These workshops explored the reasons behind the results and provided a forum for participants to discuss how the data could assist them improve services.

The detailed feedback remains confidential, but the overall trends and underlying information derived, inform the commentary in this report.

*"A number of competing factors appear to be in play including the need in some cases to invest in flexible working and more mobile devices whilst, in others, the realisation of the benefits from reduced costs from closing buildings and consolidating on a smaller number of sites and fixed workstations."*

## Key metrics of the participants

Socitm Ref	Type of Org.	Population ('000)	ICT expenditure (£m)	Net expenditure (£m)
1802	M ( P )	750 to 1,000	30 to 40	over 1,000
1803	W	under 100	5 to 10	150 to 250
1804	S	300 to 400	10 to 15	500 to 750
1805	C	400 to 500	5 to 10	500 to 750
1806	C ( P )	750 to 1,000	10 to 15	over 1,000
1807	L ( P )	500 to 625	10 to 15	750 to 1,000
1808	L	300 to 400	10 to 15	150 to 250
1809	M	500 to 625	15 to 20	250 to 500
1810	S	under 100	5 to 10	150 to 250
1811	S	100 to 150	5 to 10	150 to 250
1812	S	under 100	under 2	50 to 150
1814	C ( P )	over 1,000	n/a	over 1,000
1815	D ( P )	under 100	under 2	under 50
1816	L ( P )	150 to 225	5 to 10	500 to 750
1817	D	under 100	under 2	under 50

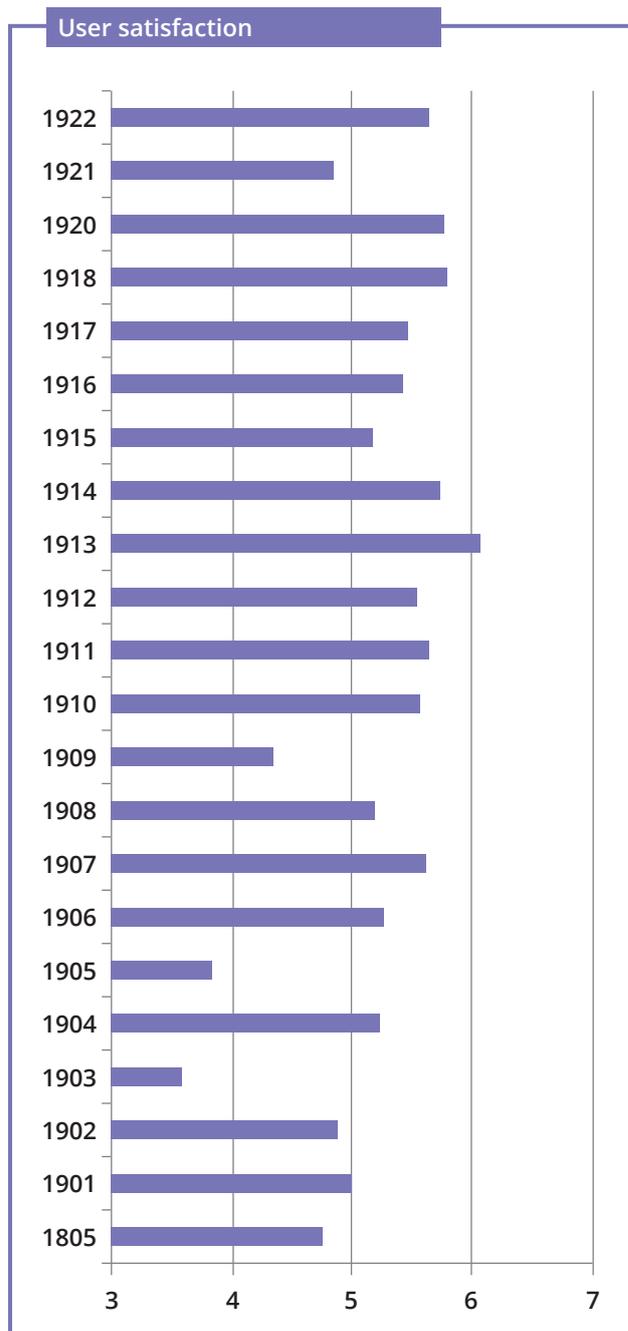
# User satisfaction

This year's Business User Satisfaction (or BUS) process within the Improve programme used the established one to seven rating system (below). ICT Service users were asked to rate a number of different aspects of service provision by means of an independent online survey. The results can be interpreted as follows:

1-2	Extremely dissatisfied/very poor
2-3	Poor
3-4	Dissatisfied
4-5	Some areas for concern
5-6	Overall good
6-7	Excellent

The application of simple mathematics dictates that average scores of seven and one are not attainable unless all participants score the same. Consequently results near the extremes are unlikely. Overall user satisfaction this year shows a greater variance than last year with an apparent downward trend, with two participants in the dissatisfied area, but still the majority showed some level of satisfaction with the ICT service. With many services (16 out of 22) recording satisfaction above five (good/excellent), that represents a major achievement against a backdrop of reduced spending/cuts.

One council managed to attain a score over six which is excellent (as an overwhelming number of people must have rated the service with a seven and very few with lower scores).



\*Reference numbers are different from other sections, as the result is for 2018/19 not the financial year 2017/18

It is interesting to note that the two organisations with scores in the three to four range are national government sponsored organisations not local authorities. This suggests they may require greater support from fellow members of Socitm. For the four councils in the four to five band there is clearly room for more improvement than for other participants.

## Reasons for satisfaction

One of the principal interests in comparing satisfaction ratings is to try and learn what works well and what doesn't. In some cases there are elements that may be entirely local but it can be the case that general approaches or specific technologies have a bearing.

Main reasons for positive scores

- › Up-skilling service desk staff to do more at first point of contact
- › Streamlined procedures, more freedom for ICT operational staff to make decisions
- › Recent investments in new equipment
- › Having a robust 5 year replacement/ refresh cycle for equipment

Main reasons for negative or low scores

- › Ageing equipment/performance issues
- › Lack of flexibility in thin client environment
- › Security restrictions causing problems.

## Service improvement model

One of the key features of the Socitm Improve service is the ability to match expectations of service with actual delivery across a wide range of issues.

Using this model it is possible show how close members are to delivering what is important to their service users.

Generally members with better satisfaction have scores closer to 100%, in a number of key areas.

The two charts below (taken from the Socitm Improve Tableau online interface) demonstrate the differing results between a top performing council (top) and a less well performing council in this year's group (bottom).



The gaps are obvious. The council on the top consistently outscores the one on the bottom by around 20-25%. While on the lower chart, none of the individual scores were the lowest overall, that they were all median shows an organisation struggling with its ICT such as having less reliable equipment; unable to fix issues quickly and not trusted by nearly half the organisation as a result.

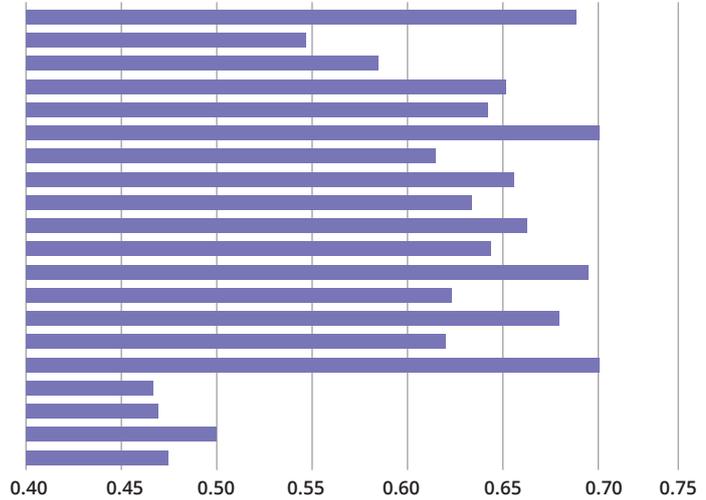
# Key driver analysis

The service improvement model is not just a means of establishing how you measure up to others. By using the new online Tableau presentation, it is also possible to understand which areas of a business are the source of results. For a council with low overall results the following charts show the different results from users of laptops and desktops (*higher results are better*).

This clearly indicates a significant dissatisfaction with indicators K17, K18, K19 related to 'fitness for purpose' for those with laptops (top) compared to those with desktops (bottom). This would point to issues with the equipment or remote access / security of these devices.

## Users with laptops

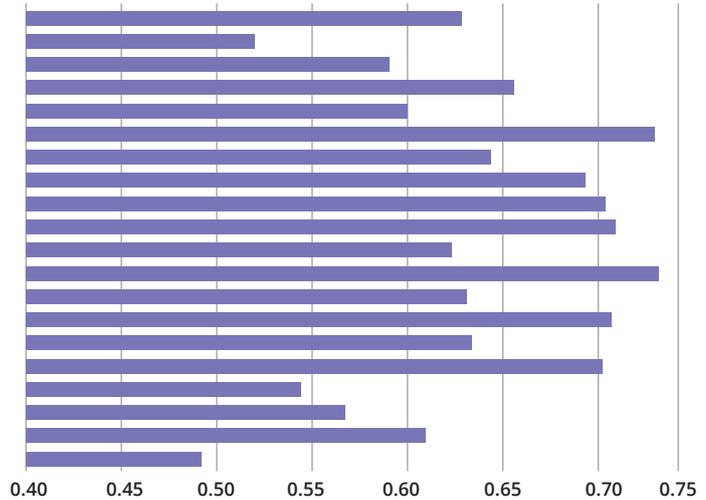
- K1. Working relationships
- K2. Political and senior management commitment
- K3. Downtime
- K4. Technical competence of ICT support staff
- K5. Customer service skills of ICT support staff
- K6. Responsiveness of ICT staff to changing needs
- K7. Ease of contacting ICT support staff
- K8. Speed of response to request for assistance
- K9. Accuracy of problem diagnosis by ICT support staff
- K10. Ability of ICT support staff to fix problems
- K11. ICT staff understanding the users business
- K12. Communication channels
- K13. Resource plans for new systems and developments
- K14. Promptness of ICT support staff
- K15. Lead times
- K16. Effectiveness of monitoring the ICT unit's performance
- K17. Fitness for purpose of the hardware provided
- K18. Fitness for purpose of office systems provided
- K19. Fitness for purpose of the business systems provided
- K20. The quality of training provided



Calculated from 576 responses

## Users with desktops

- K1. Working relationships
- K2. Political and senior management commitment
- K3. Downtime
- K4. Technical competence of ICT support staff
- K5. Customer service skills of ICT support staff
- K6. Responsiveness of ICT staff to changing needs
- K7. Ease of contacting ICT support staff
- K8. Speed of response to request for assistance
- K9. Accuracy of problem diagnosis by ICT support staff
- K10. Ability of ICT support staff to fix problems
- K11. ICT staff understanding the users business
- K12. Communication channels
- K13. Resource plans for new systems and developments
- K14. Promptness of ICT support staff
- K15. Lead times
- K16. Effectiveness of monitoring the ICT unit's performance
- K17. Fitness for purpose of the hardware provided
- K18. Fitness for purpose of office systems provided
- K19. Fitness for purpose of the business systems provided
- K20. The quality of training provided



Calculated from 487 responses

# Weighted gap analysis

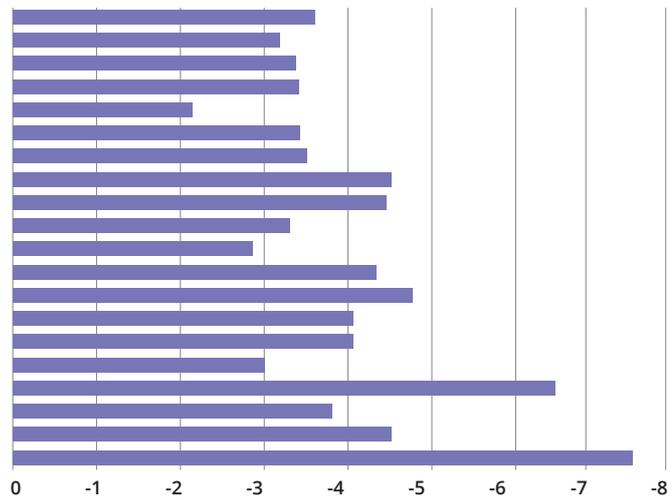
Continuing the lessons of identifying areas to concentrate improvement, Socitm Improve helps identify the perceived gap between how important an area of delivery is expected to be and its actual delivery. This is a set of indicators whereby a lower difference is better because this shows the gap between expectation and delivery.

Effective expectation management can be almost as important as the actual ability to deliver high quality services, especially in cash limited environments.

What these charts show is that across the board, the gaps on the top are less than the gaps on the bottom, pointing not only to issues in all these areas but suggests work is needed on expectation management. The standout issues are downtime and the ease (or otherwise) of contacting ICT Support Staff - together with their speed of response - so would point to priority areas for remedial action (notice the scale on the bottom is over twice that on the top).

### Top performing council

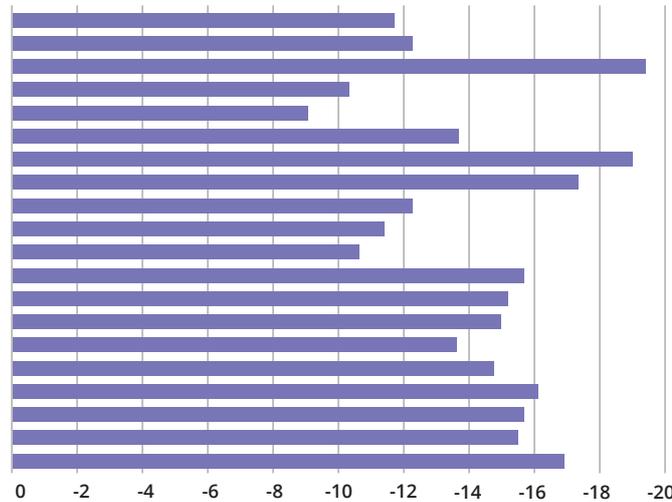
- K1. Working relationships
- K2. Political and senior management commitment
- K3. Downtime
- K4. Technical competence of ICT support staff
- K5. Customer service skills of ICT support staff
- K6. Responsiveness of ICT staff to changing needs
- K7. Ease of contacting ICT support staff
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- K9. Accuracy of problem diagnosis by ICT support staff
- K10. Ability of ICT support staff to fix problems
- K11. ICT staff understanding the users business
- K12. Communication channels
- K13. Resource plans for new systems and developments
- K14. Promptness of ICT support staff
- K15. Lead times
- K16. Effectiveness of monitoring the ICT unit's performance
- K17. Fitness for purpose of the hardware provided
- K18. Fitness for purpose of office systems provided
- K19. Fitness for purpose of the business systems provided
- K20. The quality of training provided



Calculated from 354 responses

### Less well performing council

- K1. Working relationships
- K2. Political and senior management commitment
- K3. Downtime
- K4. Technical competence of ICT support staff
- K5. Customer service skills of ICT support staff
- K6. Responsiveness of ICT staff to changing needs
- K7. Ease of contacting ICT support staff
- K8. Speed of response to request for assistance
- K9. Accuracy of problem diagnosis by ICT support staff
- K10. Ability of ICT support staff to fix problems
- K11. ICT staff understanding the users business
- K12. Communication channels
- K13. Resource plans for new systems and developments
- K14. Promptness of ICT support staff
- K15. Lead times
- K16. Effectiveness of monitoring the ICT unit's performance
- K17. Fitness for purpose of the hardware provided
- K18. Fitness for purpose of office systems provided
- K19. Fitness for purpose of the business systems provided
- K20. The quality of training provided



Calculated from 1,180 responses

# Cost module

All organisations in the public sector have to demonstrate value for money. The Socitm Improve service helps in this process but it is important to balance what services cost against what scope of estate they support and level to which they perform.

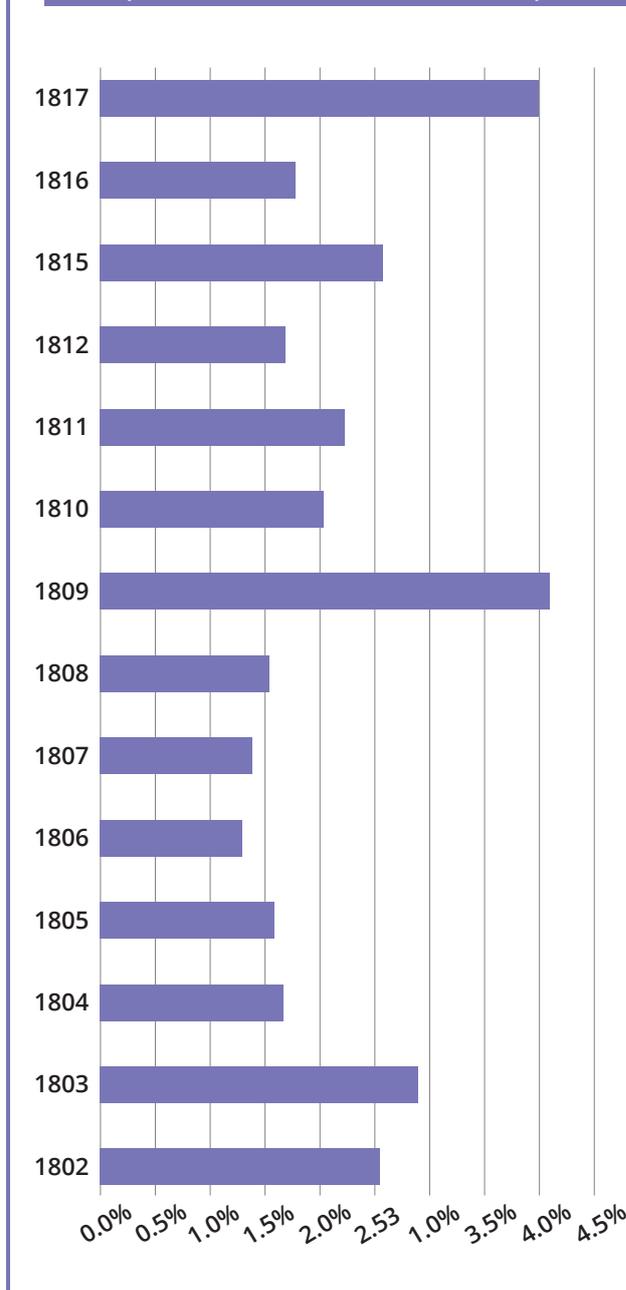
In examining metrics from the cost module, we will attempt to highlight interactions with other factors. Local circumstances and priorities do affect the cost base of councils so there can be no absolute right and wrong answers. Under-investment in ICT services has a habit of occurring in cycles, with major problems often leading to investment and a lack of immediate problems leading to cost cutting.

Key factors effecting costs are

- › Geography and the number of supported sites. Having a lot of sites connected remotely adds to base costs significantly
- › The level of out-sourcing of other service areas or partnership working
- › Use of some systems leads to significantly greater demands for support / configuration or development (such as SAP or Oracle ERP solutions)
- › Whether or not the council has reduced desktops in line with flexible working policies
- › How many remote devices have been issued or supported
- › The level of involvement in supporting schools

Not all of these factors are recorded in the Improve service; however we will attempt to draw lessons from relative size and expenditure.

ICT expenditure as a % of total council expenditure



It can be seen how much an organisation spends on its' ICT varies by nearly four times, from least to most, relative to its overall expenditure. Those in the first quartile (below 1.6%) are either extremely efficient or struggling to fund services. Those in around the median value (1.9%) would appear to be an area that have made significant efficiencies and have limited scope for more. Those in the fourth quartile (above 2.6%) may find there is scope for further efficiencies.

## Size of ICT organisation

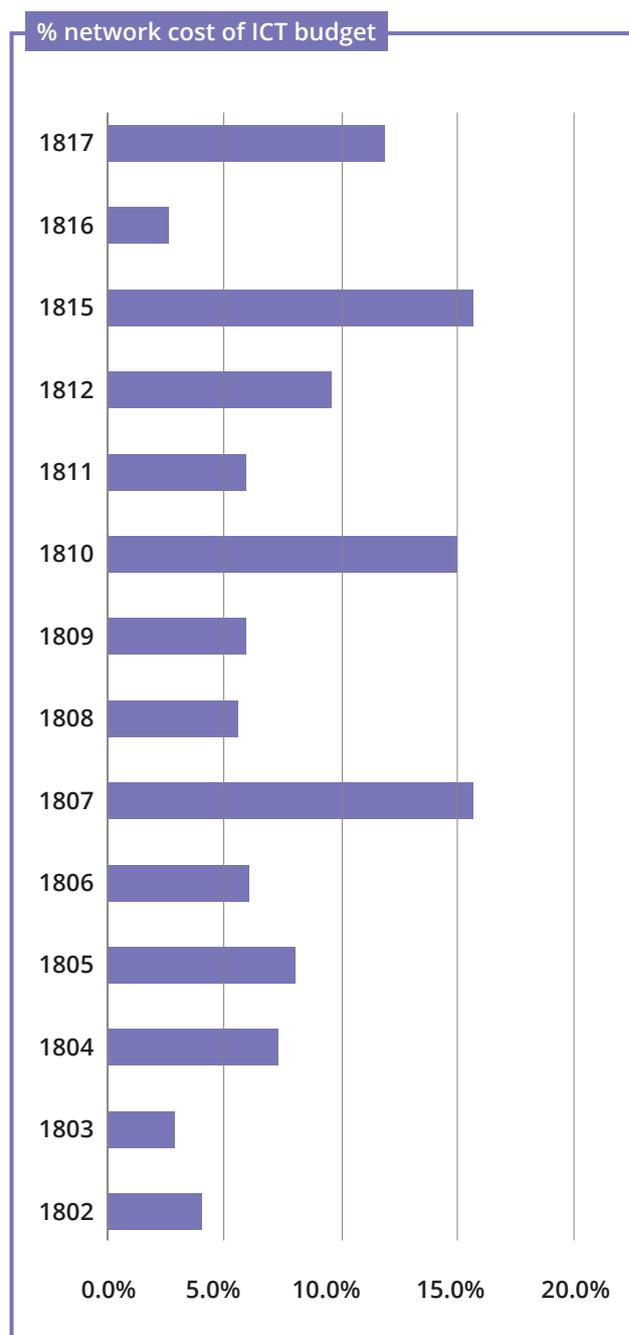
There are a number of different ways of assessing the relative size of an ICT organisation. We've selected the relationship between number of users and ICT staff to draw comparisons as this - to some extent - evens out issues relating to what services are outsourced and which are not.

Socitm Ref.	Type of org.	ICT staff (FTE)	Supported users	No. of users per ICT FTE
1802	M (P)	400.4	16,515	41.2
1803	W	47.7	2,567	53.8
1805	C	127.3	5,860	46.0
1807	L (P)	130.0	3,891	29.9
1808	L	70.0	4,160	52.7
1809	M	145.0	5,670	39.1
1810	S	60.3	4,952	82.1
1811	S	49.0	4,661	95.2
1812	S	26.0	3,765	144.8
1815	D (P)	10.4	710	68.2
1816	L (P)	40.0	3,546	88.7
1817	D	8.7	340	38.9

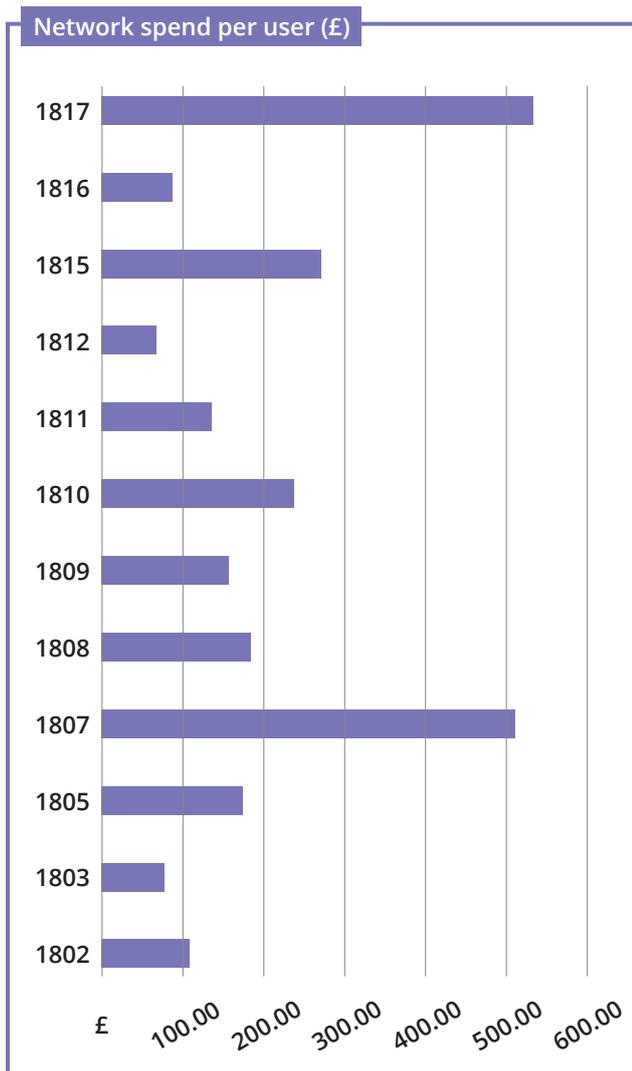
As with other indicators, having either extremely high or extremely low numbers may be an issue that needs to be investigated and understood. It is probable that the three Scottish authorities 1810,1811,1812 have higher numbers due to their greater level of interaction with schools and pupils. Discounting these councils, the figure of around 50 users per member of ICT staff (or above) would be considered good. However, those with much higher figures may wish to investigate how much shadow ICT they have in their organisations.

## Network expenditure

This area of cost is considerably influenced by geography and the number of locations supported. It is also increasingly influenced by some cloud first strategies particularly where these involve the costs of additional dedicated links to suppliers. This can be seen evidenced in different way in the following two graphs.



Three of the four highest spending participants have hybrid cloud implementations, whereby significant services are hosted externally to the council. Conversely, one of the lowest percentages is allocated by the organisation which is fully cloud hosted. This is echoed by the chart below showing the costs reflected per user (although for the most part for comparison our member's shows a figure lower than the average residential broadband charges for a year).

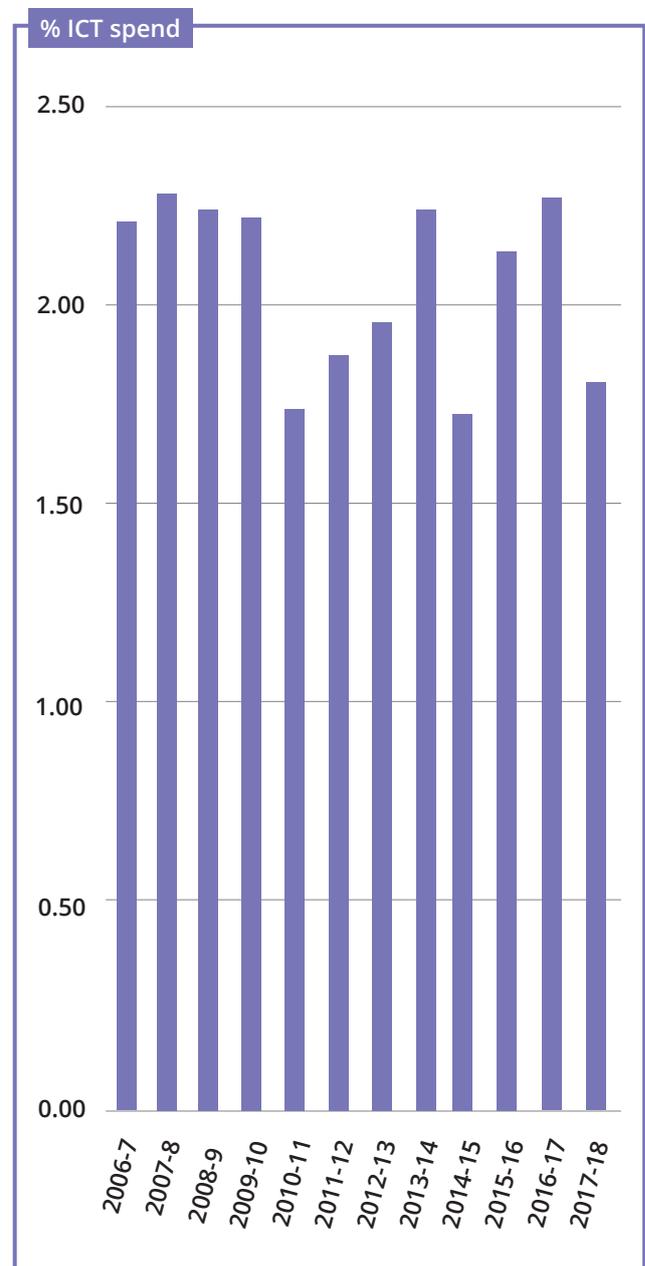


This particular indicator is unkind to districts, as the fixed costs of communications links are borne over a much smaller number of users. It is, however, a cautionary tale for those embarking on cloud first strategies, as it suggests savings may only be realised at the end of a process and in fact during the hybrid cloud stage costs may rise rather than fall.

## Expenditure changes over last 12 years

One of the unique features of the Socitm Improve service is the access to data stretching back in time.

The impact of the financial crisis of 2008/9 can clearly be seen in 2010/11, as can the introduction of austerity measures by their impact in 2014/15. 2017/18 appears to be another downturn in finances for ICT.



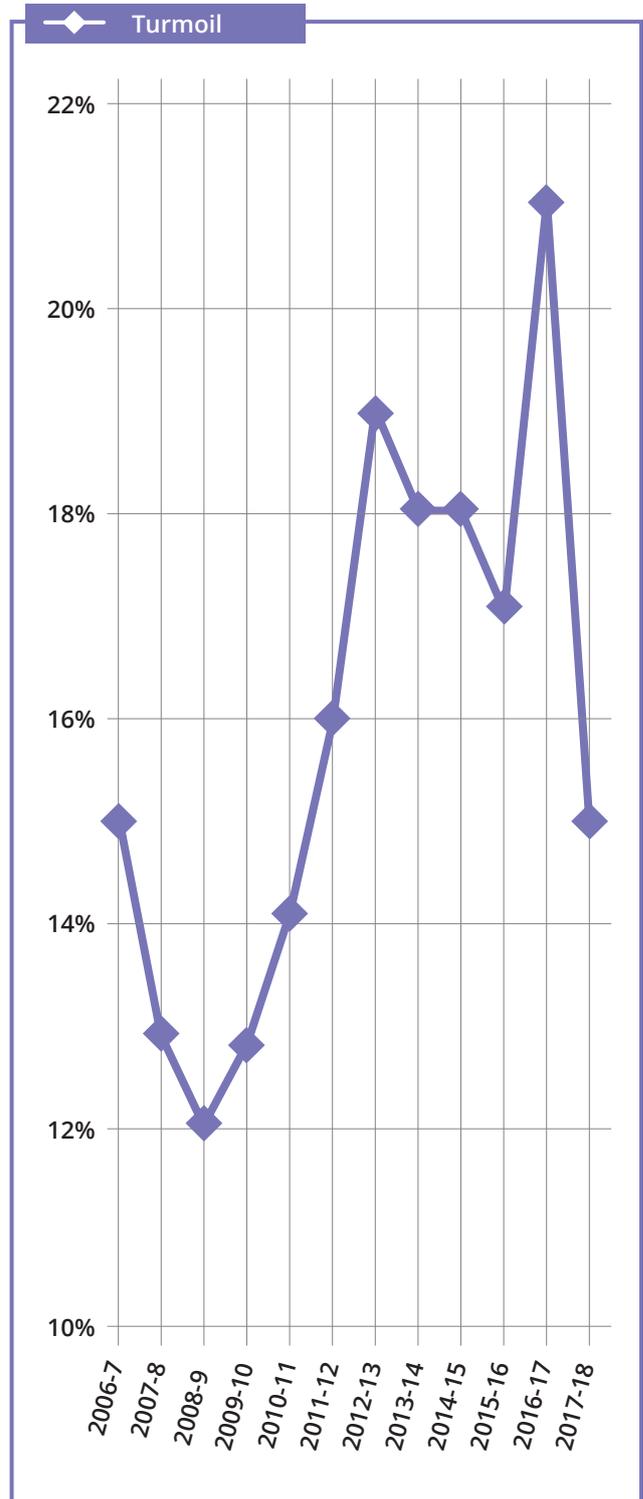
# Estate module

For most organisations direct comparisons tell members very little other than that they are different. What they can do, however, is put into context the type of ICT service they operate. The analysis below concentrates on changes in the ICT estate over time and shows how world has changed.

## Rates of ICT staff turmoil or churn over last 12 years

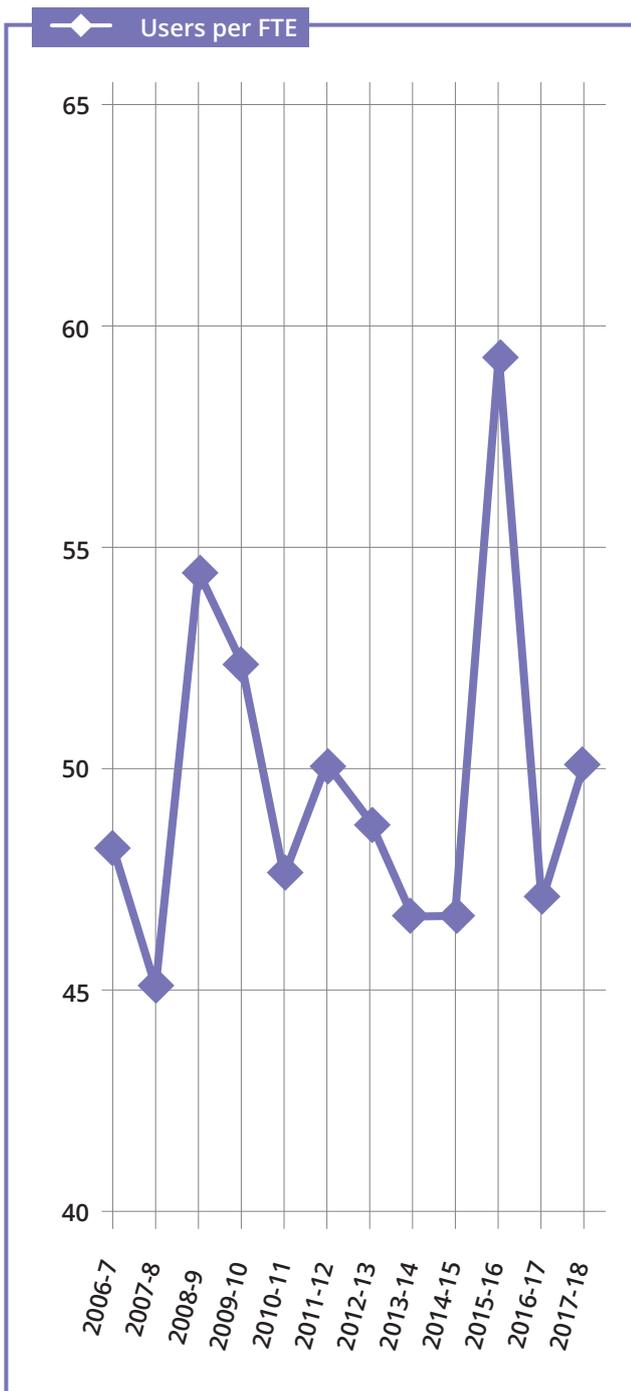
The most important factor in any ICT Service is the employee base.

Recent years have seen interesting fluctuations in the rate of turmoil or churn in numbers of ICT staff. The down turn in 2017/18 reflects to some extent the return of harder times or uncertainty in the labour market. The ICT workforce in local government is more mobile when the economy improves and less mobile as it restricts or confidence is lost. The uncertainties following the 2016 referendum and subsequent Brexit negotiations may have also had an impact on the reduced rate of people moving jobs.



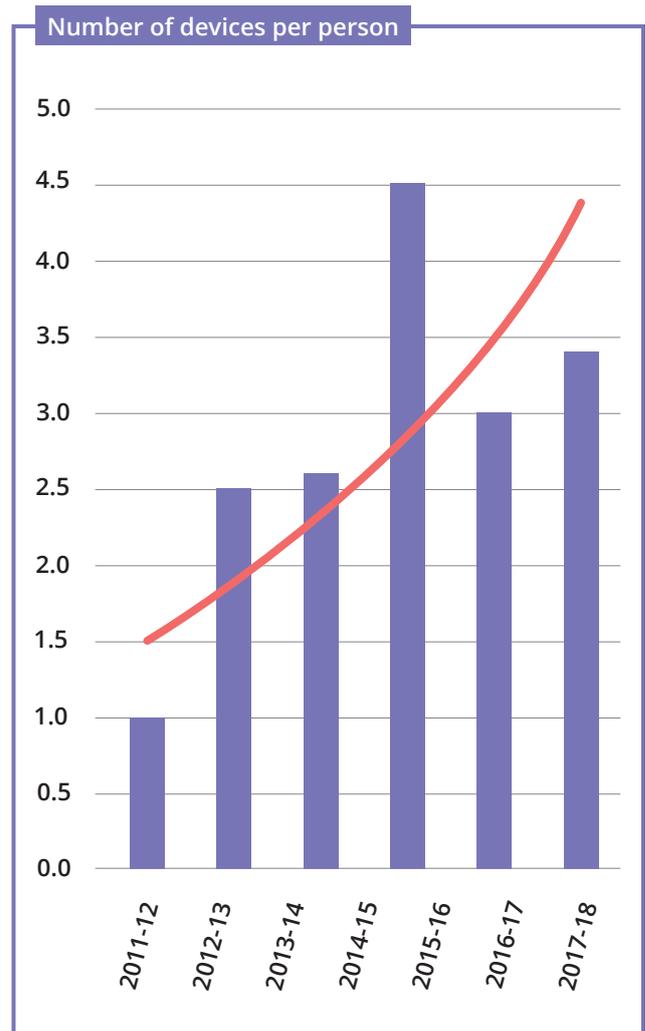
## Users per ICT FTE over last 12 years

Changes in sample size in 2015/16, appear to have provided an anomaly in the data. However, the average figure does appear to correlate closely to 50 users per member of ICT staff over time.



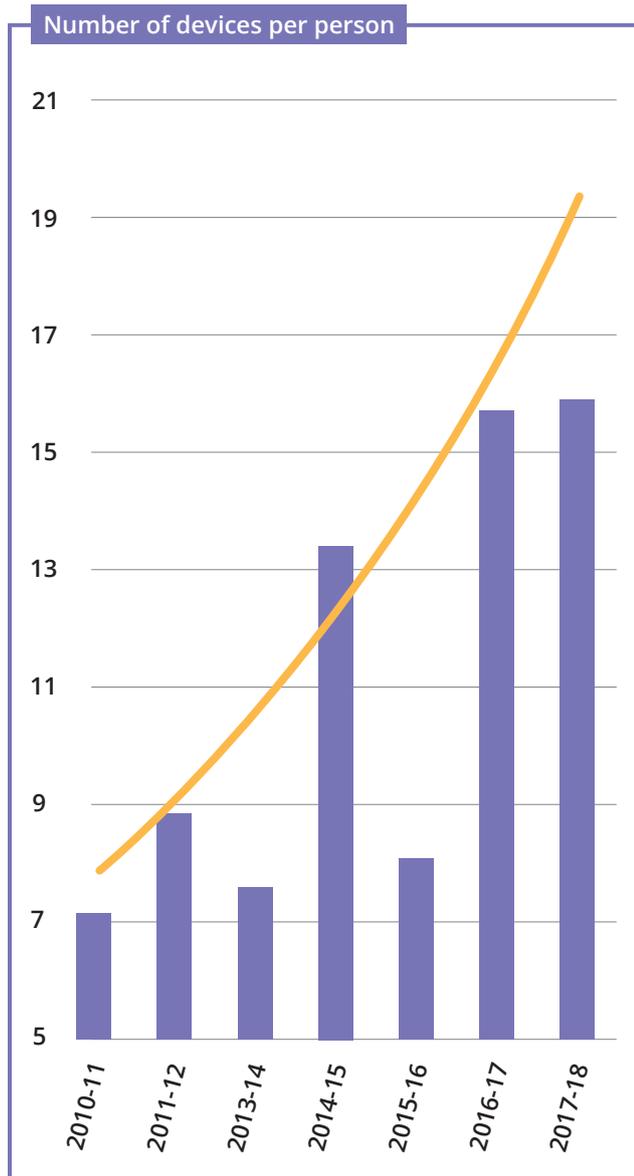
## Numbers of devices per person over last 6 years

Several different trends appear to interact with this indicator. While it is true that desk positions are reducing in many authorities - and some authorities are reducing desk phones - there is a move to increase the number of screens per person and many more people now have mobile devices. Overall, despite some rationalisation the trend suggests a gradual rise in numbers of devices - both mobile and the number of screens. Many organisations are now actively seeking to reduce the number of devices they support per person. For example, each person gets a laptop/tablet plus an additional monitor and a mobile smartphone (three devices). This is in place of a desktop with two monitors, a laptop and/or tablet, a desktop IP phone and a smartphone (five or six devices).



## Numbers of people sharing a printer

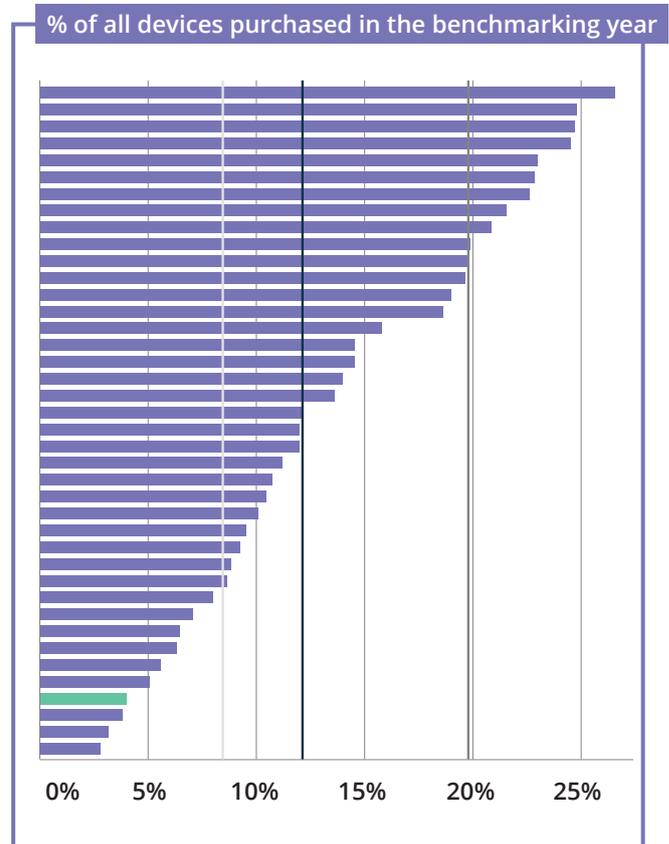
The introduction of Multi-Function Devices (MFD's) over the last 10-15 years appears to have been something of a success with the numbers of people sharing printers showing an increase over time.



The variance in some years is due to differing numbers of larger authorities taking part in the survey. However the trend is clear. Councils should aspire to have more than 20 users per printer/MFD and having fewer larger offices will help with this significantly.

## Percentage of devices replaced

(reviewed over last few years)



This measure can be used in a variety of ways, as it doesn't show refresh cycles exactly, as many councils with five year or longer refresh cycles, have five or six year spikes in expenditure and show a limited number of devices replaced in between times.

What it does show, however, is that most participants have been sweating assets with most replacing less than one in eight devices last year and some pursuing an reactive replace when broken strategy. An example being a council with only 4% of devices replaced (or one in 25). Clearly, that will not be a sustainable position as ICT equipment will not last 25 years. This indicates that many councils need to embark on urgent large scale replacement programmes in the near future. In some cases, the need to move off Windows 7 is providing this, but isn't showing in the figures for 2017/18 because some councils have been slow to begin this process.

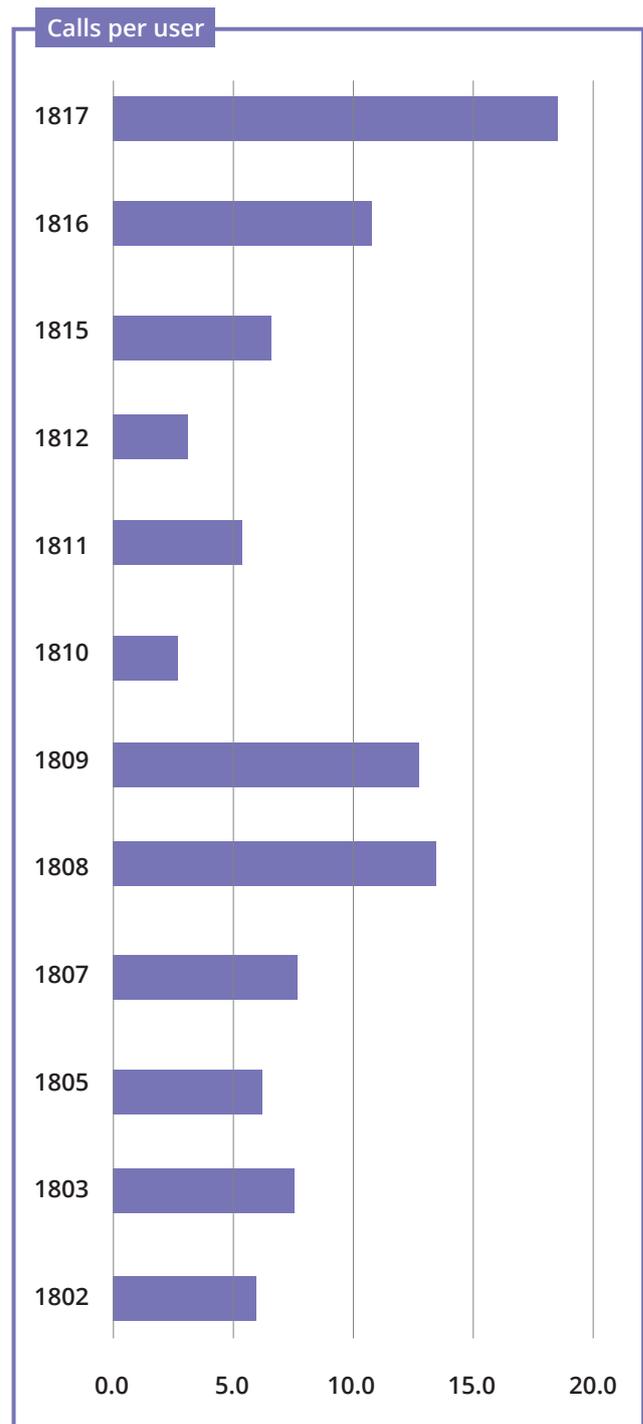
# Performance module

The ICT service is often the most easily criticised unit in any organisation as people find it easier to vocalise frustration or dissatisfaction with ICT Systems, than they do with other people. However this module provides some more objective measures to compliment those of the User Satisfaction Module.

## Service desk calls per user

Taking the total number of interactions for both service incidents and requests it is possible to see how used (or for that matter over or under used) an ICT Service Desk is. While many ICT organisations strive to reduce Service Desk calls (for instance reducing password reset or account unlock requests) having a low number of calls is not always the best outcome, just as having a very high number (particularly if they a fault reports) is also not desirable. Like any service business, having a good service often encourages people to call or email or report online rather than trying to resolve their issue without using the ICT service!

So what is a “normal” level of calls? Councils with high numbers (over 12 service desk calls per year per user) need to investigate their business processes and numbers of faults (with a number of possible repeat calls or failure demand), those with very low numbers (below four per year) need to check they are fully engaged with their service users or check their recording processes. Being in the region of six to eight calls per user per year would appear to be a good place to be. Other sources quote six calls per user per year as an industry standard.



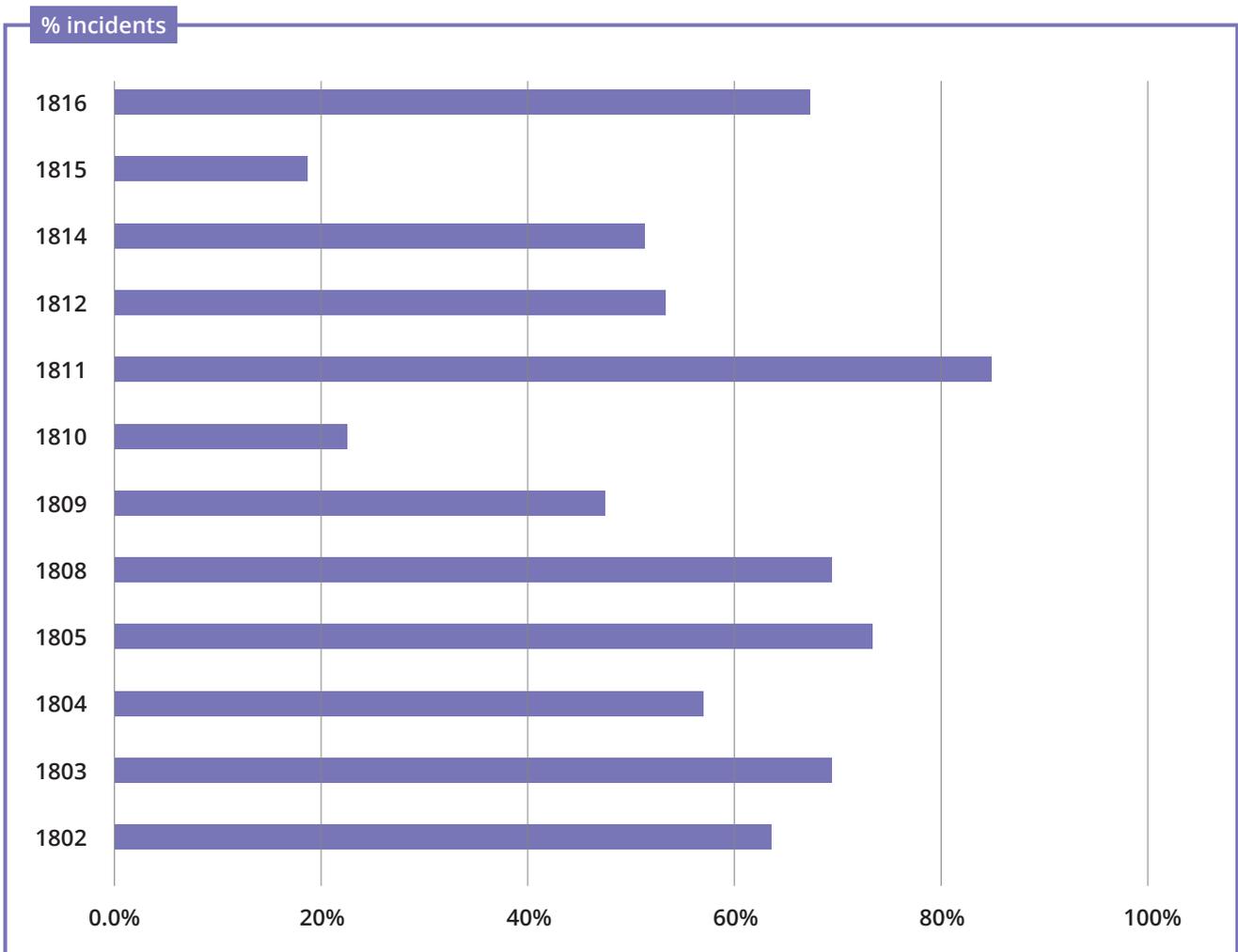
## Service desk incidents compared to requests

Most respondents now operate ITIL based service desks (or at least a suitable subset of the full model). Whilst not consistent it is generally the case that incidents are recorded when something goes wrong (it's a fault) and a request is when ICT are required to do something that is not a fault (password reset, new user, change in permissions or access rights etc.).

Balancing the desire to use your service for customer assistance and reducing the number of reasons for someone to call is difficult. However, having a relatively low percentage of faults or incidents is a concern because it suggests either miss-recording of incidents

as requests or an excessive or burdensome numbers of requests. If not already implemented, it would suggest an immediate business case for automated password reset and account unlock facilities.

Many sites - in the light of recent changes in password guidance - have either removed forced password changes or extended the time between changes significantly. It is acceptable to have a relatively high percentage of genuine incidents (faults) if the total number of calls isn't excessively high (e.g. it highlights a need for root cause analysis and problem management improvements). For sites with automated systems for common requests, a figure above 50% for incidents to requests would demonstrate the automated systems are working as desired.



## Size of service desk

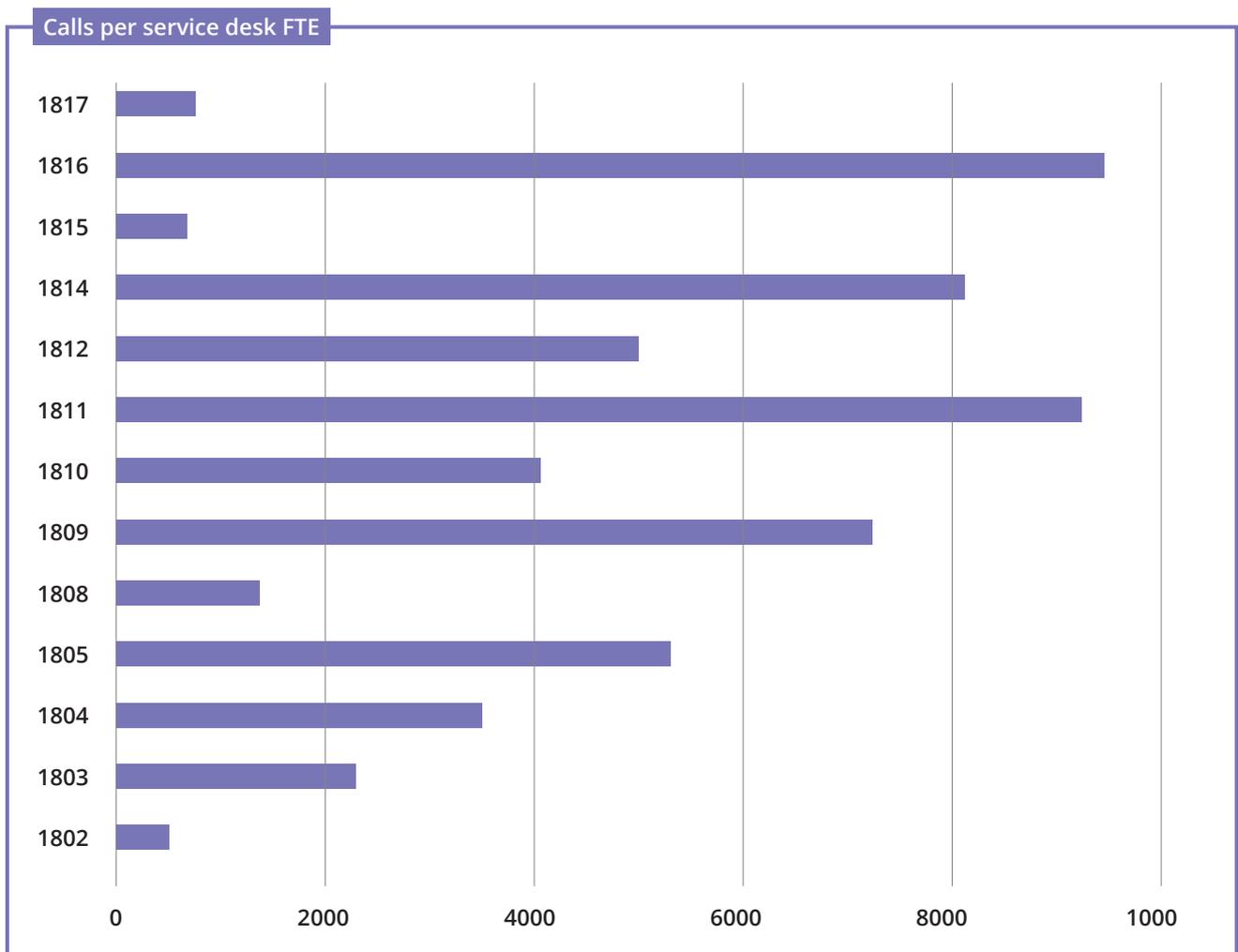
There is a vast difference to the number of recorded calls per service desk person. This can be due to a number of factors.

Those with very high numbers (over 7,000 calls per service desk FTE per year) suggest that either a large number of the recorded calls are automated or the definition of service desk personnel is quite narrowly interpreted. Having a figure of near 10,000 yearly calls per FTE - based on an FTE working about 220 days per

year - suggests each person is dealing with 45 calls a day. Allowing for breaks, meetings and other downtime that would give an average call time of seven minutes, which is high even in a commercial call centre.

If those councils haven't introduced automated password reset/account unlock software (and included those calls in the figures) then it suggests high volumes of trivial calls or limited first time fix.

Clearly up-skilling service desk personnel to fix more issues at first point of contact (or within 15 minutes) suggests that having sufficient numbers to handle less than 5,000 calls per year is better (ideally much less).



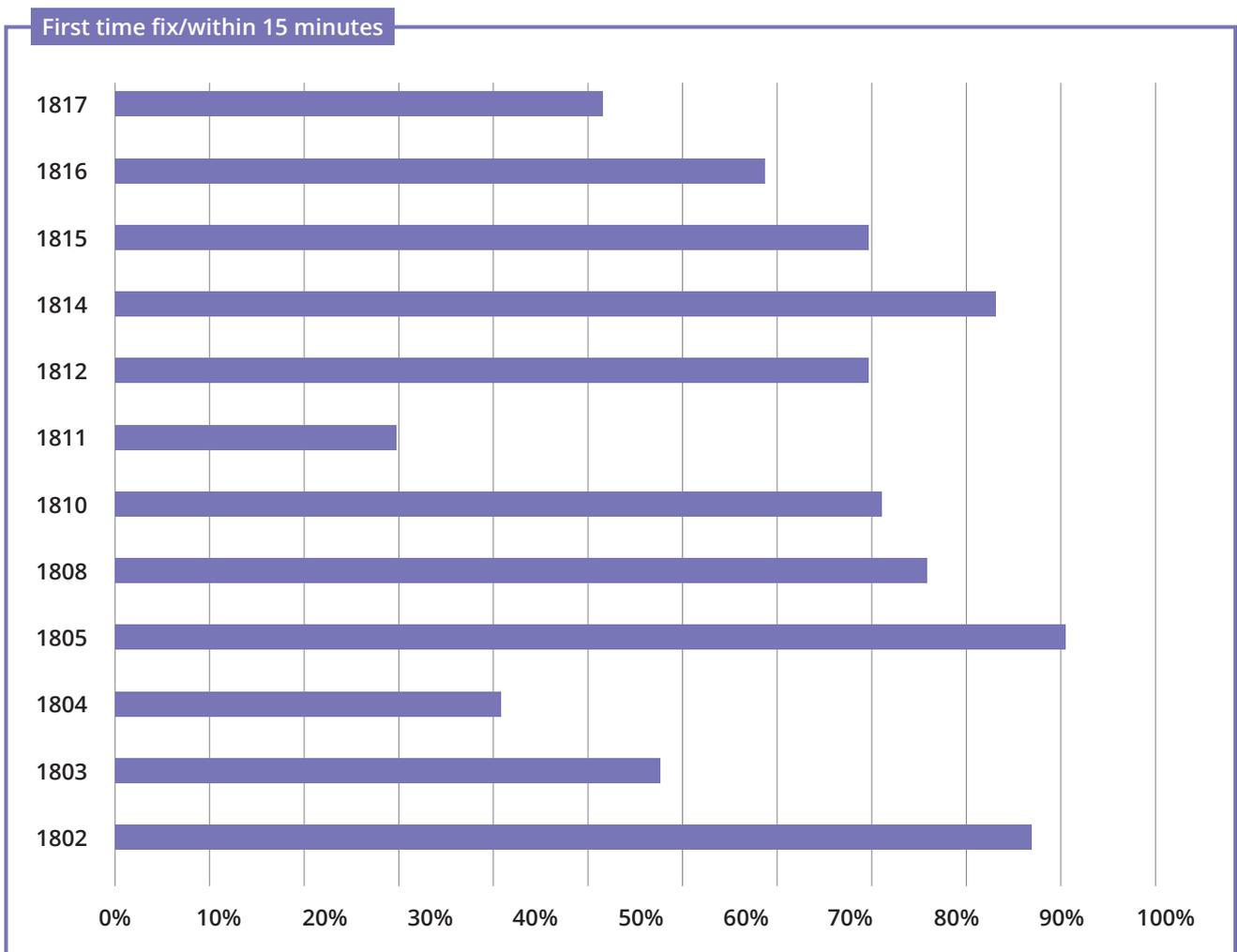
## Resolving issues at first point of contact

The trend over the last 12 years is very much one of up-skilling first line service desk personnel to enable more issues to be resolved at first contact.

There are clearly instances whereby those with high first time fix rates correspond to relatively low numbers of users per service desk FTE (for example 1802).

There are also instances that relate to high numbers of users per ICT Services FTE to lower first time fix rates (for example 1811).

This suggests something of a relationship between better fix rates and less loaded service desk staff. Setting a target for fixing calls in 15 minutes does rely upon whether or not simplistic tasks like password reset are included in the figures or not. Removing those easy fixes from calls recorded, may decrease the percentage able to be fixed in 15 minutes. Notwithstanding these caveats, it would appear reasonable that setting targets over 60% first time fix rate, can be achieved.



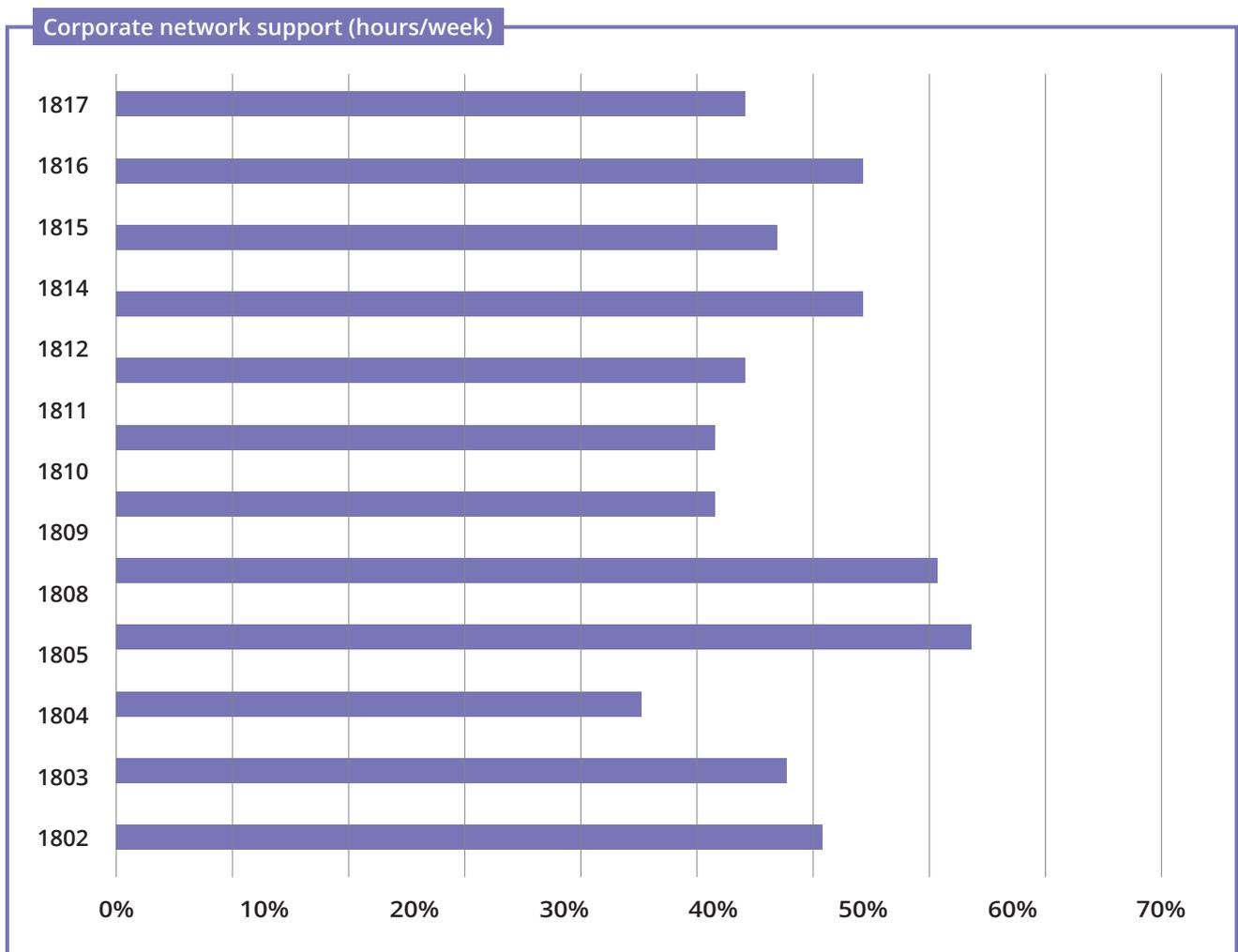
## Support for corporate network

This indicator (see graph below) is not just to show how long the service desk is open, it reflects the time that support staff are available to support the majority of systems (answering services - without technical backup - do not count).

Overall the amount of hours that an ICT service covers its core systems have been reduced in recent years despite pressures from more flexible working. Only two of this year's respondents operate with support available for more than 50 hours a week (10 hours per work day) with a majority offering a 8am until 4pm or similar (8:30am until 4:30pm), 40 hours per week, full cover.

## Network reliability/downtime

Network reliability continues to be excellent for most respondents with only two suffering any major outages for just a small number of hours (four and a half hours in one case and five hours over two incidents in the other). Website downtime is more of an issue, with nearly all respondents losing their website for some time between an hour and three days.





## Conclusions and thanks

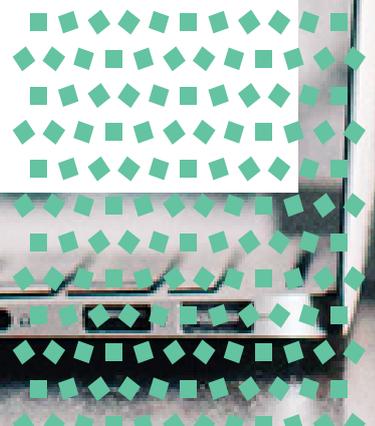
The changes in financial climate over the last 12 years have seen many changes in ICT, the impact of security restrictions from PSN compliance and the conflicting requirements for more flexible working have certainly been challenging. This year's Socitm Improve service does suggest however that many members are continuing to, literally, improve services despite these pressures.

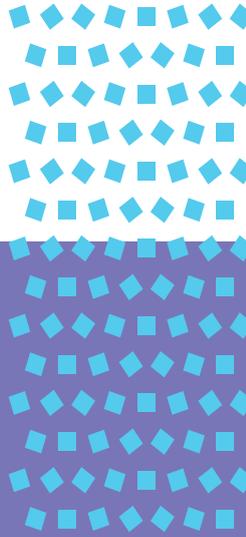
The service deliberately doesn't attempt to provide a competition and hold up individual authorities as beacons of good practice. The figures suggest that all members taking part can improve elements of their delivery. The important element of the new service is allowing each partner to monitor its own improvement from year to year and, where they need to make the case for changes, they can compare their resources to those who may perform better.

The report author would like to thank all those who welcomed him into their organisations and provided their time and energy to collect all the relevant data. He looks forward to seeing many of them again next year and at the next set of workshops. He would also like to thank Chantelle Denny, Aimie Francis and Matthew Fraser at Socitm HQ for their support and organisational skills. Finally, but by no means least, the sponsors of this report Littlefish without whom this publication would prove difficult to bring free to Socitm members.

**Warwick Andrew**

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