

SOSE BUSINESS PANEL SURVEY

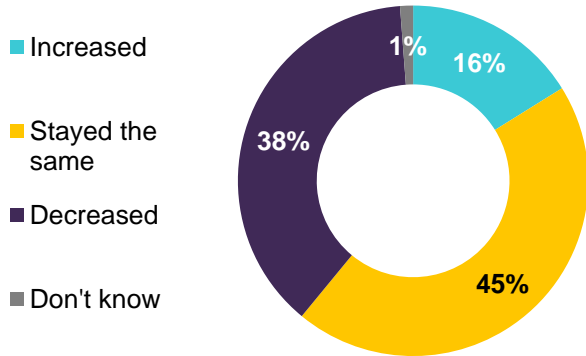
WAVE 1: June/July 2021



ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE AND OUTLOOK

Thinking about the last six months, 38% said their confidence in Scotland's economic outlook had decreased, 45% reported it had stayed the same, and 16% that it had increased. In terms of the South of Scotland economy, businesses were more confident than not, suggesting an overall positive outlook for the region.

Confident in Scottish economic outlook

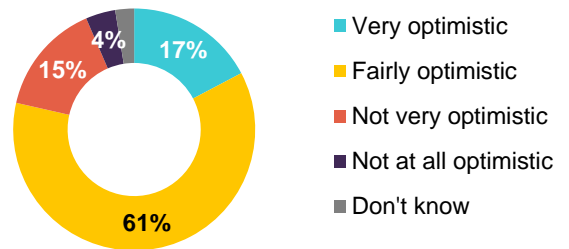


Net confident was -22*. Net confidence among businesses in the Highlands and Islands survey (carried out in parallel with this one) was -14. Both these figures are considerably higher than recent waves of the HIE business panel survey, suggesting signs of improvement in economic optimism.

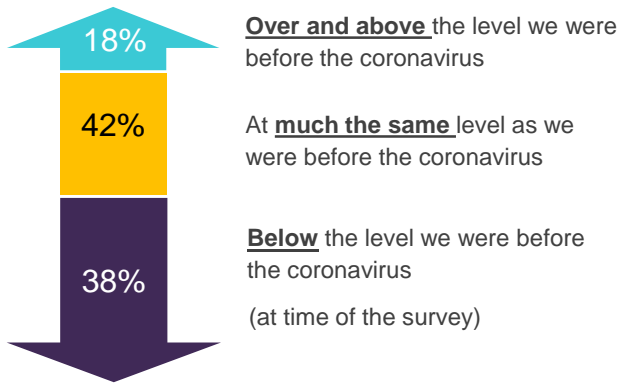
Confidence in South of Scotland economic outlook for next 12 months



79% were optimistic about their future prospects in next 12 months, 19% were not.



CURRENT OPERATING LEVEL



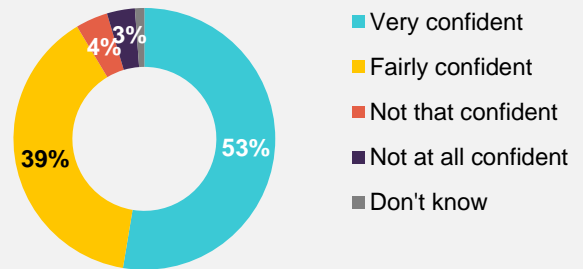
Over and above the level we were before the coronavirus

At **much the same** level as we were before the coronavirus

Below the level we were before the coronavirus
(at time of the survey)

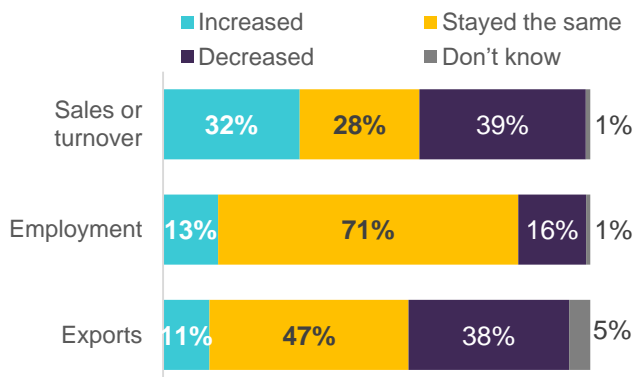
FUTURE VIABILITY

91% were confident they would be viable over the next 6 months, 6% were not.



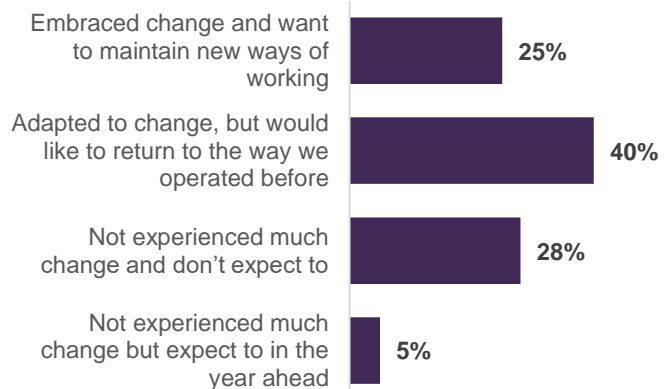
PERFORMANCE

Aspects of business performance over last 6 months



ATTITUDE TO CHANGE

Experience of change as a result of COVID-19



TAKING ACTION

83% had taken action to help them respond to changes in their working environment.

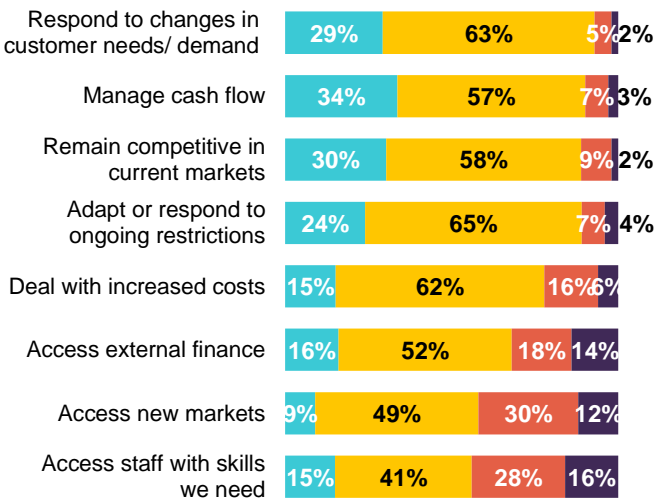
Actions taken in response to change



RESPONDING TO FUTURE CHANGE

Confidence in ability to respond to change to working environment over coming months

■ Very confident ■ Fairly confident
■ Not that confident ■ Not at all confident



PRIORITIES

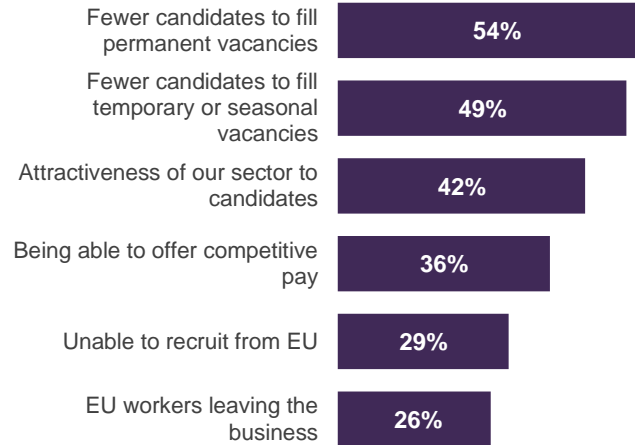
Top 3 priorities for businesses over coming months



WORKFORCE CONCERNS

41% of employers were concerned about some aspect of their workforce.

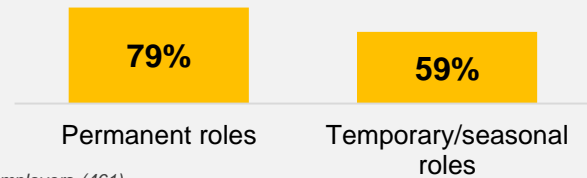
% saying they were very/fairly concerned about:



All employers (461)

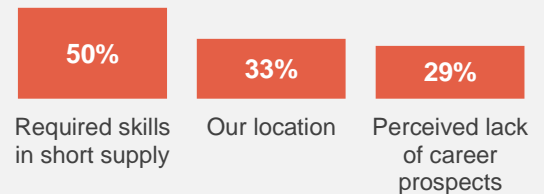
STAFFING LEVELS

% that have the level of they staff needed for...



All employers (461)

Main barriers to accessing staff needed (top 3):

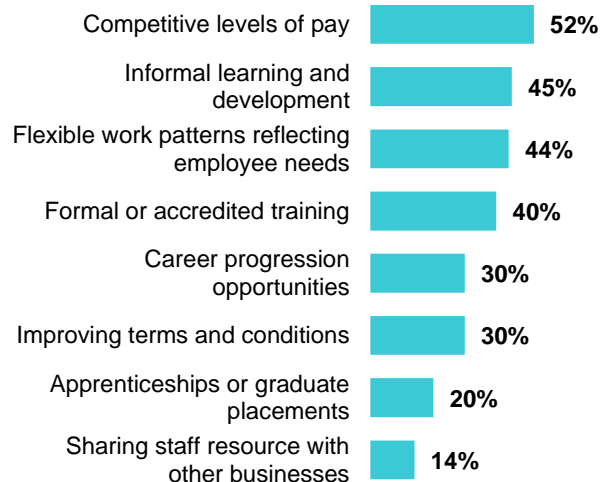


All employers without staff they needed (143)

ATTRACTING STAFF

50% of employers were taking action to help them attract the staff they needed.

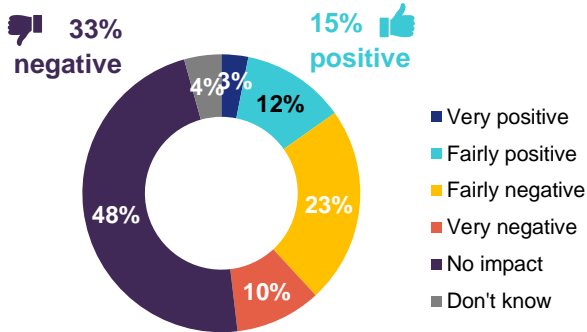
Actions taken to attract staff



All employers (461)

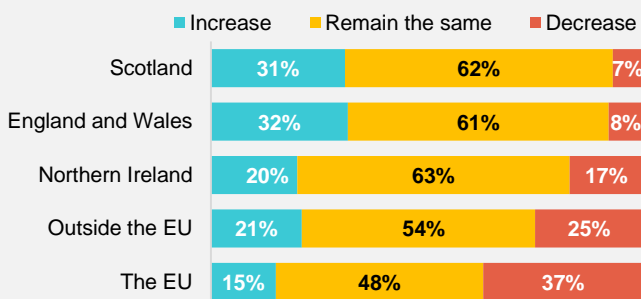
IMPACT OF BREXIT

Perceived impact of Brexit on business so far



SALES AND EXPORTS

Sales expectations for next 12 months by market



All to whom each applied

Of those exporting outside of GB, 40% were experiencing issues doing so.

Issues faced exporting outside GB

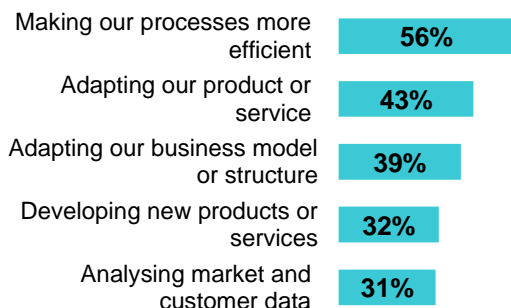


All those exporting outside GB (515)

INNOVATION

Most businesses (81%) were innovating in some way. Main barriers to innovating were having other priorities (38%), time (33%) and cost (31%)

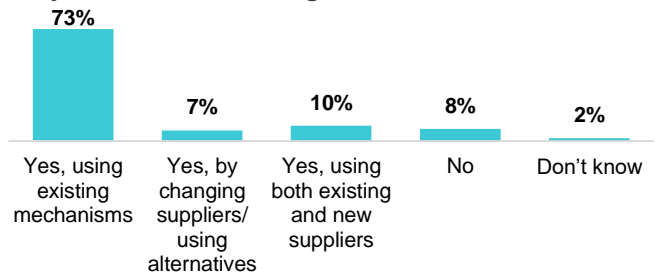
Types of innovative approaches taken (top 5)



IMPORTING

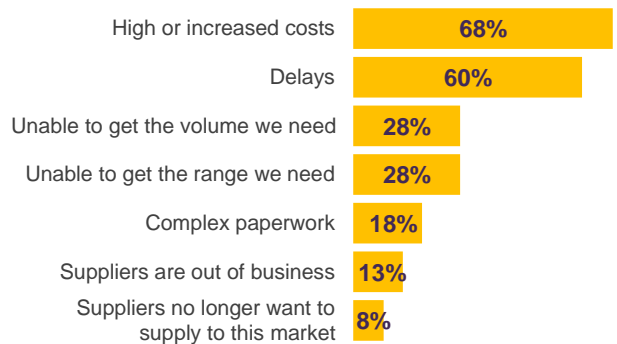
The majority (90%) were able to access the goods/services they needed.

Ability to access materials, goods or services needed

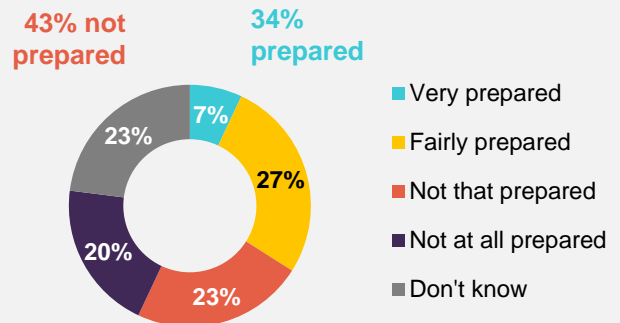


Despite most being able to access the what they needed, most (83%) faced issues when doing so.

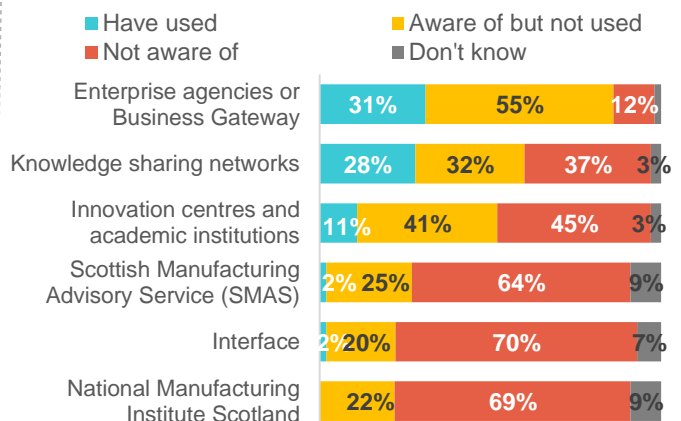
Issues when accessing goods/services



How prepared do you feel for changes to import procedures expected later this year?



Are you aware of and have you used any of the following for innovation support?



NOTES: Survey fieldwork was conducted between 2nd June and 2nd July 2021, using telephone interviewing. In total 600 businesses and social enterprises participated. Findings are weighted to ensure a representative sample of the regional business base.