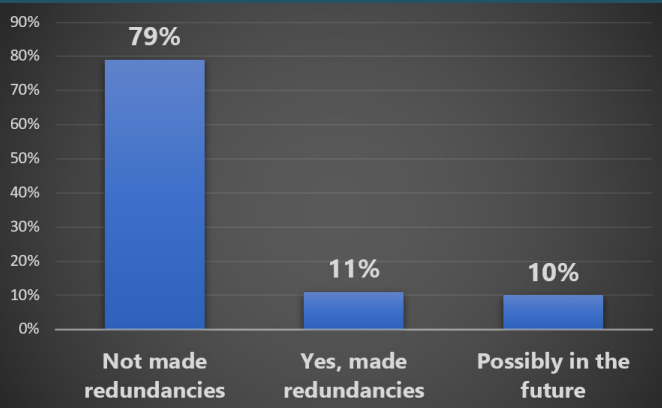


# 'Coronavirus Business Impact Survey'

## Employer Views

Dec 2020



Ashley Hunt, Director  
Employment Team



- Financial Loss
- Redundancies
- Furloughed Staff
- Health and Safety
- Premises

For employers in October/November 2020, Lawson-West Solicitors conducted an online survey of businesses to gain an understanding of the pandemic's business impact with particular emphasis on employment issues and employees.

The results were very interesting, providing some real hope that the situation the media repeatedly presents is not quite accurate.

The findings were positive in many parts, particularly regarding the 'can do' attitudes that businesses have developed in the face of the pandemic.

### The Results

The findings give a real fresh outlook and a level of positivity to suggest that a number of businesses are finding their way through these tough times, with some actually thriving.

- The statistics provide reassurance in a time when a lot of the reporting is negative.
- The geographical area in which those who took part was 79% from the East Midlands - where Lawson-West is based (in Leicestershire) - 11% in the West Midlands and 10% in other parts of the UK.

Of businesses who responded, 33% were professional services; 22% construction or building trade; 11% hospitality/leisure/tourism; 6% (each from food and drink, manufacturing, marketing/creative services, motor/vehicles, or transport), and 10% from other sector groups.

It is appreciated that the views contained in the feedback may not entirely reflect the views of all businesses, particularly those in the hospitality and leisure sectors which we know have seen some of the most financial pressure from the lockdowns and coronavirus restrictions (tier 1, 2 and 3 systems) and lean more on the professional and construction-based companies, but the views we believe are enlightening, nonetheless.

Of those who completed the survey, 78% of respondents had 15 employees or less, 11% had 16-50 employees, 11% had 51 to 100 employees.

So what did we learn.....

# 'Coronavirus Business Impact Survey'

## Results of Employer Views

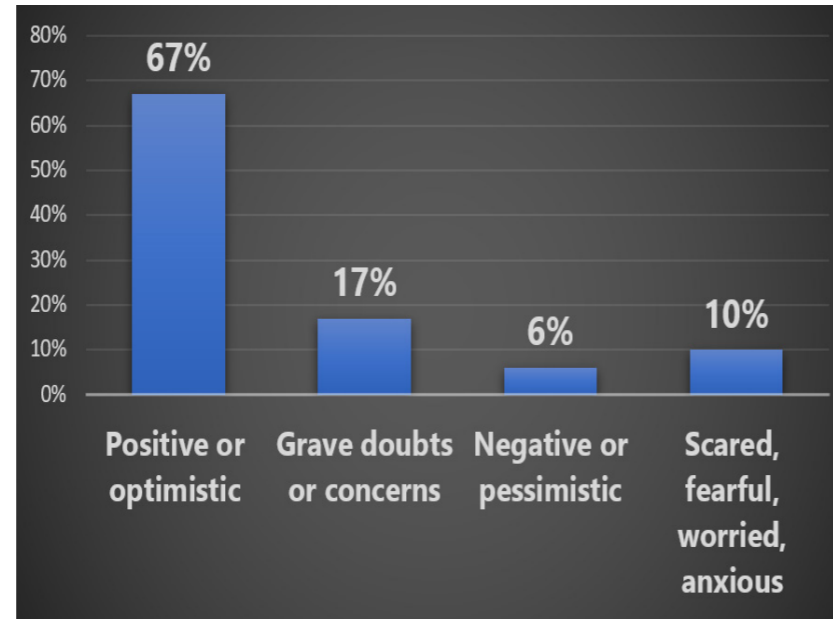
### Coronavirus – positive future views

Where 17% of businesses cited 'grave doubts or concerns' about their business' ability to survive coronavirus over the next 12 months, a massive 67% of businesses remained positive or optimistic about their survival rates. (This is even before the recent covid vaccine announcements). 10% reported being scared, fearful, worried or anxious, and 6% were negative or pessimistic about the future.

This is refreshing news and somewhat in contrast to what the media continually reports. Businesses are not taking a backseat in the fight against Covid19 and instead are attacking it head on.

Many have developed new strategies, diversified, and offered new products and services which they may never have considered or attained in such a short time had it not been for the coronavirus.

A considerable number of companies which we have had contact with have high hopes for their businesses going forward as they have created outstanding technology that is seeing them become leaders in their fields. These statistics are empowering, providing a much needed boost to business owners' morale.

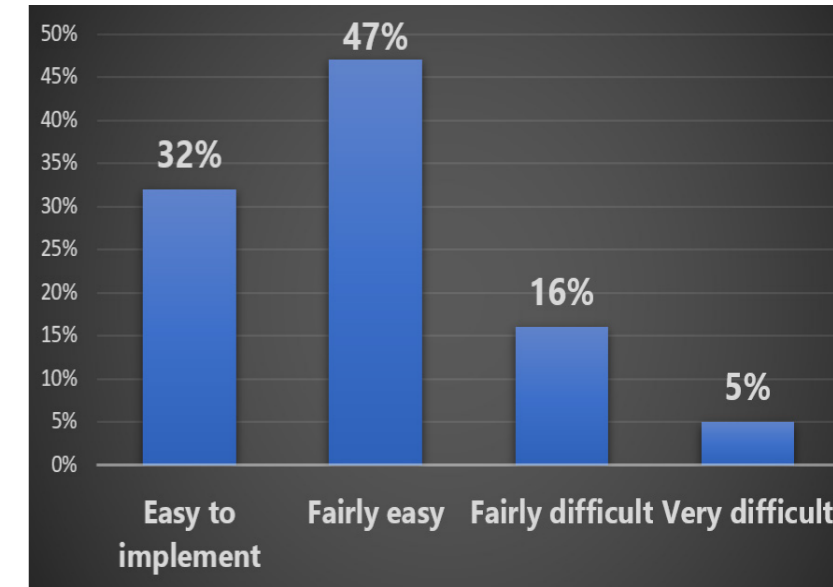


### Health & Safety measures and employee duties

Staggeringly, nearly three quarters of employers (72%) had NOT had to restructure employees' duties, roles and/or responsibilities during the pandemic and 79% had found implementing Covid Health & Safety measures reasonably easy - 47% finding them 'fairly easy', 32% 'easy to implement', 16% 'fairly difficult' and 5% 'very difficult'.

Whilst the Government produced some guidance on Covid safety measures, this was something no one had ever rehearsed. Many businesses were plunged into new ways of working, reductions in workforce being permitted onsite and cleaning measures that required real thought. It is excellent to see businesses rise to the challenge of their responsibility to keep their workforce Covid safe.

Whilst it is understood this is a tiny snippet of the United Kingdom's businesses, it is positive to reveal that despite all the challenges that businesses have faced, many are working exceptionally hard to come out of this year with a fighting spirit.

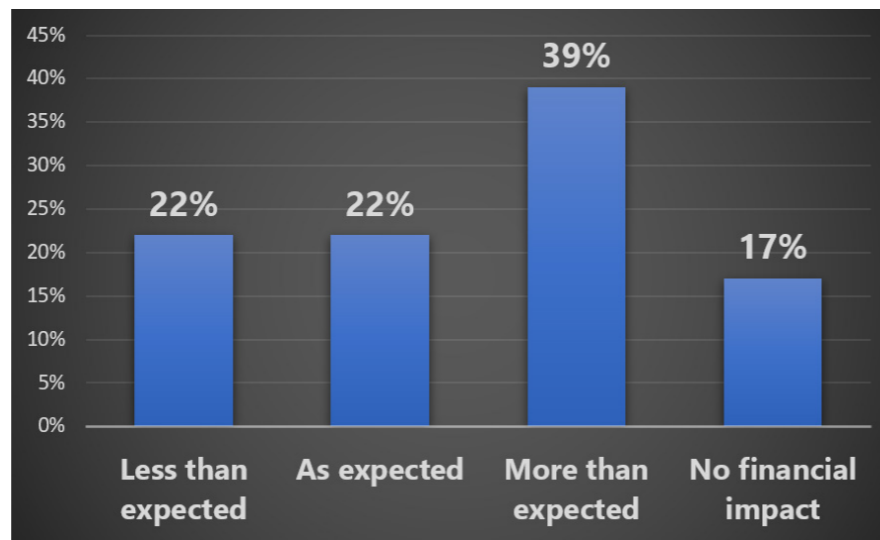


# 'Coronavirus Business Impact Survey'

## Results of Employer Views

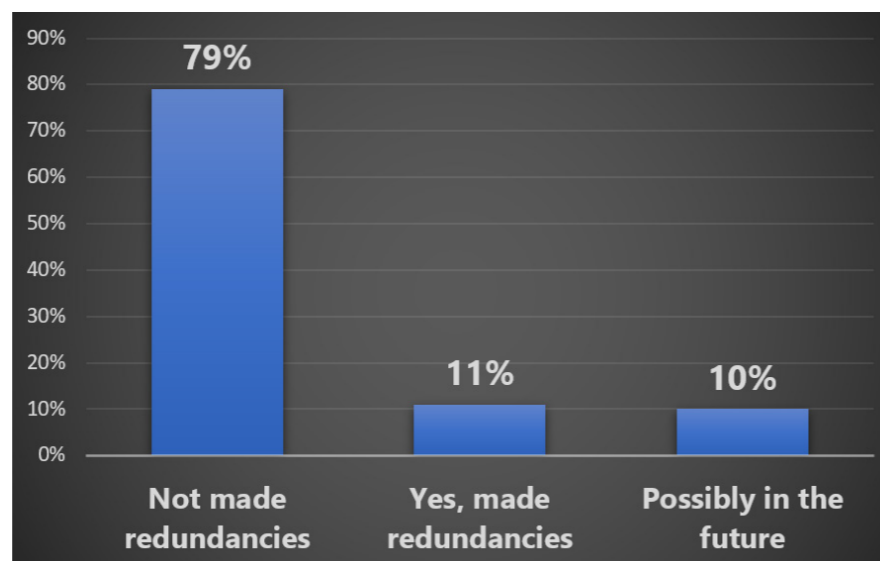
### Financial loss

Unfortunately, as to be envisaged, 61% of businesses thought the financial loss or impact on their business had been either 'more than expected' (39%), or 'as expected' (22%). This year has been unprecedented with losses to industries like never experienced before. The true measure of the financial impact of the Covid 19 virus and pandemic on our economy and businesses will not really present itself for some time. It is possible that the impact of 2020 will be present for years to come. The message is that we are 'in it together' and we will 'come through it together'.



### Redundancies

In contrast and rather refreshing to be able to report, only a quarter (21%) had either 'made redundancies' (11%) or are 'expecting to make redundancies in the future' (10%), which indicates that over three quarters (79%) of employers had NOT made any redundancies and were not thinking of making any. Redundancy and Restructure is something that is inevitable in some sectors or companies, but it would appear this really is the last resort for most. The Covid secure changes were thrust upon businesses with very little help or guidance relevant to the more niche sectors. We hope that these statistics continue, and businesses can retain their talent and ride-out the Corona storm.



### Furloughing employees

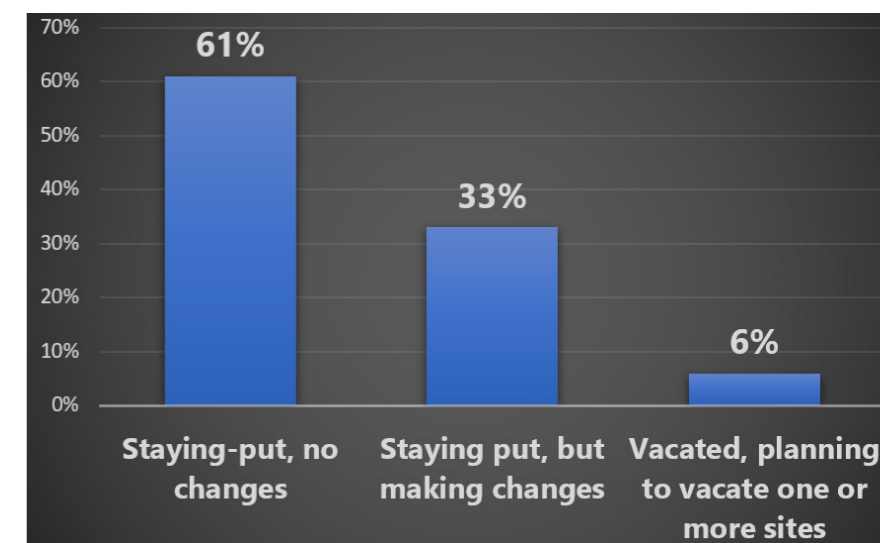
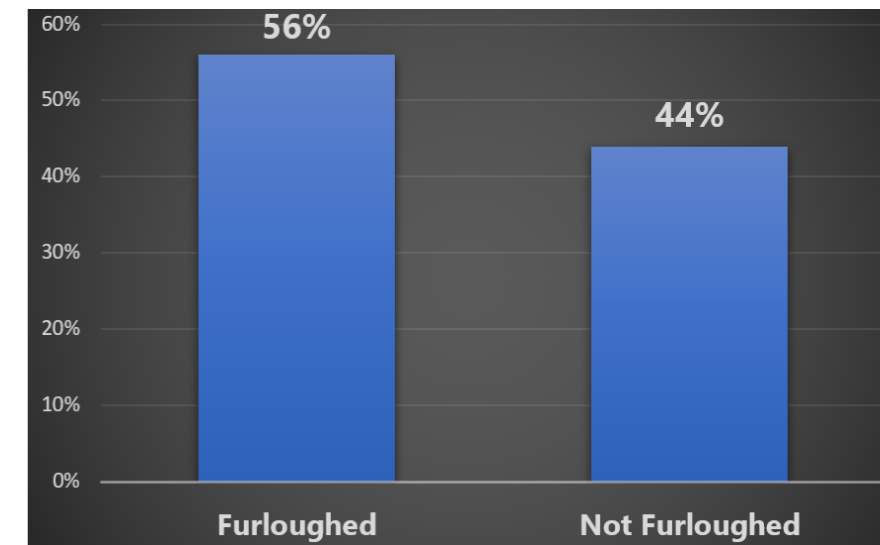
Overall, 44% of employers in our survey said they had NOT had to furlough employees, whilst 56% said that they HAD furloughed staff. 22% of businesses with 11-20 employees HAD furloughed employees, but this falls to 17% for both small businesses with 6-10 employees and 11-20 employees, respectively.

The Job Retention Scheme was a first for the UK. It is hard to fathom what the outcome would have been to businesses had this scheme not been introduced and the ability and relief provided to companies to furlough some or all of their employees. With the Job Retention Scheme and the ability to place employees or retain employees on furlough leave until March 2021, this will hopefully continue to provide much needed relief for all.

### Impact on premises

The news has reported considerably on the 'dying office space' and the need for premises now that the vast majority of the UK's workforce are either working from home full or part time. There have been questions raised as to the ongoing need for a professional workspace or if this is now to be a thing of the past.

Our results found that 61% were staying put in current premises with no changes expected, 33% were staying put, but making changes, and 6% had already vacated their premises in one or more sites. This would suggest that office space or premises is still required in some way or another and that our pre-existing ways of working will remain in some way or another.



# 'Coronavirus Business Impact Survey'

## Results and Statistics

### "Q1 How many employees in your UK business?"

78% of respondents had 15 employees or less, our survey was most popular with smaller businesses

- 78% - 15 employees or less
- 11% - 16 to 50 employees
- 11% - 51 to 100 employees

### "Q2 Where is your employment located?"

- 79% East Midlands
- 11% West Midlands
- 5% East of England
- 5% South West

### "Q2.1 What is your business sector or type?"

- 33% Professional Services
- 22% Construction / Building Trade
- 11% Hospitality/Leisure/Tourism
- 6% Food and Drink
- 6% Manufacturing
- 6% Marketing/Digital/PR/Creative
- 6% Motor/Vehicles or Transport
- 10% Other

### "Q3 How severe has the impact of the coronavirus pandemic been on your business interests?"

- 61% had experienced a low impact to the pandemic, either not very severe (39%) or somewhat severe (22%)
- 22% had experienced a very severe impact to their business
- 39% Not very severe
- 22% Somewhat severe
- 22% Very severe
- 17% No impact

### "Q4 How many employees did you place on furlough leave? (total number on the Job Retention Scheme)"

- 56% of respondents had furloughed employees
- 44% had furloughed none. Of those who furloughed:
- 17% had 1 to 5 employees
- 17% had 6 to 10 employees
- 22% had 11 to 20 employees

### "Q5 How many furloughed employees have now returned to work?"

- 50% None – no furloughed employees have been brought back to work
- 16.7% 1-5 employees
- 16.7% 6-10 employees
- 16.7% 11-20 employees

### "Q6 How positive are you about your business' ability to survive coronavirus over the next 12 months? Select the words that apply..."

- 67% positive or optimistic
- 17% grave doubts or concerns
- 6% negative or pessimistic
- 10% scared, fearful, worried, anxious

### "Q7 How easy have you found implementing Covid safety requirements in your premises?"

79% of businesses found implementing Covid safety measures reasonably easy: Easy (32%) or Fairly Easy (47%)

- 32% Easy
- 47% Fairly easy
- 16% Fairly difficult
- 5% Very difficult

### "Q8 Has the financial loss (or impact) your business has suffered due to the pandemic been:"

61% expressed the financial loss or impact on their business was more than expected (39%), or as expected (22%)

Over one third (39%) of respondents said the financial impact of the pandemic was greater than they had expected

- 22% Less than expected
- 22% As expected
- 39% More than expected
- 17% No financial impact

### "Q9 Have you had to restructure your business in terms of employees' duties?"

28% of businesses have had to restructure employees' duties due to the pandemic

- 72% No
- 28% Yes

### "Q10 Have to had to make redundancies?"

11% of businesses surveyed had made redundancies and a further 10% are expecting redundancies in the future

Nearly a quarter (21%) of businesses have made redundancies or are expecting them in the future

- 79% No
- 11% Yes
- 10% Possibly in the future

### "Q11 Have you received any complaints or disputes from your employees during the pandemic, relating to HR matters?"

- 94% No
- 6% Yes

### "Q12 Have you re-assessed your premises needs due to the pandemic?"

- 61% Staying-put, no changes
- 33% Staying-put, but making changes
- 6% Vacated, planning to vacate one or more sites



# 'Coronavirus Business Impact Survey'

## Contact Us

"I received excellent communication and advice. Very professional."

"I was very happy with the service and how quickly everything was sorted out. Thank you."

"I would just like to say a big thank you for all your help, kindness and guidance through this terrible time. I am sure I couldn't have done it without your help. If I have any further issues I will be in contact with you, and thanks again for everything."



If you would like to find out more about our employment law services, please contact Ashley Hunt on:

(0116) 212 1000  
[ahunt@lawson-west.co.uk](mailto:ahunt@lawson-west.co.uk)

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**Leicester:**  
4 Dominus Way  
Meridian Business Park  
Leicester, LE19 1RP

**Wigston:**  
44 Long Street  
Wigston, Leicester  
LE18 2AH

**Market Harborough:**  
Millers House, Roman Way  
Market Harborough  
LE16 7PQ

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Leicester: 0116 212 1000  
Market Harborough: 01858 445480  
Wigston: 0116 212 1080

[lawson-west.co.uk](http://lawson-west.co.uk)