

# Orkney Mini Business Survey June 2021

The Council's Business Gateway service conducted a mini survey to help understand how businesses have experienced the last year with the impacts of the pandemic, COVID funding other factors such as Brexit. This was not an in-depth study but was designed to 'take the pulse' of the business community as relaxations of restrictions were being implemented.

A total of 178 businesses completed our Orkney Mini Business Survey, with a wide range of sectors represented in responses – most of these businesses remained at least partially open from March 2020-April 2021, with only 16.3% remaining closed throughout this period.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic has had a negative impact on business turnover overall, with 73.6% of respondents highlighting that this is the case for their business. The furlough scheme has benefitted 36% of businesses over this period, with 17.9% of respondents still using the scheme. It is encouraging to note that although a large percentage of businesses have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, only 11.8% have made employees redundant to date.

In terms of financial support, 72.5% of businesses were successful in applying for COVID related grant support and 66.4% of these businesses considered these funds essential to business survival.

As well as the pandemic, Brexit has presented further challenges to local businesses, with 44.6% of respondents highlighting that their business has been affected by the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

It is worth noting, however, that despite the challenges of the last year, local businesses are still confident in positively moving forward with their business in both the short (46%) and particularly longer term (68.2%). This confidence is reiterated by 59.2% of respondents indicating that they are planning to invest in business development during the next 12 months.

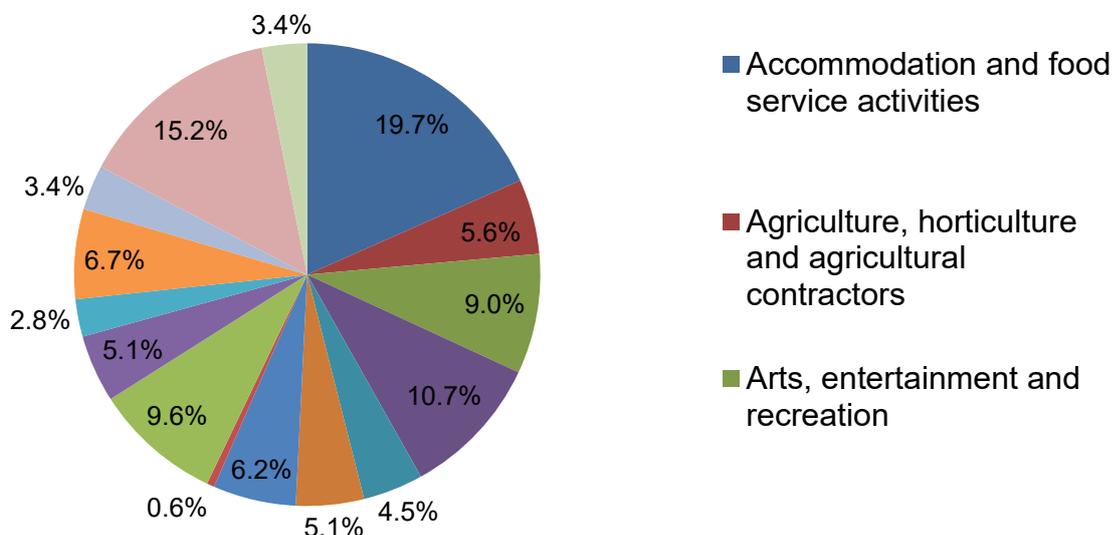
The survey also welcomed specific feedback and business insight and the responses received will help inform consideration for future developmental support options.

Question 1.

**What is the main activity of your organisation or business? Select the one that is the closest match.**

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Accommodation and food service activities.	19.7%	35
2	Agriculture, horticulture and agricultural contractors.	5.6%	10
3	Arts, entertainment and recreation.	9.0%	16
4	Crafts and textiles manufacture, creative industries.	10.7%	19
5	Construction.	4.5%	8
6	Education, human health and social work activities.	5.1%	9
7	Financial, legal, accounting, insurance and other professional services.	6.2%	11
8	Fisheries including aquaculture.	0.6%	1
9	Food & drink manufacturing/processing.	9.6%	17
10	Information, communication and media.	5.1%	9
11	Manufacturing, engineering and repair.	2.8%	5
12	Service activities.	6.7%	12
13	Renewable energy supplies and services.	3.4%	6
14	Retail and wholesale trade goods and services.	15.2%	27
15	Transport, distribution and storage.	3.4%	6
		<b>answered</b>	<b>178</b>
		<b>skipped</b>	<b>0</b>

What is the main activity of your organisation or business? Select the one that is the closest match.



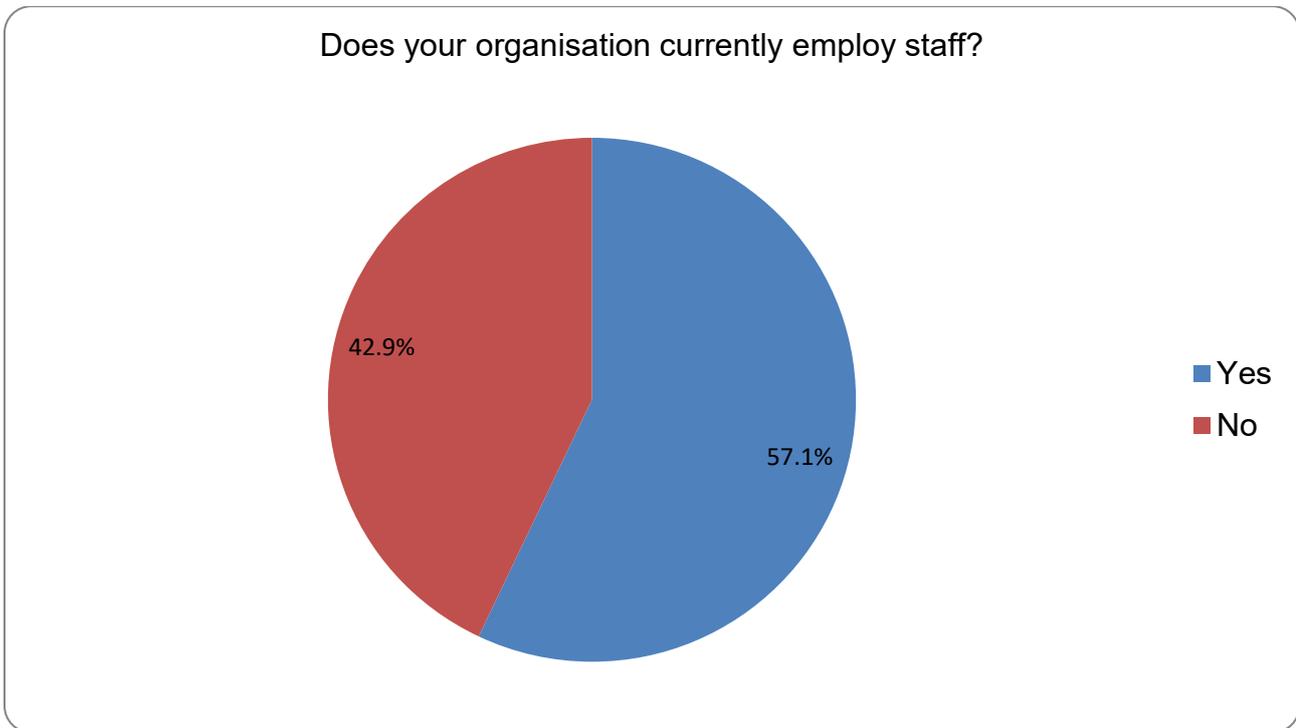
Question 2.

How long has your business been trading?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 0 - 12 months	2.8%	5
2 1 - 3 years	11.8%	21
3 3 - 5 years	10.7%	19
4 5 - 10 years	20.8%	37
5 Over 10 years	54.5%	97
<b>answered</b>		<b>178</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



Question 3.

Does your organisation currently employ staff?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1   Yes	57.1%	101
2   No	42.9%	76
If yes, how many employees?		101
<b><i>answered</i></b>		<b>177</b>
<b><i>skipped</i></b>		<b>1</b>

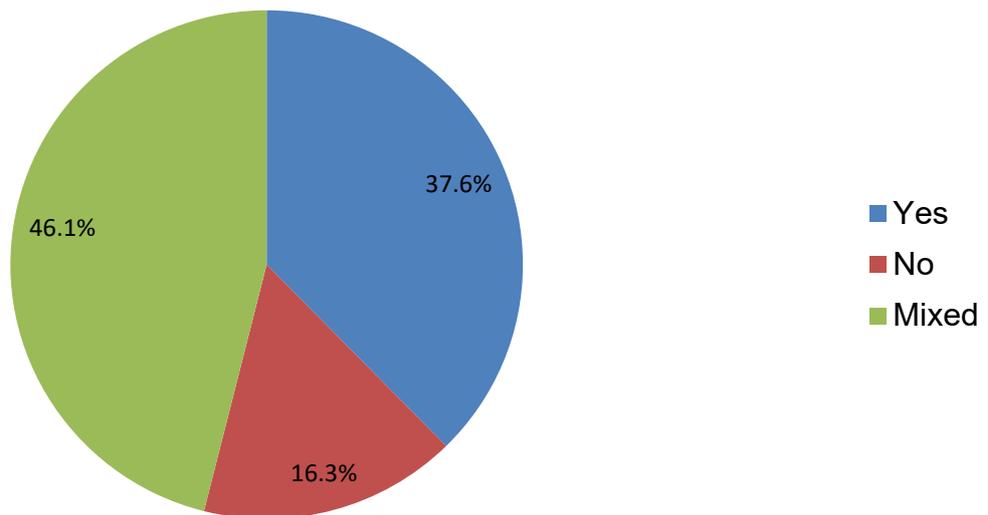


Question 4.

**Due to COVID did your business remain open between March 2020 and April 2021?**

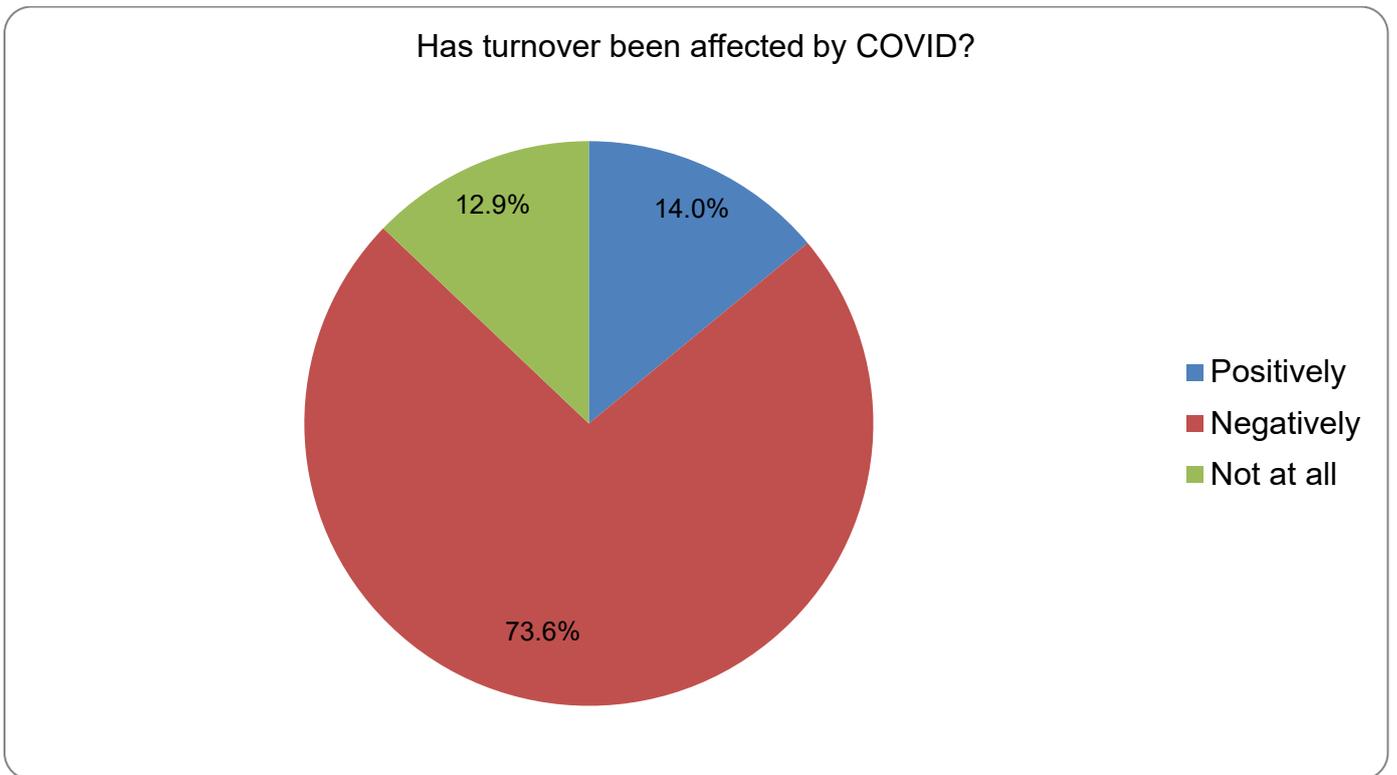
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	37.6%	67
2	No	16.3%	29
3	Mixed	46.1%	82
<b><i>answered</i></b>			<b>178</b>
<b><i>skipped</i></b>			<b>0</b>

Due to COVID did your business remain open between March 2020 and April 2021?



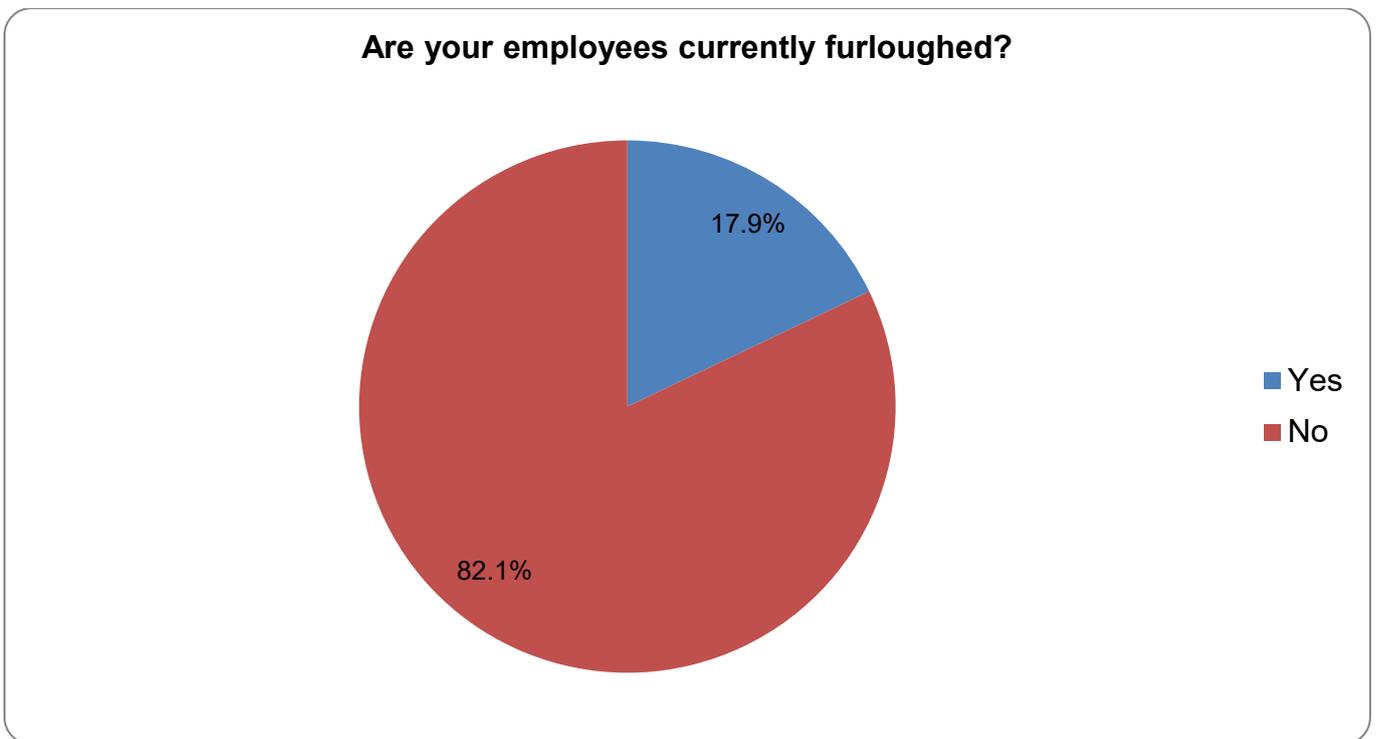
Question 5.

Has turnover been affected by COVID?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Positively	14.0%	25
2 Negatively	73.6%	131
3 Not at all	12.9%	23
<b>answered</b>		<b>178</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



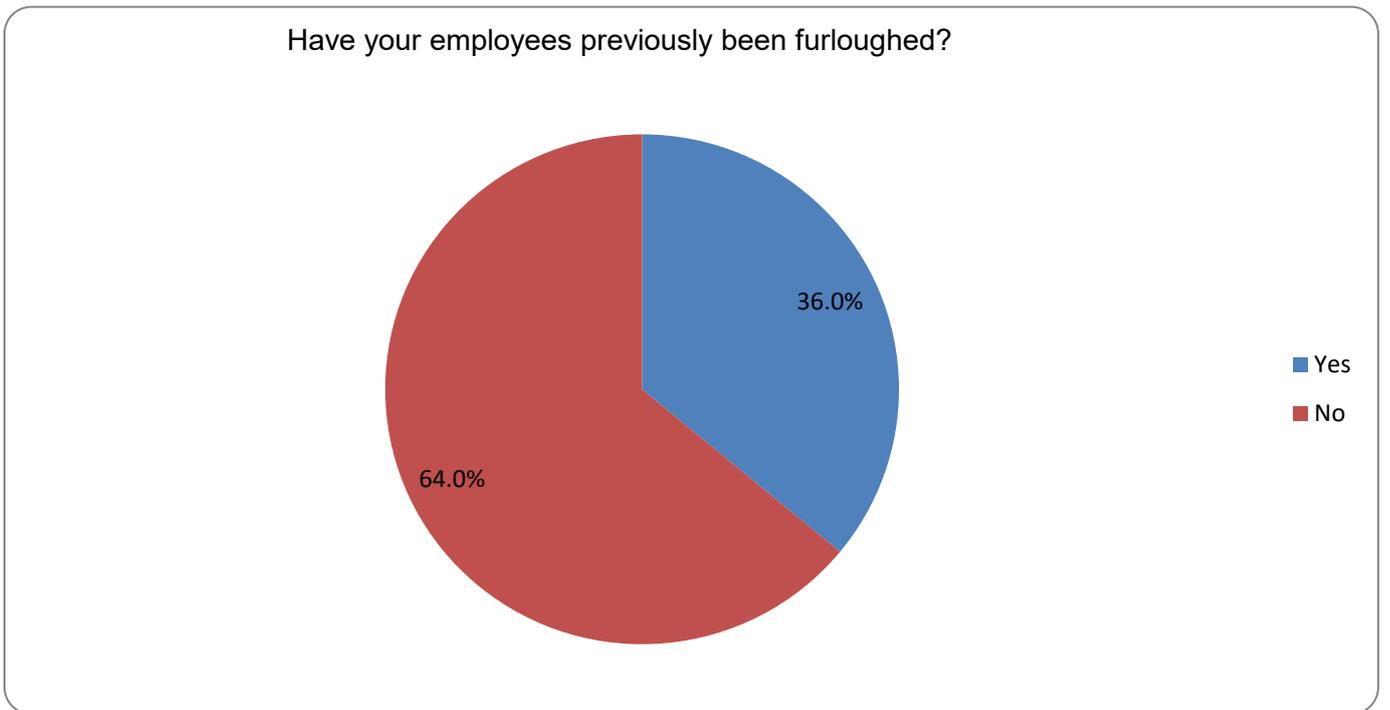
Question 6.

Are your employees currently furloughed?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes	17.9%	27
2 No	82.1%	124
If yes, how many employees?		31
<i>answered</i>		<b>151</b>
<i>skipped</i>		<b>27</b>



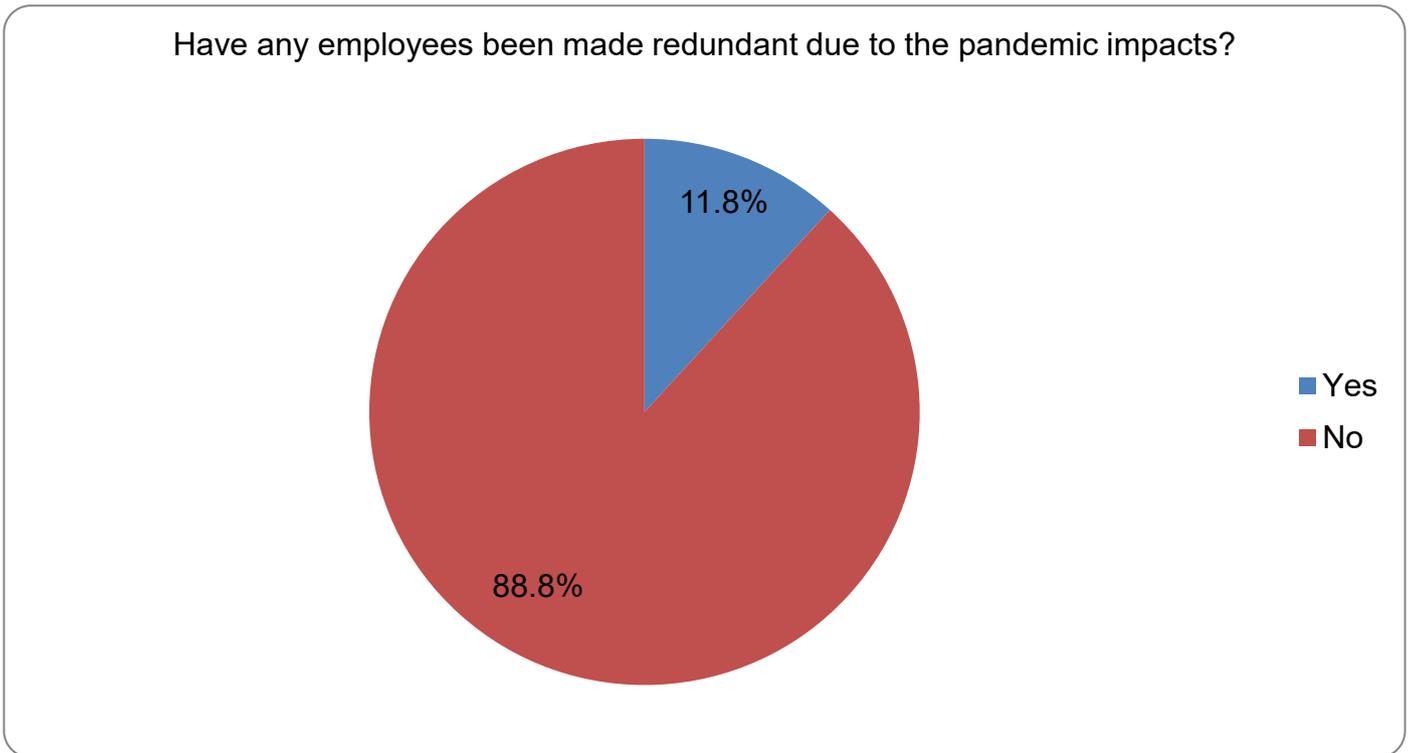
Question 7.

Have your employees previously been furloughed?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes	36.0%	54
2 No	64.0%	96
If yes, how many employees?		57
<i>answered</i>		<b>150</b>
<i>skipped</i>		<b>28</b>



Question 8.

Have any employees been made redundant due to the pandemic impacts?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes	11.8%	18
2 No	88.8%	135
If yes, how many employees?		19
<i>answered</i>		<b>152</b>
<i>skipped</i>		<b>26</b>

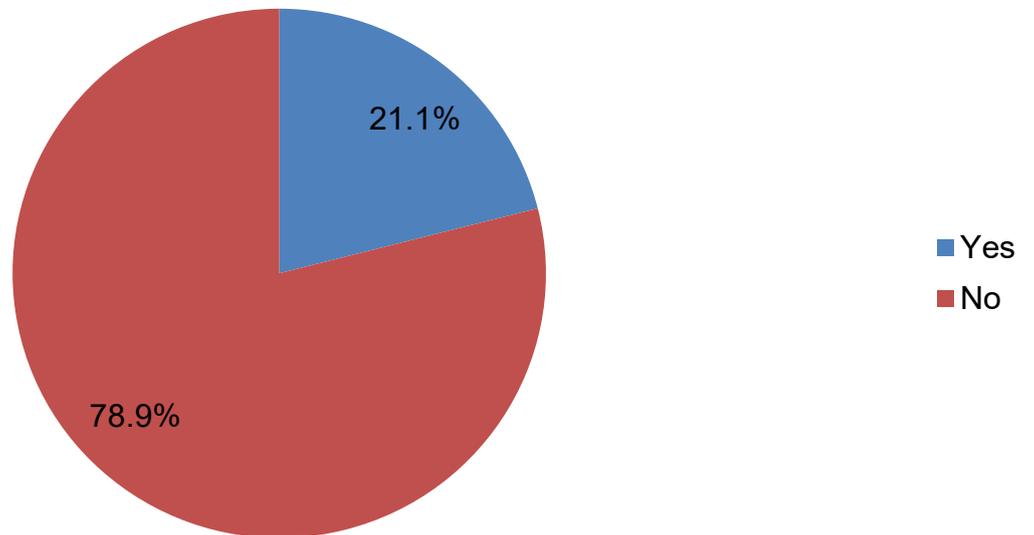


Question 9.

**Are you having difficulties recruiting new staff? (if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)**

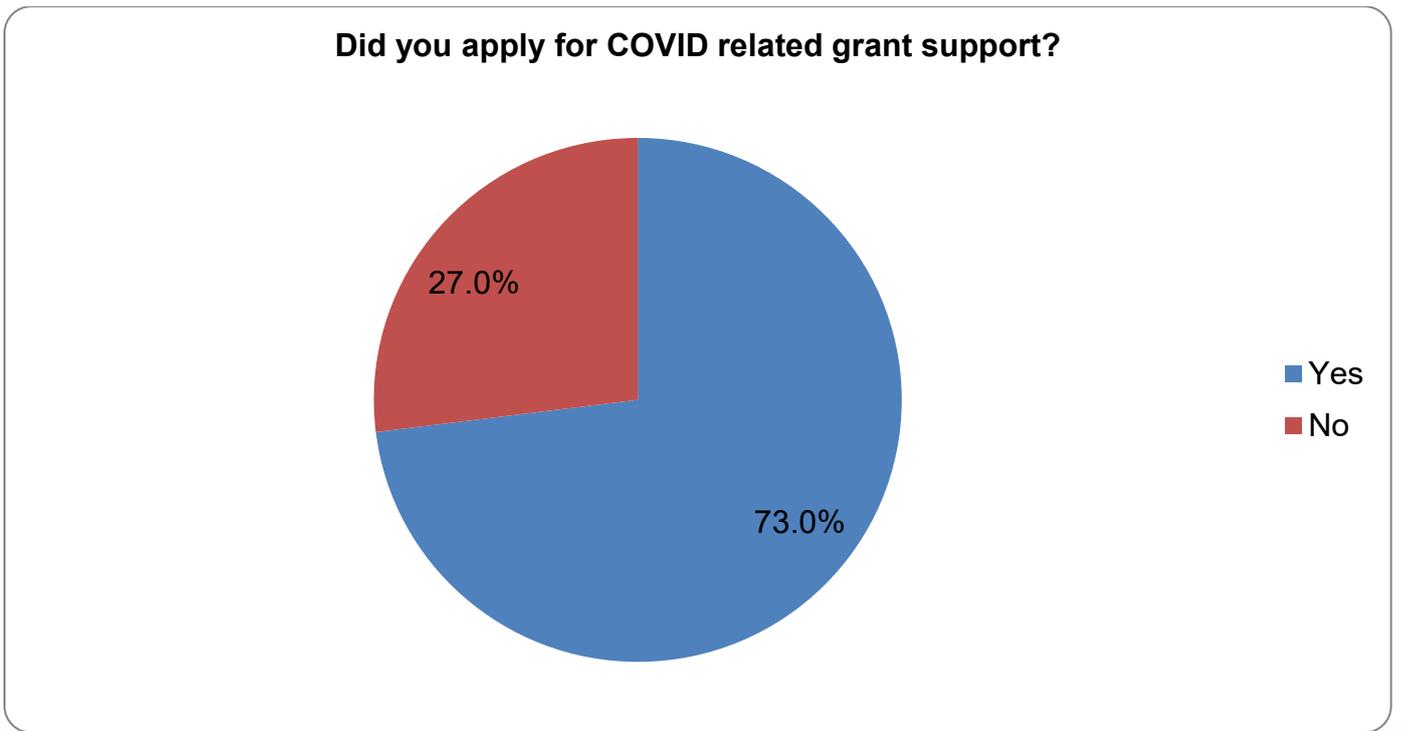
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	21.1%	32
2	No	78.9%	120
<i>answered</i>			<b>152</b>
<i>skipped</i>			<b>26</b>

Are you having difficulties recruiting new staff? (if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)



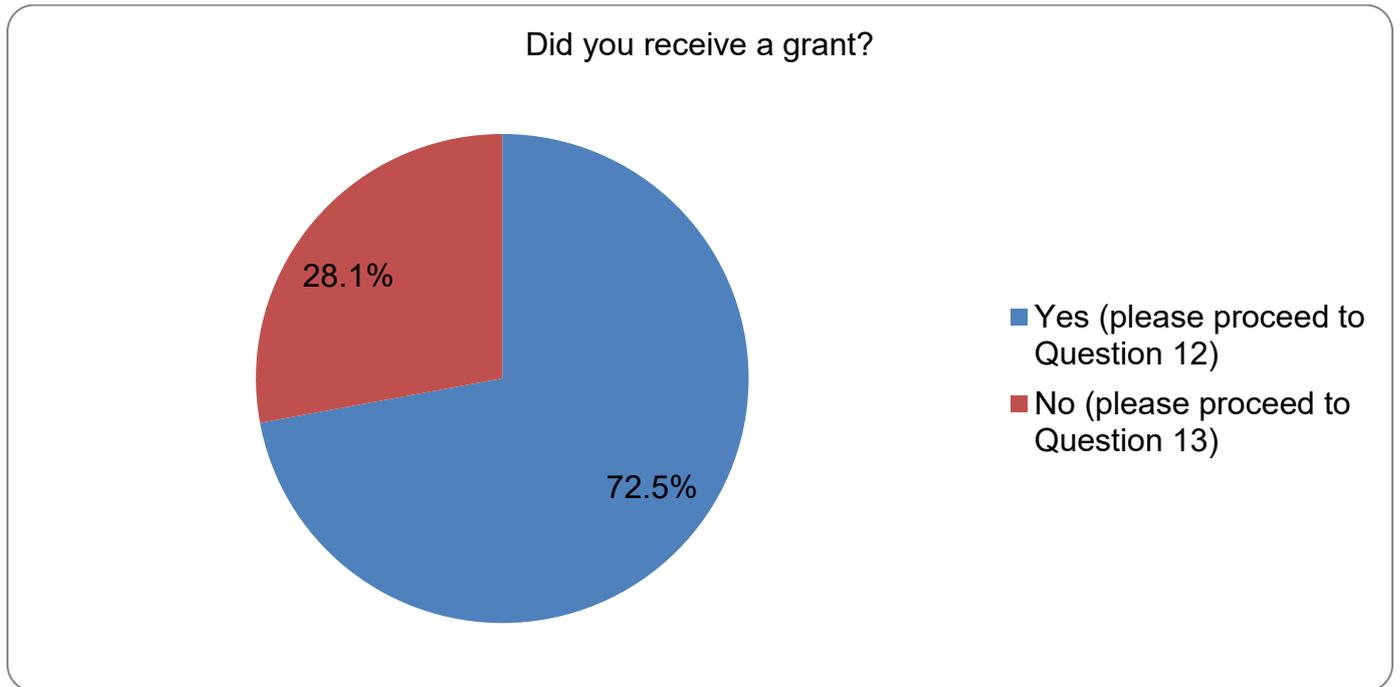
Question 10.

Did you apply for COVID related grant support?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes	73.0%	130
2 No	27.0%	48
<b>answered</b>		<b>178</b>
<b>skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



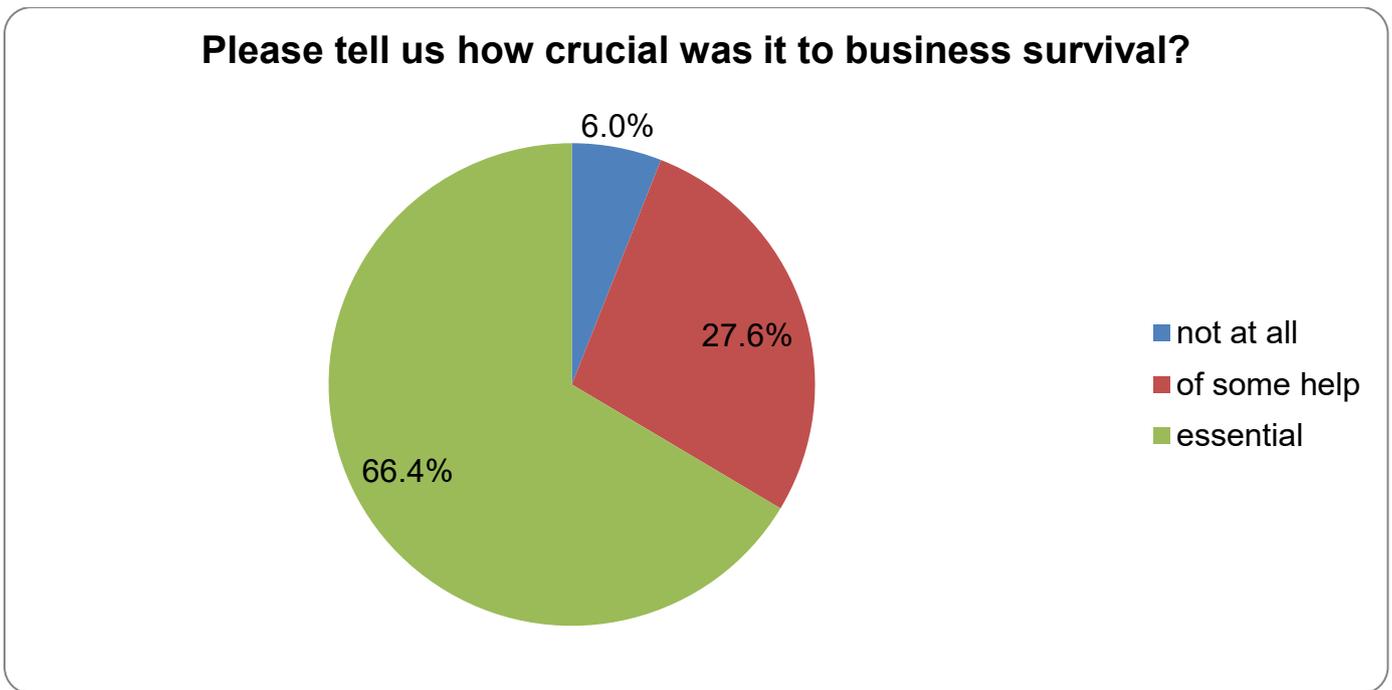
Question 11.

Did you receive a grant?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes (please proceed to Question 12)	72.5%	124
2 No (please proceed to Question 13)	28.1%	48
	<b><i>answered</i></b>	<b>171</b>
	<b><i>skipped</i></b>	<b>7</b>



Question 12.

Please tell us how crucial was it to business survival?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 not at all	6.0%	8
2 of some help	27.6%	37
3 essential	66.4%	89
<i>answered</i>		<b>134</b>
<i>skipped</i>		<b>44</b>

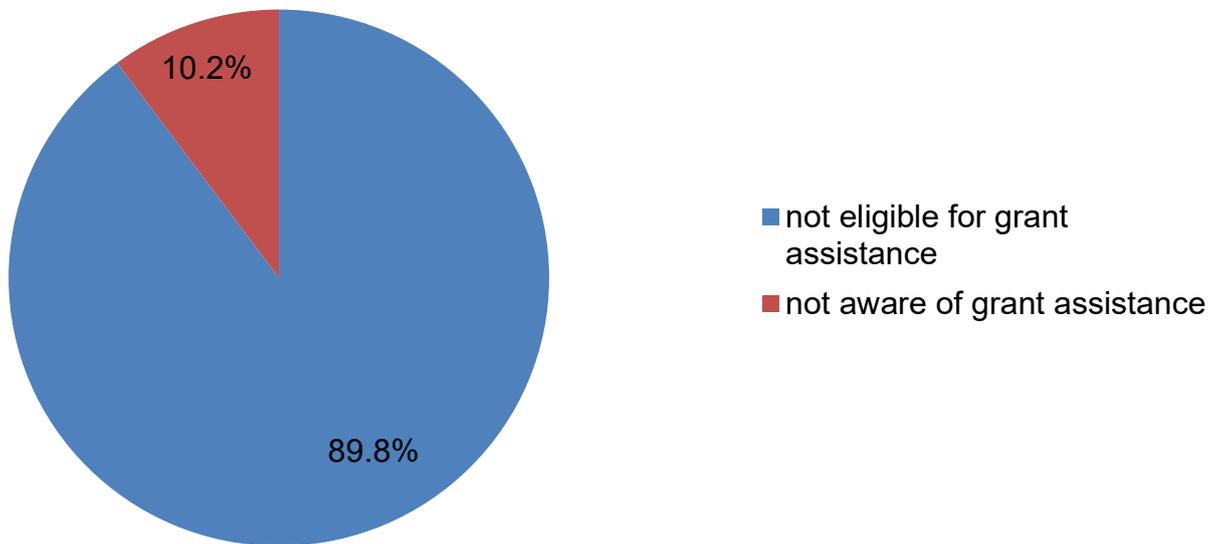


Question 13.

**If you did not receive a grant can you please tell us why not?**

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	not eligible for grant assistance	89.8%	44
2	not aware of grant assistance	10.2%	5
		<i>answered</i>	<b>49</b>
		<i>skipped</i>	<b>129</b>

Please tell us why not?

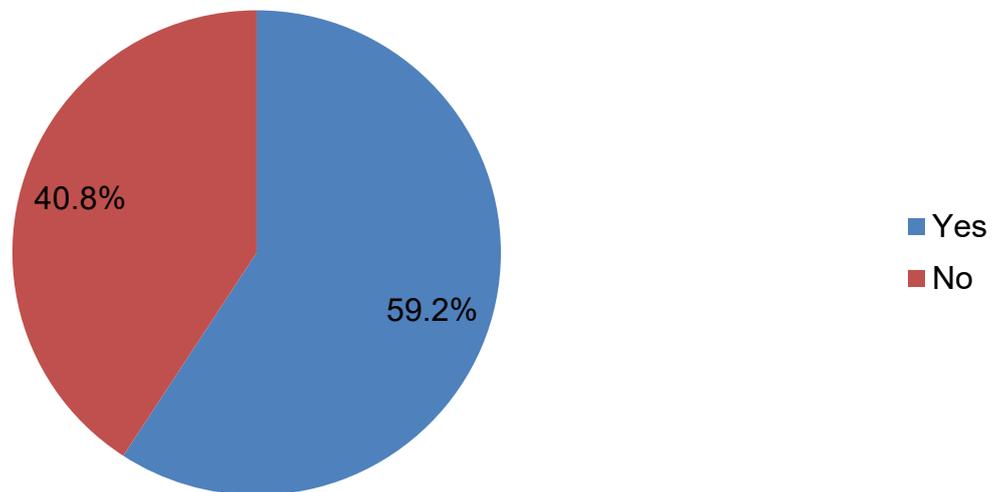


Question 14.

Have you or are you planning to invest in a business development during the next 12 months? (if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	59.2%	103
2	No	40.8%	71
<i>answered</i>			<b>174</b>
<i>skipped</i>			<b>4</b>

Have you or are you planning to invest in a business development during the next 12 months? (if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)

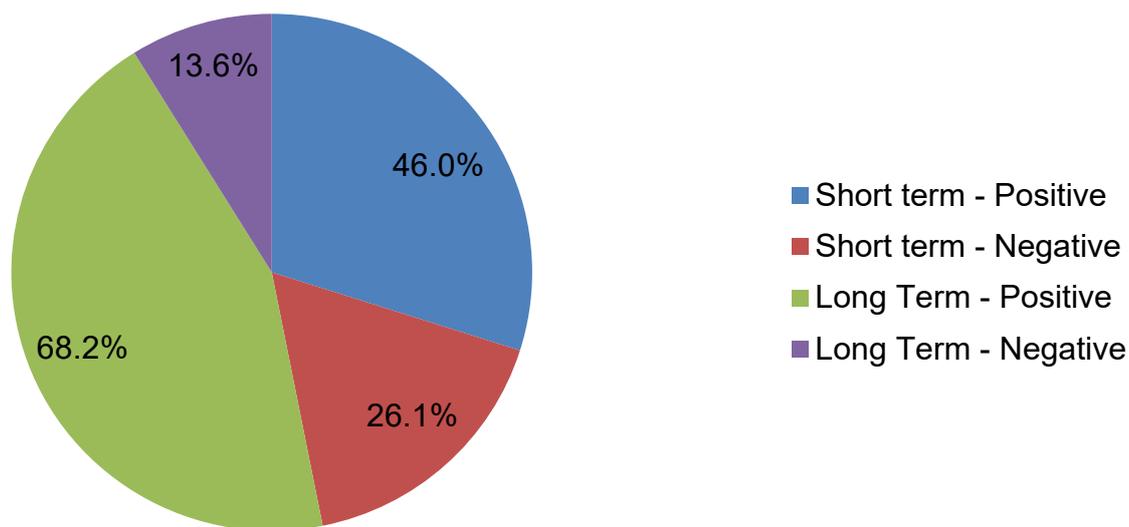


Question 15.

**Do you have confidence moving forward with your business? (tick all that apply and if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)**

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Short term - Positive	46.0%	81
2	Short term - Negative	26.1%	46
3	Long Term - Positive	68.2%	120
4	Long Term - Negative	13.6%	24
		<b><i>answered</i></b>	<b>176</b>
		<b><i>kipped</i></b>	<b>2</b>

Do you have confidence moving forward with your business? (tick all that apply and if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)

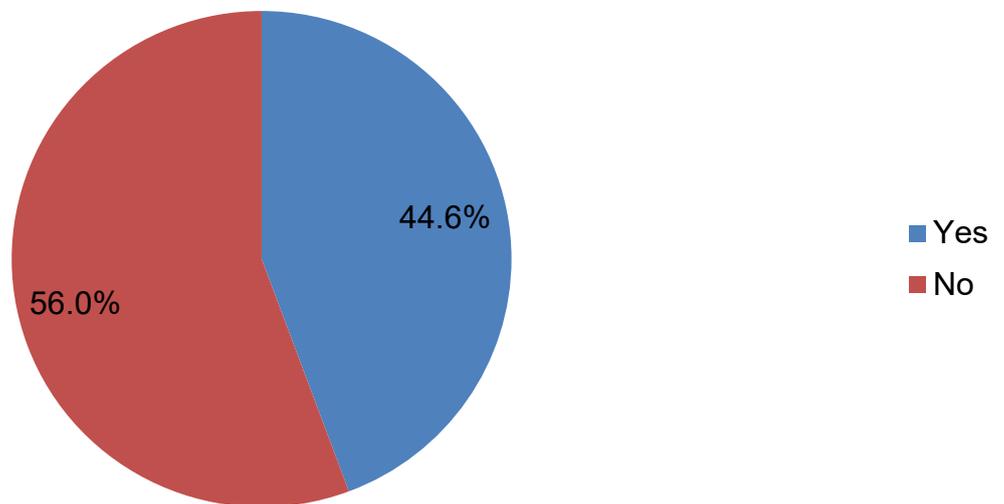


Question 16.

Has your business been affected by Brexit? (if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	44.6%	78
2	No	56.0%	98
<i>answered</i>			<b>175</b>
<i>skipped</i>			<b>3</b>

Has your business been affected by Brexit? (if you wish, please explain further in the comments box at the end of the survey)

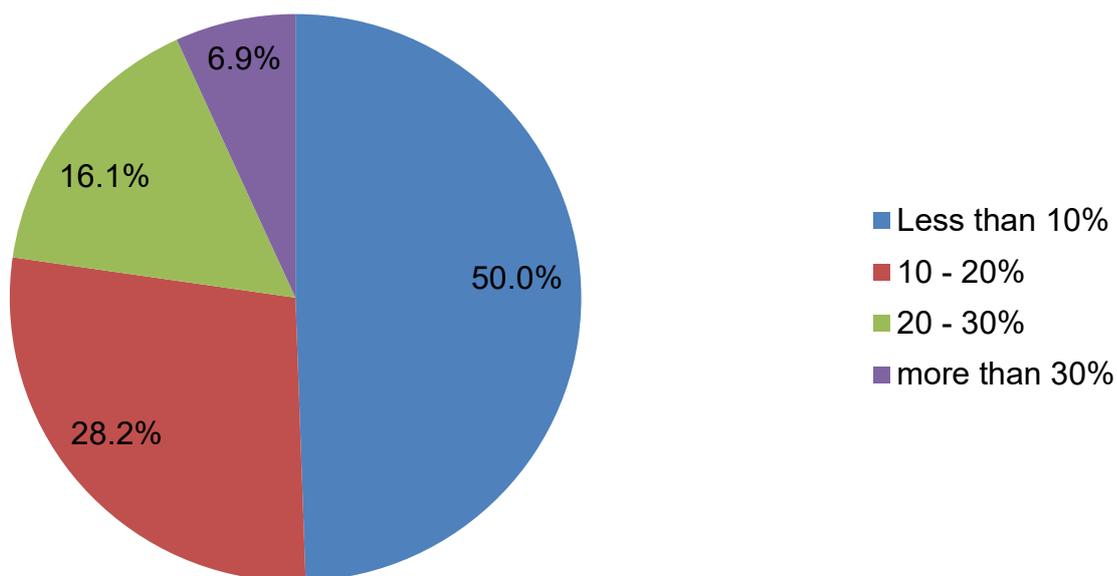


Question 17.

**As an estimate what percentage of your net turnover contributes towards energy costs associated with your business? (e.g. fuel costs, electricity, etc.)**

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Less than 10%	50.0%	87
2	10 - 20%	28.2%	49
3	20 - 30%	16.1%	28
4	more than 30%	6.9%	12
		<i>answered</i>	<b>174</b>
		<i>skipped</i>	<b>4</b>

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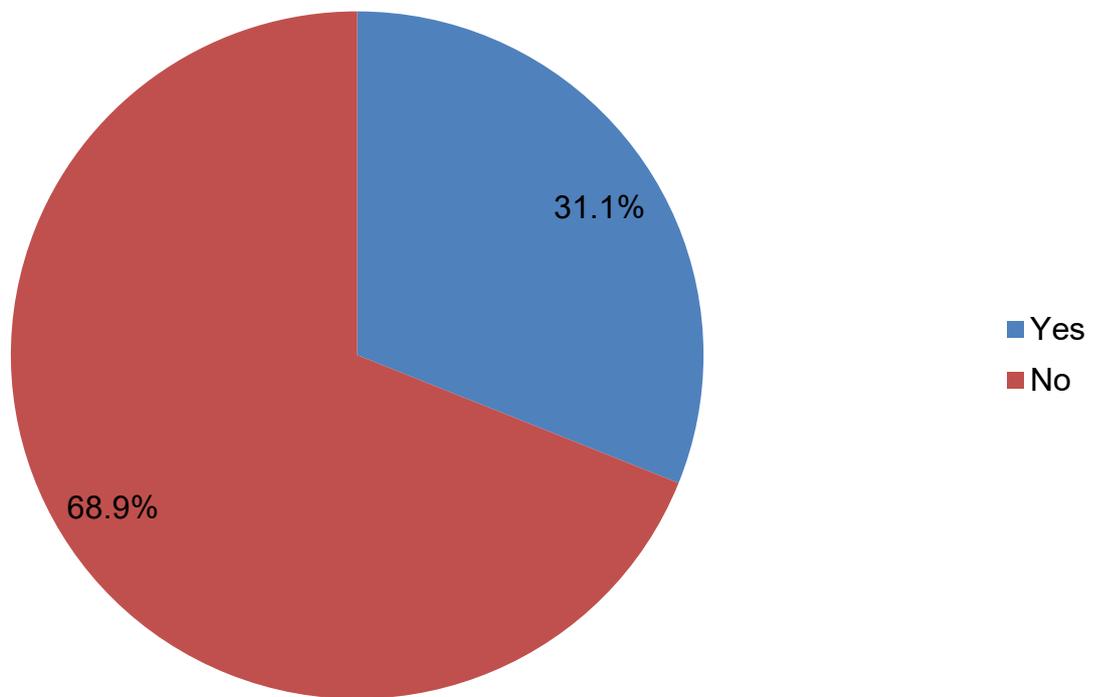


Question 18.

**Does your business currently use any form of renewable energy sources for utilities? For example heat pumps, solar, wind etc**

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	31.1%	55
2	No	68.9%	122
<b><i>answered</i></b>			<b>177</b>
<b><i>skipped</i></b>			<b>1</b>

**Does your business currently use any form of renewable energy sources for utilities? For example heat pumps, solar, wind etc**



# Additional key themes for further development

Whilst this was not an in-depth business survey a review of the open comments identified several themes which will be explored further with the business community and with partner agencies.

- Skills and training were noted as areas of concern seeking help, advice and support.
- Challenges in staff recruitment were noted (adjusting for the significant number of respondents that do not employ staff this issue is of concern to several employers).
- Marketing and promotion – Strong regional marketing is welcomed but more support sought to develop better online sales platforms. In addition, new product lines to be developed to drive online sales has been noted as an opportunity by several businesses with requests for assistance.
- Brexit uncertainty remains a concern for some around Post EU funding, labour supply and market readjustment.
- A short summer season restricted to mainly UK visitors and a limited return of Cruise visits raises concerns over another difficult winter for some (particularly businesses dependent on volume tourism).
- Supply chain disruption: mainly construction materials but labour supply also cited as a challenge.
- Interest in adopting renewable energy technology and environmentally sustainable practices: seeking additional financial incentive and better information to guide and assist uptake.
- Enquiry into progress towards 4/5G rollout and general digital connectivity.
- Concern remains for some about the end of furlough and possible future redundancies.

