

Article

Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 18 September to 1 October 2023

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Release date:
3 October 2023

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Survey information

These questions are for Wave 92 of the fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) dispatched on 18 September 2023.

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 . Exporting

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

- Exported in the last 12 months
- Exported more than 12 months ago
- Never exported but have goods or services that could be developed for export
- Never exported and do not have goods or services suitable for export
- Not sure

How did your business's exporting in August 2023 compare with this calendar month last year?

- Exported more
- Exporting stayed the same
- Exported less
- Business was unable to export
- Not sure

Did your business experience an increase in any of the following exporting challenges in August 2023, compared with the previous calendar month?

- Additional paperwork
- Change in exchange rates
- Change in transportation costs
- Customs duties or levies
- Destination countries changing their border restrictions
- Disruption at UK borders
- Finding information on how to export
- Lack of hauliers to transport goods or lack of logistics equipment
- Reduced demand for products and services
- Time taken for checks at the border
- Work permit or visa restrictions, or lack of mutual recognition of professional qualifications
- Other
- Did not experience an increase in any exporting challenges

What was the main cause of these exporting challenges?

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- End of the EU transition period
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the end of the EU transition period
- Other
- Not sure

4 . Importing

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

- Imported in the last 12 months
- Imported more than 12 months ago
- Never imported
- Not sure

How did your business's importing in August 2023 compare with this calendar month last year?

- Imported more
- Importing stayed the same
- Imported less
- Business was unable to import
- Not sure

Did your business experience an increase in any of the following importing challenges in August 2023, compared with the previous calendar month?

- Additional paperwork
- Change in exchange rates
- Change in transportation costs
- Customs duties or levies
- Disruption at UK borders
- Finding information on how to import
- Lack of hauliers to transport goods or lack of logistics equipment
- Suppliers not customs ready
- Time taken for checks at the border
- Other
- Did not experience an increase in any importing challenges

What was the main cause of these importing challenges?

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- End of the EU transition period
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the end of the EU transition period
- Other
- Not sure

5 . Freeports

Does your business plan to import or export goods to or from UK Freeports in the next 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Why is your business not planning to import or export goods from UK Freeports within the next 12 months?

- Application process is burdensome
- Application is unlikely to be processed in time
- Application was rejected by HM Revenue and Customs
- Business does not import or export goods to or from the UK
- Business is already utilising existing customs procedures
- Business is not located in a designated freeport area
- Other
- Not sure

6 . Supply chains

Was your business able to get the materials, goods or services it needed from within the UK in August 2023?

- Yes, the business was able to get the materials, goods or services it needed
- Yes, but the business had to change suppliers or find alternative solutions
- No, the business was not able to get the materials, goods or services needed
- Not applicable

Did your business experience any global supply chain disruption in August 2023?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Which of the following, if any, will be the main concern for your business in October 2023?

- Business rates
- Competition with other UK businesses
- Energy prices
- Exchange rates
- Falling demand of goods and services
- Inflation of goods and services prices
- Interest rates
- Property rental costs
- Supply chain disruption
- Taxation
- Other
- Not sure
- No concerns for the business

7 . Sending goods

Has your business sent goods from GB to Northern Ireland in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

In August 2023, how did the volume of goods your business sent from GB to Northern Ireland compare with the previous calendar month?

- Volume increased
- Volume stayed the same
- Volume decreased
- Stopped sending goods to Northern Ireland
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Please give more details about why the volume of goods sent from GB to Northern Ireland changed in August 2023

- Comments

8 . Workforce trends

Is your business using, or intending to use, increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Why is your business using, or intending to use, increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward?

- Ability to better match jobs to skills
- Ability to recruit from a wider geographical pool in the UK
- Ability to recruit from a wider geographical pool internationally
- Improved staff wellbeing
- Increased productivity
- Reduced carbon emissions
- Reduced overheads
- Reduced sickness absence
- Reduced wage bill
- Other
- Not sure

Why is your business not intending to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward?

- Concerns with integrating new starters into the workplace
- Costs of employee equipment
- Difficulties managing staff remotely
- Negative impact on working culture
- Not suitable for our business
- Reduced communication
- Reduced productivity
- Reduced reliability and retention of staff
- Security concerns
- Other
- Not sure

On average, how many days a week do your business's employees currently work from home?

- One to two days a week
- Three to four days a week
- Five or more days a week
- Not sure
- Employees do not work from home

What are your business's expectations for the number of days a week employees will work from home in the next 12 months?

- Number of days will likely increase
- Number of days will likely stay the same
- Number of days will likely decrease
- Not sure

On average, how did employees' hourly wages in August 2023 compare with employees' hourly wages in the previous calendar month?

- Wages increased
- Wages stayed the same
- Wages decreased
- Not sure

Is your business currently experiencing a shortage of workers?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

How has the shortage of workers affected your business?

- Employees working increased hours
- Business had to pause trading entirely
- Had to pause trading of some of the business
- Business had to recruit temporary workers
- Unable to meet demands
- Other
- Not sure
- Business has not been affected

9 . Industrial action

Was your business affected by industrial action in August 2023?

- Yes, the business was affected
- No, the business was not affected
- Not sure
- Not applicable
- Prefer not to say

How was your business affected by industrial action in August 2023?

- Business was unable to obtain necessary goods
- Business was unable to obtain necessary services
- Business was unable to operate fully
- Part or all of the workforce were directly involved in industrial action
- Workforce had to change their working location
- Workforce were unable to perform their roles
- Other
- Not sure

10 . Artificial intelligence

Which, if any, of the following artificial intelligence technologies 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 is not currently using artificial intelligence technologies

What does your business currently use artificial intelligence technologies for?

- Develop a new product or service, or explore a new market
- Image processing using machine learning
- 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, if any, of the following artificial intelligence technologies does your business plan to adopt within the next 3 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 or explore a new market
- Image processing using machine learning
- Improve business operations
- Provide, or personalise, products or services to customers
- Other
- Not sure
- Not applicable

In the last 3 months, which, if any, of the following factors have prevented or delayed your business in the adoption of 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

11 . Comments

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

- Comments