

Article

Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 27 December 2023 to 7 January 2024

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Release date:
8 January 2024

Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Survey information

These questions are for Wave 99 of the fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) dispatched on 27 December 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 December 2023 compare with this calendar month last year?

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

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

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

How did the time spent on exporting in December 2023 compare with this calendar month last year?

- Time spent increased
- Time spent stayed the same
- Time spent decreased
- Not sure

Did your business experience an increase in any of the following exporting challenges in December 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

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 December 2023 compare with this calendar month last year?

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

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

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

How did the time spent on importing in December 2023 compare with this calendar month last year?

- Time spent increased
- Time spent stayed the same
- Time spent decreased
- Not sure

Did your business experience an increase in any of the following importing challenges in December 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

5 . Supply Chains

Was your business able to get the materials, goods or services it needed from the EU in December 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

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

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Not applicable

In the last 12 months, has your business purchased goods or services from suppliers in other UK nations?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

In the last 12 months, which of the following goods or services has your business purchased from suppliers in other UK nations?

- Casual labour
- Financial services
- Professional services
- Finished goods
- Semi-finished or intermediate goods
- Raw materials
- Other
- Not sure

In the last 12 months, has your business sold goods or services from suppliers in other UK nations?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

In the last 12 months, which of the following challenges, if any, has your business experienced when selling goods or services to customers in other UK nations?

- Challenges related to the Northern Ireland Protocol
- Differences in rules or regulations
- Lack of demand
- Supply chain disruption
- Transport capacity
- Transport costs
- Other
- Not sure
- Business did not experience any challenges

6 . Sending goods

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

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

In December 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 December 2023

- Comments

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

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

In December 2023, how did the volume of goods your business sent from Northern Ireland to GB 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 Northern Ireland to GB changed in December 2023

- Comments

7 . 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

Which, if any, of the following skills has your business had a high demand for in the last 12 months?

- Advanced digital skills
- Basic digital skills
- Customer service skills
- Management or leadership skills
- Manual skills
- Transferable skills
- Other
- None of the above

Which, if any, of the following skills does your workforce require extra support or training in?

- Advanced digital skills
- Basic digital skills
- Customer service skills
- Management or leadership skills
- Manual skills
- Transferable skills
- Other
- None of the above

On average, how did employees' hourly wages in December 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?

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

8 . Comments

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

- Comments