

Business Recovery Survey

Summary Report



1. Introduction

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, Growth Platform has been working in partnership with the Liverpool City Region's Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Business Improvement Districts and trade associations to help address the impact of and disruption caused by the pandemic. Given the major implications for the region's Visitor Economy, it has been recognised that providing tailored business support will be critical to help the sector survive and adapt to new trading conditions over the next 12 to 18 months.

To inform ongoing discussions with the Liverpool City Region's Combined Authority and the Government, the Growth Platform Visitor Economy Team developed a short survey to help identify the specific initiatives that will be needed, and to ensure that Visitor Economy businesses viewed are represented. The survey ran for three weeks from 17th June to 8th July, and 90 businesses responded to the survey. The main aims of the research were as follows:

- To determine the characteristic of businesses that responded.
- To establish the level of support that businesses have already received and identify barriers which prevented businesses from receiving support.
- To understand how Visitor Economy businesses have already adapted during lockdown.
- To establish the immediate challenges businesses are facing over the next 12 to 18 months, and their expectations for their business over this period.
- To ultimately identify what forms of support would be most useful to businesses, in order to understand how to best tailor business support to help the sector survive over the next 12 to 18 months.

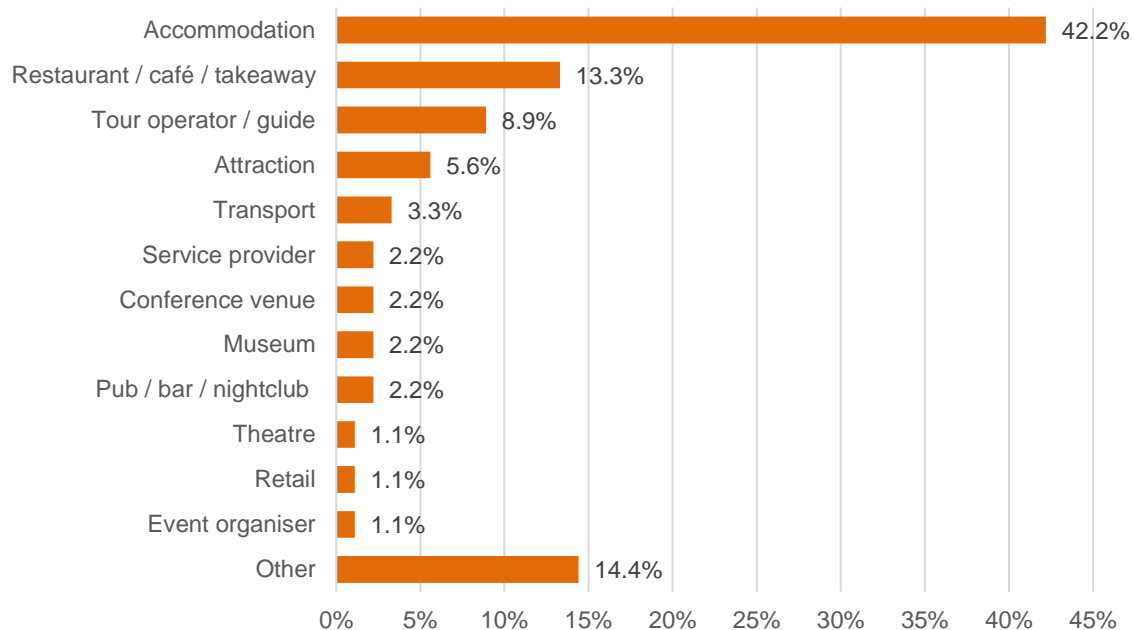
Email reminders were sent out to partners from across the City Region to share with their networks, as well as being shared on the VisitLiverpool Biz e-newsletter and Twitter feed. The survey was openly accessible via the Growth Platform website, on the Visitor Economy sector-specific support page.

This report provides:

- Headline figures covering the research aims
- Interpretation of these figures and the support needed by these business
- Headline analysis, interpretive commentary
- A summary of key findings

2. Analysis

Q1. What type of business do you run?



Overall, most businesses fall into the accommodation sector (43%). According to STEAM¹ 2019 data, this sector makes up c.8% of the City Region's overall Visitor Economy in terms of economic impact, therefore the findings of the report may not be representative of the sector as whole. Similarly, almost a quarter of responding businesses operated in the recreation sector (23%). Again, working from STEAM data, recreation contributes to 7% of the Visitor Economy's economic impact, suggesting that similar caution should be applied to the overall representation of the findings.

On the other hand, the food and drink (16%) and transport (3%) sectors are underrepresented in our data, making up 22% and 9% of the Visitor Economy's economic impact respectively. Shopping is particularly underrepresented in our report, making up just 1% of responses from businesses but contributing to 28% of the Visitor Economy's economic impact.

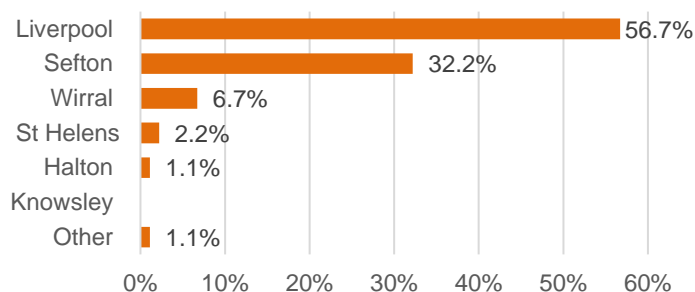
Other business types include:

- Arts & culture activities
- Audio rentals to pub / bar / nightclubs sector
- Brewer / distiller with large taproom / bar / food / tours / meeting rooms
- Brewery, distillery, with wholesale business, plus a bar / retail site with tours / events
- Copy writer
- Distiller and distributor of spirits
- English language school we also provide accommodation, activities, excursions & transport
- Golf course
- Hikers & play centre
- Italian cheese maker
- Marketing support & business advice website
- We provide a café, a takeaway service, we have a bar and organise both conference and events, in particular sporting events for both able and disabled

¹ Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor – a model used by many Destination Management Organisations to measure economic impact.

- Wedding & events venue

Q2. Which Local Authority is your business located in?



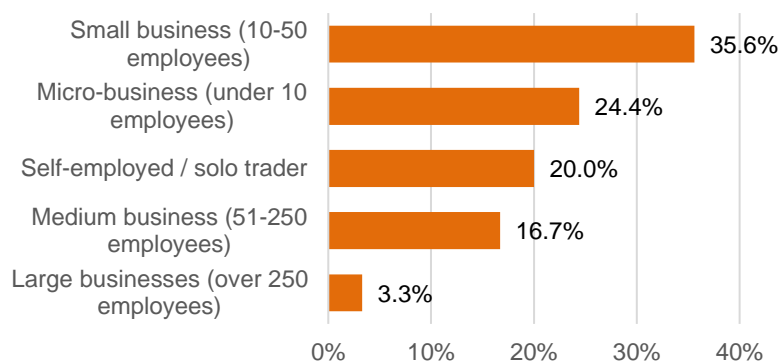
Overall, we see that half of all responses came from businesses in Liverpool, which is unsurprising considering that STEAM 2019 data indicates that Liverpool contributes to two-thirds of the overall value of tourism in the Liverpool City Region. This is then followed by Sefton (32% of responses) and Wirral (6% of responses) who are the next largest contributors to the LCR's visitor economy. However, based on their overall contribution compared to responses, Sefton is over represented and Wirral is under represented..

'West Lancs' (outside the LCR) was the only response provided as an 'other' Local Authority.

The table below provides a breakdown of business type by local authority. Please note that there were no responses from businesses located in Knowsley, therefore, this borough is not included in this table. Overall, we see that responses from businesses in Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral came from a wider range of business types than those in Halton and St. Helens.

	Halton	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Other
Accommodation	-	63.2%	34.2%	-	2.6%	-
Restaurant / café / takeaway	-	66.7%	33.3%	-	-	-
Pub / bar / nightclub	-	100%	-	-	-	-
Attraction	-	-	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Retail	-	-	100%	-	-	-
Museum	-	-	50.0%	-	50.0%	-
Theatre	-	-	100%	-	-	-
Conference venue	-	100%	-	-	-	-
Event organiser	-	-	-	-	100%	-
Tour operator / guide	-	75.0%	12.5%	-	12.5%	-
Service provider	-	50.0%	50%	-	-	-
Transport	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	-	-	-
Other	-	46.2%	30.8%	7.7%	15.4%	-

Q3. What size is your business?



Overall, we see that more responses came from smaller businesses – ie 1- 50 employees.

Using Beahurst data, a search using relevant SIC codes revealed that 5,567 of 10,558 active Visitor Economy businesses in the Liverpool City Region are SMEs (53%). Beahurst defines an SME as a company that has fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of less than €50 million. It can, therefore, be assumed that SMEs are greatly overrepresented in our survey, since only 3% of responding businesses have over 250 employees.

Below, we see the breakdown of business size by Local Authority. Sefton saw the most self-employed/solo traders responding (57%), whilst Liverpool saw the highest proportions for all other business sizes. All large businesses (over 250 employees) that responded were based in Liverpool.

	Halton	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Other
Self-employed / solo trader	-	22.2%	55.6%	5.6%	16.7%	-
Micro-business (under 10 employees)	-	54.5%	45.5%	-	-	-
Small business (10-50 employees)	3.1%	65.6%	21.9%	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%
Medium business (51-250 employees)	-	73.3%	13.3%	-	13.3%	-
Large businesses (over 250 employees)	-	100%	-	-	-	-

Q4. Have you remained trading through lockdown?



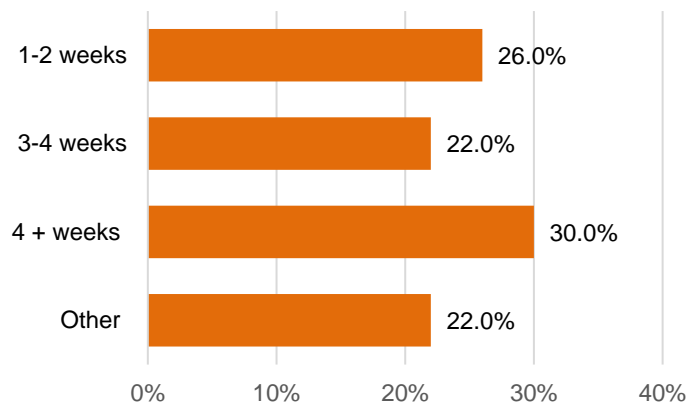
Just 3% of businesses stated that they had remained trading as usual. Over half (56%) had temporarily ceased trading as a result of lockdown restrictions, while just over a fifth (22%) had been able to continue trading, but with adjustments to their usual business operations. 2% of businesses had permanently ceased trading due to the pandemic. Other responses included businesses only operating for essential services, attempting to develop their business online and providing services for key workers.

The table below reveals that, perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of businesses in the recreational sector (such as museums, theatres, attractions, etc) were forced to temporarily cease trading as a result of the pandemic. Half of pubs/bars/nightclubs and a quarter of restaurants/café/takeaways were able to continue trading with adjustments to the businesses, which is likely the result of these premises offering takeaway services. The only business type that indicated they were able to continue trading as usual were accommodation providers, however, this was likely as they were offering services to key workers rather than tourists, as per the verbatim comments to this question.

It is also important to note that some businesses would have completed this survey after restrictions were lifted on 4th July, causing some variation in these results.

	Trading as usual	Trading with adjustments to the business	Business was previously closed but have since reopened	Have temporarily ceased trading	Permanently ceased trading
Accommodation	7.9%	21.1%	2.6%	57.9%	-
Restaurant / café / takeaway	-	25.0%	33.3%	33.3%	8.3%
Pub / bar / nightclub	-	50.0%	-	50.0%	-
Attraction	-	20.0%	-	80.0%	-
Retail	-	-	-	100%	-
Museum	-	-	-	100%	-
Theatre	-	-	-	100%	-
Conference venue	-	-	-	100%	-
Event organiser	-	-	-	100%	-
Tour operator / guide	-	-	-	87.5%	-
Service provider	-	100%	-	-	-
Transport	-	33.3%	33.3%	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-

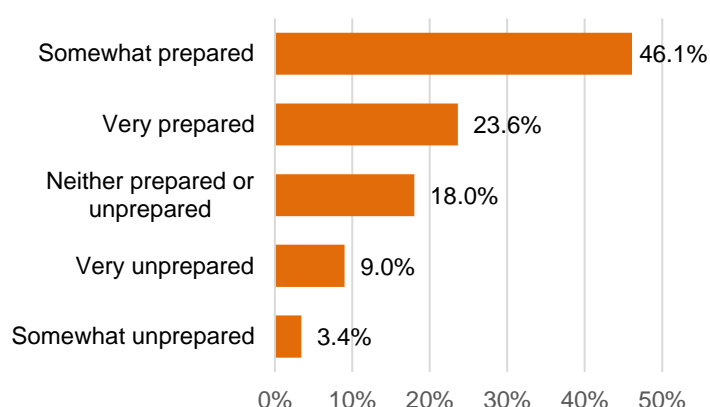
Q4a. How long are you anticipating it will take for your business to reopen? (For the those who indicated 'Have temporarily ceased trading' in the previous question)



Most businesses anticipated it taking them 4+ weeks to reopen (30%), followed by just over a quarter who anticipated it taking them 1-2 weeks (26%).

Over a fifth of businesses responded 'other' to this question, and responses showed that some businesses were considering staying closed for up to 12 months, with many stating that the lack of clarity around government guidance was a key factor in determining the measures that would need to be put in place for reopening. These include uncertainty in areas such as hygiene, social distancing and PPE. Similarly, respondents operating in the events/conferences sector and night-time sector are still awaiting guidance for reopening, and, therefore, are unable to forward plan.

Q5. How prepared do you feel for the reopening of the economy?

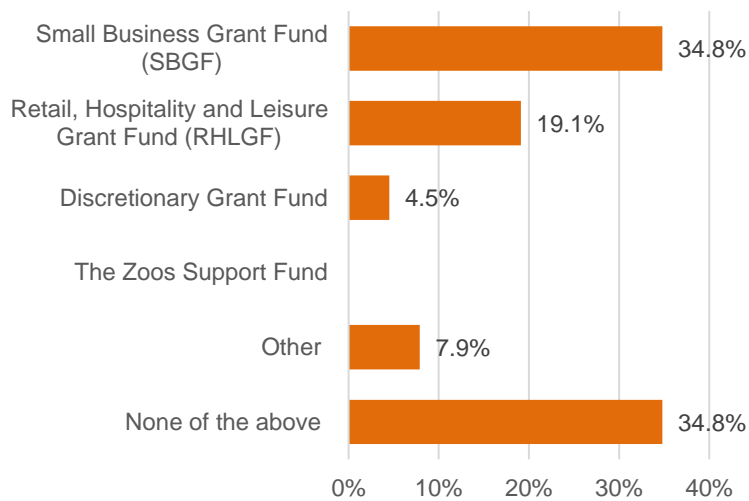


Almost half of all businesses indicated that they felt 'somewhat prepared' for the reopening of the economy (46%), followed by just under a quarter who felt 'very prepared' (23%). As we see from the table below, 81% of accommodation businesses and 50% of restaurants/café/takeaways indicated that they felt prepared for the reopening of the economy. This is likely a result of the government publishing specific guidelines on reopening safely for these business types, and, given that these businesses make up 56% of all responses, this offers a reason as to why we see high levels of businesses feeling prepared.

Generally, fewer businesses felt unprepared for the reopening of the economy, with only 9% answering 'very unprepared' and just 3% answering 'somewhat unprepared'. 18% of businesses felt 'neither prepared nor unprepared'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the table below shows that businesses feeling less prepared included attractions and event organisers, who have been provided with less guidance from the government on when they can reopen and how they can do it safely at the time of the survey.

	Very unprepared	Somewhat unprepared	Neither prepared nor unprepared	Somewhat prepared	Very prepared
Accommodation	5.4%	5.4%	8.1%	54.1%	27.0%
Restaurant / café / takeaway	16.7%	-	33.3%	41.7%	8.3%
Pub / bar / nightclub	-	-	-	50.0%	50.0%
Attraction	20.0%	-	20.0%	20.0%	40.0%
Retail	-	-	-	100%	-
Museum	-	-	-	50.0%	50.0%
Theatre	-	-	-	100%	-
Conference venue	-	-	50.0%	-	50.0%
Event organiser	-	100%	-	-	-
Tour operator / guide	-	-	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%
Service provider	-	-	-	-	100%
Transport	-	-	-	66.7%	33.3%

Q6. Have you accessed government grant support?

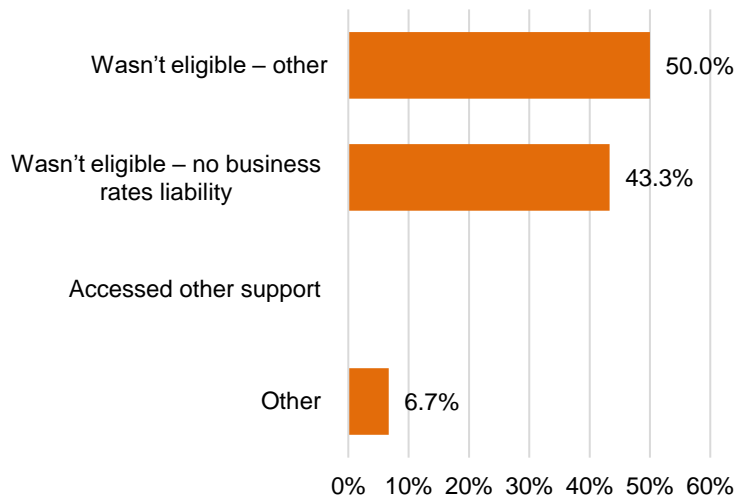


*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

35% of businesses had accessed the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF), whilst 19% had accessed the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) and 5% accessed the Discretionary Grant Fund. 8% of respondents answered 'other', for which responses included grants for the voluntary sector and one business who had applied for the RHLGF but had not yet received the money.

A significant proportion of businesses stated that they had not accessed any government grant support (35%), which is interesting when it is considered that initiatives such as the SBGF and, in particular, the RHLGF were intended to support Visitor Economy businesses through the pandemic. Reasons that businesses did not access grant support are explored below.

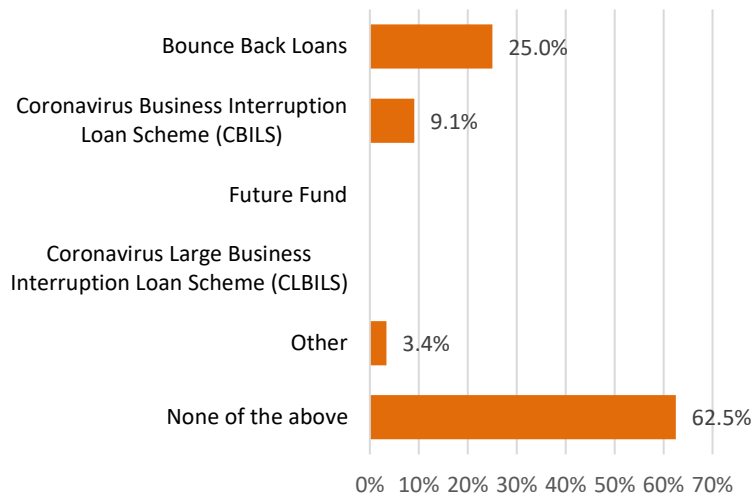
Q6a. For the those who indicated 'none of the above' in the previous question



Responses to this question are revealing of where gaps in government grant support lay. For the 35% of businesses who indicated that they had not accessed any government grant support, 43% were ineligible as they have no business rates liability. This is consistent with local feedback that has been received from businesses through the Growth Platform Helpline, as, for example, businesses who run their business from home or who rent space in a shared premises have no business rates liability and, therefore, are ineligible to receive government grant support. Given that almost a quarter of businesses who responded are micro-businesses (under 10 employees), and a fifth are self-employed/solo traders, it is likely that these businesses do not have their own business premises and, therefore, have no business rates liability.

Half of those who did not access government grant support indicated that they were ineligible for other reasons. This may include the 17% of medium-sized businesses (51-250 employees) and 3% of large businesses (over 250 employees), who may have a business premises with a rateable value of over £51,000 – particularly if located in the centre of Liverpool. Businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000 were also ineligible to receive government grants, further demonstrating the gaps in government support for Visitor Economy businesses.

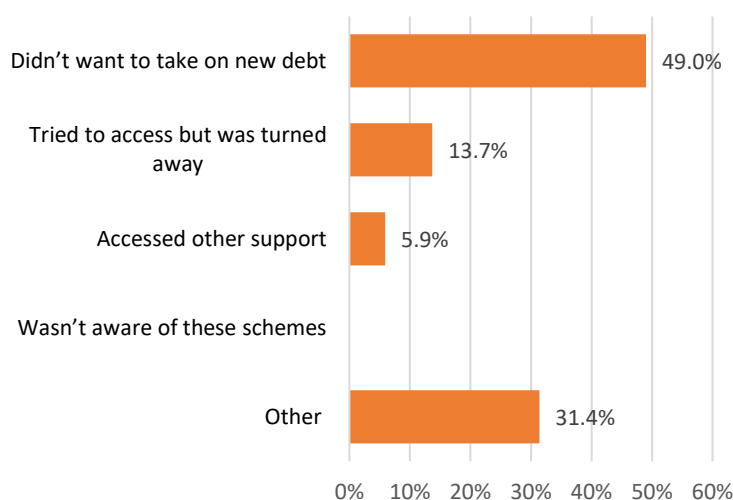
Q7. Have you borrowed capital through any of the government backed finance schemes?



*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

Just 37.5% of businesses had borrowed capital through Government backed finance schemes. A quarter of businesses accessed a Bounce Back Loan, whilst just 9% had borrowed money through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, reflecting feedback that this scheme has been difficult for businesses to access, as explored below. Interestingly, no businesses had borrowed money through the Future Fund, reflecting how Visitor Economy businesses have been left out from accessing this scheme.

Q7a. For the those who indicated 'none of the above' in the previous question.



Almost half of those who did not borrow capital through the Government back finance scheme chose not to as they did not want to take on new debt. The table below reveals that businesses from every borough felt this way about taking on new debt, reflecting uncertainty about the Visitor Economy market and the ability to pay the loan back.

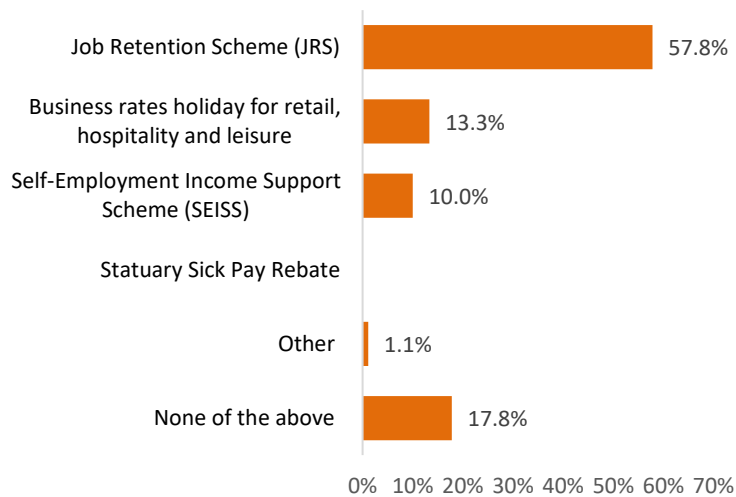
14% of businesses tried to access one of the schemes but were turned away, all of whom were located in Liverpool. Based on feedback from LCR businesses, we can assume that these businesses were more than likely turned away from accessing CBILS. Liverpool Hospitality Association reported that in mid-March, no members had been successful in securing a CBILS loan, and other business feedback suggested that the 80% limit on the government guarantee of the loan played a large part in banks refusing applications from smaller businesses. Furthermore, businesses facing financial difficulties or working with limited cash flow (as many Visitor Economy businesses do) before the pandemic likely would have been turned down from accessing CBILS, once again, limiting the number of Visitor Economy businesses that could secure a loan.

31% answered 'other' to this question, for which verbatim comments mainly consisted of businesses either not requiring a loan or not feeling that they would be able to repay it, reflecting the earlier point on businesses feeling uncertain about the market. Some businesses stated that they were still in the process of applying or waiting to hear back from their banks on whether they had been successful in securing a loan, which is, once again, consistent with feedback from LCR businesses who felt the loan application was took too long. One business stated that they were waiting to hear back from their insurer on whether they will receive a business interruption payment.

The table below shows a breakdown of these responses by borough:

	Halton	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral
Accessed other support	-	66.7%	33.3%	-	-
Tried to access but was turned away	-	85.7%	-	-	-
Didn't want to take on new debt	4.0%	36.0%	52.0%	4.0%	4.0%
Wasn't aware of these schemes	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-

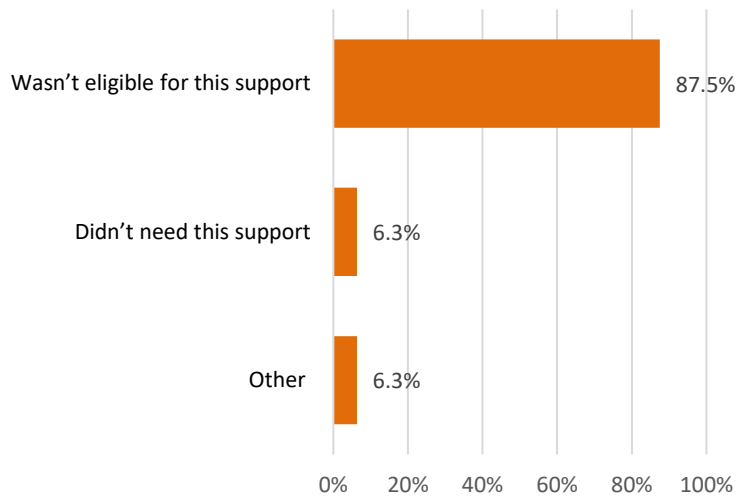
Q8. Have you accessed any other government support?



*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

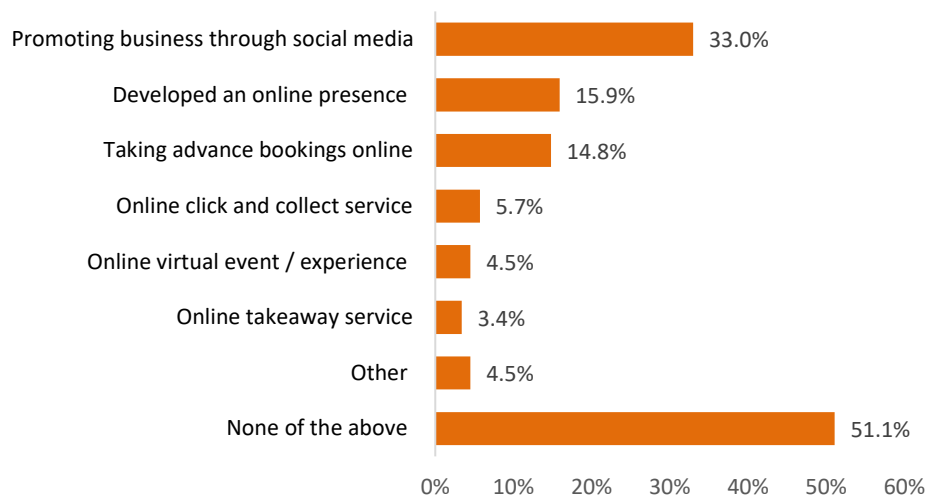
82% of all businesses who responded had accessed a form of other government support, most of whom accessed the Job Retention Scheme (58%). Interestingly, although the business rates holiday was aimed at supporting businesses in the visitor economy (retail, hospitality and leisure businesses), only 13% of businesses accessed it – likely due to issues around business rates liability for the 24% of micro businesses and 20% of self-employed/solo traders who responded, as mentioned previously.

Q8a. For the those who indicated 'none of the above' in the previous question.



Of the 18% of businesses who did not access the previous forms of government support, the overwhelming majority (88%) did not access it as they were not eligible. This, once again, highlights the gaps in government support in being able to support all visitor economy businesses through the pandemic. For example, despite 20% of businesses who responded being self-employed/solo traders, only 10% of businesses accessed the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS). This could reflect that the eligibility criteria for the SEISS limited the number of businesses who could apply, as newer businesses (set up after the 2018/19 tax year) or self-employed who trade through a limited company or trust were unable to access this support.

Q9. Have you developed new sales channels through online means?



*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

Just under half (49%) of businesses indicated that they had been able to develop new sales channels through online means, most of whom had been promoting their business on social media (33%). This is then followed by 16% who developed an online presence, and 15% who had begun taking advance bookings online. 5% answered 'other', which included responses such as pay forward vouchers or working with their local council to assist vulnerable people.

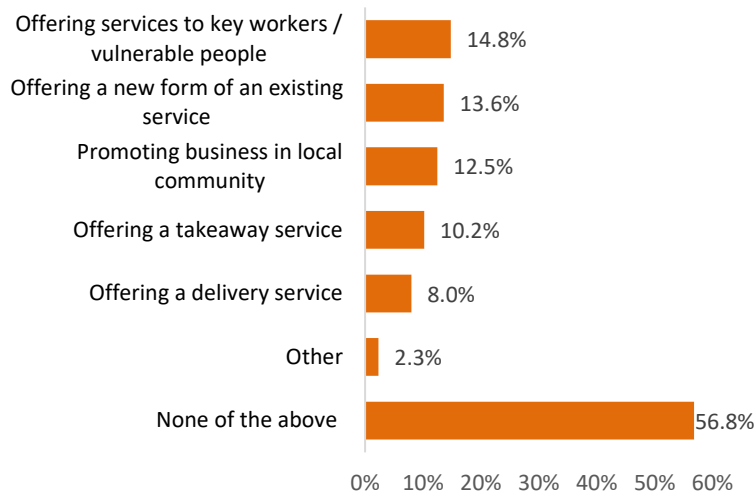
The breakdowns below reveal that most business types were able to develop new sales channels through online means, with the exception of pubs/bars/nightclubs, conference venues and service providers. We see the widest range to business types were able to develop an online presence or promote their business through social media, but a smaller range of businesses had developed an online event/experience or been able to take advanced bookings online, suggesting some businesses may need support in being able to develop in these areas.

Smaller businesses, micro businesses and self-employed/solo traders appear to have struggled more with developing new sales channels through online means than medium to large businesses, with the majority of those who answered 'none of the above' having fewer than 50 employees. This suggests that smaller businesses may need more support with developing their business online than larger businesses. The breakdown also demonstrates that most business sizes were able to develop an online presence, promote their business through social media and take advance bookings, but smaller businesses struggled with developing an online takeaway or click and collect service, which may have required more technological skill.

	Accommodation	Restaurant / café / takeaway	Pub / bar / nightclub	Attraction	Retail	Museum	Theatre	Conference venue	Event organiser	Tour operator / guide	Service provider	Transport
Developed an online presence	48.3%	17.2%	-	-	3.4%	6.9%	-	-	3.4%	6.9%	-	3.4%
Online virtual event / experience	-	-	-	-	-	25.0%	-	-	-	25.0%	-	-
Online takeaway service	33.3%	33.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Online click and collect service	20.0%	20.0%	-	20.0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Promoting business through social media	48.3%	17.2%	-	-	3.4%	6.9%	-	-	3.4%	6.9%	-	3.4%
Taking advance bookings online	84.6%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15.4%	-	-
Other	50.0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
None of the above	37.8%	8.9%	4.4%	8.9%	-	-	-	4.4%	-	8.9%	4.4%	4.4%

	Self-employed / solo trader	Micro-business (under 10 employees)	Small business (10-50 employees)	Medium business (51-250 employees)	Large businesses (over 250 employees)
Developed an online presence	7.1%	28.6%	57.1%	7.1%	-
Online virtual event / experience	50.0%	-	25.0%	25.0%	-
Online takeaway service	-	-	100%	-	-
Online click and collect service	-	-	80.0%	20.0%	-
Promoting business through social media	10.3%	27.6%	34.5%	20.7%	6.9%
Taking advance bookings online	23.1%	23.1%	30.8%	23.1%	-
Other	-	-	75.0%	25.0%	-
None of the above	24.4%	24.4%	37.8%	11.1%	2.2%

Q10. Have you been able to diversify your existing business operations?



*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

43% of businesses had been able to diversify their existing business operations through lockdown, most of whom had been offering services to key workers and/or vulnerable people (15%). This is then followed by 14% who had begun offering a new form of an existing service, and 13% who were promoting their business in the local community. 2% of businesses indicated 'other', which include helping the Local Authority redistribute PPE and food.

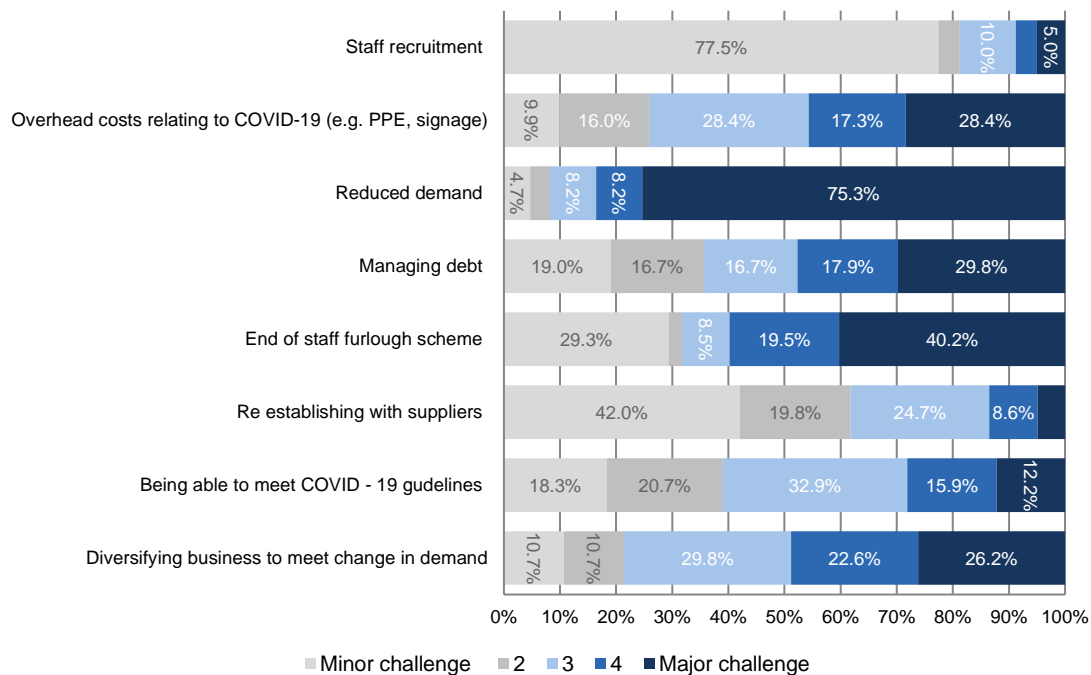
57% of businesses indicated that they had not been able to diversify their existing business operations, and the breakdown below reveals that these businesses were most likely to be in accommodation sector (46%). Although the fact most businesses who responded were from the accommodation sector may be a factor in this, it is also indicative of how lockdown restrictions limited the way in which hotels, in particular, were able to adapt.

As was the case with the previous question, we see that smaller businesses were more likely to have answered 'none of the above' than medium to large businesses. However, of the businesses that had been able to diversify their existing business operations, we see that a significant proportion of self-employed had promoted their business within the local community, and smaller businesses were more likely to have offered a new form of an existing service.

	Accommodation	Restaurant / café / takeaway	Pub / bar / nightclub	Attraction	Retail	Museum	Theatre	Conference venue	Event organiser	Tour operator / guide	Service provider	Transport
Offering services to key workers / vulnerable people	76.9%	7.7%	-	7.7%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.7%
Offering a takeaway service	11.1%	66.7%	-	-	-	11.1%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Offering a delivery service	14.3%	42.9%	14.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Offering a new form of an existing service	41.7%	8.3%	-	-	-	8.3%	-	-	-	16.7%	-	-
Promoting business in local community	18.2%	18.2%	-	-	-	-	9.1%	-	9.1%	9.1%	-	-
Other	-	50.0%	-	-	-	-	-	50.0%	-	-	-	-
None of the above	46.0%	6.0%	2.0%	8.0%	2.0%	-	-	2.0%	-	10.0%	4.0%	4.0%

	Self-employed / solo trader	Micro-business (under 10 employees)	Small business (10-50 employees)	Medium business (51-250 employees)	Large businesses (over 250 employees)
Offering services to key workers / vulnerable people	7.7%	15.4%	38.5%	30.8%	7.7%
Offering a takeaway service	-	22.2%	66.7%	-	11.1%
Offering a delivery service	-	-	100%	-	-
Offering a new form of an existing service	25.0%	16.7%	41.7%	16.7%	-
Promoting business in local community	36.4%	18.2%	36.4%	9.1%	-
Other	-	-	50.0%	50.0%	-
None of the above	24.0%	26.0%	34.0%	14.0%	2.0%

Q11. What are your immediate challenges over the next six months? Please rate these challenges on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being a minor challenge and 5 being a major challenge for your business.



The chart above indicates that, by far, the biggest challenge businesses are facing over the next 6 months is reduced demand, with three-quarters identifying this as a ‘major challenge’. This is then followed by the end of the staff furlough scheme (40% identifying this as a ‘major challenge’) and the ability to manage debt (30% identifying this as a ‘major challenge’).

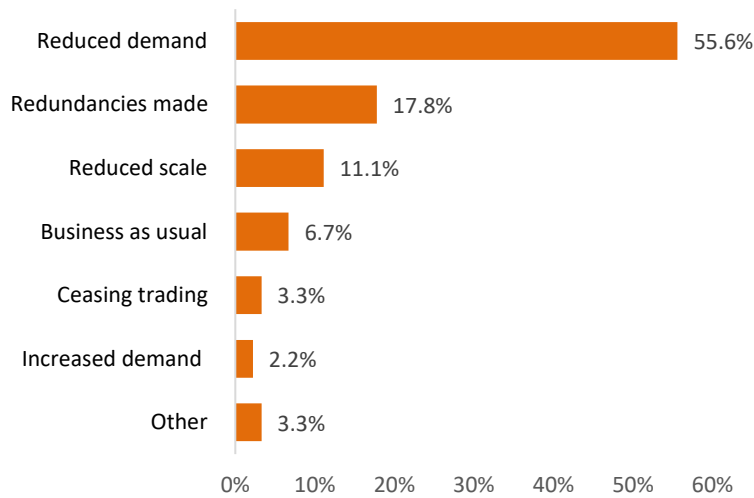
The table below reveals that almost every business type indicated that a reduce in demand would be a major challenge for them over the next six months, demonstrating one of the ways in which the impact of the pandemic is being felt across all sectors of the Visitor Economy. Accommodation providers and restaurants/cafés/takeaways were the most concerned with the end of the furlough scheme, whilst managing debt was identified as a ‘major challenge’ for a smaller range of business types. It is worth noting that an equal number of accommodation providers and restaurants/cafés/takeaways felt managing debt would be a ‘major challenge’, which is significant given that accommodation providers make up a significantly higher proportion of responses than restaurants/cafés/takeaways.

Staff recruitment appears to be less of a challenge for businesses, with 78% stating that this was a ‘minor challenge’, followed by re-establishing with suppliers (42% identifying this as a ‘minor challenge’).

The below table shows the types of business that facing major challenges in the following:

	Accommodation	Restaurant / café / takeaway	Pub / bar / nightclub	Attraction	Retail	Museum	Theatre	Conference venue	Event organiser	Tour operator / guide	Service provider	Transport
Reduced demand	45.3%	12.5%	1.6%	3.1%	1.6%	1.6%	-	3.1%	1.6%	10.9%	-	3.1%
Managing debt	28.0%	28.0%	-	4.0%	-	-	-	4.0%	-	8.0%	-	4.0%
End of staff furlough	39.4%	18.2%	-	6.1%	3.0%	-	-	6.1%	-	9.1%	-	3.0%

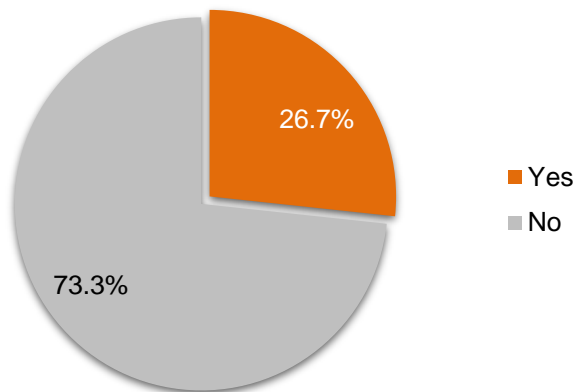
Q12. What are your current expectations for your business over the next 12 months?



Over half of Visitor Economy businesses (56%) believe that they will experience a reduce in demand over the next 12 months, which is consistent with responses to the previous question (where we see that 75% of businesses believe this will be a 'major challenge' over the next 6 months). This is then followed by 18% who believe they will need to make redundancies, which also aligns with responses to the previous question, where 40% of businesses identified the end of the staff furlough scheme as a 'major challenge'. This highlights the need for a potential extension of the Job Retention Scheme to help businesses avoid making redundancies over the coming year.

Just 7% felt that their business would continue as usual, and only 2% believe that they will experience an increase in demand as a result of the pandemic.

Q13. Have you received any local business advice, mentoring or support?



Interestingly, almost three quarters of businesses did not receive any local business advice, mentoring or support. Reasons for this are explored below.

Q13a. Which services did you access? (For the those who said 'Yes' to the previous question)

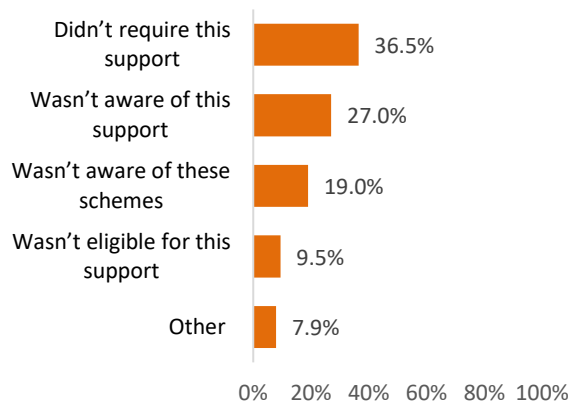


*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

A quarter of those who received local business advice, mentoring or support accessed it from the Local Growth Hub, followed by 13% who accessed support from Growth Platform's professional and business service community. Interestingly, no businesses accessed support from BDO, Be the Business Mentoring, Gather or Mettle, potentially due to a lack of awareness of these programmes, but also possibly due to the fact they were not aimed at supporting Visitor Economy businesses.

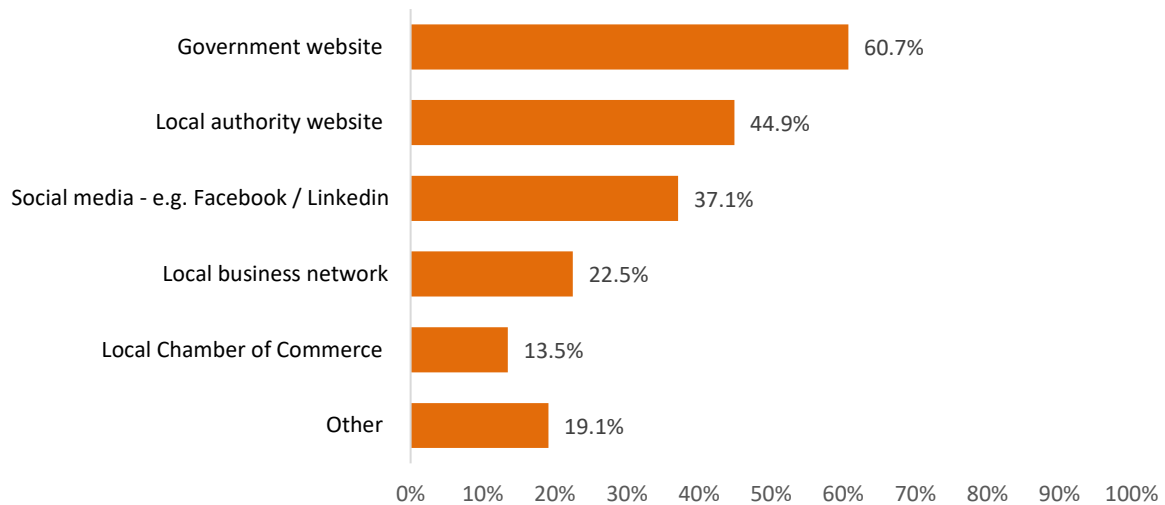
The majority of those who received local business advice, mentoring or support accessed it from somewhere 'other' than the options provided, which included responses such as the Local Council, Local BIDs, Liverpool Hospitality, UKHospitality, The Women's Org, Local Chambers of Commerce and the Enterprise Hub. Interestingly, most of the support that was sought seems to be around professional advice and guidance, which could have been accessed via the BDO Business Resilience Support, suggesting that there was a low level of awareness of this scheme in particular.

Q13b. Have you received any local business advice, mentoring or support? (For the those who said 'No' to question 13)



Of the businesses who did not access any local business advice, mentoring or support, 37% felt that they did not need this support. 27% were not aware of being able to get this support in general, whilst 19% indicated that they were not aware of the specific schemes available to them. This provides an explanation as to why so few businesses accessed the specific support schemes mentioned previously and highlights the need to raise awareness of the local support available to local businesses. 8% answered 'other', and responses included not having enough time to research what support was available, or not being responded to after trying to access support.

Q14. Where do you typically go to find out business-related information? (e.g. on grants/regulatory changes/access to mentors/etc).

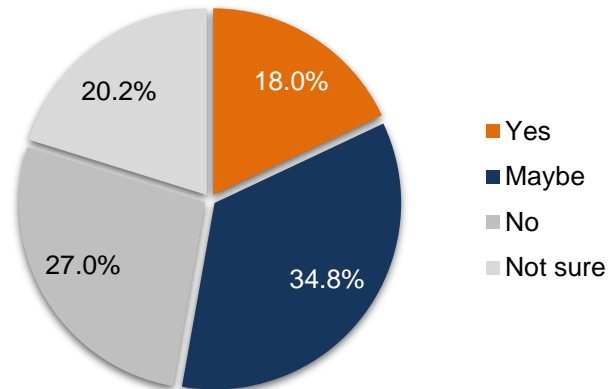


*Please note that question is multiple choice and therefore won't add up to 100%

Most businesses indicated that they go to the Government website for information (61%), followed by 45% who use their Local Authority's website and 37% who use social media. 23% indicated that they had accessed business support for local business networks, which included 2 respondents mentioning Liverpool Hospitality Association, 2 mentioning Growth Platform, 4 mentioning Southport BID, 2 mentioning Southport Hotelier's Association and 3 mentioning VisitSouthport.

Just under a fifth of respondents indicated they had accessed an 'other' form of support, which included a range of responses, such as TripAdvisor, UKInbound, Federation of Small Businesses, Professional Association of Self Caterers, accounting firms and solicitors.

Q15. Would one to one professional business support be helpful to your business at the moment?



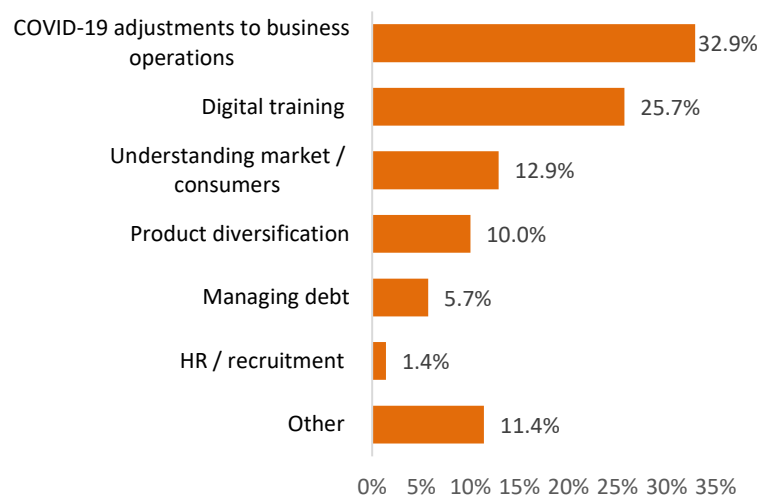
18% of businesses felt that one to one professional business support would be helpful to them at the moment, with 35% answering 'maybe' and a fifth stating that they were not sure. The breakdown below shows us that business who answered 'yes' came from a fairly wide range of sectors, notably accommodation providers and restaurants/cafés/takeaways (the two largest business types in responses).

Interestingly, no medium or large businesses answered 'yes' to this question, meaning that this form of support would be most useful for small businesses, micro businesses and the self-employed. Raising awareness of any one to one professional business support will, therefore, be important among smaller businesses.

	Accommodation	Restaurant / café / takeaway	Pub / bar / nightclub	Attraction	Retail	Museum	Theatre	Conference venue	Event organiser	Tour operator / guide	Service provider	Transport
Yes	37.5%	12.5%	-	6.3%	-	-	-	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%	-	6.3%
Maybe	35.5%	19.4%	3.2%	6.5%	-	-	-	-	-	6.5%	-	3.2%
No	50.0%	8.3%	4.2%	8.3%	4.2%	8.3%	-	-	-	8.3%	-	-
Not sure	44.4%	11.1%	-	-	-	-	5.6%	5.6%	-	16.7%	11.1%	5.6%

	Self-employed / solo trader	Micro-business (under 10 employees)	Small business (10-50 employees)	Medium business (51-250 employees)	Large businesses (over 250 employees)
Yes	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	-	-
Maybe	19.4%	25.8%	45.2%	6.5%	3.2%
No	16.7%	16.7%	25.0%	33.3%	8.3%
Not sure	22.2%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	-

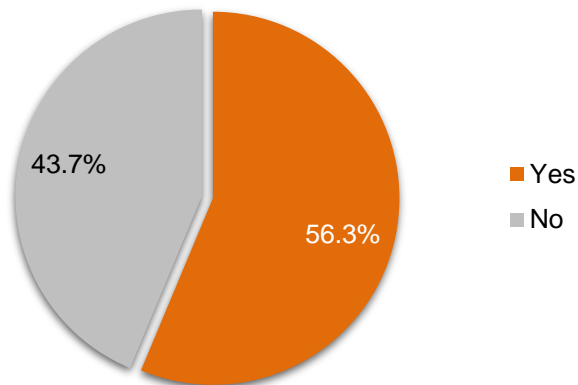
Q15a. What form of consultancy would be most useful to your business?



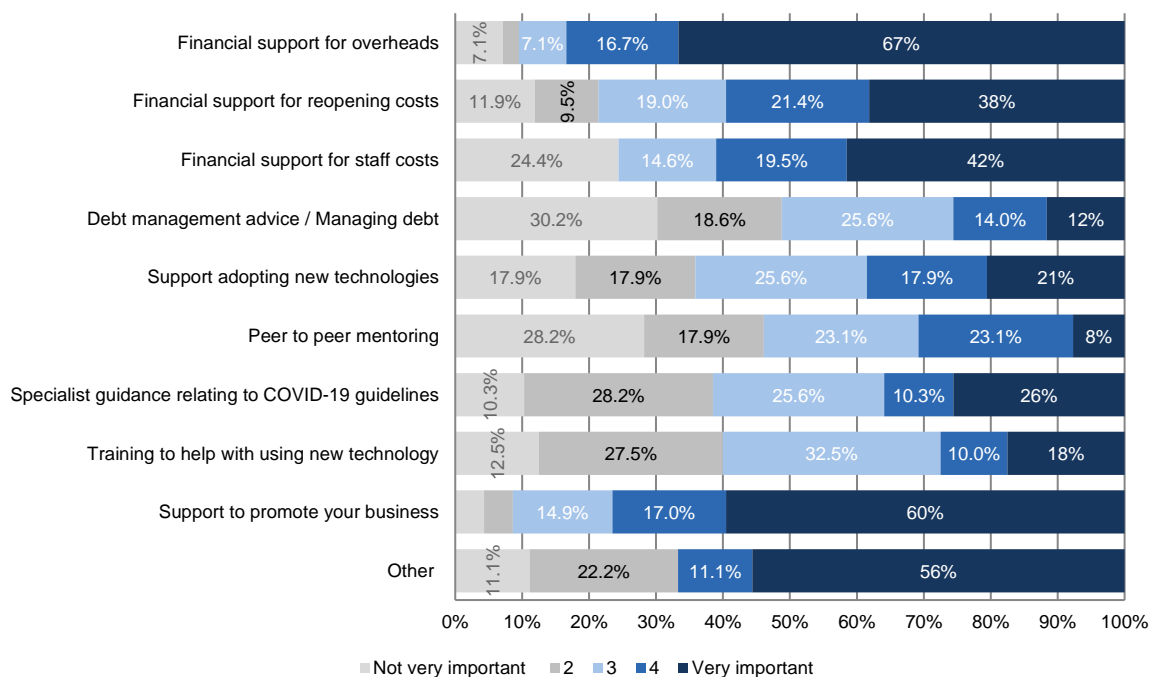
A third of businesses stated that consultancy on COVID-19 adjustment to business operations would be most useful to them, followed by 26% who indicated digital training and 13% who answered understanding markets/consumers. The 26% who felt digital training would be most useful to them aligns with the responses to Question 9, as 51% of businesses indicated that they had not been able to develop new sales channels through online means, particularly for smaller businesses. 11% answered 'other', which included accessing new markets, changing strategy and diversifying business operations, and assistance with marketing/promotion.

Insight from previous questions, such as Question 11 and 12, reveal that accessing new markets and marketing/promotion of businesses will be an extremely useful form of consultancy, given that 75% of businesses believe reduced demand will be a 'major challenge' for them over the next 6 months and 56% are expecting a reduce in demand over the next year. The responses to Question 10 suggest that businesses may also require consultancy on how to diversify existing business operations, because 57% of businesses had not been able to do this through lockdown.

Q16. Will you be seeking support for your business over the next 12 months?



Q16a. Please rank the following areas in terms of their importance to your business, with 1 being not very important and 5 being very important.



The support businesses indicated would be most important to them was 'financial support for overheads' (67% stating this as 'very important, and a further 17% answering 'important'). This is unsurprising, given that we see earlier in the report that 35% of business were unable to access government grant support, and 63% of businesses have not taken out a government backed finance scheme, either as they have been unable to access one or did not want to take on new debt. Feedback from local businesses suggests that being able to pay overheads has been constraining in terms of business survival, which is made worse as furlough is reduced, and they have to invest in PPE and signage. We also see that 42% of businesses identified 'financial support for staff costs' as 'very important', (with a further 20% identifying this as 'important'), and 38% stated that 'financial support for reopening costs' as 'very important' (with a further 21% identifying it as 'important').

It is perhaps unsurprising that businesses are looking for financial support initially following lockdown, as this would help them to survive through the initial recovery period. However, as this form of support is unlikely to be

forthcoming, we turn to look at what else has been identified as being useful to businesses. 60% felt that 'support to promote your business' was 'very important' to them, with a further 17% finding it important. As mentioned earlier in the report, many businesses are expecting to see a reduction in demand over the next 12 months and believe that this will be a 'major challenge'. Support to promote businesses will be essential in accessing new markets, to help lessen the medium-term impacts of reduced demand..

Although lower than other areas, we still see that a significant proportion of businesses would find peer to peer mentoring (31%), debt management advice (26%) and training to help with new technology (28%) important to their businesses. Training to help with new technology will be particularly important to the significant number of businesses who had not been able to develop new sales channels through online means (51%) and to help businesses adapt in the post-lockdown economy.

Other responses included marketing, and financial support to assist with new machinery/PPE.

3. Summary of Key Findings & Recommendations

- Most businesses came from the accommodation sector (43%), followed by the recreation sector (23%), and analysis of STEAM data suggests that these sectors are overrepresented in our report. On the other hand, STEAM data indicates that the food and drink (16%), transport (3%) and retail (1%) sectors are underrepresented in our report.
- The majority of businesses came from Liverpool (57%), unsurprising given that STEAM data suggests that Liverpool contributes to two-thirds of the overall value of tourism in the Liverpool City Region. 32% of responses came from Sefton, meaning that Sefton has been overrepresented in our report, whereas only 7% of responses came from Wirral, meaning it has been underrepresented.
- Over a third of businesses were small business (10-50 employees - 36%), followed by just under a quarter who were micro-businesses (under 10 employees - 24%) and a fifth who were self-employed/solo-traders (20%). Just 3% came from large businesses (over 250 employees). Beahurst data indicates that SMEs are greatly overrepresented in our report, since they only make up 53% of the LCR's Visitor Economy businesses but at least 97% of our responses.
- 56% of businesses had temporarily ceased trading as a result of lockdown restrictions, and these businesses were mainly from the recreational sector. Just over a fifth (22%) of businesses had been able to continue trading, but with adjustments to their usual business operations, whilst 2% had permanently ceased trading.
- 35% of businesses had accessed the SBF, whilst 19% had accessed the RHLGF and 5% accessed the Discretionary Grant Fund. However, 35% of businesses stated that they had not accessed any government grant support, which was largely due to businesses being ineligible, particularly due to business rates liability, highlighting the gaps in government support.
- Just 38% of businesses had borrowed capital through Government backed finance schemes. The main reason businesses did not borrow capital was because they did not want to take on new debt, reflecting uncertainty about the market.
- 82% of all businesses who responded had accessed a form of other government support, most of whom accessed the Job Retention Scheme (58%). Interestingly, although the business rates holiday was aimed at supporting businesses in the visitor economy (retail, hospitality and leisure businesses), only 13% of businesses accessed it – likely due to issues around business rates liability.
- Just under half (49%) of businesses indicated that they had been able to develop new sales channels through online means, most of whom had been promoting their business on social media (33%). 43% had been able to diversify their existing business operations through lockdown, with those businesses being most likely to have offered services to key workers and/or vulnerable people.
- Businesses indicated that the biggest issue they are facing over the next 6 months is reduced demand, with three-quarters identifying this as a 'major challenge'. This is then followed by the end of the staff furlough scheme (40% identifying this as a 'major challenge') and the ability to manage debt (30% identifying this as a 'major challenge').
- Over half of businesses (56%) believe that they will experience a reduction in demand over the next 12 months, which is then followed by 18% who believe they will need to make redundancies. Just 7% felt that their business would continue as usual, and only 2% believe that they will experience an increase in demand as a result of the pandemic.
- Almost three-quarters of businesses did not receive any local business advice, mentoring or support. Of those businesses, 37% felt that they did not need this support, whilst 27% were not aware of being able to get this support in general and 19% indicated that they were not aware of the specific schemes available to them.
- 18% of businesses felt that one to one professional business support would be helpful to them at the moment, with 35% answering 'maybe' and a fifth stating that they were not sure. A third of businesses stated that consultancy on COVID-19 adjustment to business operations would be most useful to them,

followed by 26% who indicated digital training and 13% who answered understanding markets/consumers

- The support responding businesses indicated would be most important to them was 'financial support for overheads'. However, this form of support is unlikely to be forthcoming, therefore considering the other choices available, 60% felt that 'support to promote your business' was 'very important' to them, with a further 17% finding it important. Although lower than other areas, we still see that a significant proportion of businesses would find peer to peer mentoring (31%), debt management advice (26%) and training to help with new technology (28%) important to their businesses.