



To: Safer & Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board

On: 14 May 2015

Report by:

Director of Community Resources, Renfrewshire Council

RENFREWSHIRE TRUSTED TRADER SCHEME - SATISFACTION REVIEW 2015

1. Summary

The Renfrewshire Trusted Trader scheme was launched in March 2012, with 17 member traders. Following agreement between the two authorities, the scheme was expanded to cover East Renfrewshire in April 2014, offering a pan-Renfrewshire solution to benefit customers, businesses and Trading Standards Services. The scheme has now reached its 3rd anniversary and has 42 member traders, covering the two local authority areas.

The scheme is open to home improvement businesses with a significant trading presence in the Renfrewshire or East Renfrewshire areas. Background checks are carried out by Trading Standards on businesses who apply, and once approved, customers are able to rate the work carried out by them.

Member traders require to adhere to strict terms and conditions, contravention of which can result in them being removed from the scheme.

Since the launch of the scheme, it's has grown steadily and has:

- 42 member traders (from 17 at inception),
- Approximately 850 web hits per month on the Trusted Trader website directory (up from 500 last year),
- Over 1,300 customers returning feedback on their experience with member traders.

The scheme is supported by an online directory of home improvement companies hosted on the Renfrewshire Council website, as well as a printed directory for non-internet users. Officers from Trading Standards, within Community Resources regularly promote the scheme at talks, public information events, utilising social media and with targeted, affordable advertising.



As the scheme reached its 3rd anniversary in March 2015, surveys were carried out to the following 3 groups to ascertain satisfaction levels:

- Members of the scheme (traders)
- Users of the scheme (customers)
- Non-users of the scheme

The main findings were that:

- The average member satisfaction score is 8 out of 10.
- Member traders report a 15% increase, on average, in business since joining the scheme.
- 100% of customers found the scheme easy to use.
- 98% of customers would use the scheme again.
- 75% of non-users were not aware of the existence of the scheme
- 75% of non-users would prefer a greater selection of traders and trades.

Trading Standards will now implement the recommendations from this report:

- Increase membership numbers by a targeted mailing campaign,
- Further improve the website by offering the option for Traders to be listed in more than one trade category,
- Increased, sustained promotion of the scheme.

The attached report details the full findings of these surveys.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Note the attached satisfaction report on the Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme, demonstrating its success.

3. Background

The catalyst for establishing the Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme was a duty imposed by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 on local authority Housing Services to make a public statement advising stakeholders whether they assist with repairs, maintenance or improvements to their homes. This legislation, together with the priorities of Trading



Standards, provided the ideal landscape for the introduction of a trusted trader scheme in Renfrewshire.

The home improvements sector is the most complained about service sector. In addition to this, an Office of Fair Trading report confirmed the level of anxiety experienced by customers when entering into contracts for home improvements, particularly in relation to doorstep sales. The same report highlighted the concerns raised by home improvement businesses at being undercut by door-to-door “rogue traders”.

Schemes such as Trusted Trader are designed to empower customers through access to information on the customer experience of traders they may wish to consider contracting for work on their home. Customers can be assured that businesses who are members of the scheme have been audited by Trading Standards in terms of how they deal with customer complaints. Businesses benefit through affiliation to the scheme and through enhanced support from Trading Standards.

Membership of the Renfrewshire Trusted Trader scheme has increased almost three-fold since its inception. Positive feedback from customers and member businesses has previously been received indicating the scheme is achieving its core objectives of increasing consumer confidence and encouraging economic development. This, coupled with Renfrewshire’s innovative approach to an in-house web solution, has generated much interest from neighbouring authorities.



Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme Satisfaction Review 2015

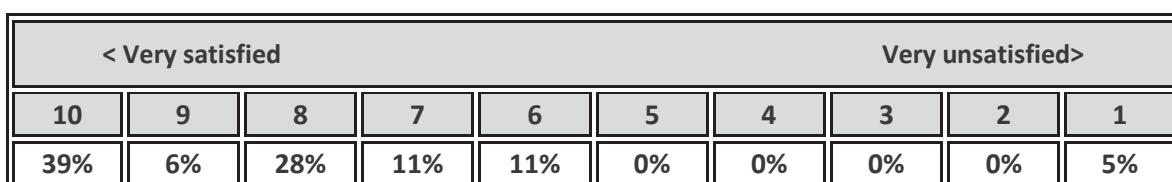
1. Background

- 1.1. The Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme was launched in March 2012, initiated by the Council to help Renfrewshire customers find reliable local traders. This, in turn, helps quality local traders generate more business.
- 1.2. In April 2014 the scheme was expanded to cover the East Renfrewshire Council area, under the control of Renfrewshire Council Trading Standards & Licensing team.
- 1.2. Renfrewshire Trusted Trader Scheme publishes an online [directory of local businesses](#) that have registered as Trusted Traders therefore enabling previous customers to comment and rate their work.
- 1.3. As we approach the 3rd anniversary of the scheme, survey reviews were undertaken to assess the impact and future of the scheme to the following groups:
 - (a) Members of the scheme (traders);
 - (b) user of the scheme (customers); and
 - (c) non-users of the scheme.

2. Members of the Trusted Trader scheme – survey results

- 2.1. Traders who applied and were accepted as members of the scheme supplied the Trading Standards & Licensing team with a contact email address. These email addresses were used to send out a [feedback survey](#).
- 2.2. There are currently 42 traders who are members of the scheme. 20 members responded to our request for feedback, which equates to a return of 48.6%.
- 2.3. The feedback survey was anonymous to encourage freedom of expression. Members were asked to leave an email address at the end of the survey if they felt they had any issues which required attention.
- 2.3. *Satisfaction*

Each member was asked to rate the scheme between 1 to 10, 10 being very satisfied and 1 being very unsatisfied.

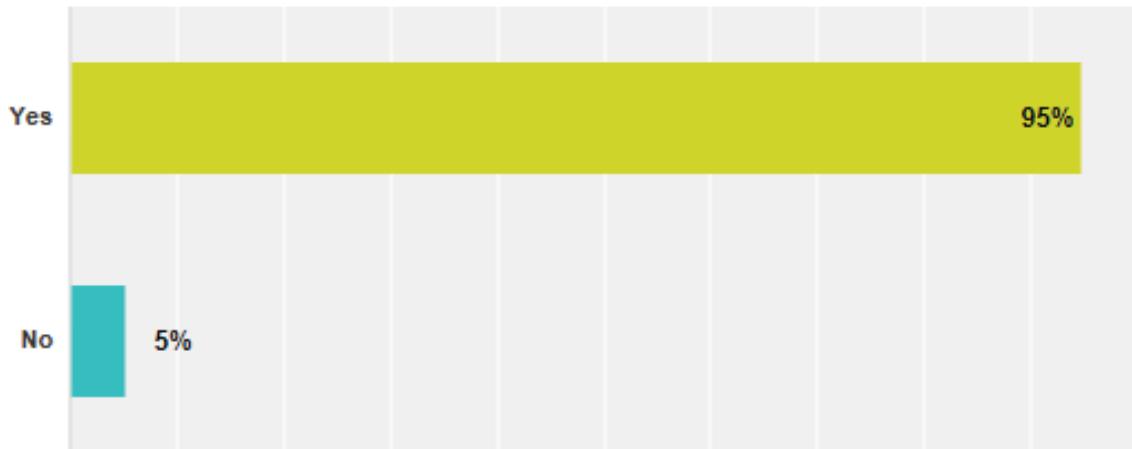




- The table above equates to an average satisfaction score of 8 out of 10.
- The most popular satisfaction score was 10/10 - given by 39% of members.
- 84% of traders scored their satisfaction as 7 or above.

It was noted that 1 member had scored 1/10 for satisfaction. Unfortunately, no comments relating to their score were offered, nor did they leave an email address to allow us to address their issues.

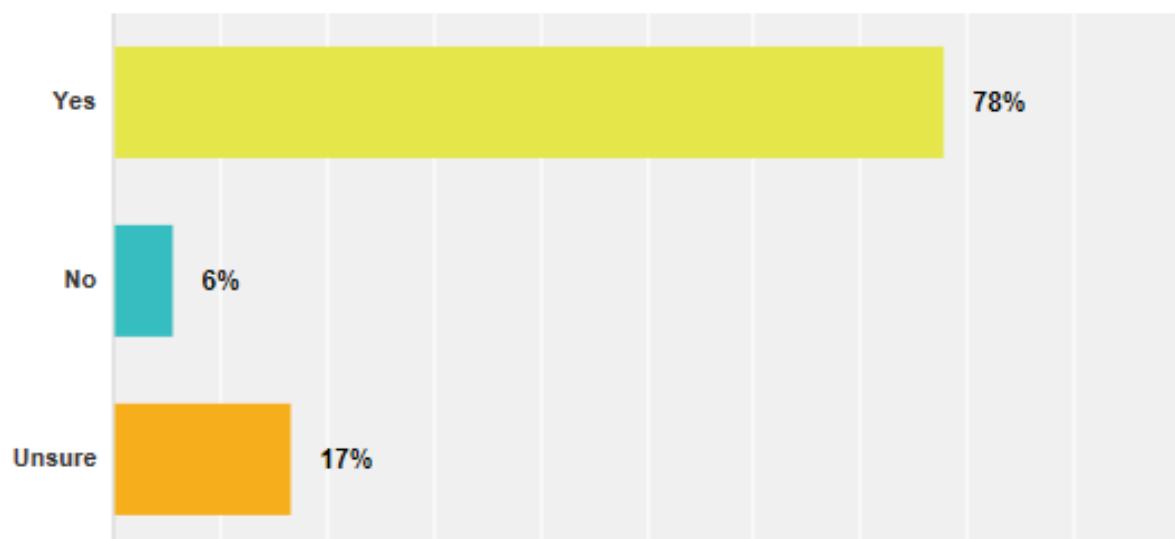
2.4 *Would you recommend the scheme to another trader?*



- 95% of members would recommend the scheme to another trader.
- 5% (one member) would not recommend the scheme.

This was the same member who gave a satisfaction score of 1/10, but provided no comments and left no contact details to allow us to address their issues.

2.5 *Have you received customer enquiries since joining the scheme?*





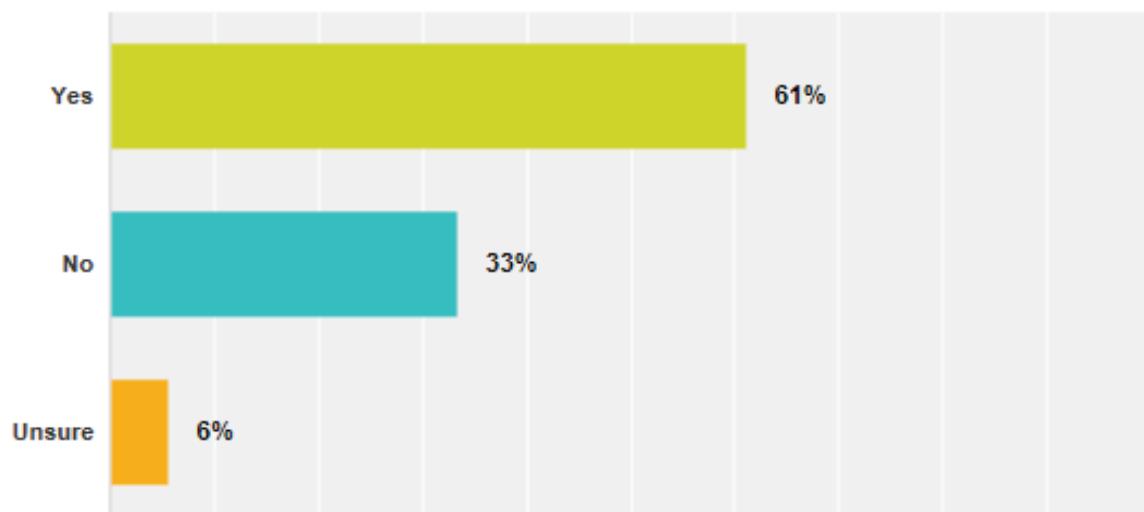
- 78% of members confirmed that they had received customer enquiries as a direct result of belonging to the scheme.
- 17% were unsure if they had received customer enquiries as a direct result of being members.
- 6% of members claimed to have received no customer enquiries.

2.6 *Work generated by the Trusted Trader scheme*

Percentage of work generated by Trusted Trader scheme							
0%	1-5%	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-50%	51-75%	76-100%
10%	36%	5%	27%	16%	6%	0	0

- The average increase in business between all members was 15%.
- 54% of members reported an increased workload of between 6% and 50%.
- The most popular answer conveyed that 36% of members had increased their business by between 1 – 5 %.
- It was also noted that 10% of members had stated they had received no business from the scheme.

2.7 *Expansion to East Renfrewshire*



Members were asked if they had received customer enquiries from East Renfrewshire, since expansion of the scheme to cover that area in April 2014.

- 61% of members intimated that they had received enquiries.
- 33% intimated that they had not yet received any enquiries from this area.



- 6% were unsure if the enquiries they received from East Renfrewshire were a direct result of being a Trusted Trader member.

2.8 *Introduction of individual trader web pages*

In April 2014, members were, for the first time, offered [individual web pages](#) hosted within the Renfrewshire Council website as an improvement to the scheme. We asked members the following questions: (more than one answer could be given)

Since the introduction of individual web pages, do you.....	
Feel the content is appropriate (logo, address, services, web, email etc)	76%
Check the contents regularly for recent reviews and scores	65%
Link your own website to your Trusted Trader page	24%

This improvement to the scheme was undertaken after a similar member survey last year. The survey highlighted that the PDF documents (attachments within a webpage which contained trader details, customer comments and scores) were taking too long to open, and could not be opened on some smartphones and tablets.

Two members provided comments stating that they were not aware they had their own individual web pages hosted within the Renfrewshire Council website.

It should be noted that all members were sent an email followed by a letter informing them of this improvement to the scheme, following last years' survey.

One of the comments was left by the member whose satisfaction score for the scheme was 1/10.

2.9 *Statements of members*

The members were offered a number of statements relating to the scheme and were asked to choose all that applied to them. More than one answer could be given.

I tell customers who are unaware of Trusted Traders about the scheme	68%
Being a Trusted Trader member benefits my business	64%
I am happy with the content of the customer feedback forms	63%
I offer every customer a feedback form	36%
I do not feel that being a Trusted Trader member has increased my workload	21%
Trading Standards have resolved an issue I have raised about the scheme	10%
I rarely offer customers a feedback form	6%



I have contacted another Trusted Trader to help me complete a job	5%
I have contacted another Trusted Trader to carry out work in my own home	5%

The three most popular answers were all positive statements:

- Being a Trusted Trader member benefits my business
- I tell customers who are unaware of Trusted Traders about the scheme
- I am happy with the content of the feedback forms

It was noted that 21% of members stated that they did not feel being a Trusted Trader increased their workload. This contradicts the previous question (2.6) where only 10% stated they had not increased their workload.

2.10 *Comments and improvement suggestions*

Members were asked to offer suggestion that may improve the scheme, or to leave general comments. The following answers were provided:

- *“The feedback we get from clients helps us with providing customer satisfaction in future”*
- *“I would like to see the council advertise the scheme more to make people aware of it”*
- *“The best thing that has happened for Renfrewshire. More and more people are using it. Perhaps another awareness campaign.”*
- *“No improvements needed”*
- *“More promotion”*
- *“Just keep promoting it as so many people do not know about the scheme until we explain it to them.”*
- *“Very happy with scheme. Get lots of referrals”*

Of the 8 comments left by members, 50% requested that the Council promote the scheme further to make more people aware of it.

No negative comments were made against the scheme.



2.11 *Recommendations*

The survey has highlighted that the vast majority of members of the scheme are satisfied and have increased their business since joining.

It is recommended that promotion of the scheme to the general public be increased. This would help improve the satisfaction levels of members, and satisfy the suggestions made.

It is further recommended that traders be encouraged to offer feedback forms to more of their customers. This will help raise the profile of the scheme and their businesses.

It is also recommended that traders be encouraged to promote their membership of the scheme on the own websites. This will raise both their own and the Trusted Trader scheme profile.

3. Customers of the Trusted Trader scheme – survey results

- 3.1 Customers of the Trusted Trader scheme were contacted and were requested to provide feedback on their experience of using the service.
- 3.2 A [link](#) was placed online within the Trusted Trader homepage and emails were sent out to subscribers of the Renfrewshire Trading Standards [e-update](#).
- 3.3 57 customers of the Trusted Trader scheme completed the [survey](#).
- 3.4 The feedback survey was anonymous to encourage freedom of expression. Customers were asked to leave an email address at the end of the survey if they felt they had any issues which required attention.
- 3.5 *How do you know about the Trusted Trader scheme?*

Customers were asked how they were first introduced to the scheme. The following answers were provided:

Trading Standards e-update	32%
Council website feature	30%
Word of mouth	20%
Other	8%
Council Magazine article	5%
Poster or leaflet	5%
Local newspaper article	0%



The following comments were provided:

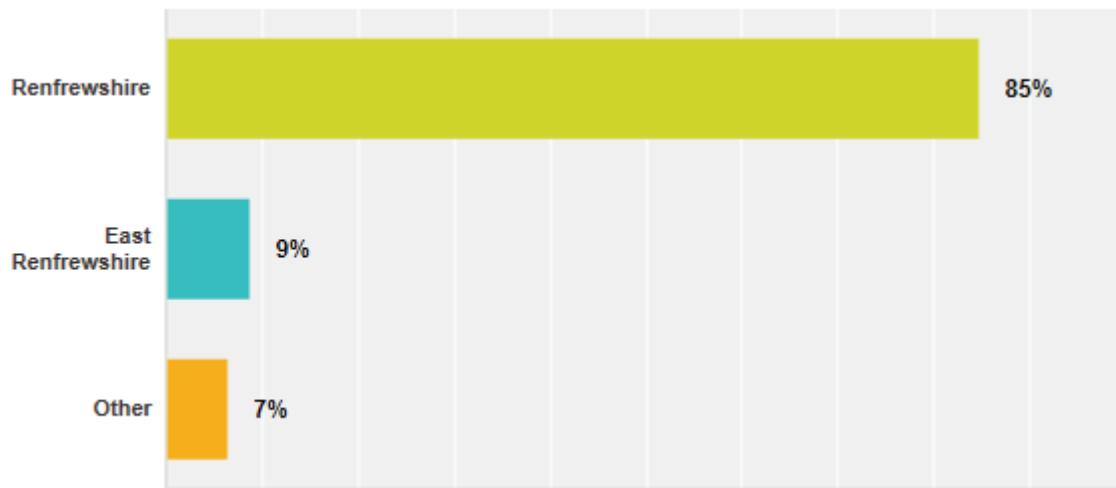
- “Web search”
- “Display at Paisley shopping centre”
- “On Engage Renfrewshire email list”
- “Police”
- “e-updates keep me up to date with these kind of things. Very useful.”

The majority of customers were first made aware of the scheme by subscribing to Trading Standards e-updates. Promotion of the scheme on the Council website homepage closely followed this, and the next most popular answer was ‘word of mouth’. These 3 answers accounted for 82% of responses.

It was noted that no customer had stated they discovered the scheme through local newspaper advertising. This is likely due to the fact that the scheme has not been promoted in a local newspaper for over two years.

It should also be noted that no customer mentioned any of the Renfrewshire Council social media posts regarding the scheme, although this was not offered as an answer.

3.5 *Which area do you reside?*

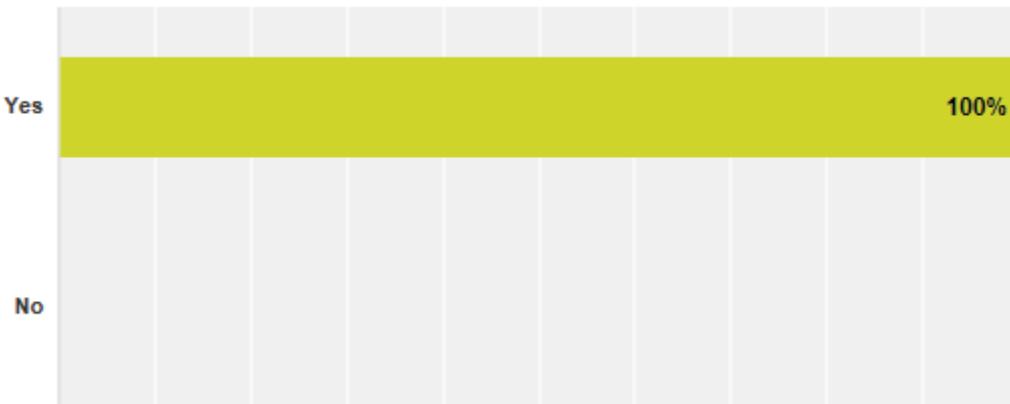


Two customers of the scheme came from Glasgow, one from Argyll & Bute.

One of the customers resided in the USA (presumably they moved there since using the scheme, or sourced a trader for a relative from Renfrewshire or East Renfrewshire).

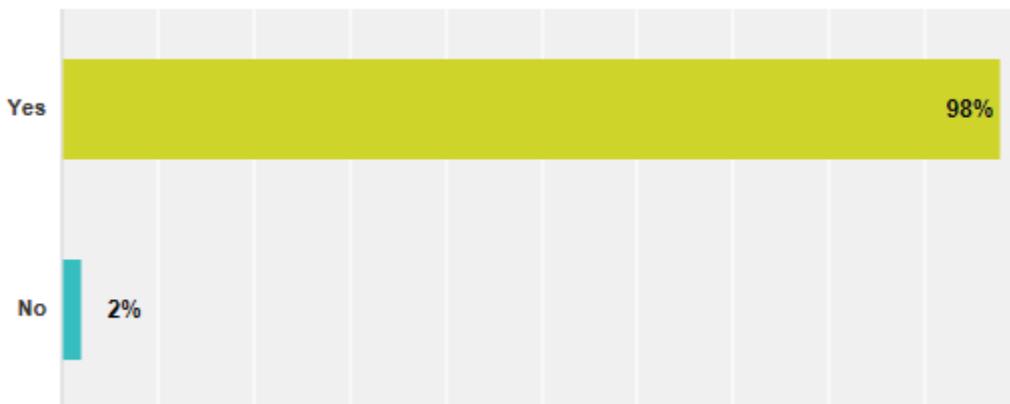


3.6 *Did you find the scheme easy to use?*



100% of customer who have used the Trusted Trader scheme found the website easy to use.

3.7 *Would you use the scheme again to find a trader?*



98% of customers agreed that they would return to the scheme again to find a trader. Only 2% (1 customer), would not use the scheme again.

The following comments were provided:

- “I have not yet had occasion to use scheme but would do so.”
- “Not sure”
- “Using the scheme was easy and the trader I got was excellent, therefore I have no qualms in using the scheme again and recommending it to family and friends.”



3.8 *Which trade did you use?*

Customers of the scheme were asked to tell us which trade(s) they have used. More than one answer was allowed to be given.

Plumber/Gas Engineer	32%
Electrician	18%
Builder	16%
Painter & Decorator	16%
Roofer	14%
Joiner	12%
Fencing & Decking	10%
Kitchen & Bathroom fitter	10%
Tiler	6%
Plasterer	6%
Driveways & Paving	6%
Double glazing	4%
Jet Washer	4%
Landscape Gardener	4%
Cleaner	0%

It was noted that no customer had indicated that they had used a cleaner. This category is the newest trade to be added to the scheme, coming online in May 2014.

3.9 *Improvement suggestions or comments*

Customers were asked to provide improvement suggestions or leave comments regarding the scheme. The follows answers were provided:

- “I believe a large number of tradespeople are unaware of this list. The assumption that all information is disseminated via web is not a valid stance. It would be worthwhile to use other media such a newspaper article to provide information to the wider community. Demographics would support that older people in Renfrewshire still purchase local newspapers.”
- “The scheme is a great idea and makes me feel more confident about choosing tradesmen. More people should know about it. The tradesmen I have used have been trustworthy, reliable and reasonable. Thank you.”



- “No seems to work very well!”
- “Seems ok”
- “No. Very pleased with the service.”
- “All fine”
- “Keep up the good work”
- “Consider allowing a reviewer the opportunity to revisit his/her review within a certain period in order to update a review.”
- “No - easy to use”
- “Scheme is very easy to use and it's useful to see comments from other clients of the traders”
- “No. Excellent idea. Told everyone I know about it. Used a trader and he was 10/10”
- “Council staff should have a greater awareness of the scheme. This would also help to spread the word in the community”
- “None - very useful”
- “No. Excellent idea - great trader. Will recommend scheme to my friends. Should be publicised more.”
- “I think it is an excellent idea, particularly for vulnerable groups. I will be recommending it on to any friends or relatives who are looking to have work done.”

3.10 *Recommendations*

The general feedback from people who have used the scheme is that they find it easy to use and have had a good experience with the traders they have employed.

It was highlighted by several customer comments that the scheme should be promoted more. One customer suggested that Council employees should be made more aware.

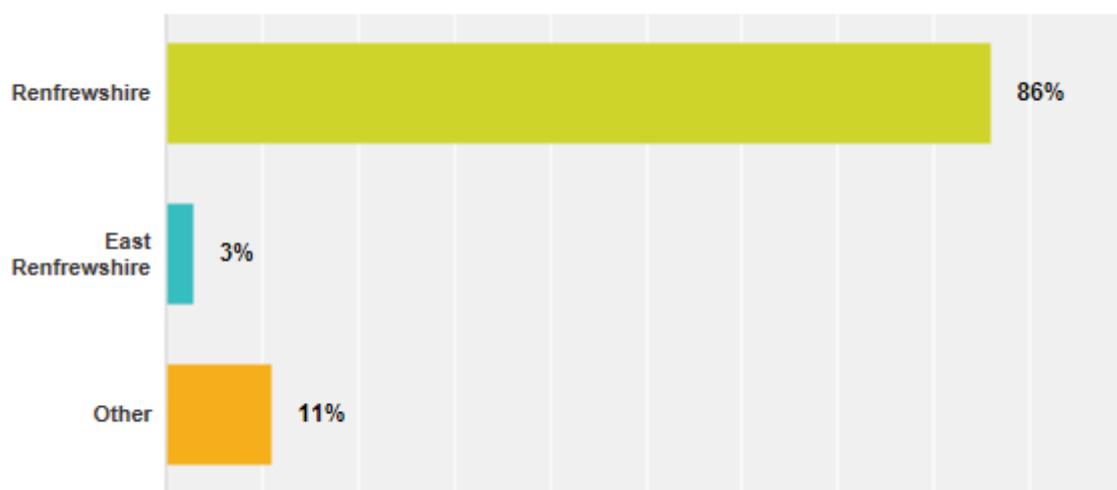
It is recommended that an ‘all-user’ email promoting the scheme be sent to all employees. Also, further promotion on the Council website homepage, and on the Council’s social media outputs be utilised to increase awareness.

It is also recommended that local newspaper advertising be carried out in order to make people aware who do not have access to the internet.



4. Non-users of Trusted Trader scheme - survey results

- 4.1 Non-users of the Trusted Trader scheme were contacted and requested to provide feedback on why they had not used the service. A [link](#) was placed on the Trusted Trader homepage and emails were sent out to subscribers of the Renfrewshire Trading Standards [e-update](#).
- 4.2 102 non-users of the Trusted Trader scheme completed the [survey](#).
- 4.3 The feedback survey was anonymous to encourage freedom of expression. An email address was requested if they felt they had any issues which required attention.
- 4.4 *Which area do you reside*



Most non-users who responded resided in Renfrewshire. A small percentage resided in East Renfrewshire. The following other areas of residence were reported:

- South Lanarkshire (x3)
- North Lanarkshire
- Glasgow (x2)
- North Ayrshire
- Inverclyde
- Dundee
- Inverclyde
- East Ayrshire

- 4.5 *Reasons for not using the Trusted Trader scheme*

Non-users of the scheme were offered a number of options as to why they had never used the scheme before, and were invited to leave comments. More than one answer could be given.



Never needed a tradesman since the scheme began	34%
I was not aware the trusted trader scheme existed	25%
I already use a reliable trader who is not on the scheme	22%
I am not from Renfrewshire or East Renfrewshire	13%
I do all my own home improvements	12%
Other (see comments)	4%
The trade I was looking for was not listed	2%
I use other, better known trusted trader schemes	1%
Found the website too difficult to understand	0%

The following 'other' comments were left:

- *"I rely more on recommendation from friends."*
- *"There were no double glazing repairs."*
- *"I never really thought about it. Any tradesmen we use are from recommendations from friends and family and we haven't used many, just the odd electrician to put in a light fixture."*
- *"What is the trusted trader? Is it Care & Repair or something else? Would like to know."*
- *"I just don't think about it."*
- *"I am aware of the trusted trader scheme, but have not, as yet, needed to use any of the traders."*

4.6 What would encourage you to use the scheme in the future?

Non-users of the scheme were offered a number of options that would encourage them to use the scheme in the future, and were also invited to leave comments. More than one answer could be given.

More traders	31%
Printed directory of traders	27%
Smartphone app	22%
Better range of trades	18%
Better search facility on website	16%



Other (see comments)	16%
Easier website	8%
I will never use the scheme	8%

The following comments were provided:

- *“When I require a trader, I would happily use the service if the trader was willing to travel to South Lanarkshire for the work.”*
- *“I would consider using the trusted traders if I knew their price was also fair for the quality they provide.”*
- *“Now I know it exists, I will check it out.”*
- *“I will use it if the need arises.”*
- *“I had never heard of it but will log on next time I require a tradesman to check.”*
- *“I use word of mouth. Also I forget there is a website on trusted traders.”*
- *“If I needed a job completed that I felt that was out with my capability.”*
- *“Knowledge of the scheme would have helped.”*
- *“I would use it if I need to in the future.”*
- *“I will if I need one.”*
- *“I think it's a very good scheme. I just haven't needed to use it. I will use it if the need arises.”*
- *“Would use it when I need a trader”*
- *“Don't require traders in this area as reside in another local authority.”*
- *“I don't really know. I didn't every realise it covered East Renfrewshire, where I live.”*
- *“I will use the scheme when I need to. This was not one of your optional answers.”*
- *“If I ever needed a tradesman.”*
- *“I will use it when I require work to be done.”*



- “*Better advertised.*”

4.7 *Recommendations*

A quarter of the non-users who responded stated that they had never heard of the scheme. Further promotion of the scheme would resolve this issue.

Almost half of those who responded to the survey intimated that they would use the scheme if there were a bigger selection of trades and more traders. The expansion to East Renfrewshire has helped increase the number of traders. It is anticipated that approximately 10 new traders will be added by April 2016 from East Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire Council shall also be inviting more trades and traders to join the scheme in the coming year.

It is recommended that research be carried out into the possibility of a smartphone app and whether a better web search facility on the Council website could be implemented.

A printed directory of traders has always been available to the public. This should be promoted further to increase knowledge of its availability.

5. **Conclusions**

5.1 The feedback from all 3 surveys was very positive. The majority of the feedback and improvement suggestions pointed towards better promotion of the scheme as a whole – to non-users, traders and customers.

Should the recommendations be implemented, it is predicted that the satisfaction levels will rise, usage and knowledge of the scheme will improve and the number of trades and traders will increase.

5.2 *Options for promotion*

- Advertising in local newspaper
- Advertising in local free papers
- Tagline in Council employees payslips (cost tbc)
- Feature article on Council employee intranet (free)
- Feature article on Council internet homepage (free)
- Article in Renfrewshire Council magazine (free)
- All-user email to Council employees (free)
- Social media posts (free)
- Attend suitable events/talks/displays (free)
- Promotion to Renfrewshire e-update subscribers (free)

Ideally, a promotional campaign using a combination of all of the above options should raise the awareness of the scheme with maximum impact, reaching all the target



audiences, i.e. non-users, non-member traders, current customers and people without access to the internet.

Each campaign component would feed in to the other – i.e. newspaper advert(s), Council magazine advert & social media posts leading potential customers to visit the council website feature, or telephone/email for further information; and the Council employee all-user email & payslip tagline leading employees to the Council intranet feature.

The only costs associated with the above campaign would be advertisement within the local newspaper and free papers.

The advertising campaign would be monitored for effectiveness by:

- (a) using Google Analytics to monitor any increase in web hits on the Trusted Trader website;
- (b) logging the number of telephone calls relating to the scheme; and
- (c) monitoring the increase in email enquiries.