



SOUTH of
SCOTLAND
ENTERPRISE

SOSE Business Panel Survey

November/December 2023



Executive summary (1)

Overview

This report presents the findings from the eighth business panel survey for South of Scotland Enterprise. It involved a survey of 601 businesses across the region, conducted in November/December 2023.

Confidence in the economy dropped this wave, with more than half of businesses saying they were not confident in the economic outlook for Scotland. However, businesses were much more confident in the economy that they had been this time last year.

Business performance was mixed, and broadly in line with the previous wave. Most said they had either performed well or had been fairly steady, but a quarter had struggled. Looking ahead, around half of businesses were striving for growth, while over a third were content with their current level of performance and just over one-in-ten wanted to downsize.

Most businesses were aiming for their sales to either remain stable or to increase in each of their markets of operation. Businesses were more ambitious about future sales in Scotland (the biggest market of operation) than in the rest of the UK or outside the UK. Reflecting on potential changes to import arrangements between the UK and the EU likely coming into place in 2024, businesses were much more likely to think these would have negative impacts on their business than positive impacts.

This wave, the survey explored the role businesses played in Community Wealth Building (CWB). Contributing to the local community was one of the most important values for businesses (second most important overall, after ensuring quality of goods or services).

Findings also highlight the extent to which businesses were contributing to the five pillars of CWB*:

- On **finance**, almost three-quarters of businesses were taking actions to benefit the community. Among those, the most common action was providing financial support or donations to community groups or initiatives.
- Around one-in-ten businesses had an **inclusive ownership** model (being a social enterprise, employee-owned or cooperative business). The main reason for adopting, or considering, inclusive ownership models was to ensure the financial viability of the business.
- On **workforce**, a quarter of businesses said that providing fair work and conditions for staff was one of their most important values.
- On **spending**, two-thirds of businesses were using or increasing their use of local suppliers, and their main reason for doing so was to support local businesses.
- The survey did not explore **land and property** in detail. However, over a quarter were allowing the community to use their facilities, and one in ten were providing or helping source housing or accommodation for staff.

The biggest place-based opportunities for businesses were tourists and visitors coming to the area and renewable energy projects. The majority of businesses were taking action to make the most of growth opportunities in their local area, including investing in equipment, technology and upskilling staff.

While contributing to the local community was clearly of importance for businesses, findings suggest that financial concerns still loomed large. The most immediate-term priorities for businesses were surviving current financial challenges, satisfying existing customer demand, looking after their wellbeing, and making cost savings.

Executive summary (2)

Optimism and performance

- **Confidence in the economic outlook for Scotland decreased this wave:** 42% of businesses were confident (compared to 48% in May/June 2023), while 56% were not (compared with 51%).
- **Reflecting on the past six months, 42% of businesses said their confidence had decreased, 7% said it had increased, and 51% said it had stayed the same.** Economic confidence was similar to the previous wave, but significantly higher than this time last year.
- **Fewer than half (45%) of businesses were confident in the economic outlook for the South of Scotland region,** while 53% were not confident.
- **Views on business performance were mixed,** with 29% saying their business had performed well, 43% saying business had been fairly steady, and 28% saying they had struggled.
- **Over the past six months, sales or turnover performance was mixed (34% said it had increased, 26% decreased, and 39% remained the same).** Businesses had performed better on sales or turnover than on profit (19% said profit margins had increased, 40% decreased, and 38% remained the same).
- **Employment and exports had remained relatively stable** (72% and 65% respectively said these had stayed the same).
- **Around half (47%) of businesses were striving for growth** while 37% were content with their current level of performance and 13% wanted to downsize.

Markets of operation

- **84% of businesses were importers** (sourcing goods from outside Scotland), with 83% importing from the rest of the UK and 31% from outside the UK. The majority of businesses (92%) sourced goods and materials from Scotland.
- **Almost two thirds (64%) of businesses were exporters** (selling to markets outside Scotland), with 63% selling to the rest of UK and 19% outside the UK. The majority (97%) of businesses sold goods or services within Scotland, with 34% selling *only* in Scotland.
- Among those operating in each market, **at least half of businesses were aiming for sales to remain the same in Scotland (50%), the rest of the UK (56%), and outside the UK (58%) over the next 12 months.** Businesses were more ambitious about their future sales in Scotland (39% aimed for an increase) than in the rest of the UK (34%) and outside the UK (26%).
- Businesses were asked about changes to import arrangements between the UK and the EU likely to come into place in 2024. **Over one-in-five (22%) felt these changes would have mainly negative impacts on their business, while 2% anticipated positive impacts and 27% no impacts.**
- Among those expecting negative impacts from changes to import arrangements, their top concern was potential **cost increases (87%), followed by delays to goods being delivered (68%) and additional time and effort required to comply with changes (55%).**

Executive summary (3)

Business structure

- Among employers, **76% described themselves as family-owned and 5% were employee-owned** (with employees owning a majority of the shares). 18% of businesses were women-led, 3% described themselves as a social enterprise and 3% were a co-operative (owned or controlled by its members).
- Combined, around **one-in-ten (9%) businesses fell within one of the “inclusive ownership models”** of employee-ownership, social enterprise or co-operatives.
- A minority (**4%**) of those that did not already have an inclusive ownership model said they would consider adopting one in future. Most (86%) said they were not considering this, while 8% said they were unsure and would like to know more about it.
- Among those that already had, or would consider having, one of these inclusive ownership models, the main reasons for that were **to ensure their financial viability (58%), support growth (55%) and keep wealth in the local community (49%)**.

Business values and priorities

- The value deemed most important by businesses was **ensuring quality of goods or services (51%)**, followed by contributing to the local community (33%), maximising profit (32%), and being environmentally sustainable (30%).
- **More than half of businesses (58%) considered their profitable growth and links to the local community to be equally important**. 17% said their profitable growth was more important than their community links, while 12% thought their links to the local community was more important than their profit.

Executive summary (4)

Community Wealth Building

- **Most businesses (89%) were taking operational actions that had relevance to community wealth building.** The most common actions were using or increasing use of local suppliers (66%) and collaborating with local businesses (60%).
- Among those who were collaborating, the main benefits of doing so were **sharing ideas and best practice (69%), reaching new customers or markets (67%), and developing products or services (53%).**
- Among those that were using or increasing their use of local suppliers, the main reasons for this were **to support local businesses (90%), to align with their business ethos (69%), and to shorten delivery timescales (60%).** For those not using local suppliers, the main reason for this was a lack of suppliers in the area (51%).
- **Most businesses (72%) were taking action to benefit their local community.** The most common actions were providing financial support or donations for community groups or initiatives (42%), engaging with schools, colleges or universities around career opportunities (30%), allowing the community to use facilities (28%), and providing expertise or delivery support to community organisations (25%).
- Of those providing financial support or donations for the community, the most common form of support was **responding to requests for gifts and donations for events or charities (85%).**
- **Two-in-five (41%) businesses said they would like to do more for the local community** in the next 12 months, while 55% said they would not. The main barriers to doing so would be lack of time (65%), cost (60%), and being focussed on their day-to-day survival (47%).

Executive summary (5)

Priorities and local opportunities

- **The top immediate-term priorities for businesses were surviving current financial challenges (42%) and satisfying existing customer demand (38%).** This was followed by looking after their wellbeing (29%), making cost savings (28%) and building resilience to future financial challenges (25%).
- **A quarter (23%) of businesses felt that tourists and visitors coming to the area offered them a significant opportunity.** Renewable energy projects were seen as a significant opportunity by 19% of businesses, companies investing in or establishing a base in the area by 11%, community-led projects or developments by 14%, and large construction or infrastructure projects by 10%.
- **The majority of businesses (83%) were taking action to make the most of growth opportunities in their local area.** The top actions were investing in new or upgraded equipment (53%) and investing in technology (43%).
- **The main barriers preventing businesses from making the most of opportunities in their local area were complying with regulation and legislation (34% to a large extent),** lack of people or skills in the area (31%), transport infrastructure (22%), access to specialist skills (21%), and projects or investment getting delayed (19%).

Engagement with SOSE

- **The majority (89%) of businesses had at least heard of SOSE before taking part in the survey, and 67% knew at least a little about it.** Around a quarter (26%) knew at least a fair amount about SOSE, including 5% who knew a great deal.
- **Findings were similar to those seen in June 2021** (the last time this question was asked), but with a slight increase in overall awareness (from 86% to 89% having heard of SOSE).
- **Around two-fifths (39%) of businesses said they would be likely to contact SOSE if they needed help, advice or support while 57% said they were unlikely to.** This was slightly down on June '21, when 42% said they were likely and 53% unlikely.

01

Introduction

Introduction and context

Introduction

The South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) Business Panel was created to measure and monitor the economic health of the South of Scotland region through the experiences and opinions of businesses and social enterprises in the area, and to explore topical issues at a regional, sub-regional or sectoral level.

In June 2021, SOSE commissioned Ipsos to establish and manage the panel and run a survey with businesses and social enterprises, representative of the South of Scotland business base in terms of geographic area, organisation size and sector.

This report presents findings from the panel survey carried out in November/December 2023. The survey covered a range of topics including: markets of operation, business structure, economic optimism, business performance, business values, Community Wealth Building and local opportunities

Each wave, the survey is carried out in parallel with one for Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), among members of the HIE Business Panel and other businesses in the Highlands and Islands region. Both surveys covered mostly the same questions, but South of Scotland businesses were asked some bespoke questions about their awareness of and engagement with SOSE.

Context

This wave businesses continued to face challenging economic circumstances, operating against a backdrop of high cost of energy, labour and materials. Consumer demand also remained weakened as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, although there were signs that household financial pressures were easing towards the end of 2023.

Import checks on products coming from the EU to the UK are likely to come into force later in 2024. The survey therefore looked at business views on the potential impacts of these changes.

The second half of 2023 saw continued focus on Community Wealth Building (CWB) in Scotland, which is a key element of SOSE's five-year plan and its strategic focus on activating and empowering enterprising communities. SOSE therefore sought to understand business experience of and views on CWB.



Methodology (1)

Survey fieldwork

The survey fieldwork was conducted between 1 November and 8 December 2023, using a combination of online survey and telephone interviewing. In total 601 eligible surveys with businesses and social enterprises across the South of Scotland were achieved (542 by telephone, 59 online).

Within each participating organisation, the survey respondent was the owner or a senior manager able to comment on the performance and future prospects of the organisation.

Updates to methodology

Two changes to the methodology were introduced in the previous wave (May/June 23) which continued this wave.

- First, an online element was used, allowing businesses the chance to complete the survey either online or by telephone interview.
- Second, a slight change was made to the sector categories used in the design of the survey sample (see overleaf).

In both cases precautions were taken and quality checks carried out to ensure that findings remained as comparable as possible with previous survey waves.



Methodology (2)

Sampling

The survey sample was partly sourced from businesses that took part in previous waves of the survey and had indicated that they were willing to be re-contacted as part of their members of the SOSE business panel. The remaining survey sample was sourced from the Dun and Bradstreet and Market Location business databases and was stratified by sector and size to reflect the population of businesses in the South of Scotland.

Quotas were set for recruitment and interviewing so that the achieved sample reflect the population of eligible organisations as defined by the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR).

The sectors referenced in the report are derived from a Standard Industry Classification (SIC) 2007 code applied to each business*. The following SIC 2007 Sections were excluded from the sampling:

- Public administration and defence; compulsory social security;
- Education and health and social work;
- Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use; and
- Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies.

The survey was designed to be reflective of the population based on the SIC 2007 codes. Previous survey waves (prior to May/ June 2023) had been designed to be reflective of the population based on areas of economic activity considered to be “growth sectors” (as set out in the Government Economic Strategy) **. The sector profile of the achieved survey sample still remained similar to that seen in previous waves (based on SIC 2007 codes).

To reflect the new sample design, while allowing comparability with previous waves, in this report businesses are referred to in two ways:

- by the standard sector groupings defined by SIC 2007 code.
- by the growth sector categories used in previous waves.

The types of business covered by each category are shown in the appendix (slide 61).

Presentation and interpretation of the data

Interpretation of the data

The survey findings represent the views of a sample of businesses, and not the entire business population of the South of Scotland, therefore they are subject to sampling tolerances, meaning that not all differences will be statistically significant.

Throughout the report, differences between sub-groups are commented upon only where we are sure these are statistically significant, i.e. where we can be 95% certain that they have not occurred by chance. The typical sub groups reported on are:

- Size of business (grouped by 0-4, 5-10, 11-24 and 25+ staff)
- Sector (using the SIC categories outlined in the previous slide)
- Location (Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders)
- Rurality* (remote rural, accessible rural and urban)
- Other characteristics based on responses to the survey (e.g. the markets they trade with, their growth aspiration etc)

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers. Aggregate percentages (e.g. "optimistic/not optimistic" or "important/not important") are calculated from the absolute values. Therefore, aggregate percentages may differ from the sum of the individual scores due to rounding of percentage totals.

Throughout the report, an asterisk (*) denotes any value of less than half a percent and a dash (-) denotes zero. For questions where the number of businesses is less than 30, the number of times a response has been selected (N) rather than the percentage is given.

Weighting

The achieved sample was broadly representative of the population. Nonetheless, weighting was applied to correct for any differences between the achieved sample and the business population. A breakdown of the achieved profile of businesses is provided in the Appendix.

02

Optimism and performance

Key findings

- Confidence in the economic outlook for Scotland decreased this wave: 42% of businesses were confident (compared to 48% in May/June 2023), while 56% were not (compared with 51%).
- Reflecting on the past six months, 42% of businesses said their confidence had decreased, 7% said it had increased, and 51% said it had stayed the same. Net economic confidence was similar to the previous wave, but significantly higher than this time last year.
- Fewer than half (45%) of businesses were confident in the economic outlook for the South of Scotland region, while 53% were not confident.
- Views on business performance were mixed, with 29% saying their business had performed well, 43% saying business had been fairly steady, and 28% saying they had struggled.
- Over the past six months, sales or turnover performance was mixed (34% said it had increased, 26% decreased, and 39% remained the same). Businesses had performed better on sales or turnover than on profit (19% said profit margins had increased, 40% decreased, and 38% remained the same).
- Employment and exports had remained relatively stable (72% and 65% respectively said these had stayed the same).
- Around half (47%) of businesses were striving for growth while 37% were content with their current level of performance and 13% wanted to downsize.

Confidence in Scotland's economy was down:

42% were confident

56% were not

Over the past six months:

29% had performed well

28% had struggled

47% were striving for growth.

37% were content with current level

13% wanted to downsize

Economic outlook for Scotland

Confidence in the economic outlook for Scotland decreased this wave: 42% of businesses were confident (compared to 48% in May/June 2023), while 56% were not (compared with 51%).

Businesses in the South of Scotland were less confident in the economic outlook for Scotland than those in the Highlands and Islands (where 50% were confident, 48% not).

More confident than average:

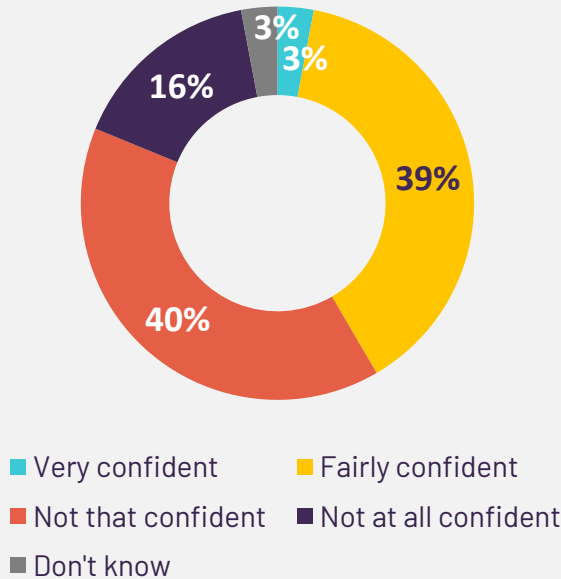
- IT, finance and real estate (59%).
- In urban areas (48%).
- Performed well in past six months (57%).
- Content with current level of performance (49%).

Less confident than average:

- Primary industries (68%).
- Struggled in the past six months (74%).
- Want to downsize (70%).

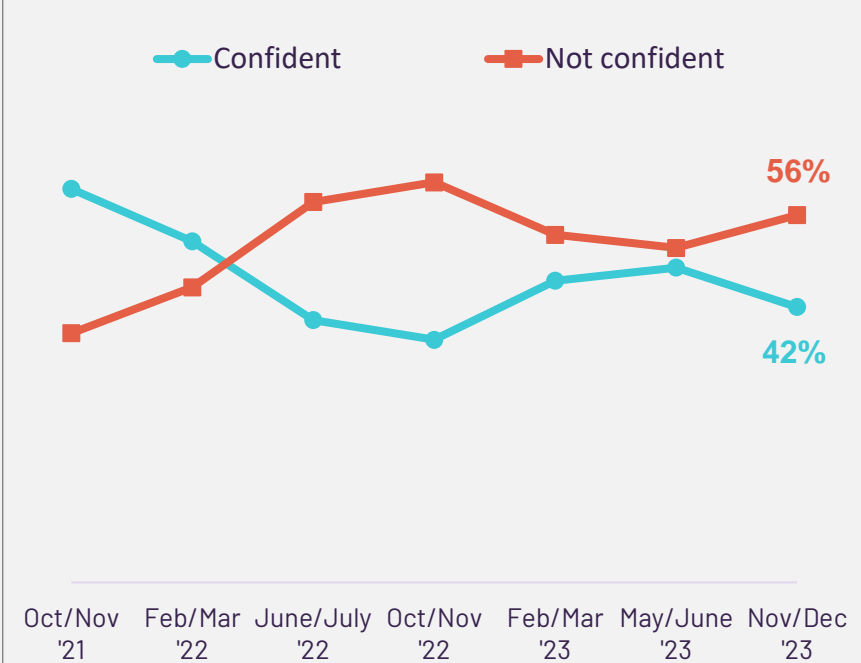
Q. How confident are you in the economic outlook for Scotland over the next 12 months?

Nov/Dec 2023



Base: All businesses (601)

2021-2023 Trend



Economic optimism over past six months

Reflecting on the past six months, 42% of businesses said their confidence had decreased, 7% said it had increased, and 51% said it had stayed the same.

Net confidence* was -35, in line with the level reported in May/June 2023 (-34) but significantly higher than this time the previous year (-58 in Oct/Nov 2022). Net confidence was lower than the level seen in the Highlands and Islands this wave (at -28).

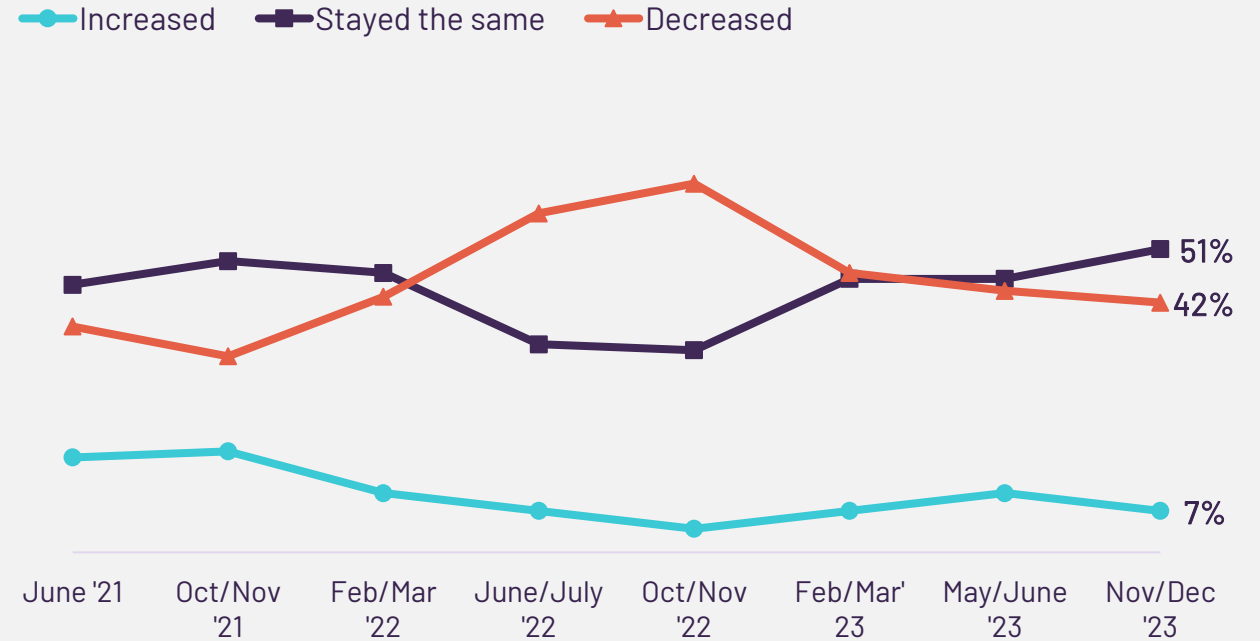
More likely to report increased confidence:

- Performed well in past six months (14%).

More likely to report decreased confidence:

- Primary industries (51%).
- Women-led (51%).
- Struggled in the past six months (65%).

Q. In the past six months has your level of confidence in the economic outlook in Scotland increased, decreased or has it stayed the same?



Base: All businesses each year (601)

Economic outlook for South of Scotland

Fewer than half (45%) of businesses were confident in the economic outlook for the South of Scotland region, while 53% were not. This was slightly higher than the overall confidence in the economic outlook for Scotland (42% confident, 46% not)

Confidence was lower than in June 2021 (the last time this question was asked), when 63% of businesses were confident and 35% were not

Businesses in the South of Scotland were less confident in the economic outlook for their region than those in the Highlands and Islands (where 53% were confident, 45% not).

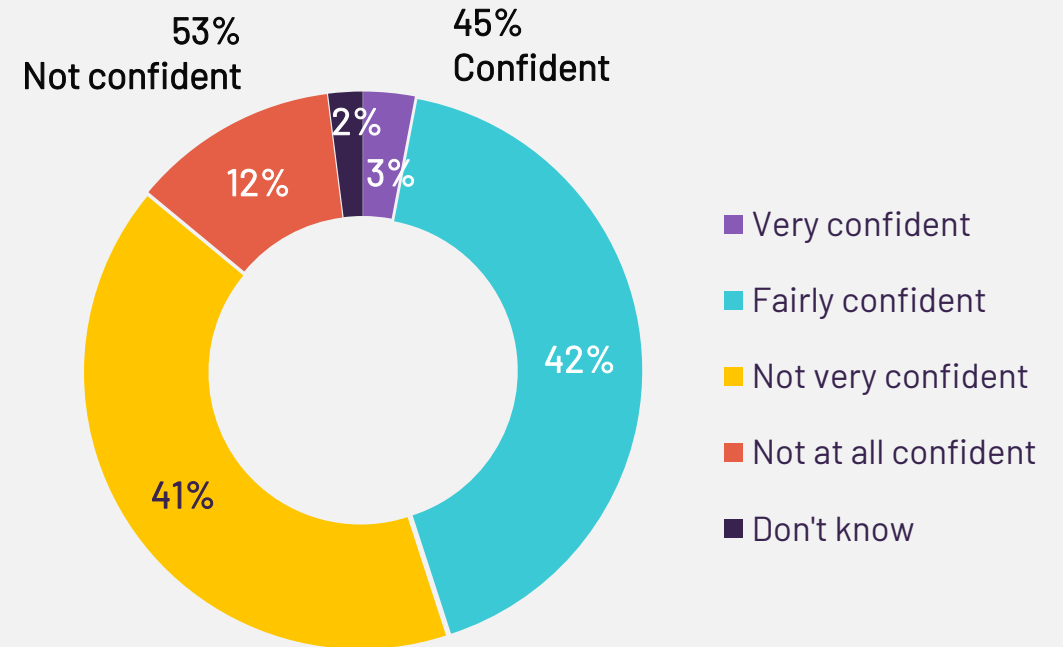
More confident than average

- Performed well in past six months (62%).
- Content with their current level of performance (54%).

Less confident than average

- Primary industries (61%).
- Struggled in the past six months (70%).
- Want to downsize (65%).

Q. And how confident are you in the economic outlook for the South of Scotland region over the next 12 months?



Base: All businesses (601)

Performance

Views on business performance were mixed, with 29% saying their business had performed well, 43% saying business had been fairly steady, and 27% saying they had struggled.

Performance was similar to the previous wave in May/June 2023 (when 29% had performed well, 24% had struggled and 46% reported steady performance). Performance was slightly lower than the levels seen in the Highlands and Islands this wave (where 34% had performed well, and 21% struggled).

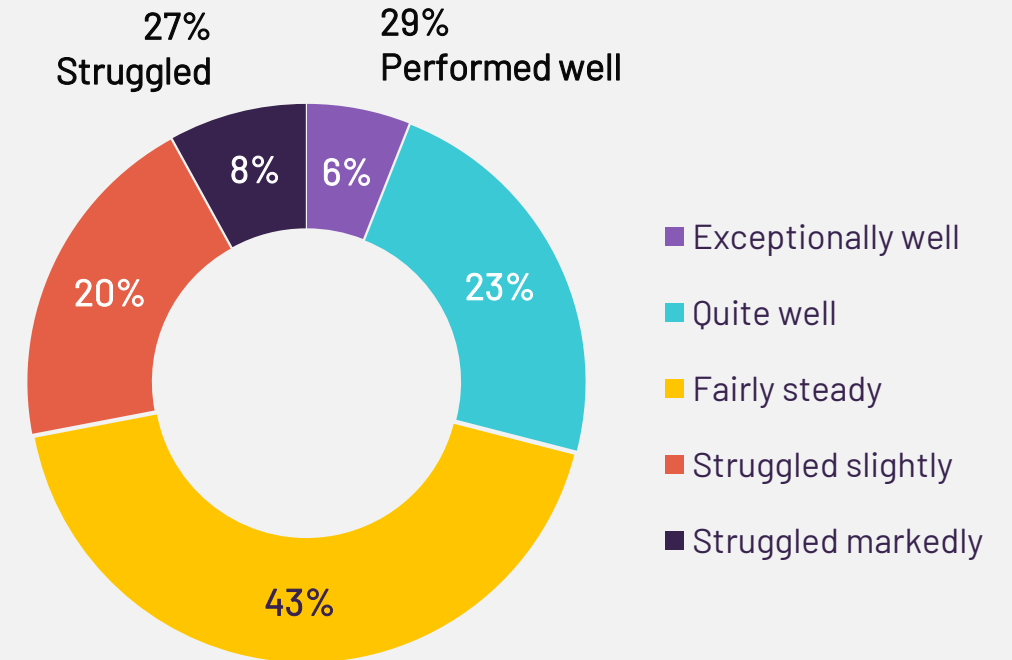
More likely to have performed well:

- Selling to markets outside the UK (39%).
- Striving for growth (34%).

More likely to have struggled:

- Want to downsize (43%).
- Women-led (36%).

Q. Overall, how has your business performed in the last six months?



Base: All businesses (601)

Aspects of business performance

Over the past six months, sales or turnover performance was mixed (34% said it had increased, 26% decreased, and 39% remained the same). Businesses had performed better on sales or turnover than on profit (19% said profit margins had increased, 40% decreased, and 38% remained the same). Employment and exports had remained relatively stable (72% and 65% respectively said these had stayed the same).

Increases were more common among:

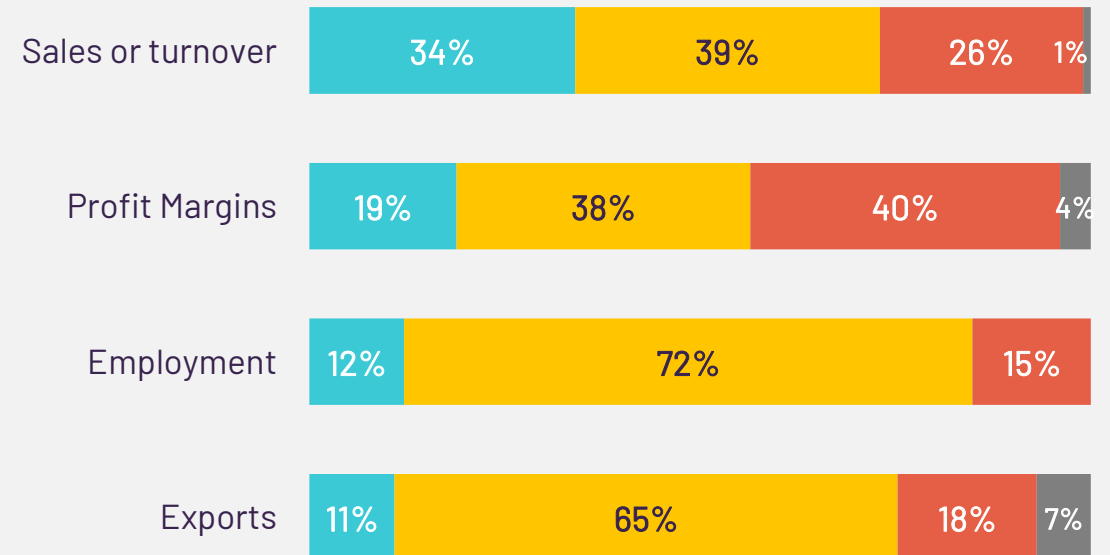
- **Professional, scientific and technical services:** sales or turnover (57%), profit margins (36%).
- **IT, finance and real estate:** sales or turnover (55%).
- **Performed well in past six months:** profit margins (45%), and employment (23%).
- **Striving for growth:** profit margins (25%), exports (16%), and employment (16%).

Decreases were more common among:

- **0-4 staff:** exports (28%).
- **Accessible rural:** employment (20%).
- **Struggled in the past six months:** profit margins (81%), sales or turnover (66%), and exports (37%), and employment (33%).
- **Want to downsize:** sales or turnover (39%), and employment (25%).

Q. Has the following increased, stayed the same or decreased in the last six months?

■ Increase ■ Remain the same ■ Decrease ■ Don't know



Base: All businesses for whom each applied: sales or turnover (593), profit margins (593), exports (176), employment (522).

Performance expectations

Around half (47%) of businesses were striving for growth while 37% were content with their current level of performance and 13% wanted to downsize.

Compared with June/July 2022 (the last time this question was asked), the proportion of businesses striving for growth increased (from 40% to 47%), while the proportions who were content decreased (from 47% to 37%). The proportion wanting to downsize remained similar (from 12% to 13%).

More likely to strive for growth:

- Arts and entertainment (72%).
- Wholesale and retail (61%).
- Accommodation and food (60%).
- Women-led (60%).
- Importing from (58%) and selling to (61%) international markets.
- Performed well in the past six months (55%).

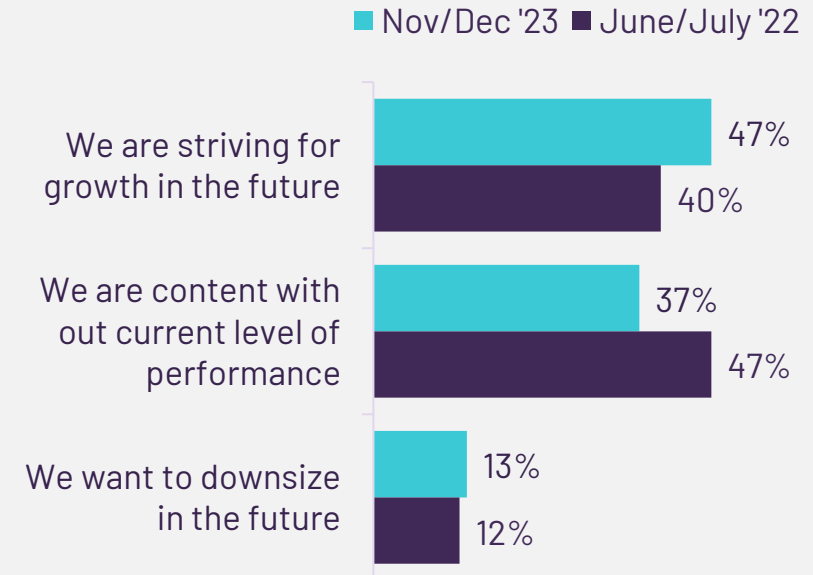
More likely to be content with their current level of performance:

- Construction (58%)
- Steady performance in past six months (44%)

More likely to want to downsize:

- Struggled in the past six months (20%)

Q. Which of the following best describes your current aspirations for your business?



Base: All businesses Nov/Dec 2023 (601) | All businesses June/July 2022 (595)

03

Markets of operation

Key findings

- Eighty-four percent (84%) of businesses were importers (sourcing goods from outside Scotland), with 83% importing from the rest of the UK and 31% from outside the UK. The majority of businesses (92%) sourced goods and materials from Scotland.
- Almost two thirds (64%) of businesses were exporters (selling to markets outside Scotland), with 63% selling to the rest of UK and 19% outside the UK. The majority (97%) of businesses sold goods or services within Scotland, with 34% selling *only* in Scotland.
- Among those operating in each market, at least half of businesses were aiming for sales to remain the same in Scotland (50%), the rest of the UK (56%), and outside the UK (58%) over the next 12 months. Businesses were more ambitious about their future sales in Scotland (39% aimed for an increase) than in the rest of the UK (34%) and outside the UK (26%).
- Businesses were asked about changes to import arrangements between the UK and the EU likely to come into place in 2024. Over one-in-five (22%) felt these changes would have mainly negative impacts on their business, while 2% anticipated positive impacts and 27% no impacts. 32% were not sure what the changes would mean and 14% felt these would not be applicable to their business.
- Among those expecting negative impacts from changes to import arrangements, their top concern was potential cost increases (87%), followed by delays to goods being delivered (68%) and additional time and effort required to comply with changes (55%).

84% were importers

64% were exporters

26% were aiming for an increase in sales outside the UK

22% expected changes to UK/EU import arrangements to have negative impacts on them (2% positive)

Import markets

Eighty-four percent (84%) of businesses were importers*, with 83% importing from the rest of the UK and 31% from outside the UK. The majority of businesses (92%) sourced goods and materials from Scotland.

The proportion of those importing from outside the UK has remained at a similar level (of between 30% and 33%) since Oct/Nov 22, lower than the levels seen in 2021 (of between 37% and 38%).

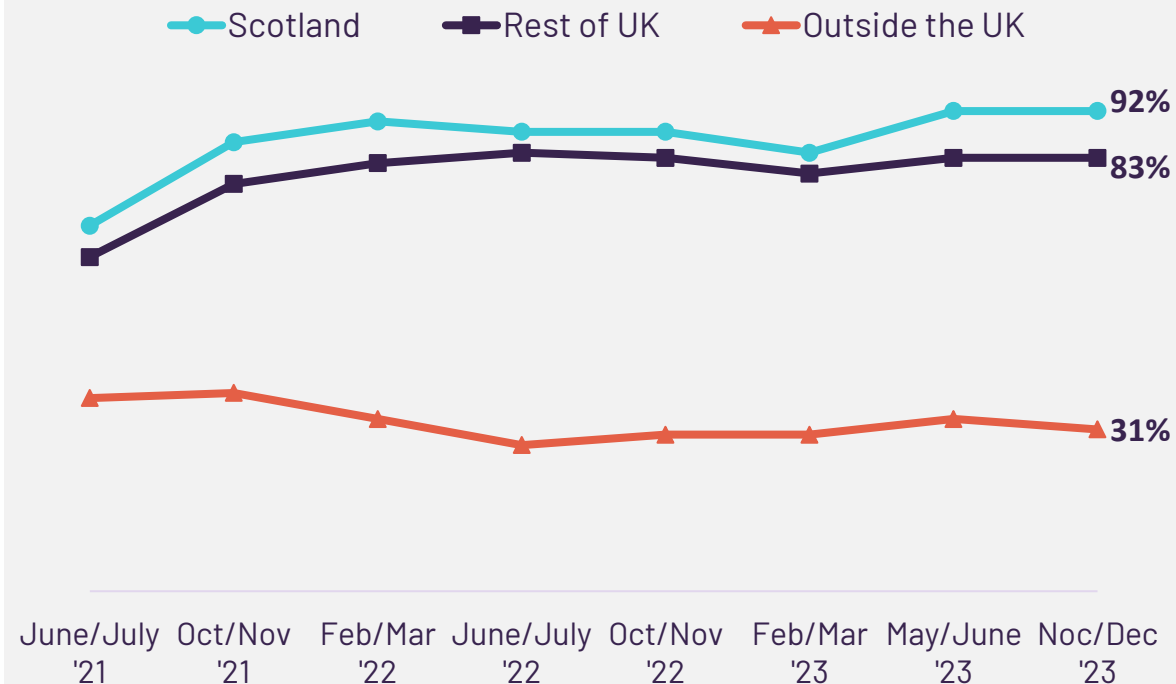
Variation

Overall importing was more common than average among **wholesale and retail** (94%) businesses.

In terms of specific markets:

- **Primary industries** (99%), businesses in **Dumfries and Galloway** (95%) and **remote rural** businesses (98%) were more likely than average to source goods from Scotland.
- **Wholesale and retail** businesses were more likely than average to source from the rest of the UK (91%) and outside the UK (55%).
- **Creative industries** growth sector were more likely to source from outside the UK (45%).

Q. From which of these markets do you currently source goods and materials?



Base: All businesses (601)

Export markets

Almost two thirds (64%) of businesses were exporters* (selling to markets outside Scotland), with 63% selling to the rest of UK and 19% outside the UK.

The majority (97%) of businesses sold goods or services within Scotland, with 34% selling *only* in Scotland.

The proportion selling outside of the UK was similar to the previous wave (21%) but remained lower than the level seen in June/July 2021 (33%).

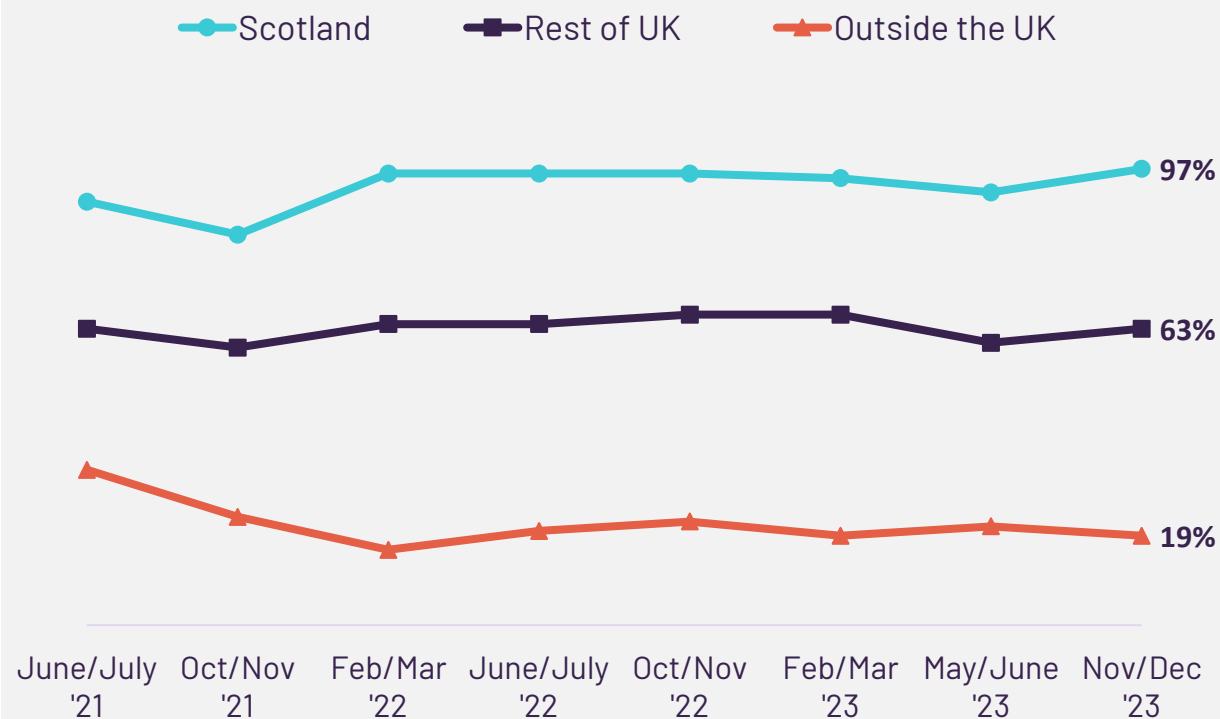
Variation

Overall exporting was more common than average among **manufacturing** (81% were exporters) and **professional, scientific and technical** (78%) businesses.

In terms of specific markets:

- **Manufacturing** (78%) and **professional, scientific and technical** (78%), businesses were more likely to sell to the rest of the UK.
- **Manufacturing** (44%) and **accommodation and food** (43%) businesses were more likely to sell outside the UK.

Q. In which of these markets do you currently sell goods or provide services?



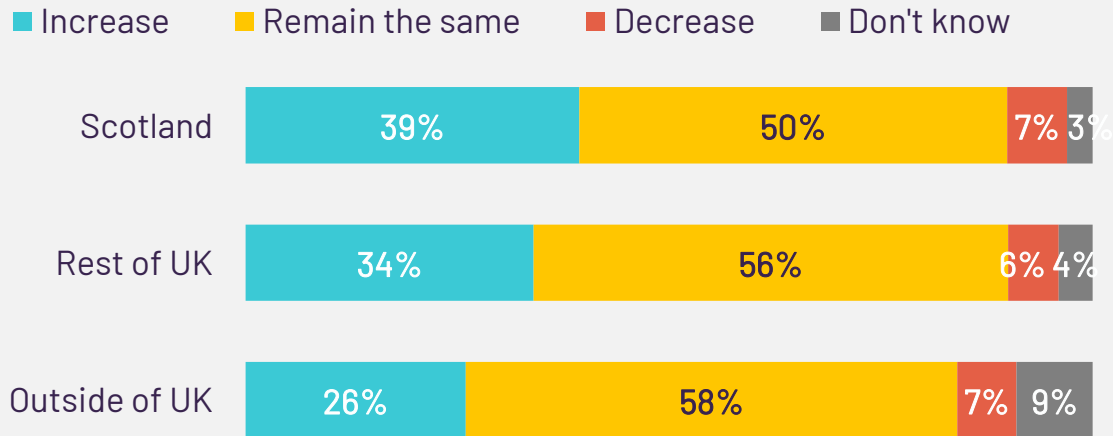
Base: All businesses (601)

Sales aspirations

Among those operating in each market, at least half of businesses were aiming for sales to remain the same in Scotland (50%), the rest of the UK (56%), and outside the UK (58%) over the next 12 months.

Businesses were more ambitious about their future sales in Scotland (39% aimed for an increase) than in the rest of the UK (34%) and outside the UK (26%).

Q. Are you aiming for your sales in these markets to increase, decrease or remain about the same over the next 12 months?



Base: All businesses to whom each applied: Scotland (587), Rest of UK (445), Outside the UK (255)

Variation

More likely to aim for increased sales

- Arts and entertainment – in Scotland (63%).
- Accommodation and food services – in Scotland (53%).
- Wholesale and retail – in Scotland (53%).
- Performed well – in Scotland (53%).
- Striving for growth – in Scotland (59%), rest of UK (52%) and outside the UK (77%).

More likely to aim for steady sales

- 0-4 staff – in Scotland (54%) and rest of UK (62%).
- Construction – in Scotland (69%).
- Primary industries – in Scotland (58%) and rest of UK (72%).
- Had steady performance – in rest of UK (63%) and outside the UK (69%).
- Content with current performance – in Scotland (69%), rest of UK (76%) and outside the UK (77%).

More likely to aim for decreased sales

- Want to downsize – in Scotland (31%) and rest of UK (29%)

Views on changes to import arrangements

Businesses were asked about changes to import arrangements between the UK and the EU likely to come into place in 2024. Over one-in-five (22%) felt these changes would have mainly negative impacts on their business, while 2% anticipated positive impacts and 27% no impacts. 32% were not sure what the changes would mean and 14% felt these would not be applicable to their business.

Variation

More likely to anticipate **negative** impacts:

- Those importing from outside the UK (30%)
- Wholesale and retail (36%).
- Struggled in last six months (29%).

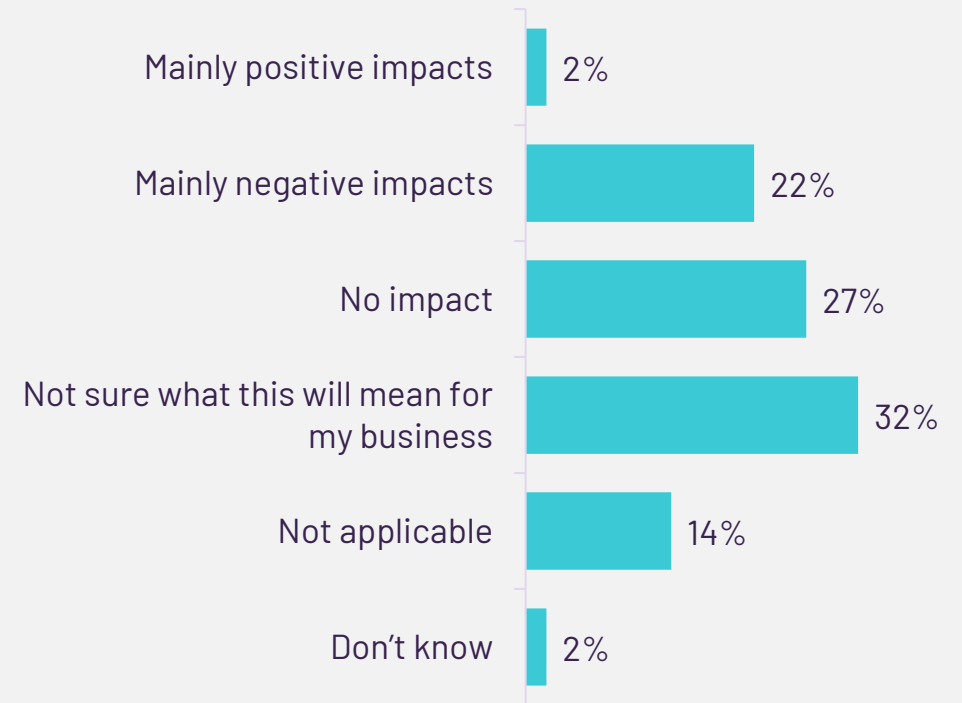
More likely to anticipate **no impact**:

- Those confident in the economic outlook for Scotland (35%)

More likely to say changes were **not applicable**:

- IT, finance and real estate (35%)
- Professional, scientific and technical (25%).

Q. Changes to import arrangements between the UK and the EU are likely to come into place next year. What sorts of impacts do you expect this to have on your business?



Base: All businesses (601)

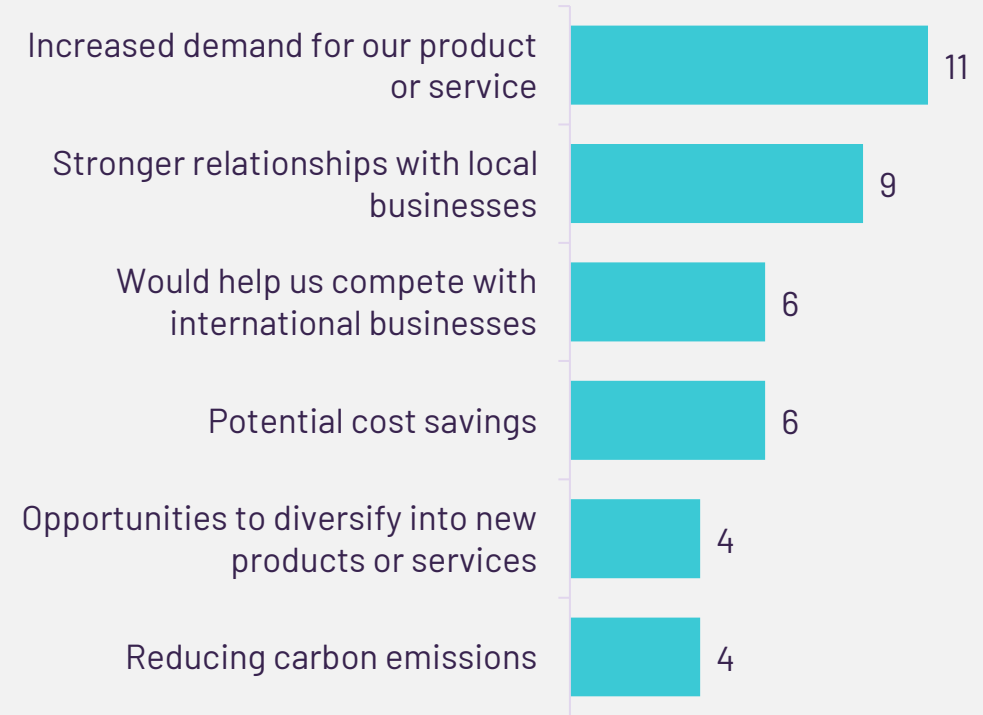
Positive impacts of changes to import arrangements

Among those anticipating positive impacts from changes to import arrangements (2% of businesses), the most common of these were: increased demand for their product or service, stronger relationships with local businesses, being more able to compete with international businesses, and potential cost savings.

Due the low number of businesses answering this question, findings are shown in numerical form rather than as percentages.

There was no significant variation in findings within this group (reflecting the small base size).

Q. What positive impacts do you expect those changes to have on your business? (N = 13)



Base: All those anticipating positive impacts from changes

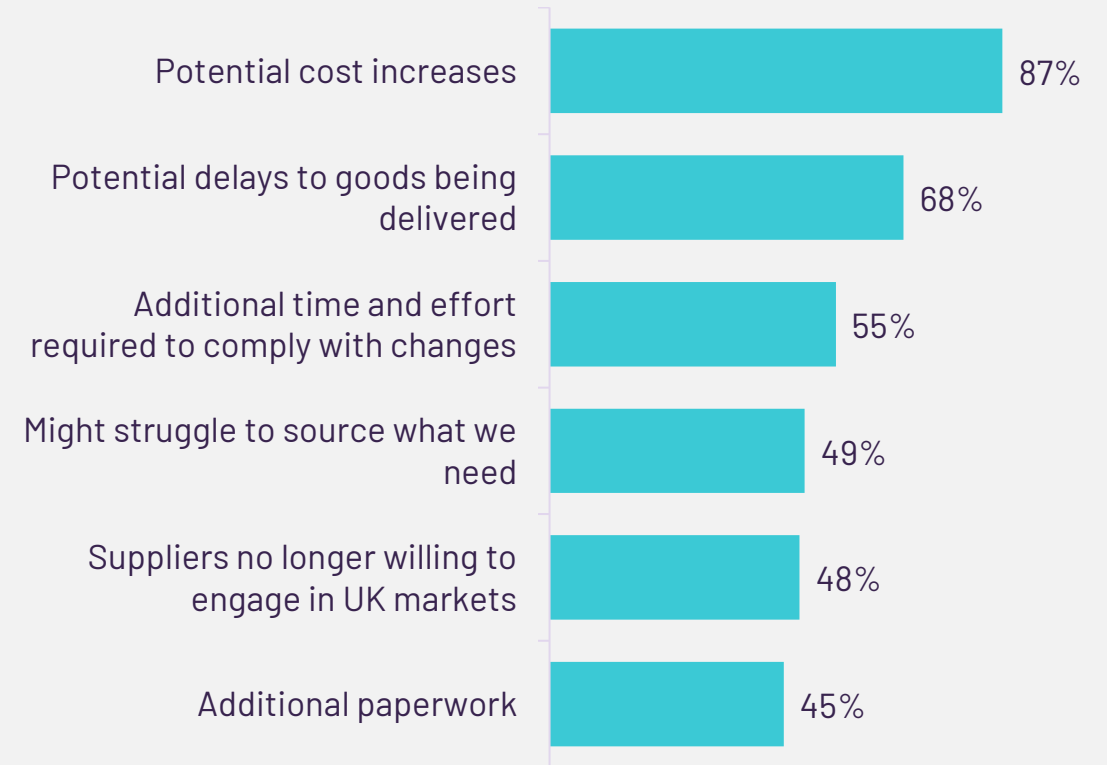
Negative impacts of changes to import arrangements

Among those expecting negative impacts from changes to import arrangements, their top concern was potential cost increases (87%), followed by delays to goods being delivered (68%) and additional time and effort required to comply with changes (55%).

Variation (higher than average)

- Wholesale and retail – potential delays to goods being delivered (87%).
- Importing from outside the UK – additional time and effort (70%), additional paperwork (61%) and suppliers no longer willing to engage in UK (61%).
- Selling to markets outside the UK – potential delays to goods being delivered (91%), additional time and effort (85%) and additional paperwork (78%).

Q. What negative impacts do you expect those changes to have on your business?



Base: All businesses who expect a negative impact (138)

04

Business structure

Key findings

- Among employers, 76% described themselves as family-owned and 5% were employee-owned (with employees owning a majority of the shares). 18% of businesses were women-led, 3% described themselves as a social enterprise and 3% were a co-operative (owned or controlled by its members).
- Combined, around one-in-ten (9%) businesses fell within one of the “inclusive ownership models” of employee-ownership, social enterprise or co-operatives.
- A minority (4%) of those that did not already have an inclusive ownership model said they would consider adopting one in future. Most (86%) said they were not considering this, while 8% said they were unsure and would like to know more about it.
- Among those that already had, or would consider having, one of these inclusive ownership models, the main reasons for that were to ensure their financial viability (58%), support growth (55%) and keep wealth in the local community (49%).

9% had an inclusive ownership model

The main reason for adopting an inclusive ownership model was to **ensure their financial viability (58%)**

Profile of business ownership

Among employers, 76% described themselves as family-owned and 5% were employee-owned (with employees owning a majority of the shares). 18% of businesses were women-led, 3% described themselves as a social enterprise and 3% were a co-operative (owned or controlled by its members).

Compared to the previous wave (June/July 2023%) there was an increase in women-led businesses (from 10% to 18%). Otherwise, findings were similar (in the previous wave 76% were family-owned, 5% employee-owned and 4% social enterprises). This was the first wave that asked about co-operative ownership.

More likely to be family-owned

- Primary industries (88%)
- 1-4 staff (79%)

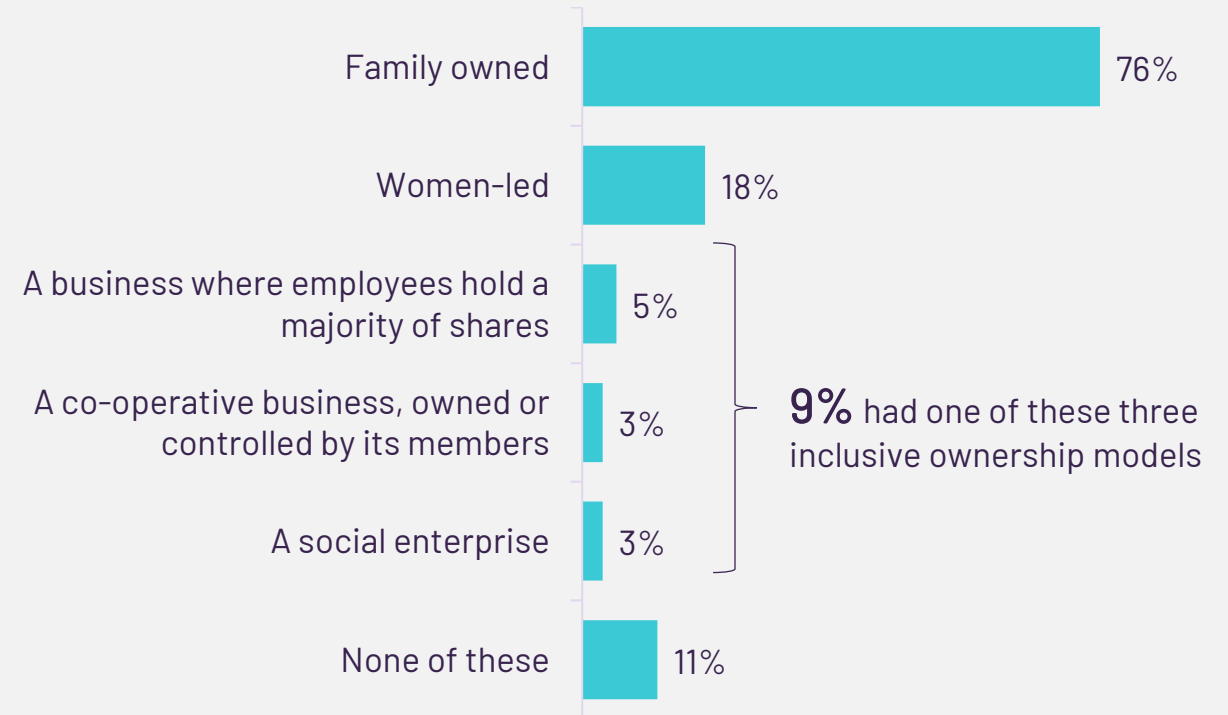
More likely to be women-led

- Arts and entertainment (38%) and wholesale and retail (33%)
- In urban areas (23%)

More likely to be a social enterprise

- Arts and entertainment businesses (19%).

Q. Which of the following, if any, describes your business?



Base: All businesses (601)

Inclusive ownership models

A minority (4%) of those that did not already have an inclusive ownership model said they would consider adopting one in future. Most (86%) said they were not considering this, while 8% said they were unsure and would like to know more about it.

Among those that already had, or would consider having, one of these inclusive ownership models, the main reasons for that were to ensure their financial viability (58%), support growth (55%) and keep wealth in the local community (49%).

Q. What were/would be the main reasons for adopting that business model?



Base: Those who were, or planned to be, an employee-owned, social enterprise or co-operative business (91)

05

Business values

Key findings

- The value deemed most important by businesses was ensuring quality of goods or services (51%), followed by contributing to the local community (33%), maximising profit (32%), and being environmentally sustainable (30%).
- More than half of businesses (58%) considered their profitable growth and links to the local community to be equally important. 17% said their profitable growth was more important than their community links, while 12% thought their links to the local community was more important than their profit.

33% said their most important value was contributing to the local community.

59% considered their profitable growth to be as important as their links to the local community.

Business values

The value deemed most important by businesses was ensuring quality of goods or services (51%), followed by contributing to the local community (33%), maximising profit (32%), and being environmentally sustainable (30%).

Q. Which two or three of the following values would you say are most important for your business?



Base: All businesses (601)

Variation (higher than average):

Sector

- Wholesale, retail and repair – ensuring quality of good and services (61%).
- Creative industries growth sector– contributing to the community (55%).
- Arts and entertainment – contributing to the community (53%), being inclusive fair and ethical (54%).
- Accommodation and food services – contributing to the community (51%)
- Primary industries – maximising profit (44%), being environmentally sustainable (44%), leaving a positive legacy (32%).
- Construction –fair pay and conditions (37%).

Rurality

- Remote rural and accessible rural – being environmentally sustainable (40% and 36%).

Growth aspiration

- Striving for growth – maximising profit (36%), being innovative and entrepreneurial (22%).

Business structure

- Women-led – contributing to the community (43%), being inclusive fair and ethical (33%).
- Family-owned – maximising profit (36%), fair pay and conditions (34%).

Business priorities

More than half of businesses (58%) considered their profitable growth and links to the local community to be equally important. 17% said their profitable growth was more important than their community links, while 12% thought their links to the local community was more important than their profit.

More likely to prioritise:

Profitable growth

- Selling to markets outside the UK (26%).

Links with their local community

- Arts and entertainment (37%).
- Creative industries growth sector (33%).
- Accommodation and food services (19%).
- Would like to do more to support local community (18%).

Both as equally important

- Performed well in the past six months (65%).
- Striving for growth (63%).

None of these

- Administrative and support services (23%).
- Want to downsize (22%).

Q. Thinking about the next 2-3 years, which of these statements most closely reflects your overall priorities?



Base: All businesses (601)

06

Community Wealth Building

Key findings

- Most businesses (89%) were taking operational actions that had relevance to community wealth building. The most common actions were using or increasing use of local suppliers (66%) and collaborating with local businesses (60%).
- Among those who were collaborating, the main benefits of doing so were sharing ideas and best practice (69%), reaching new customers or markets (67%), and developing products or services (53%).
- Among those that were using or increasing their use of local suppliers, the main reasons for this were to support local businesses (90%), to align with their business ethos (69%), and to shorten delivery timescales (60%). For those not using local suppliers, the main reason for this was a lack of suppliers in the area (51%).
- Most businesses (72%) were taking action to benefit the local community. The most common actions were providing financial support or donations for community groups or initiatives (42%), engaging with schools, colleges or universities around career opportunities (30%), allowing the community to use facilities (28%), and providing expertise or delivery support to community organisations (25%).
- Of those providing financial support or donations for the community, the most common form of support was responding to requests for gifts and donations for events or charities (85%).
- Two-in-five (41%) businesses said they would like to do more for the local community in the next 12 months, while 55% said they would not. The main barriers to doing so would be lack of time (65%), cost (60%), and being focussed on their day-to-day survival (47%).

89% were taking operational actions that had relevance to community wealth building

72% were taking action to benefit the local community.

The most common action was providing financial support or donations (42%)

41% wanted to do more for the local community. Time and cost were the main barriers.

Actions relevant to Community Wealth Building (1)

Most businesses (89%) were taking action related to their operations that had relevance to community wealth building. The most common actions were using or increasing use of local suppliers (66%) and collaborating with local businesses (60%).

More likely to be taking action:

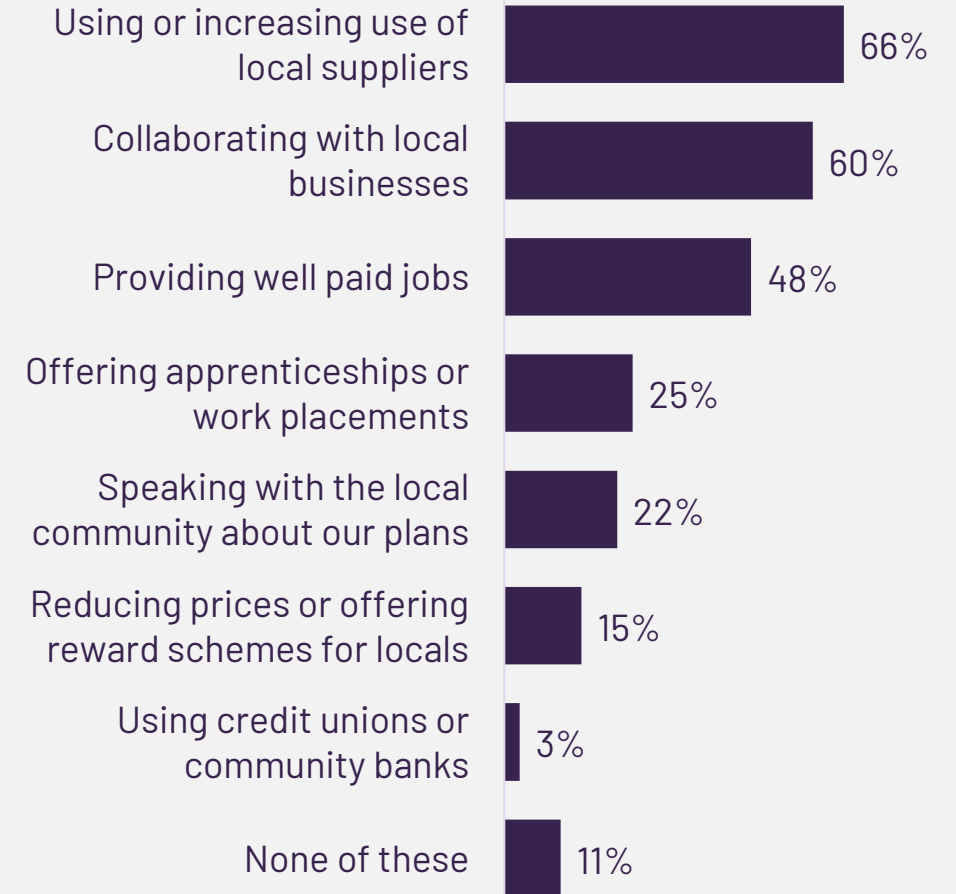
- Tourism growth sector (96% taking any of these actions).
- Performed well in the past six months (95%).
- Those striving for growth (92%).

Less likely to be taking action:

- Struggled in the past six months (16% taking none of these actions).

Variation in the businesses taking specific actions is shown on the next slide.

Q. Which of the following actions, if any, is your business taking in relation to its operations?



Base: All businesses (601)

Actions relevant to Community Wealth Building (2)

Variation (higher than average):

Sector

- **Accommodation and food services** – using local suppliers (86%) and speaking with the community about their plans (33%).
- **Primary industries** – using local suppliers (73%).
- **Wholesale and retail** – providing well paid jobs (61%), reducing prices or offering reward schemes for locals (32%), and speaking with the community about their plans (31%).
- **Arts and entertainment** – speaking with the community about their plans (48%), apprenticeships or work placements (45%), and reducing prices or offering reward schemes for locals (28%).
- **Manufacturing** – reducing prices or offering rewards schemes for locals (26%).
- **Creative industries growth sector** – speaking with the community about their plans (47%) and reducing prices or offering rewards schemes for locals (28%).

Location

- **Urban businesses** – collaborating (67%), providing well paid jobs (54%), speaking with the community about their plans (29%), reducing prices or offering reward schemes for locals (21%).

Performance and outlook

- **Performed well in past six months** – providing well paid jobs (57%) and offering apprenticeships or work placements (31%).
- **Striving for growth** – providing well paid jobs (56%), offering apprenticeships or work placements (28%), speaking with the community about their plans (26%).



Benefits of collaboration

Among those who were collaborating (60% of businesses), the main benefits of doing so were sharing ideas and best practice (69%), reaching new customers or markets (67%), and developing products or services (53%).

Variation (higher than average):

Sector

- **Primary industries** – cost savings (64%).
- **Accommodation and food services** – reaching new customers or markets (81%).
- **Arts and entertainment** – developing their product or service (69%).

Location

- **Urban businesses** – reaching new customers or markets (76%), and developing their product or service (60%).

Q. What benefits does collaborating offer you?



Base: All businesses that are collaborating (363)

Reasons for using local suppliers

Among those that were using or increasing their use of local suppliers (66% of businesses), the main reasons for this were to support local businesses (90%), to align with their business ethos (69%), and to shorten delivery timescales (60%).

Variation (higher than average):

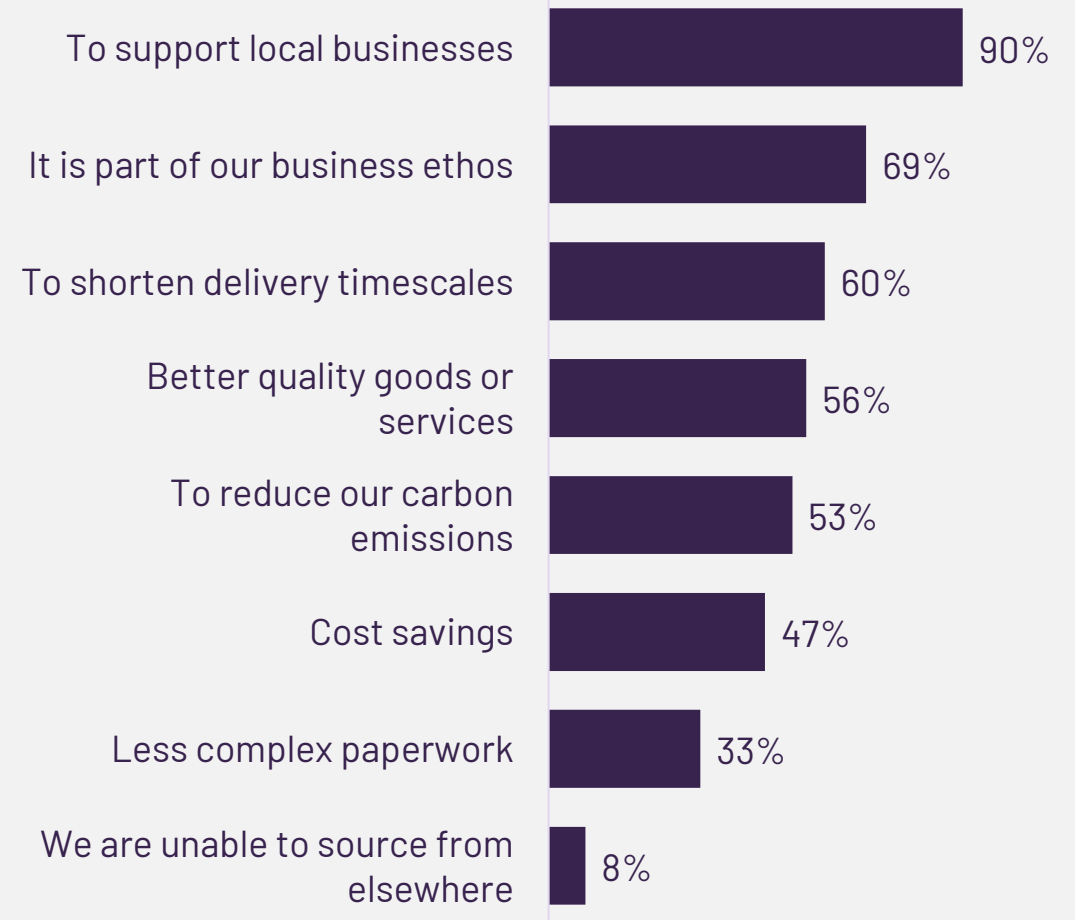
Sector

- **Construction** – to shorten delivery timescales (76%).
- **Accommodation and food services** – part of their business ethos (80%) and better quality goods or services (67%).

Location

- **Scottish Borders** – to shorten delivery timescales (67%), better quality goods or services (62%), and to reduce their carbon emissions (62%).

Q. What are your main reasons for using local suppliers?



Base: All businesses using local suppliers (392)

Reasons for not using local suppliers

Among those that were not using or increasing their use of local suppliers (34% of businesses), the main reason for this was a lack of suppliers in the area (51%), followed by having a very specialist requirement (42%), and suppliers being unable to meet demand (19%).

Variation (higher than average):

Sector

- **Primary industries** – suppliers are unable to meet demand (35%), and it is not a priority (22%).
- **Wholesale and retail** – lack of suppliers in the area (72%).

Markets

- **Importers** – lack of suppliers in the area (56%) and quality issues (10%).

Q. What are your main reasons for not using local suppliers?



Base: All businesses not using local suppliers (209)

Community benefits (1)

Most businesses (72%) were taking action to benefit the local community. The most common action was providing financial support or donations for community groups or initiatives (42%).

This was followed by engaging with schools, colleges or universities around career opportunities (30%), allowing the community to use facilities (28%), and providing expertise or delivery support to community organisations (25%).

More likely to be taking action:

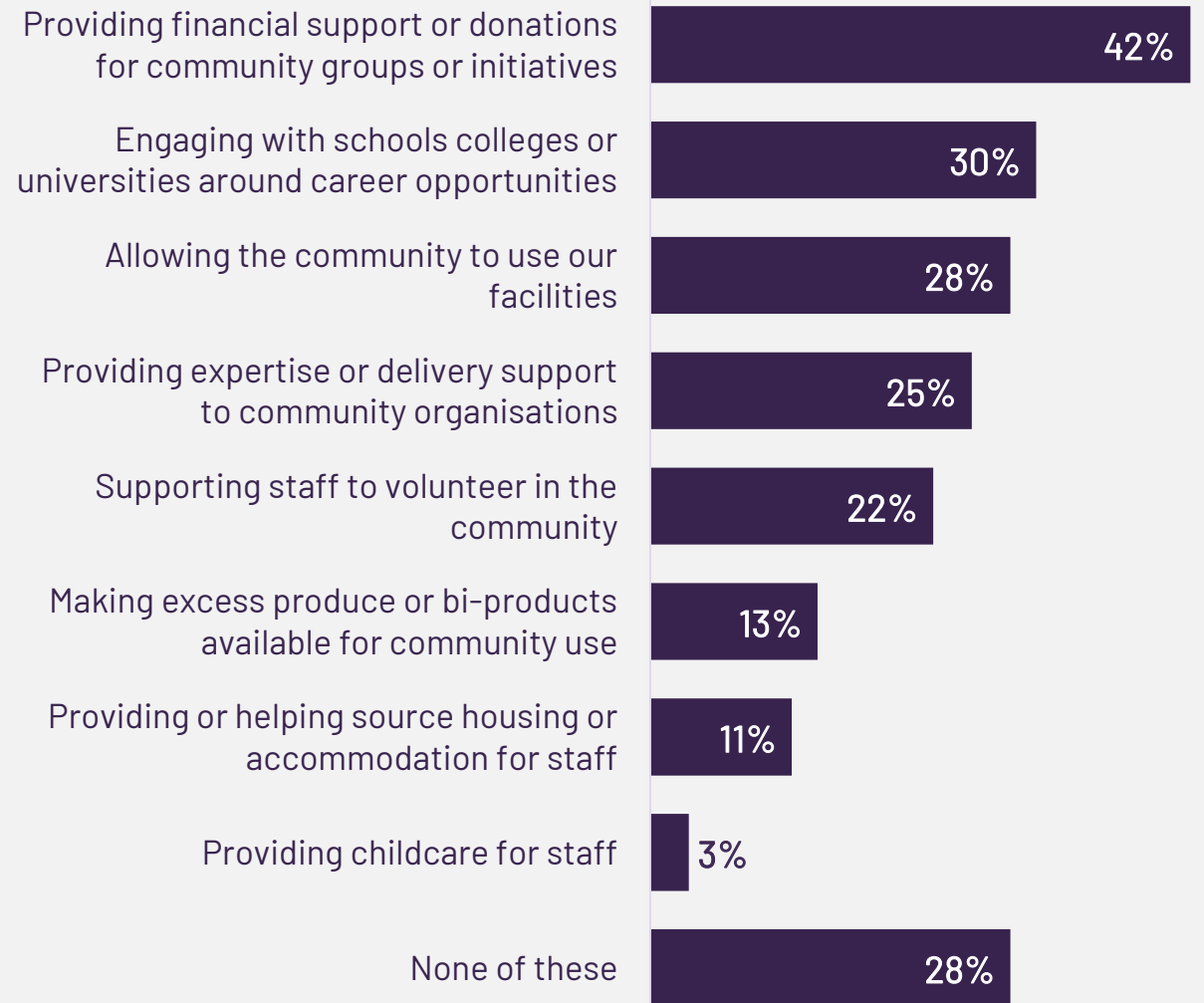
- Arts and entertainment (88% taking any of these actions).
- Financial and business services growth sector (88%).
- Performed well in the past six months (81%).
- Those striving for growth (77%).

Less likely to be taking action:

- Those who want to downsize (44% taking none of these actions).
- Those that had struggled in the past six months (35%).
- 0-4 staff (32%).

Variation in the businesses taking specific actions is shown on the next slide.

Q. Which of the following actions, if any, is your business taking to benefit the local community?



Base: All businesses (601)

Community benefits (2)

Variation (higher than average):

Sector

- **Accommodation and food services** – providing financial support or donations (56%), allowing the community to use facilities (48%), and making excess produce or bi-products available (22%).
- **Arts and entertainment** – engaging with schools, colleges or universities (62%), allowing the community to use facilities (49%), providing expertise or delivery support (45%), supporting staff to volunteer (35%), and making excess produce or bi-products available (26%).
- **Primary industries** – providing, or helping source, accommodation for staff (17%).
- **Wholesale and retail** – providing financial support or donations (56%).
- **Professional, scientific and technical** – providing financial support or donations (56%) and providing expertise or delivery support (42%).

Growth sector

- **Creative industries** – providing expertise or delivery support (42%)
- **Financial and business services** – providing expertise or delivery support (49%).

Location

- **Accessible rural businesses** – providing or helping source accommodation for staff (15%).
- **Urban businesses** – providing financial support or donations (51%) and providing expertise or delivery support (30%).

Performance and outlook

- **Performed well in the past six months** – providing financial support or donations (50%),
- **Striving for growth** – providing financial support or donations (47%), engaging with schools, colleges or universities (35%) and making excess produce or bi-products available (15%).



Financial support for the community

42% of businesses were providing financial support or donations for the community. The most common action was responding to requests for gifts and donations for events or charities (85%), followed by sponsoring local sports teams or groups (61%), and collecting donations for local charities or initiatives (47%).

Variation (higher than average):

Sector

- **Accommodation and food services** – collecting donations (66%).
- **Wholesale and retail** – responding to requests for gifts and donations (96%) and collecting donations (63%).

Location

- **Urban businesses** – responding to requests for gifts and donations (90%) and sponsoring local sports teams or groups (69%).

Q. Which of the following actions, if any, is your business taking to benefit the local community?



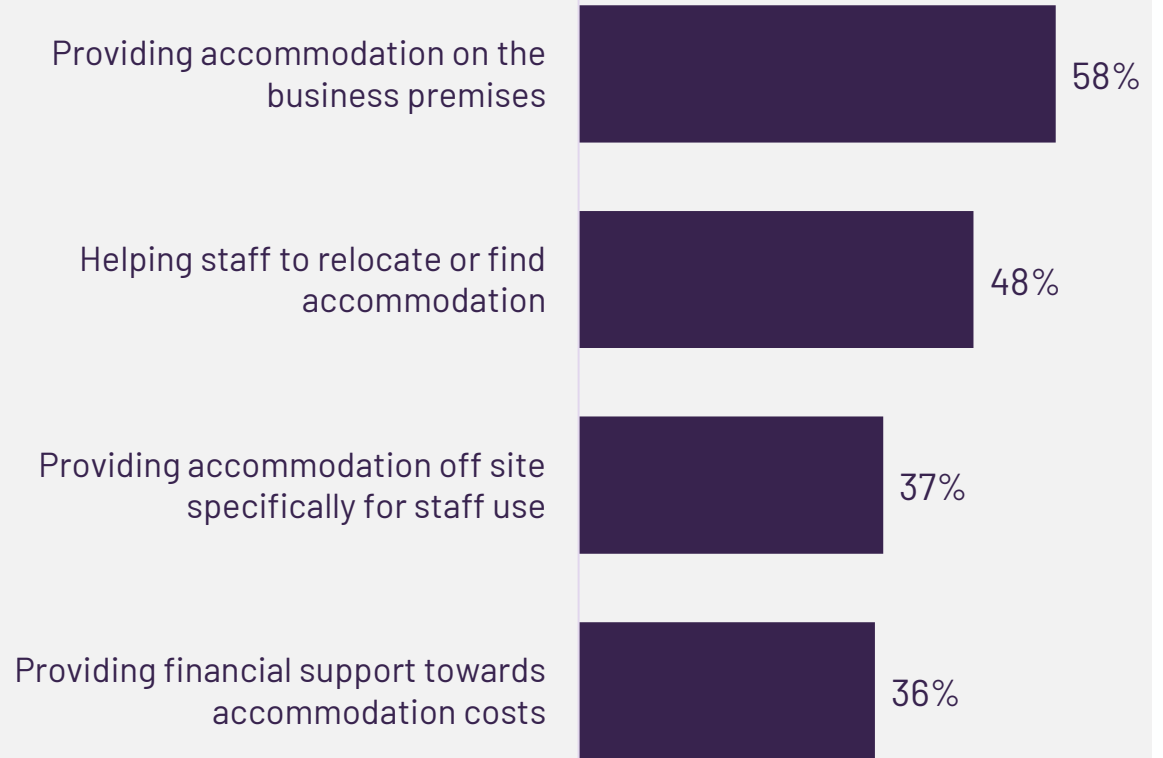
Base: All providing financial support or donations to the community (275)

Supporting staff with housing and accommodation

Among those providing or helping source accommodation for staff (11% of businesses), this most commonly involved providing accommodation on the business premises (58%) and helping staff to relocate or find accommodation (48%).

There were no significant variations amongst businesses.

Q. What form does providing or helping source housing or accommodation for staff take?



Base: All providing housing or accommodation (65)

Doing more for the community

Two-in-five (41%) businesses said they would like to do more for the local community in the next 12 months, while 55% said they would not.

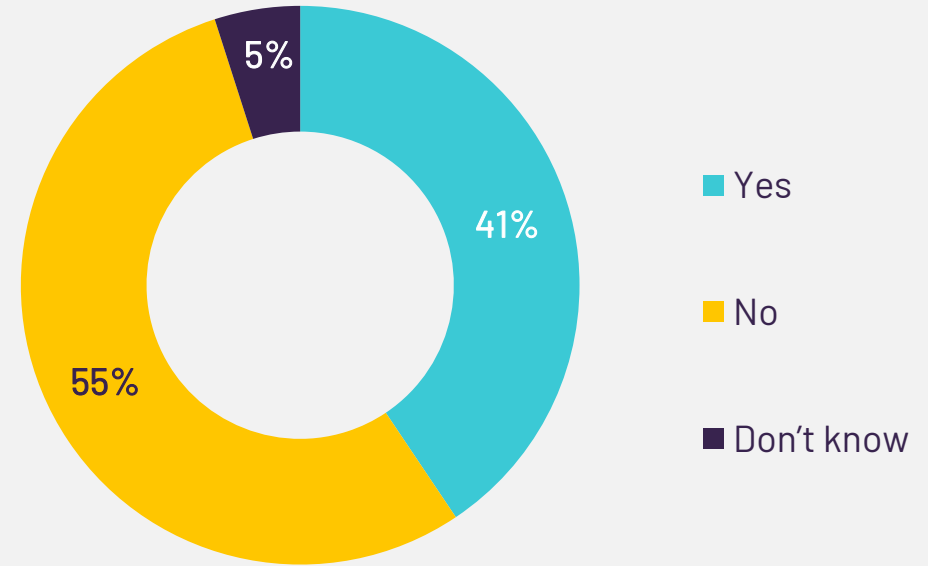
More likely to want to do more:

- Arts and entertainment (66%).
- Wholesale and retail (49%).
- Those striving for growth (51%).
- Businesses in the Scottish Borders (46%).

Less likely to want to do more:

- Primary industries (65% said no).
- Those with 0-4 staff (58%).

Q. In the next 12 months, would you like to do more for your local community than you already do?



Base: All businesses (601)

Barriers to doing more for the community

Among those who would like to do more for their community, the main barriers to doing so would be lack of time (65%), cost (60%), and being focussed on their day-to-day survival (47%).

Variation (higher than average):

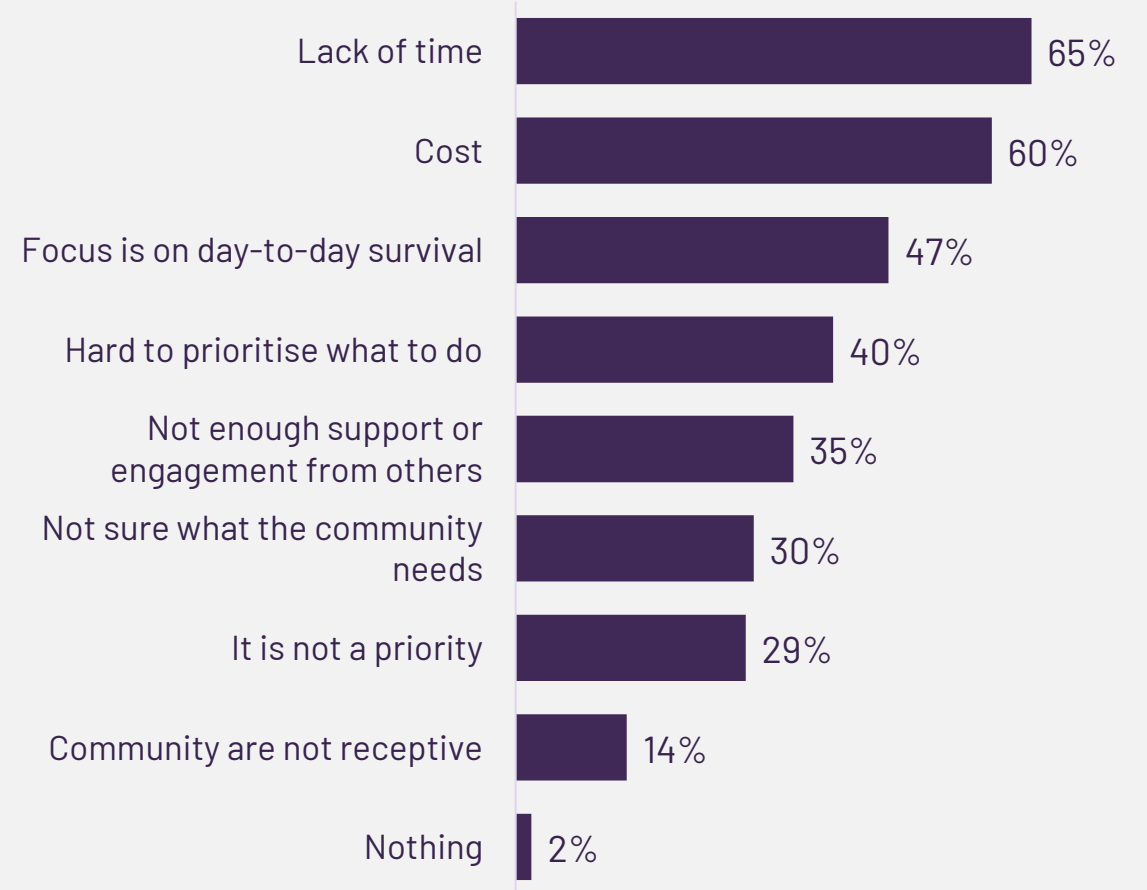
Sector

- Wholesale and retail – cost (73%).
- Arts and entertainment – not enough support or engagement from others (49%).

Performance and outlook

- Struggled in the past six months – cost (72%) focus is on day-to-day survival (60%).

Q. Which of the following, if any, might prevent you from doing more for your local community?



Base: All businesses that would like to do more for the community (268)

07

Place-based opportunities

Key findings

- The top immediate-term priorities for businesses were surviving current financial challenges (42%), satisfying existing customer demand (38%), looking after their wellbeing (29%), making cost savings (28%) and building resilience to future financial challenges (25%).
- A quarter (23%) of businesses felt that tourists and visitors coming to the area offered them a significant opportunity. Renewable energy projects were seen as a significant opportunity by 19% of businesses, companies investing in or establishing a base in the area by 11%, community-led projects or developments by 14%, and large construction or infrastructure projects by 10%.
- The majority of businesses (83%) were taking action to make the most of growth opportunities in their local areas. The top actions were investing in new or upgraded equipment (53%) and investing in technology (43%).
- The main barriers preventing businesses from making the most of opportunities in their local areas were complying with regulation and legislation (34% to a large extent), lack of people or skills in the area (31%), transport infrastructure (22%), access to specialist skills (21%), and projects or investment getting delayed (19%).

The biggest place-based opportunity for businesses was **tourists and visitors coming the area** (23% saw this as an opportunity to a large extent)

83% were taking action to make the most of growth opportunities in their local area

Priorities

The top immediate-term priorities for businesses were surviving current financial challenges (42%), satisfying existing customer demand (38%), looking after their wellbeing (29%), making cost savings (28%) and building resilience to future financial challenges (25%).

Variation (higher than average):

Size

- 5-10 and 11-24 staff – growing workforce (16% and 21%)

Sector

- Professional, scientific and technical – new market opportunities (40%)
- Tourism – satisfying existing customer demand (50%)
- Accommodation and food services – surviving financial challenges (54%)
- Arts and entertainment – looking after our wellbeing (41%)
- Primary industries – making cost savings (37%), low carbon ways of working (27%)

Performance

- Performed well – satisfying customer demand (47%), skills (26%).
- Struggled – surviving financial challenges (57%), cost savings (35%)

Growth aspiration

- Striving for growth – building resilience (29%), new market opportunities (28%), skills (23%), growing workforce (14%).

Q. Which two or three of these are the most immediate priorities for your business right now?

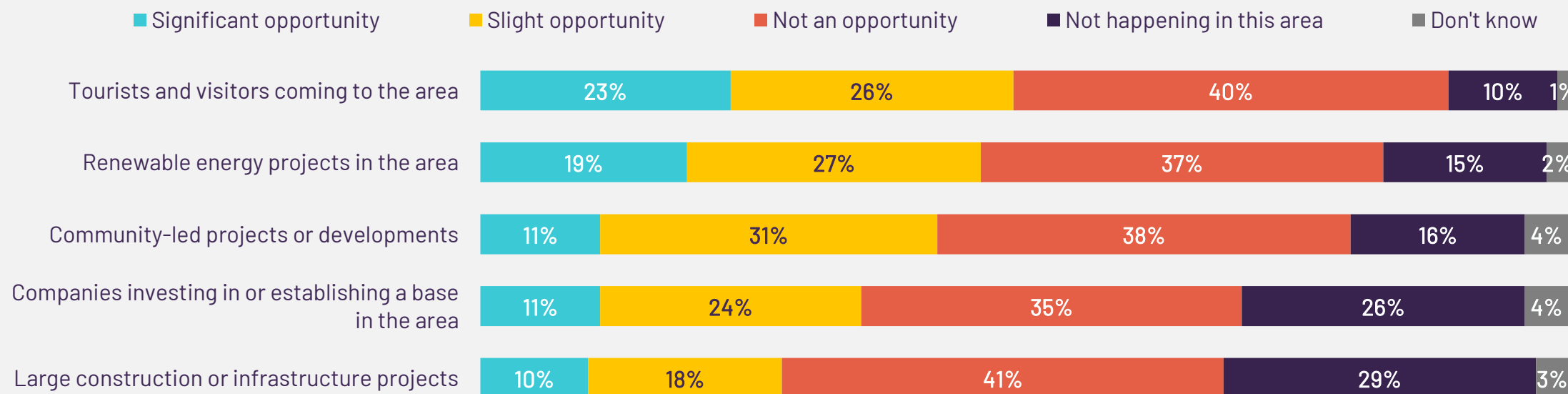


Base: All businesses (601)

Local opportunities (1)

A quarter (23%) of businesses felt that tourists and visitors coming to the area offered them a significant opportunity. Renewable energy projects were seen as a significant opportunity by 19% of businesses, companies investing in or establishing a base in the area by 11%, community-led projects or developments by 14%, and large construction or infrastructure projects by 10%.

Q. The following are examples of activities that may, or may not, be happening in your local area. For each one, please tell me how much of an opportunity it presents for your business?



Base: All businesses (601)

Local opportunities (2)

The following businesses were more likely than average to identify these as significant opportunities in their area:

- **Tourists and visitors coming to the area** (average = 23%)
 - Accommodation and food services (76%).
 - Wholesale and retail (30%).
 - Dumfries and Galloway (28%).
 - Performed well (28%).
 - Striving for growth (28%).
- **Large construction or infrastructure projects** (average = 10%)
 - Accommodation and food services (19%).
- **Companies investing in or establishing a base in the area** (average = 11%)
 - Accommodation and food services (20%).
 - Urban areas (16%).
- **Renewable energy projects in the area** (average = 19%)
 - Primary industries (26%).
 - Remote rural areas (26%).
 - Striving for growth (24%).
- **Community-led projects or developments** (average = 11%)
 - Creative industries growth sector (25%).
 - Arts and entertainment (20%).
 - Striving for growth (14%).



Growth opportunities

The majority of businesses (83%) were taking action to make the most of growth opportunities in their local areas. The top actions were investing in new or upgraded equipment (53%) and investing in technology (43%).

This was followed upskilling staff (33%), developing new products, services or specialisms (32%) and exploring different procurement opportunities (31%).

Variation (higher than average):

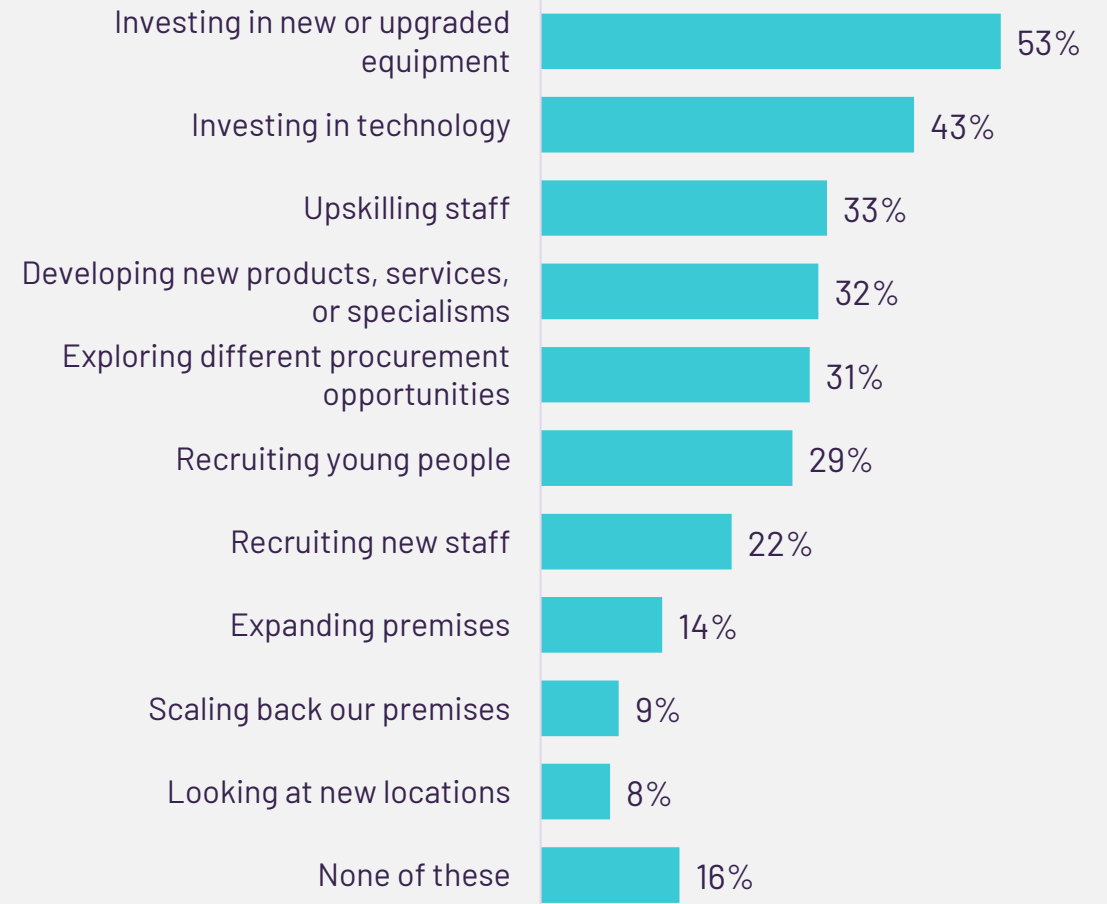
Sector

- **Manufacturing** - developing new products, services or specialisms (58%), scaling back premises (18%).
- **Wholesale and retail** - developing new products, services or specialisms (48%), upskilling staff (44%).
- **Professional, scientific and technical** - investing in technology (58%), developing new products, services or specialisms (53%).
- **Arts and entertainment** - upskilling staff (49%), recruiting young people (48%), recruiting new staff (42%).
- **Tourism growth sector** - developing new products, services or specialisms (43%).

Performance

- **Performed well** - investing in technology (53%), recruiting young people (36%), recruiting new staff (29%), looking at new locations (14%).

Q. Which, if any, of the following are you doing to make the most of growth opportunities existing in your local area?



Base: All businesses (601)

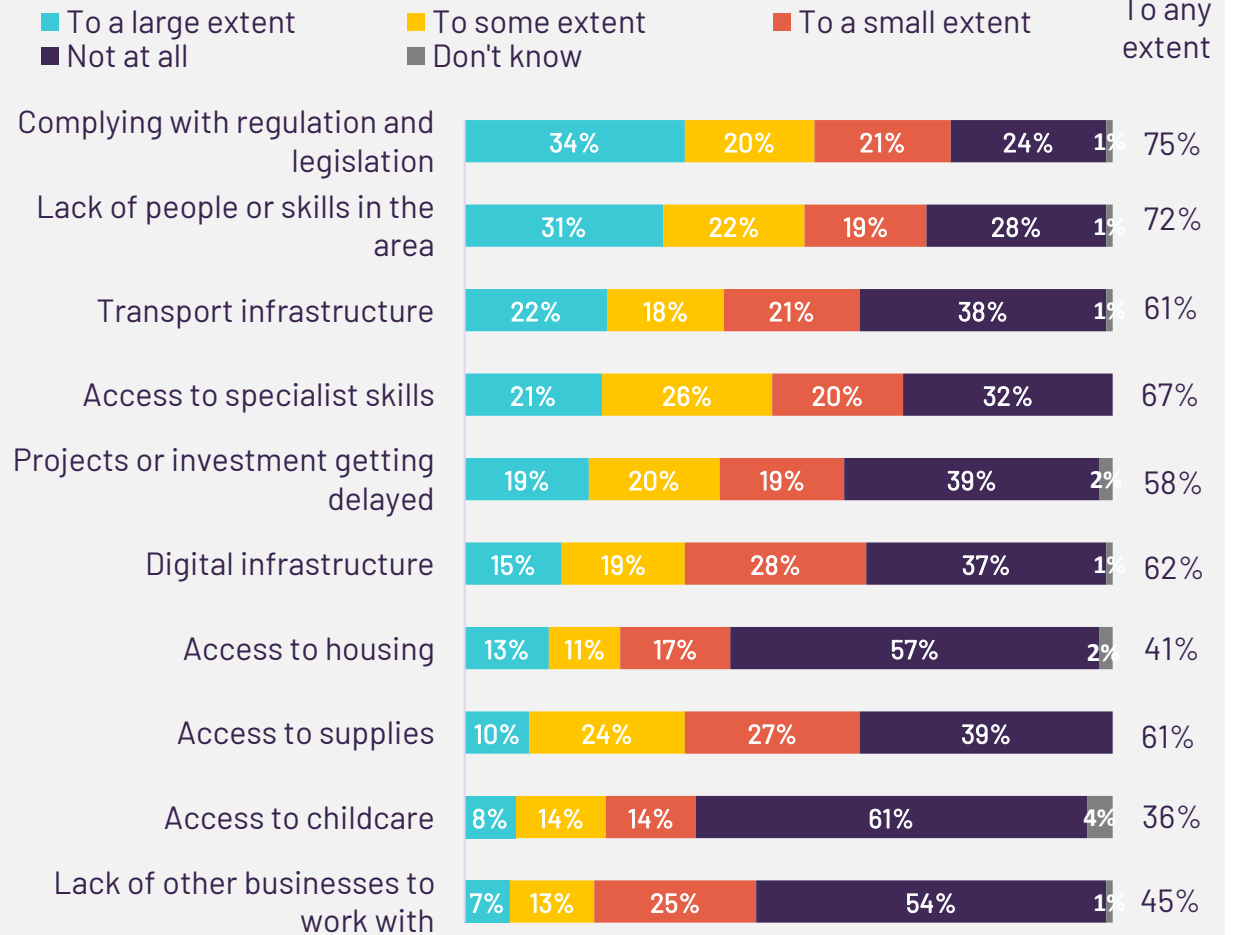
Barriers to growth opportunities

The main barriers preventing businesses from making the most of opportunities in their local areas were complying with regulation and legislation (34% to a large extent), lack of people or skills in the area (31%), transport infrastructure (22%), access to specialist skills (21%), and projects or investment getting delayed (19%).

Variation (more likely to say 'to a large extent'):

- **Primary industries**- complying with regulation and legislation (45%), digital infrastructure (21%).
- **Accommodation and food services** - complying with regulation and legislation (42%).
- **Remote rural** - complying with regulation and legislation (45%), digital infrastructure (21%).
- **Women-led** - access to housing (22%) and childcare (17%).

Q. To what extent do the following prevent you from making the most of opportunities that exist in your local area?



Base: All businesses (601)

08

Engagement with SOSE

Key findings

- The majority (89%) of businesses had at least heard of SOSE before taking part in the survey, and 67% knew at least a little about it. Around a quarter (26%) knew at least a fair amount about SOSE, including 5% who knew a great deal.
- Findings were similar to those seen in June 2021 (the last time this question was asked), but with a slight increase in overall awareness (from 86% to 89% having heard of SOSE).
- Around two-fifths (39%) of businesses said they would be likely to contact SOSE if they needed help, advice or support while 57% said they were unlikely to. This was slightly down on June '21, when 42% said they were likely and 53% unlikely.

67% knew at least a little about SOSE (vs 64% in June 2021)

39% were likely to contact SOSE for help and support (vs 42% in June 2021)

Awareness of SOSE

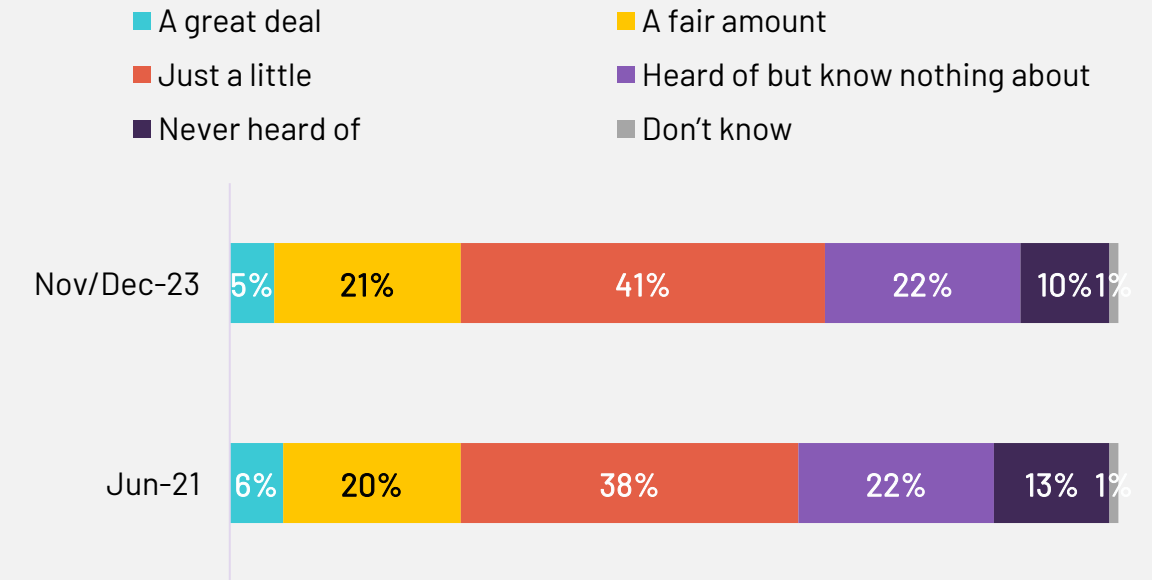
The majority (89%) of businesses had at least heard of SOSE before taking part in the survey, and 67% knew at least a little about it.

Around a quarter (26%) knew at least a fair amount about SOSE, including 5% who knew a great deal.

One-in-ten (10%) had never heard of the organisation. This was higher in the Scottish Borders (17%).

Findings were similar to those seen in June 2021 (the last time this question was asked), but with a slight increase in overall awareness (from 86% to 89% having heard of SOSE).

Q. Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about South of Scotland Enterprise?



Base: All businesses (Nov/Dec 23: 601, June 21: 600)

Advice and support

Around two-fifths (39%) of businesses said they would be likely to contact SOSE if they needed help, advice or support while 57% said they were unlikely to. This was slightly down on June '21, when 42% said they were likely and 53% unlikely.

Those **more likely** to contact SOSE were:

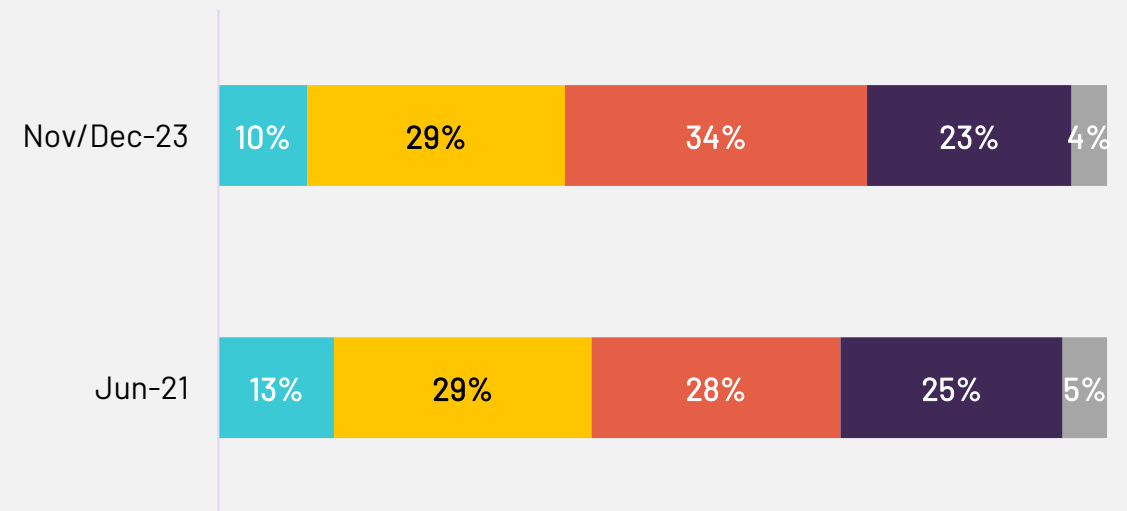
- Arts and entertainment (57% likely)
- Women-led (51%)

Those **less likely** to contact SOSE were:

- 0-4 staff (60% unlikely)
- Primary industries (67%)

Q. If you were looking for help, advice or support with your business, how likely or unlikely would you be to contact South of Scotland Enterprise?

Very likely Fairly likely Fairly unlikely Very unlikely Don't know



Base: All businesses (601)

09

Appendix

Sector categories included in the survey sample

SIC 2007 categories

The sector categories referred to in the report, and examples of the types of sectors covered by these categories, are summarised below.

Sector title uses in report	Types of sectors covered
Primary industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing; Mining and quarrying; Electricity, gas and air supply; Water and sewerage
Manufacturing	Manufacturing
Construction	Construction
Wholesale and retail	Wholesale and retail sales and repairs
Transport and storage	Transport activity and storage of goods used for transport activities
Accommodation and food	Accommodation and food service activities
IT, finance and real estate	IT, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, and real estate
Professional, scientific and technical	Legal, accounting, advertising, architectural and scientific research.
Administrative and support services	Office administration, human resources, services to buildings and landscapes, travel, and security services.
Arts and entertainment	Creative and arts activities; Libraries, museums and cultural activities; Sports and recreation

Growth sector categories

The growth sector categories referred to in the report, and the types of SIC 2007 sectors they partially cover are summarised below.

Growth sector category	SIC 2007 categories partially covered
Creative industries	Manufacturing; Wholesale and retail; Professional, scientific and technical; Administrative and support services; Arts and entertainment.
Energy	Primary industries; Manufacturing; Professional, scientific and technical.
Financial and business services	IT, finance and real estate; Professional, scientific and technical; Administrative and support services;
Food and drink	Primary industries; Manufacturing.
Life sciences	Manufacturing. Professional, scientific and technical;
Tourism	Accommodation and food services; Administrative and support services; Arts and entertainment.



Profile of businesses interviewed

Size (no of employees)	Weighted %
Sole trader	28
1-4	50
5-10	13
11-24	6
25+	3

Location	Weighted %
Dumfries and Galloway	50
Scottish Borders	50

Urban/Rural	Weighted %
Remote rural	26
Accessible rural	36
Urban	37

Sector	Weighted %
Primary industries	31
Manufacturing	5
Construction	12
Wholesale and retail	13
Transport and storage	3
Accommodation and food	9
IT, finance and real estate	5
Professional, scientific and technical	10
Administrative and support services	6
Arts and entertainment	6



Ipsos Standards & Accreditations

Ipsos' standards & accreditations provide our clients with the peace of mind that they can always depend on us to deliver reliable, sustainable findings. Moreover, our focus on quality and continuous improvement means we have embedded a 'right first time' approach throughout our organisation.



ISO 20252 – is the international market research specific standard that supersedes BS 7911 / MRQSA & incorporates IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme); it covers the 5 stages of a Market Research project. Ipsos was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.



MRS Company Partnership – By being an MRS Company Partner, Ipsos endorse and support the core MRS brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness, and commit to comply with the MRS Code of Conduct throughout the organisation & we were the first company to sign our organisation up to the requirements & self regulation of the MRS Code; more than 350 companies have followed our lead.



ISO 9001 – International general company standard with a focus on continual improvement through quality management systems. In 1994 we became one of the early adopters of the ISO 9001 business standard.



ISO 27001 – International standard for information security designed to ensure the selection of adequate and proportionate security controls. Ipsos was the first research company in the UK to be awarded this in August 2008.



The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) – Ipsos is required to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the UK Data Protection Act; it covers the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy.



HMG Cyber Essentials – A government backed and key deliverable of the UK's National Cyber Security Programme. Ipsos was assessment validated for certification in 2016. Cyber Essentials defines a set of controls which, when properly implemented, provide organisations with basic protection from the most prevalent forms of threat coming from the internet.



Fair Data – Ipsos is signed up as a 'Fair Data' Company by agreeing to adhere to ten core principles. The principles support and complement other standards such as ISOs, and the requirements of Data Protection legislation.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252 and with the Ipsos Terms and Conditions

Thank you

