



Covid-19 Funding and Support Survey for Tourism Businesses in Mid Wales, The Brecon Beacons and surrounding area

This online survey was conducted between 16th and 20th April 2020 and the results represent a snapshot of tourism businesses from across Mid Wales, the Brecon Beacons and surrounding area.

Participants were asked to use the Welsh Government COVID-19 Business Support Eligibility Checker before undertaking our survey to ensure they knew what funding was available to their business.

The survey was completed by 317 tourism businesses covering the following sectors:

- serviced accommodation
- self catering
- caravan and campsites
- attractions
- activity providers
- restaurants, cafe and pubs
- retail
- drink and food producers

The number of respondents from the three groups invited to complete the survey were:

- Brecon Beacons Tourism Members (84 respondents)
- Mid Wales Tourism Members (99 respondents)
- Tourism related businesses in the Brecon Beacons National Park, excluding BBT members (134 respondents)

The aim of the survey was undertaken to understand:

- What financial support businesses had received from the Welsh Government and/or the UK Government Covid-19 schemes
- How many businesses have outcomes pending or are unable to access any financial help so far.
- Understand the impact the Covid-19 crisis is likely to impact on the medium / long term viability of businesses in the region

The Mid-Wales region is largely rural in nature and relies heavily on the tourism sector. The majority of tourism businesses are owner-run micro businesses, with income heavily dependent on the main season March - October.

The survey results and comments show the stark reality and mood of desperation as bills continue to come in, without any indications as to whether business will be able to resume anytime soon.

Key Findings:

Self-employment Scheme - 24% of respondents are waiting to hear whether they will receive income from the self-employment scheme. It should be noted that this scheme is based on average monthly earnings, this will almost certainly cause hardship in the Winter months this year, even if business resumes as early as July.

Business Rates Scheme -27% of respondents are not Business Rated and are therefore not eligible for this scheme.

A further 26% are not VAT registered and 24% do not employ staff meaning and are not eligible for the Economic Resilience grant.

The main groups of respondents who are shown to be excluded from existing grant funding and aid fall within the following categories:

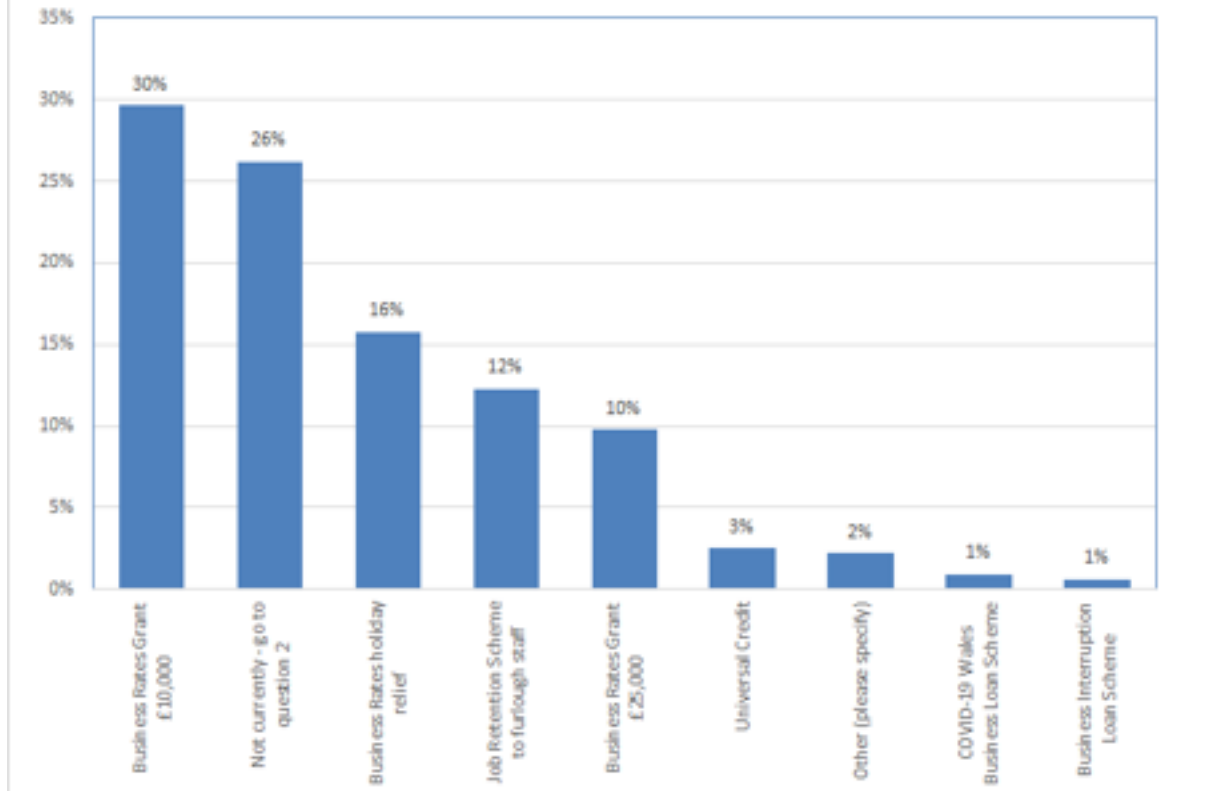
- Company Directors paying themselves by dividends
- New business Startups
- Newer businesses without profits last year
- Self-employed people with holiday lettings falling under the Furnished Holiday Lettings Scheme
- Charities

Business Confidence:

Stark figures about business confidence were reflected in the results including:

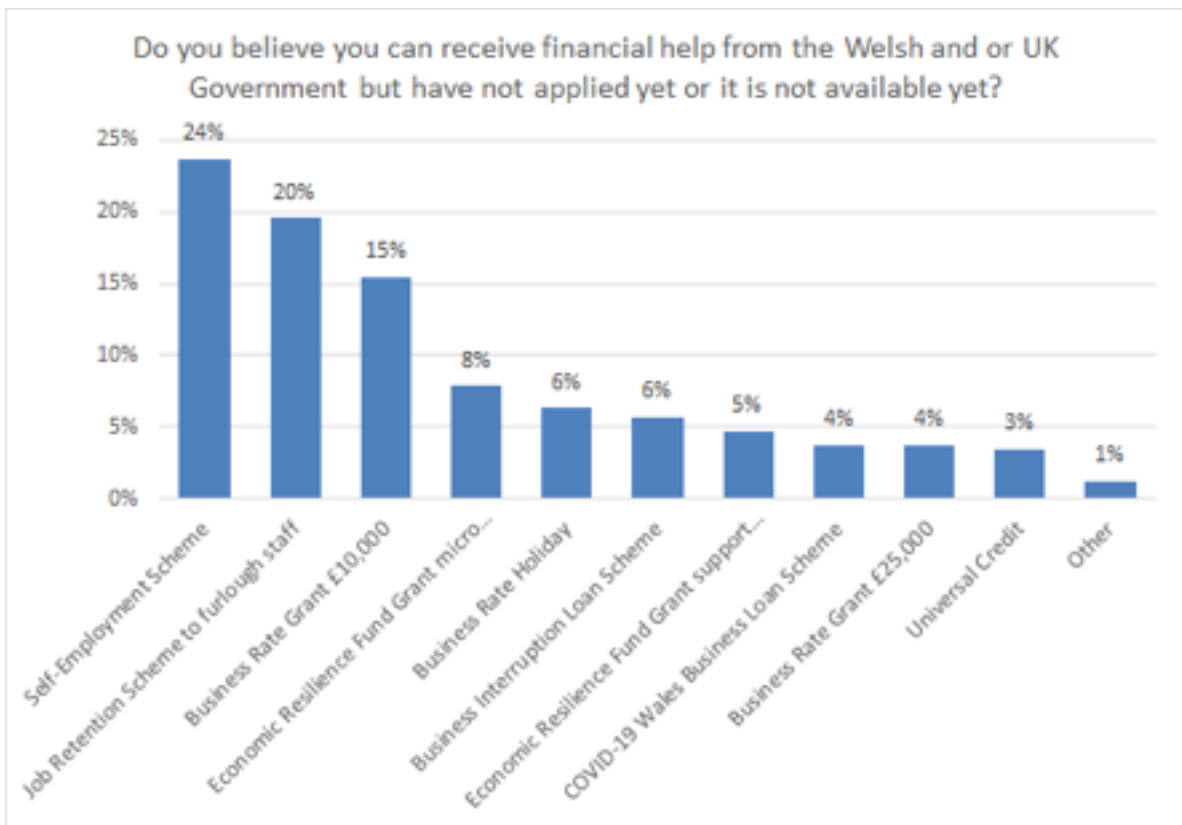
- 31% reported they can survive a maximum of 3 months with current cash flow and 26% are already struggling to pay their bills now.
- 24 % of businesses responded saying they were not at all confident their business would survive until Easter 2021 if they could start trading again in July 2020.
- This increased to 55% of businesses stating they were not at all confident their business would survive until Easter 2021 that if lockdown was lifted by September 2020

Q1 Have you received financial help from the Welsh or UK Governments so far?



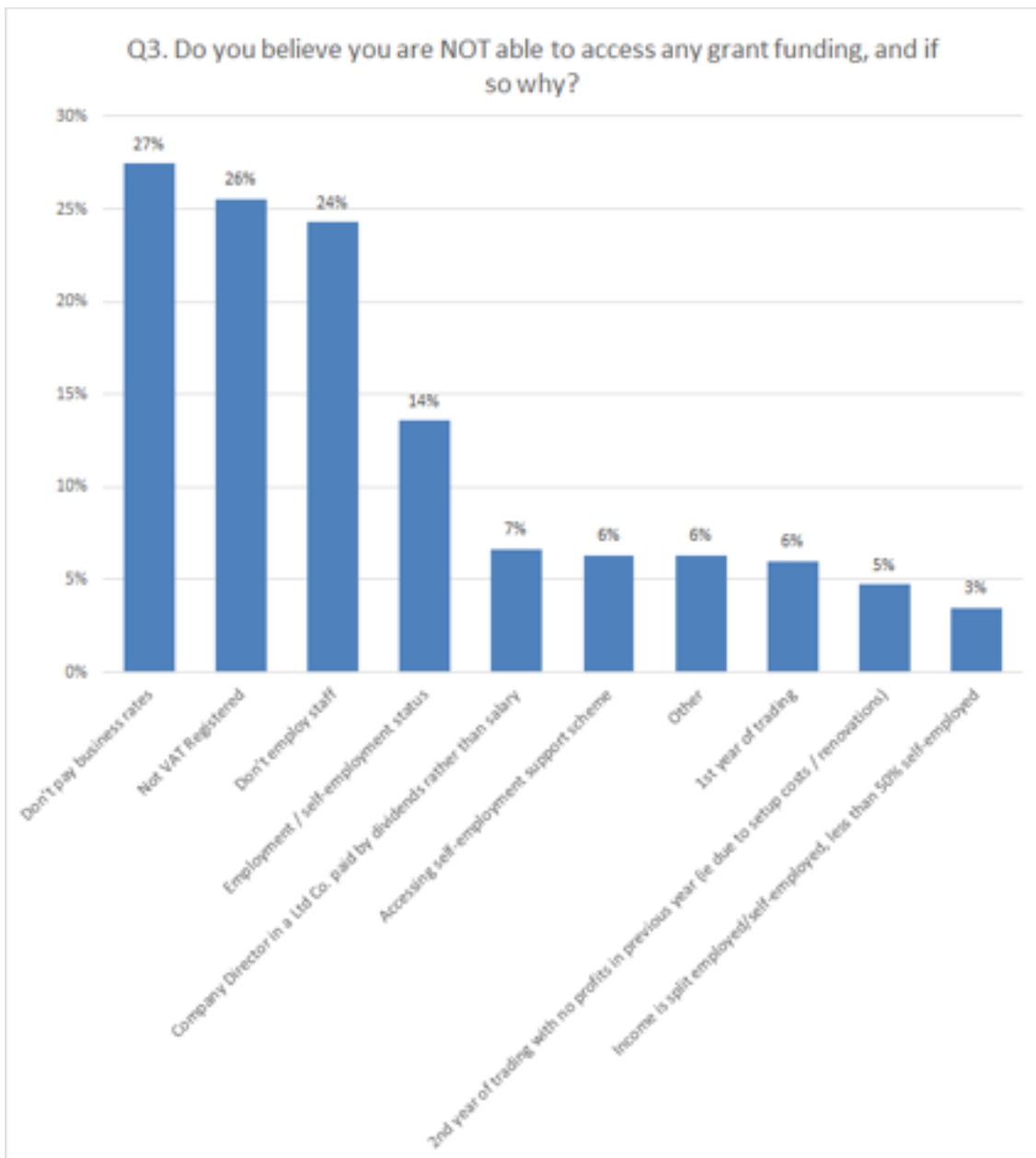
Q1 Other: responses

- £1000 Grant from Welsh Books Council
- no business rates for 2020/21
- Awaiting arrangement of capital repayment holiday



Q2 Other: responses

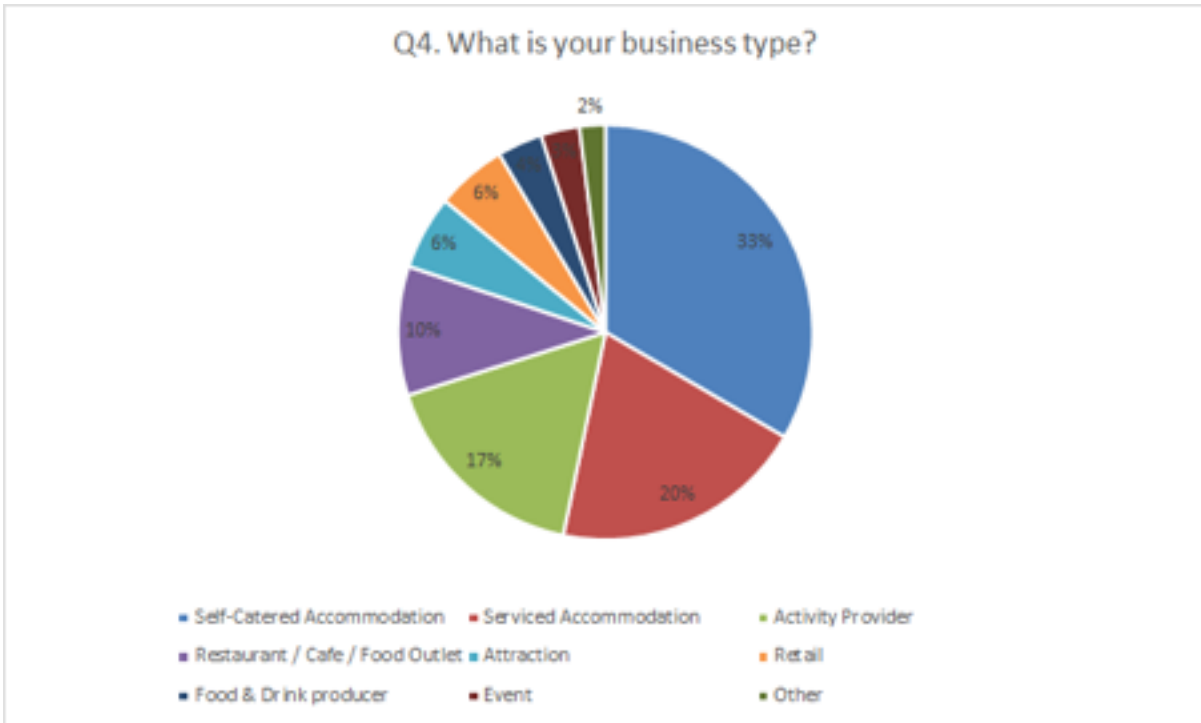
- Holiday cottage in process of being listed for Business Rates.
- Mortgage holiday.



Q3 Other: responses

- Failed eligibility criteria for Economic Resilience Fund - as awaiting loan from DBW, and Not eligible for business Rate Grant as rateable value is over £51,000
- Holiday lets require 12 months trading before applying for business rates.
- Welsh business but 2 employees live just over border into Herefordshire so not eligible for microbusiness grant even though meet rest of criteria
- Company yet to make a profit
- I'm a full-time student as well as business owner who is shielding after receiving a letter from the Welsh Government. I've been refused universal credit based on my student status
- Charity
- Banks not being very cooperative
- Less than 50% income due to pension
- New business so 70 night criteria not yet met. 59 nights currently.
- We are a charity, which apparently negates our access to the SBRR grant. No ERF grant, as we have no PAYE staff
- Have not started trading yet as building not complete and on hold until building contractors start work again

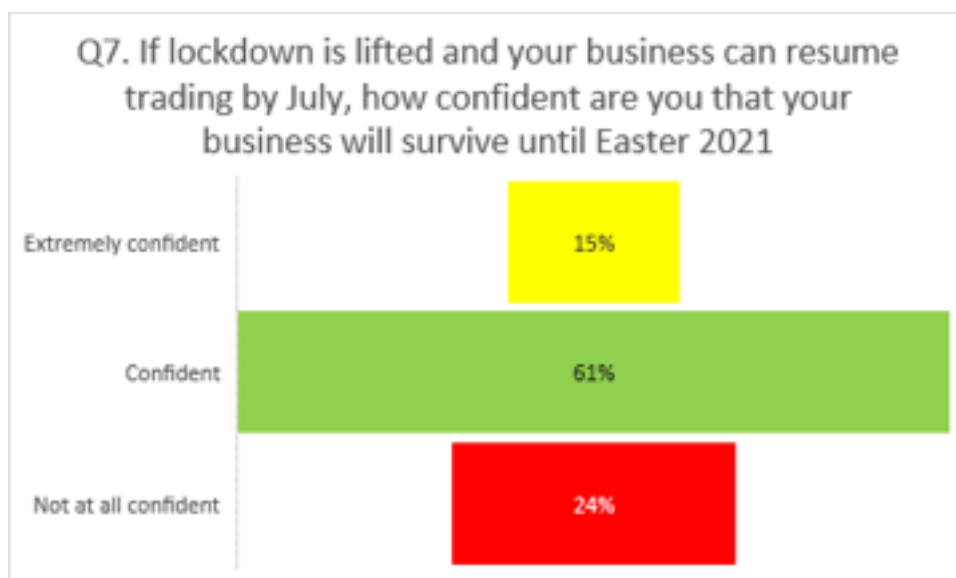
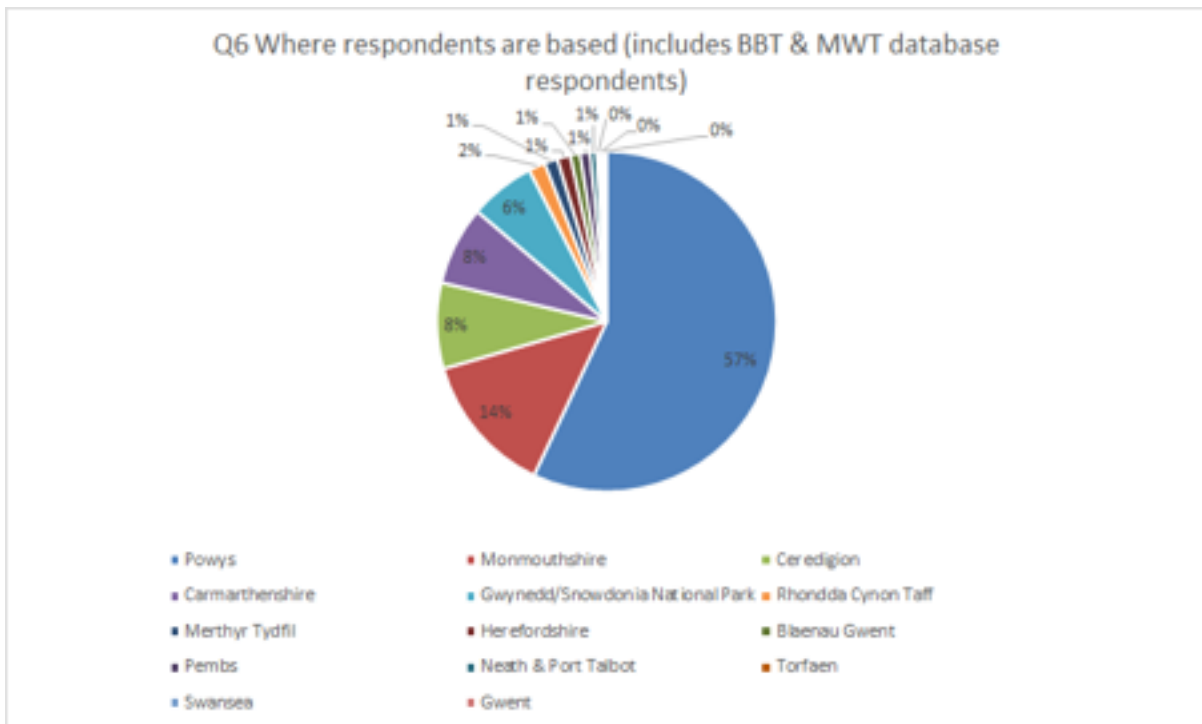
- We are not able to access self-employed scheme because we run a holiday cottage business which comes under Furnished Holiday Letting and is therefore not classed as self-employed income.

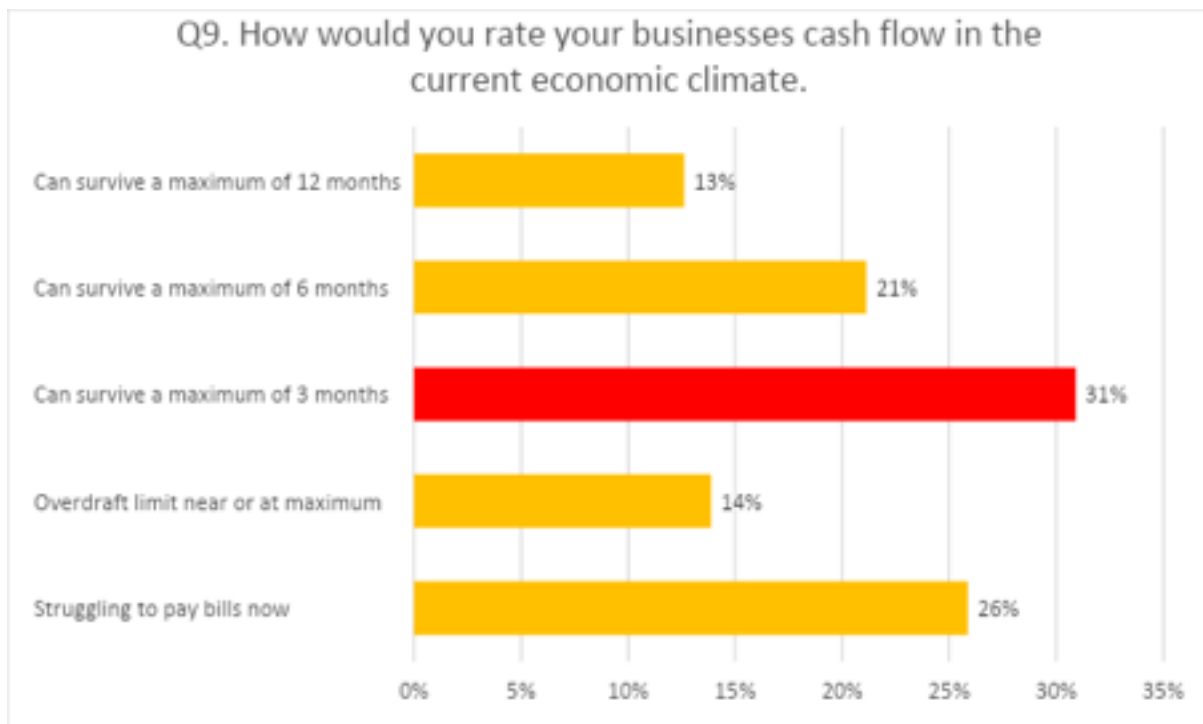
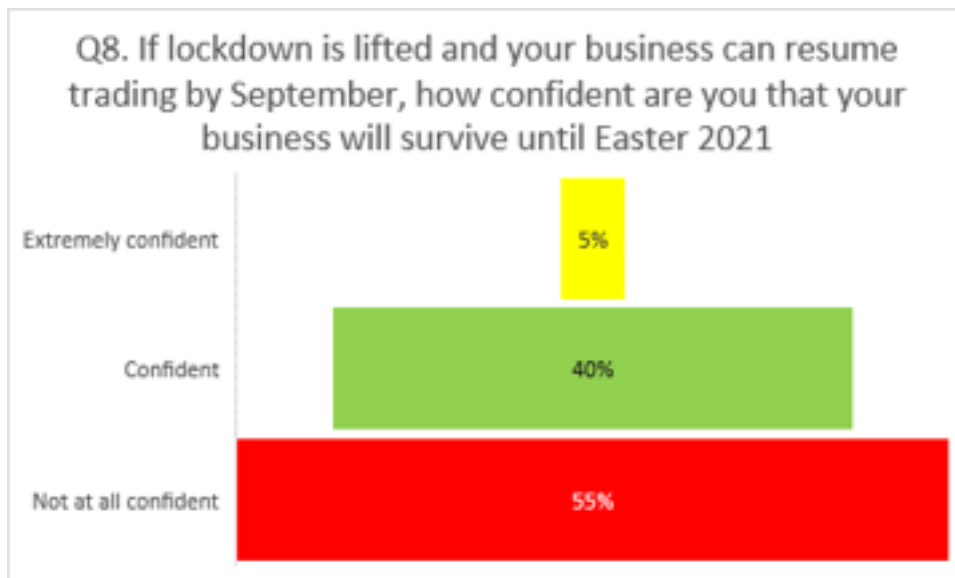


Notes:

Most accommodation providers noted laying laid off regular cleaners and also not using cleaning or building companies.

The data may be skewed for the amount of self-employed workers as many businesses normally employ seasonal workers that may or may not be included in this survey.





Additional recurring comments were:

Living off savings to survive

Cashflow problems while waiting for furlough payment or grants

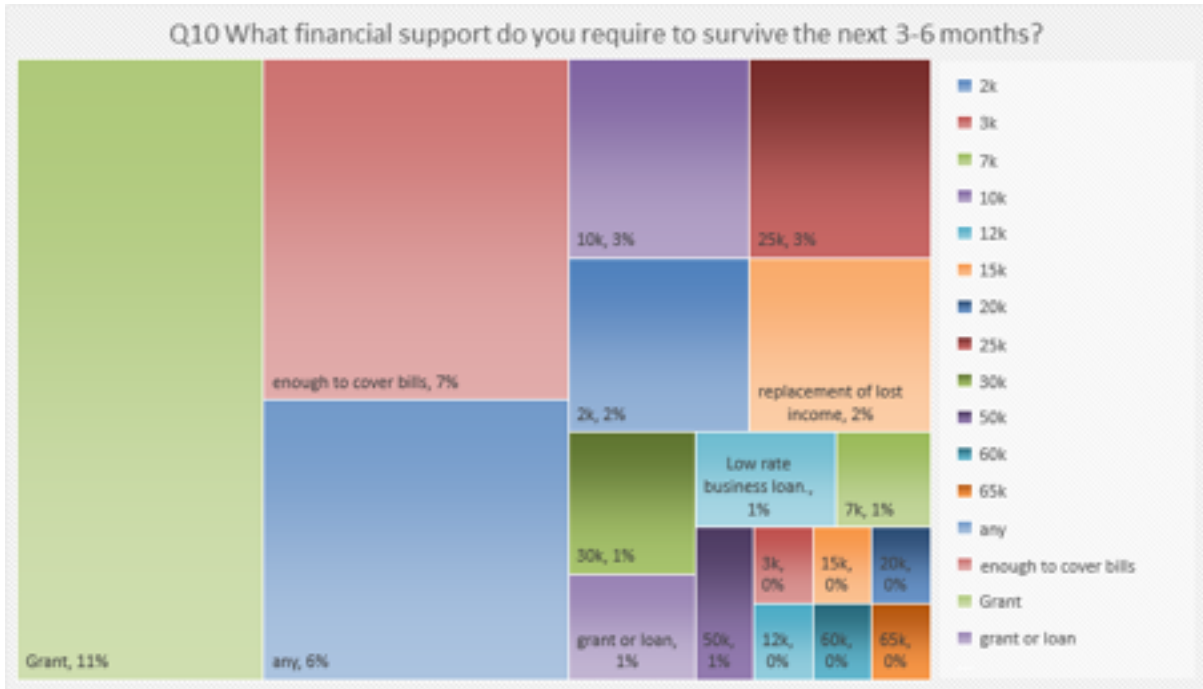
Not enough income to support bills

Invoices will probably not be paid

Additional burden for establishments with animals as ongoing care and welfare costs even when closed

No loan/overdraft available at the moment although applied

Uncertainty over whether Self-Employment Scheme will apply

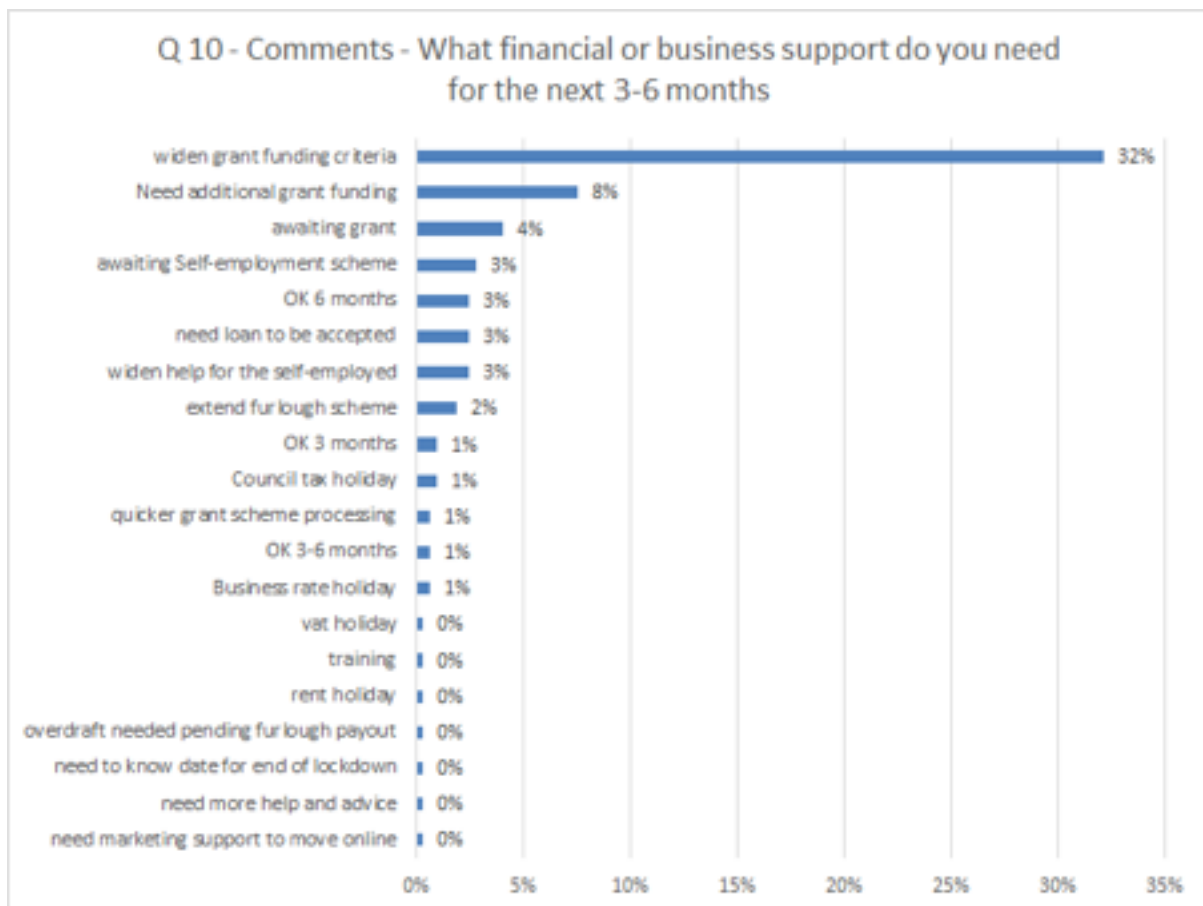


Q10 was an open question. The table above shows where people have made specific requests i.e. an actual amount, a grant or an help etc. Although some respondents were very specific with actual figures, the majority were more general.

It shows that the vast majority of respondents are requesting additional help or access to funding for their business to survive for the next 3-6 months.

Only 9% of respondents reported that they had sufficient resources now for the next 3-6 months with no further funding.

From respondents' comments, 32% indicated that the current grant criteria should be widened to include more businesses, with 8% stating that they will require additional funds to those already received in order to survive the next 3-6 months should lockdown continue.



Specific recurring comments about support needed were:

Further grant funding

Further loan access

Cashflow assistance from September onwards

Take dividends or turnover into consideration for Ltd Companies

Help for small owner-run businesses without employees & not VAT registered

Matching of support to all businesses of £10k grant

Faster processing of existing grants to aid cashflow

Take seasonal turnover into account rather than averaged over 12 months

Include the Furnished Holiday Letting Scheme income in the self-employment scheme