

South West Business Link

SW RSP - Performance Report Quarter 4 - 2007/08

Key Points

South West Business Link has performed extremely well in Quarter 4 of 2007/08 – better than any other English region.

- Market Penetration was 18% above target levels;
- The number of intensively assisted businesses was 86% above target;
- Customer satisfaction is very slightly below target, but not to a statistically significant degree.

A strategic decision to focus on intensive assistance around businesses growth and with start-ups and pre-starts accounted for the good performance on intensive assists. This has been achieved while continuing to meet broader, lighter-touch, market penetration targets.

1. Introduction

This report has been produced by SLIM for the SW Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) Board. It summarises the performance of the Business Link network in the South West during 2007/8 using information from the national Business Link Management Group's Regional Performance Report.

2. Business Link Customers

In the last 12 months 88,931 customers (Figure 1.1) in the South West used Business Link Services, including nearly 73,221 established businesses. This is the equivalent to 36% of the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) business base.

Of these, 7,626 customers received intensive assistance involving one-to-one support leading to an agreed plan of action to improve business turnover and productivity.

In addition, the network provided pre-start services to over 12,227 potential entrepreneurs.

South West Business Link customers

	2007/8
Start-ups	3,483
Other established businesses	73,221
<i>SMEs Intensively Assisted</i>	7,626
Pre-starts	12,227
Total customer base	88,931

BL MIR returns Q4 07/08. Rolling four quarter data

During 2007/08 there has been some realignment of activity, with more effort being put into activities with the clearest potential to contribute to regional economic performance and social and economic inclusion. This has seen some shift in focus from mass market 'light touch' support to the established SME population towards more intensive assistance to support business growth and more work with start-ups and pre-starts to grow the business base.

3. Key Performance Indicators

Regional and national performance of the Business Link network is measured against three Key Performance Indicators:

1. Market Penetration;
2. Intensive Assistance (IAs);
3. Customer satisfaction.

Market Penetration and Intensively Assisted Customers are measured as a proportion of the stock of businesses on the IDBR.

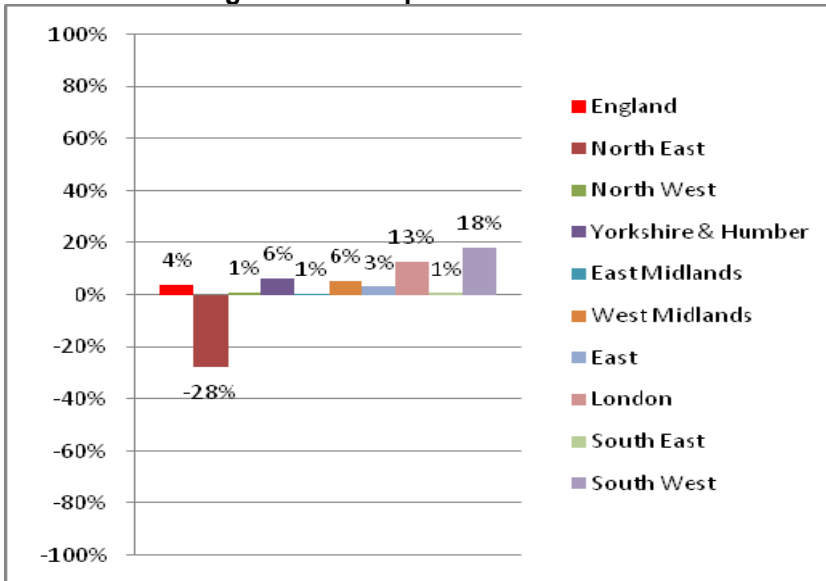
3.1 Market Penetration

Eight of the nine English regions met their targets for market penetration in 2007/8. The South West exceeded its 2007/8 target in all quarters and was the most successful region, with market penetration 18% above target levels for the year as a whole.

	Q4 2006/07	Q1 2007/8	Q2 2007/8	Q2 2007/8	Q4 2007/8	Target
Market Penetration (% of IBDR)	39.9%	39.7%	37.3%	39.8%	43.4%	36.7%

BL MIR returns Q4 07/08. Rolling four quarter data (Q4 data for customer satisfaction)

Variation from targets – market penetration



Source: Business Link MI Q4 07/08. Rolling four quarter data.

The South West RDA reports that this has been due in large part to a comprehensive above and below the line marketing campaign which included TV, radio, web podcasts, editorials in local newspapers and innovative commercial partnerships (with Costa Coffee).

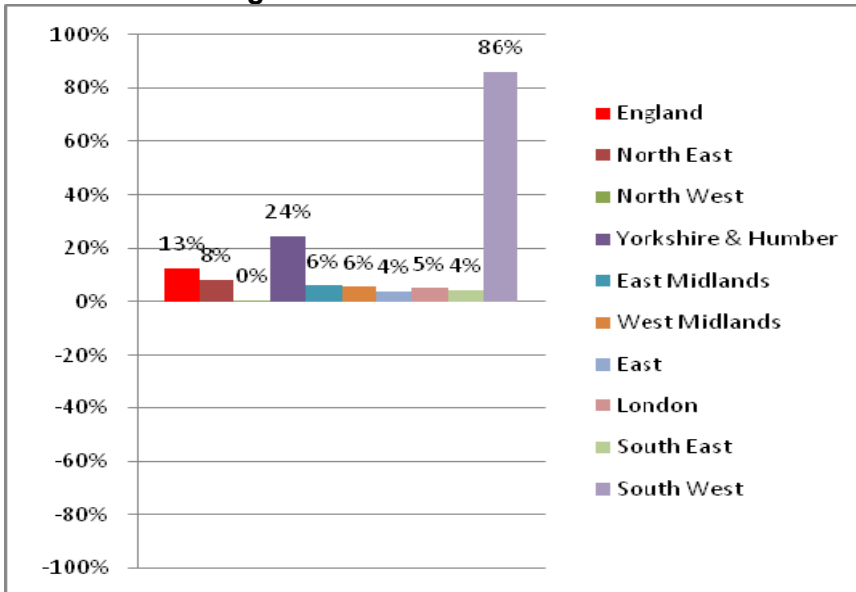
3.2 Intensive Assistance

All nine regions met their regional targets for the number of SMEs receiving Intensive Assistance.

	Q4 2006/07	Q1 2007/8	Q2 2007/8	Q2 2007/8	Q4 2007/8	Target
Intensively Assisted (% of IDBR)	2.7%	2.9%	3.1%	3.3%	3.7%	2.0%

The South West exceeded its target for intensive assistance in all quarters, managing to achieve delivery levels 86% above the regional target during the year as a whole.

Variation from targets – intensive assistance



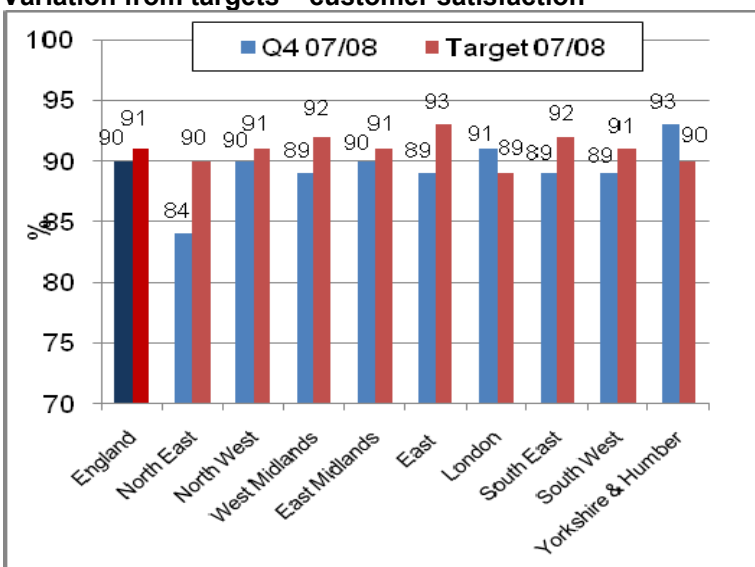
As stated, this reflects a shift in focus from mass market 'light touch' support towards more intensive assistance required to support business growth.

3.3 Customer satisfaction

The South West, along with all but two other regions, just failed to achieve its target for customer satisfaction.

	Q4 2006/07	Q1 2007/8	Q2 2007/8	Q2 2007/8	Q4 2007/8	Target
Customer Satisfaction	93%	89%	90%	91%	89%	91.0%

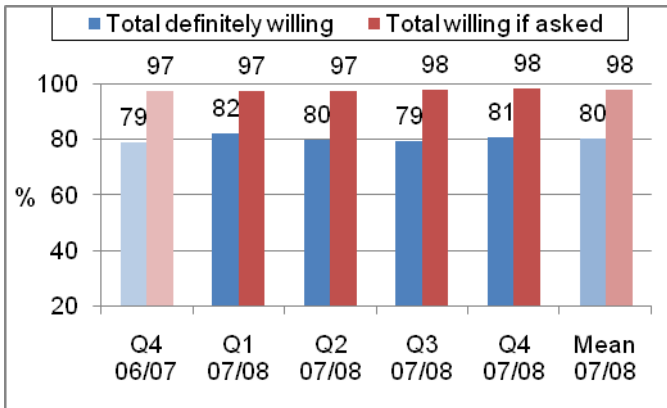
Variation from targets – customer satisfaction



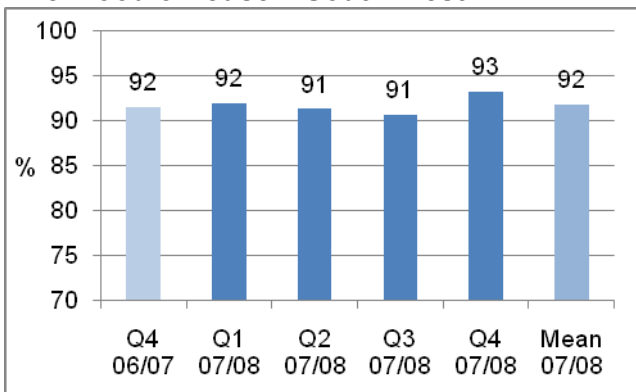
At national level the decrease in satisfaction from 2006/07 is only on the borders of statistical significance and there has been no increase in dissatisfied customers. The growth is in the percentage reporting themselves neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

The proportion of South West Business Link customers stating that they are likely to reuse and/or to recommend Business Link to others remains high. Although not a Key Performance Indicator, results for the South West are given below.

Likelihood of a Recommendation – South West



Likelihood of reuse – South West

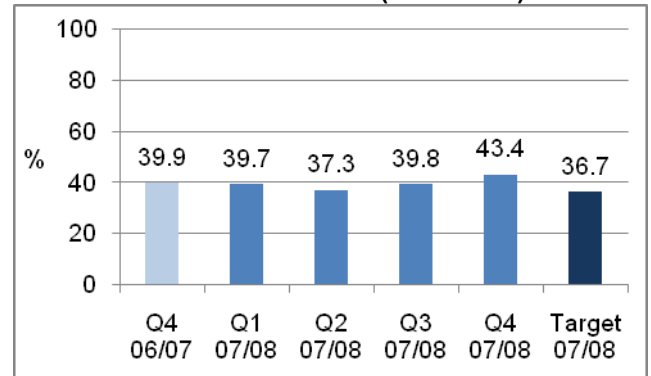


SW Performance Summary South West

Business Link Customers – Rolling 4 quarters (R4Q)

	Customers	% IDBR business base
Pre-starts	12,227	-
Start-ups	3,483	2%
Established businesses	73,221	36%
Total customer base	88,931	43%
<i>Of whom Intensively Assisted</i>	7,626	4%
<i>SMEs supported (penetration)</i>	76,704	37%

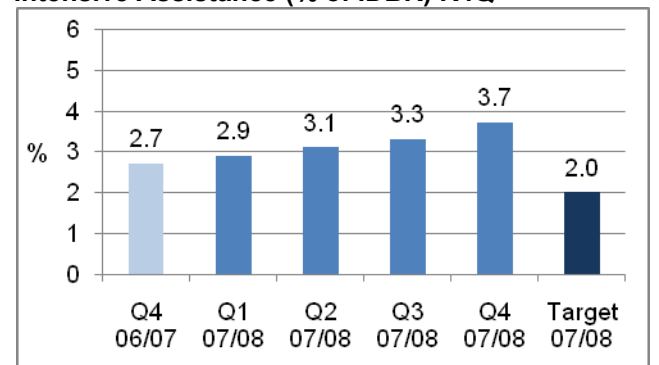
Penetration - All Customers (% of IDBR) R4Q



Priority Groups & Themes*

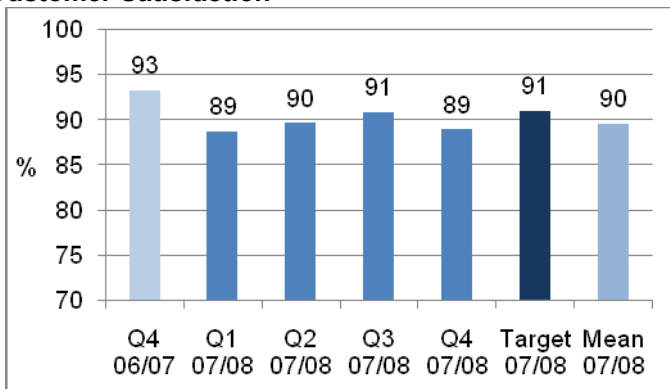
Management or location characteristic	Est. Customers (annual)	Est. % Customers
Maj. female managed	28,600	32%
Maj. BAME managed	2,300	3%
Maj. PWD managed	500	<1%
In deprived areas	3,700	4%
In rural areas	21,400	24%

Intensive Assistance (% of IDBR) R4Q

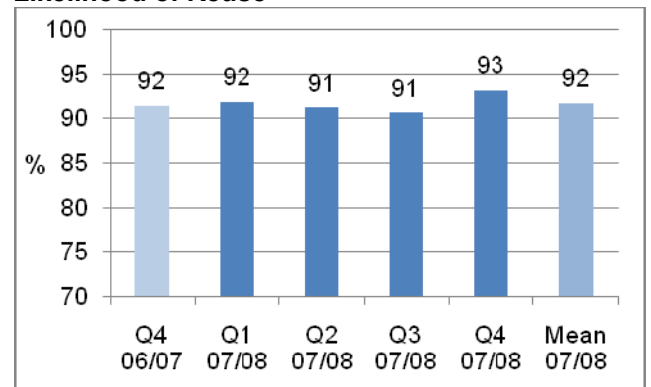


Q4 07/8 Customer Satisfaction data. Estimates to be treated with caution.

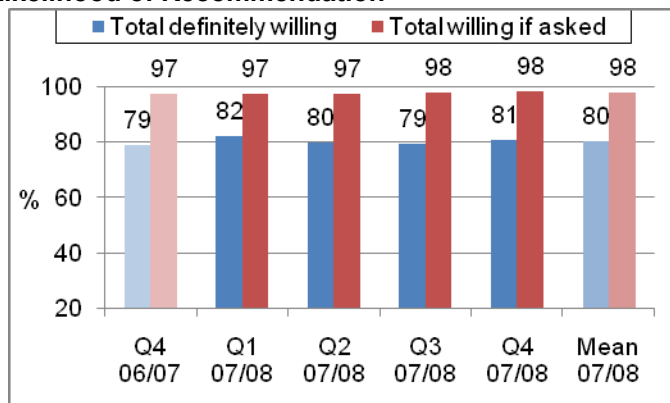
Customer Satisfaction



Likelihood of Reuse



Likelihood of Recommendation



Notes

- 2 sub-regional providers created.
- Experience of the Providers has combined with significant and comprehensive marketing campaign to achieve high market penetration.
- Start-up service was 're-procured' during the year taking front line staff away from service delivery.

