

Article

# Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 16 September to 6 October 2024

Contact:  
Business Insights and Conditions  
Survey team (BICS)  
bics@ons.gov.uk  
+44 1633 456417

Release date:  
7 October 2024

Next release:  
To be announced

## Table of contents

1. [Survey information](#)
2. [Trading Status of Your Business](#)
3. [Stock](#)
4. [Supply chains](#)
5. [Capital expenditure](#)
6. [Workforce management](#)
7. [Environment](#)
8. [Technology](#)
9. [Comments](#)

# 1 . Survey information

These questions are for Wave 117 of the fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) dispatched on 16 September 2024.

## 2 . Trading Status of Your Business

Which of the following statements best describes your business's trading status?

- Currently fully trading
- Currently partially trading
- Paused trading but intends to restart in the next two weeks
- Paused trading and does not intend to restart in the next two weeks
- Permanently ceased trading

## 3 . Stock

Is your business stockpiling any goods or materials?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

How did your business's stock levels of raw materials in August 2024 compare with the previous calendar month?

- Stock levels were higher
- Stock levels stayed the same
- Stock levels were lower
- Not sure
- Not applicable

How did your business's stock levels of finished goods in August 2024 compare with the previous calendar month?

- Stock levels were higher
- Stock levels stayed the same
- Stock levels were lower
- Not sure
- Not applicable

## 4 . Supply chains

Which of the following factors, if any, is your business concerned about impacting supply chains over the next 12 months?

- Artificial intelligence
- Climate change
- Cyber attacks
- Increased barriers to trade
- International conflict
- Market distorting practices
- Sanctions
- Shipping disruption
- Other
- Not sure
- Business is not concerned about factors impacting supply chains over the next 12 months

How does your business expect these factors to impact supply chains?

- Increased costs of sourcing materials
- Increased labour costs
- Increased transportation costs
- Shortage of inputs
- Other
- Not sure
- Business does not expect these factors to impact supply chains

Which of the following actions, if any, did your business take to increase supply chain resilience in the last 12 months?

- Demand management
- Diversification of suppliers across a broader range of countries
- Improved relationships with key suppliers
- Increased awareness of supply chains
- Onshoring
- Relocated existing sourcing to another country
- Stockpiling and surge capacity
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Which of the following actions, if any, does your business plan to take to increase supply chain resilience over the next 12 months?

- Demand management
- Diversification of suppliers across a broader range of countries
- Improve relationships with key suppliers
- Increase awareness of supply chains
- Onshoring
- Relocate existing sourcing to another country
- Stockpiling and surge capacity
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

## 5 . Capital expenditure

What are your business's expectations for capital expenditure between September and November 2024?

- Capital expenditure will increase
- Capital expenditure will stay the same
- Capital expenditure will decrease
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Why is your business expecting to authorise capital expenditure between September and November 2024?

- For replacements
- To expand capacity
- To increase efficiency
- To provide new services
- To reach new customers
- To purchase new technology
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Which of the following, if any, do you expect to limit your business's capital expenditure between September and November 2024?

- Inability to raise external finance
- Inadequate return on proposed investment
- Shortage of internal finance
- Shortage of labour
- Uncertainty about demand or business prospects
- Other
- Not sure
- Not expecting any limits to capital expenditure

Did your business invest in plant and machinery between June and August 2024?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Did your business use the full expensing capital allowance on qualifying plant and machinery investments between June and August 2024?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

## 6 . Workforce management

Does your business have a probation policy in place?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

How long is a typical probationary period for your business?

- 3 months or less
- 4 to 6 months
- 7 to 9 months
- 10 to 12 months
- More than 12 months
- Not sure

How does your business plan to adapt to any future increases in employment costs?

- Absorb within profit margins
- Increase prices
- Limit overtime hours
- Reduce employee benefits
- Reduce number of employees
- Reduce spending on investment
- Reduce spending on training
- Reduce wage increases for other employees
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Does your business employ anyone on a variable hours contract?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable
- Prefer not to say

## **7 . Environment**

Is your business concerned about the impact climate change may have on the business?

- Yes, very concerned
- Yes, somewhat concerned
- No, not concerned
- Not sure

Which of the following actions, if any, has your business taken to protect the environment?

- Has a climate change strategy
- Has a net zero or greenhouse gas emissions target
- Has a net zero or greenhouse gas emissions target which includes supply chain
- Has a nature or biodiversity strategy
- Has a nature or biodiversity target
- Has a nature or biodiversity target which includes supply chain
- Monitors climate-related risks
- Monitors nature or biodiversity-related risks
- Publishes an annual sustainability report
- Other
- Not sure
- None of the above

Which of the following actions, if any, has your business taken to reduce carbon emissions?

- Adjusting heating and cooling systems
- Electrifying your vehicle fleet
- Installing a smart meter
- Installing charging points
- Installing your own renewable electricity or heating
- Insulating your buildings
- Introducing a cycle to work scheme
- Switching to LED bulbs
- Other
- Not sure
- No actions have been taken to reduce emissions

For which, if any, of the following effects of climate change has your business assessed risks?

- Coastal erosion
- Increased flooding
- Supply chain disruption and distribution
- Temperature increases
- Water scarcity
- Not sure
- None of the above

Which, if any, of the following effects of climate change has your business taken action to adapt to?

- Coastal erosion
- Increased flooding
- Supply chain disruption and distribution
- Temperature increases
- Water scarcity
- Not sure
- None of the above

Which, if any, of the following reasons have prevented your business from taking action against any of these climate change effects?

- Business has been unable to take action due to costs
- Business has been unable to take action due to lack of information or guidance
- Business does not expect to be impacted by these effects
- Other
- Not sure
- Business has not been prevented from taking action

Which of the following severe weather events, if any, has your business been impacted by in the last 12 months?

- Flooding
- Increased temperatures or heat
- Storm
- Water shortage or drought
- Other
- Not sure
- Business has not been impacted by any severe weather events

How has your business been impacted by severe weather events in the last 12 months?

- Disruption to global supply chains
- Disruption to local supply chains
- Employee absence
- Weather related damage to physical infrastructure
- Other
- Not sure

## 8 . Technology

Which of the following artificial intelligence technologies, if any, does your business currently use?

- Autonomous vehicles
- Data processing using machine learning
- Image processing using machine learning
- Robotics
- Text generation using Large Language Models
- Visual content creation
- Other
- Not sure
- Business does not currently use artificial intelligence technologies

What does your business currently use artificial intelligence technologies for?

- Develop a new product or service
- Explore a new market
- Improve business operations
- Provide, or personalise, products or services to customers
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

How did your business adopt these artificial intelligence technologies?

- Developed in-house
- Outsourced to external providers or third parties
- Through purchase of external software or ready-to-use
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Which of the following artificial intelligence technologies, if any, does your business plan to adopt within the next three months?

- Autonomous vehicles
- Data processing using machine learning
- Image processing using machine learning
- Robotics
- Text generation using Large Language Models
- Visual content creation
- Other
- Not sure
- Business does not plan to adopt artificial intelligence technologies in the next 3 months

What does your business plan to adopt artificial intelligence technologies for?

- Develop a new product or service
- Explore a new market
- Improve business operations
- Provide, or personalise, products or services to customers
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

In the last three months, which, if any, of the following factors have prevented or delayed your business from adopting artificial intelligence technologies?

- Cost
- Difficulty identifying business use cases
- Employee concern about any potential impact of using artificial intelligence technologies
- Level of expertise in artificial intelligence
- Product or service availability
- Security concerns
- Uncertainty about government regulations or industry standards
- Other
- Not sure
- Business has not attempted to use artificial intelligence technologies
- Business has not been prevented or experienced delays in the adoption of artificial intelligence technologies

## 9 . Comments

Please tell us anything else about your business's current situation relating to topics covered in this survey

- Comments