

Article

Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 8 February 2021 to 21 February 2021

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1 . Survey information

These questions are for Wave 24 of the fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) dispatched on the 8 February 2021. These are the most up-to-date survey questions.

2 . Trading status of your business

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

- Currently trading and has been for more than the last two weeks
- Started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in 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

Where in the UK are your business's sites located?

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- East of England
- East Midlands
- Greater London
- North East of England
- North West of England
- South East of England
- South West of England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and The Humber
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Where in the UK are your sites temporarily or permanently closed?

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- East of England
- East Midlands
- Greater London
- North East of England
- North West of England
- South East of England
- South West of England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and The Humber
- Not sure
- None of our sites are temporarily or permanently closed

3 . Turnover and profits

How does your business's turnover for the last two weeks, compare to normal expectations for this time of year?

- Turnover has increased by more than 50%
- Turnover has increased between 20% and 50%
- Turnover has increased by up to 20%
- Turnover has not been affected
- Turnover has decreased by up to 20%
- Turnover has decreased between 20% and 50%
- Turnover has decreased by more than 50%
- Not sure

What was the main reason for this change to your business's turnover in the last two weeks?

- 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

What are your expectations about turnover for the next two weeks?

- Expect turnover to substantially increase
- Expect turnover to increase a little
- Expect turnover to stay the same
- Expect turnover to decrease a little
- Expect turnover to substantially decrease
- Not sure

In the last two weeks, how has your business's profits compared with normal expectations for this time of year?

- Profits have increased by more than 50%
- Profits have increased by between 20% and 50%
- Profits have increased by up to 20%
- Profits have stayed the same
- Profits have decreased by up to 20%
- Profits have decreased by between 20% and 50%
- Profits have decreased by more than 50%
- Not sure
- Not applicable

4 . Exporting

Has your business exported goods or services in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

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

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

Where has your business exported goods or services to in the last two weeks?

- EU only
- Non-EU only
- Both EU and non-EU
- Never exported in the last two weeks
- Not sure

How does your business's exporting in the last two weeks compare to normal expectations for this time of year?

- Exporting more than normal
- Exporting as normal
- Exporting, but less than normal
- Not been able to export in the last two weeks
- Not sure

Have you experienced any of the following challenges with exporting goods or services over the last two weeks?

- Additional paperwork
- Basing some staff in an EU member state to be allowed to work
- Change in transportation costs
- Closure of infrastructure used to export goods or services
- Customs duties or levies
- Destination countries changing their border restrictions
- Disruption at UK borders
- Lack of hauliers to transport goods or lack of logistics equipment
- Reduced demand for products and services
- Work permit or visa restrictions, or lack of mutual recognition of professional qualifications
- Other
- Did not experience any challenges with exporting

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

How much disruption to your business have these challenges caused?

- Severe disruption
- Moderate disruption
- Low disruption
- No disruption
- Not sure

Which of the following support options would your business benefit from, to help with exporting challenges?

- Financial support
- Understanding markets and demand issues
- Finding new markets
- Finding new overseas contacts or customers
- Transport and distribution
- Legal issues
- Customs and tariffs
- Export licences
- Other
- None of the above

Let us know anything else that will help us understand your business's exporting in the last two weeks

What are your expectations about your business's sales from exports in the next 12 months?

- Export sales will substantially increase
- Export sales will increase a little
- Export sales will stay the same
- Export sales will decrease a little
- Export sales will substantially decrease
- Not sure

5 . Importing

Has your business imported goods or services in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Did your business import goods or services more than 12 months ago?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Where has your business imported goods or services from in the last two weeks?

- EU only
- Non-EU only
- Both EU and non-EU
- Not imported in the last two weeks
- Not sure

Have you changed where you have sourced your imports of goods or services from in the last two weeks?

- Changed from EU to non-EU suppliers
- Changed from non-EU to EU suppliers
- Changed in a different way
- No changes made
- Not sure

How does your business's importing in the last two weeks compare with normal expectations for this time of year?

- Importing more than normal
- Importing as normal
- Importing, but less than normal
- Not been able to import in the last two weeks
- Not sure

Have you experienced any of the following challenges with importing over the last two weeks?

- Additional paperwork
- Change in transportation costs
- Closure of infrastructure used to import goods or services
- Customs duties or levies
- Destination countries changing their border restrictions
- Disruption at UK borders
- Lack of hauliers to transport goods or lack of logistics equipment
- Suppliers not continuing to trade
- Suppliers not customs ready
- Other
- Did not experience any challenges with importing

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

How much disruption to your business have these challenges caused?

- Severe disruption
- Moderate disruption
- Low disruption
- No disruption
- Not sure

Which of the following support options would your business benefit from, to help with importing challenges?

- Understanding markets and demand issues
- Finding new alternative supply chains
- Finding new overseas contacts or customers
- Transport and distribution
- Legal issues
- Customs and tariffs
- Import licences
- Other
- None of the above

Let us know anything else that will help us understand your business's importing in the last two weeks.

6 . Supply chains

Has your business made changes to supply chains due to the end of the EU transition period?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

In which of the following ways has your business changed supply chains due to the end of the EU transition period?

- Using more UK suppliers
- Using more EU suppliers
- Using more non-EU suppliers
- Moving the supply chain away from the short straits crossings
- Increasing the diversity in suppliers
- Expanding to different modes of freight
- Other
- Not sure

Has your business had any extra costs due to the end of the EU transition period?

- Costs due to increased red tape
- Costs incurred from wasted goods
- Cost of setting up EU subsidiaries
- Extra tariffs or taxes
- Other
- Not sure
- No extra costs

Was your business able to get the materials, goods or services it needed from the EU in the last two weeks?

- Yes, the business has been 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 has not been able to get the materials, goods or services needed
- Not applicable

Does your business intend to open any new branches or subsidiaries in the EU in the next 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Was your business able to get the materials, goods or services it needed from within the UK in the last two weeks?

- Yes, the business has been 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 has not been able to get the materials, goods or services needed
- Not applicable

Please explain why your business was not able to get the materials, goods or services needed.

In the last two weeks, did your business use logistics services to distribute goods or services produced, within the UK?

- Yes
- No, because we could not obtain the UK logistics services we needed
- No, because we did not need UK logistics services
- Not sure

Did the logistics services used in the last two weeks meet your business's UK distribution demands?

- All distribution demands were met
- Some distribution demands were met
- Not sure

To what extent do you expect that your business's UK distribution demands will be met by logistics services in the next two weeks?

- All UK distribution demands will be met
- Some UK distribution demands will be met
- None of the UK distribution demands will be met
- The business will not need any UK distribution
- Not sure

7 . Prices of materials, goods and services

How did the prices of materials, goods or services bought by your business change in the last two weeks, compared with normal price fluctuations?

- Prices increased more than normal
- Prices did not change any more than normal
- Prices decreased more than normal
- Some prices increased, some prices decreased
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Please give more details about the prices of materials, goods or services that changed.

How did the prices of goods or services sold by your business change in the last two weeks, compared with normal fluctuations?

- Prices increased more than normal
- Prices did not change any more than normal
- Prices decreased more than normal
- Some prices increased, some prices decreased
- Not sure
- Not applicable

Please give more details about how prices changed.

8 . Stock

How do your business's stock levels for the last two weeks, compare to normal expectations for this time of year?

- Stock levels are higher than normal
- Stock levels have not changed
- Stock levels are lower than normal
- Not sure
- Not applicable

In the last two weeks, what has had the greatest impact to your business's stock levels?

- 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

Please explain this difference in stock levels in more detail.

Is your business stockpiling any goods or materials?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Where are you sourcing these stockpiled goods or materials from?

- UK suppliers
- EU suppliers
- Non-EU suppliers
- Not sure

Which of the following materials or goods are you stockpiling?

- Agricultural products
- Chemicals
- Food
- Manufacturing parts
- Metals and materials
- Pharmaceuticals
- Other consumer goods
- Other
- Not sure

Where are the stockpiled materials or goods being stored?

- Within the UK
- Outside the UK: EU
- Outside the UK: non-EU
- Not sure

Which storage solutions are you using for stockpiling these materials or goods?

- Building new storage
- Renting new storage
- Using more of our current storage
- Other
- Not sure

Please tell us more information about the goods or materials you are stockpiling.

9 . Sending goods from GB to Northern Ireland

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

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

What route did your business mainly use over the last 12 months, to send goods from GB to Northern Ireland?

- From GB direct to Northern Ireland
- From GB via Republic of Ireland
- Other
- Not sure

Has your business sent, or intended to send, goods from GB to Northern Ireland in the last two weeks?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

In the last two weeks, has the volume of goods your business would normally send from GB to Northern Ireland changed?

- Volume has increased
- Volume has stayed the same
- Volume has decreased
- Have stopped sending goods to Northern Ireland
- Not sure
- Not applicable

What were the reasons for this change in the volume of goods sent from GB to Northern Ireland?

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- Decreased demand for goods
- Increased costs
- Increased delays
- Other
- Not sure
- None of the above

Has your business changed the main route for sending goods from GB to Northern Ireland in the last two weeks?

- Changed to go via Republic of Ireland
- Changed to go direct to Northern Ireland
- No change made
- Not sure

What were the reasons for this change in route?

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- Increased costs
- Increased delays
- Other
- Not sure
- Route has not been affected

10 . Access to financial support

Has your business applied for any of the following grants?

- Local Restrictions Support Grant -- England
- Local Restrictions Support Scheme -- Northern Ireland
- Strategic Framework Business Fund -- Scotland
- Lockdown Business Fund -- Wales
- Not sure
- Not applied for any of these grants

Has your business received any of the following grants?

- Local Restrictions Support Grant -- England
- Local Restrictions Support Scheme -- Northern Ireland
- Strategic Framework Business Fund -- Scotland
- Lockdown Business Fund -- Wales
- Not sure
- Not received any of these grants

Has your business received any of these other grants?

- Small business grant
- Sector-specific grant
- Additional Restriction Grant -- England
- Business Contingency Fund Grants -- Scotland
- Business Development Grant -- Wales
- Not sure
- Not received any of these grants

Which governments in the UK provided the small business grant, or grants?

- Northern Ireland Executive
- Scottish Government
- UK Government -- England only
- Welsh Government
- Not sure

Which governments in the UK provided the sector-specific grant, or grants?

- Northern Ireland Executive
- Scottish Government
- UK Government -- England only
- Welsh Government
- Not sure

Has your business received any government-backed loans or finance agreements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Are you using, or intending to use, either of the following schemes?

- Kickstart Job Scheme for young people
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)
- Not sure
- Not using, or intending to use, either of these schemes

How long do you think your business's cash reserves will last?

- No cash reserves
- Less than 1 month
- 1 to 3 months
- 4 to 6 months
- More than 6 months
- Not sure

How much confidence does your business have that it will survive the next three months?

- High confidence
- Moderate confidence
- Low confidence
- No confidence
- Not sure

Over the last month, how did your business's debt repayments compare with turnover?

- Repayments were more than 100% of turnover
- Repayments were between 50% and 100% of turnover
- Repayments were between 20% and 50% of turnover
- Repayments were up to 20% of turnover
- No repayments
- Not sure

Over the last month, how did your business's debt repayments compare with normal expectations for this time of year?

- Repayments have increased by more than 50%
- Repayments have increased by between 20% and 50%
- Repayments have increased by up to 20%
- Repayments have stayed the same
- Repayments have decreased by up to 20%
- Repayments have decreased by between 20% and 50%
- Repayments have decreased by more than 50%
- Not sure

Over the next month, how do you expect your business's debt repayments to change?

- Expect repayments to substantially increase
- Expect repayments to increase a little
- Expect repayments to stay the same
- Expect repayments to decrease a little
- Expect repayments to substantially decrease
- Not sure
- Not applicable

What is your business's risk of insolvency?

- Severe risk
- Moderate risk
- Low risk
- No risk
- The business is insolvent
- Not sure

How has your business's risk of insolvency changed in the last two weeks?

- Risk has increased
- Risk has stayed the same
- Risk has decreased
- Not sure

11 . Operational performance

In the last two weeks, approximately what percentage of your business's workforce were:

- On partial or full furlough leave
- Working at their normal place of work
- Working from home instead of at their normal place of work
- On sick leave or not working due to coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, self-isolation or quarantine
- Made permanently redundant
- Other

Of those partially and fully furloughed, what percentage are fully furloughed?

- Approximate percentage of furloughed staff who are 'fully furloughed'
- Not sure

In the last two weeks, approximately what percentage of your workforce have:

- Moved from homeworking to the normal workplace
- Moved from the normal workplace to homeworking
- Returned from furlough to homeworking, either fully or partially
- Returned from furlough to the normal workplace, either fully or partially
- Moved from working to furlough, either fully or partially

In the next two weeks, approximately what percentage of your workforce will:

- Move from working to furlough, either fully or partially
- Return from furlough to homeworking, either fully or partially
- Return from furlough to the normal workplace, either fully or partially
- Return to the workplace from homeworking

Has your business had more staff working from home in the last two weeks, compared to normal expectations for this time of year?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

How has the increase in homeworking affected the productivity of your workforce?

- Productivity has increased
- Productivity has stayed the same
- Productivity has decreased
- Not sure

Does your business intend to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Why do you intend to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward?

- Ability to recruit from a wider geographical pool
- Ability to better match jobs to skills
- Increased productivity
- Reduced overheads
- Improved staff wellbeing
- Reduced sickness levels
- Other
- Not sure

Why do you not intend to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward?

- Reduced productivity
- Security concerns
- Reduced reliability and retention of staff
- Reduced communication
- Negative impact on working culture
- Not suitable for our business
- Other
- Not sure

Is your business intending to permanently close any business sites in the next three months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Where in the UK are the sites that will permanently in the next three months?

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- East of England
- East Midlands
- Greater London
- North East of England
- North West of England
- South East of England
- South West of England
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and The Humber
- Not sure

How do you expect closing these sites to affect your workforce?

- Decreased hours
- Increased hours
- Move to remote working
- Permanent redundancies
- Relocation
- Other
- Not sure
- Workforce will not be affected

Does your business expect to make any of your workforce redundant over the next three months?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Approximately what percentage of your workforce do you expect to be made redundant over the next three months?

- Approximate percentage of redundancies in the next three months
- Not sure

When do you expect these redundancies to happen?

- Within the next 2 weeks
- Between 2 weeks and 1 month
- Between 1 and 3 months
- Not sure

12 . Recruitment from Countries in the EU and EEA

Does your business expect to recruit new workers from countries in the EU or EEA in the next 12 months?

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

The immigration system for recruiting employees from the EU or EEA changed on 1 January 2021. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: We understand what the new immigration system for recruiting EU or EEA citizens means for our business.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Prefer not to say

Which of the following reasons best describes why your business does not fully understand what the immigration system for recruiting EU or EEA citizens means for the business?

- Not aware that the way to recruit from the EU or EEA has changed
- Not sure what the business's recruitment plans are so have not looked into it
- Aware the changes affect the business, but do not know where to find information
- Aware the changes affect the business, but plan on reading guidance at a later date
- Aware the changes affect the business, but do not plan on reading the guidance
- Have read the guidance, but still do not understand what the changes mean for the business
- Not sure
- Not relevant for this business

13 . Comments

Please tell us anything else that may help us understand your business's current situation

- Comments