

# Coronavirus Business Impact Monitoring Form

## Consultation Report

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## **Background**

This consultation was developed to assess the medium to long term impact of coronavirus on the business community in Hackney so this information could be used to inform future Council business support provision, economic strategies for the borough and lobbying action.

An initial survey was conducted in March 2020 which remained live until May 2020 and garnered 250 responses from businesses, this informal google form survey addressed the short term impact on businesses and provided valuable insight into industries within the borough that were not receiving or eligible for any existing Government funding and facing severe financial difficulties. The results of this, and further conversations with respondents led to a series of lobbying actions on behalf of Hackney Council calling for further support from the Government and in the short term has helped guide the Council's business support offer during the pandemic.

The original survey, having been developed before any business restrictions and closures were implemented, did not address the medium to long term impact of the pandemic on the different industries within the borough, their financial hardships, loss of employment or rebuilding their business after unprecedented restrictions and the country-wide economic downturn.

The data from this consultation, whilst only a tiny snapshot of how businesses have been affected by the pandemic, will signpost issues that require further investigation on behalf of the Council and other stakeholders to establish the true scale of the impact that coronavirus has had on our economy and support our next phase planning.

## **Consultation Approach**

The consultation was created in Citizen Space, and this is how businesses took part.

Historically it has been difficult to engage with businesses through online surveys in Hackney and so in normal circumstances we would combine the survey with a significant amount of face to face engagement through business forums and other meetings however social distancing measures have meant all communication channels for this consultation have been online.

The communication channels used to promote the consultation were:

- LBH coronavirus business [support page](#) and Hackney Business Network business [support page](#)
- Hackney Business Network newsletters ( 6000 subscribers) on the following dates [15 May](#), [29 May](#), [5 June](#)
- Hackney Council newsletter (need to find out date)
- Consultation featured in the news section of the Hackney Business Network [website](#)
- Sent to the East End Trades Guild and Federation of Small Businesses to share with their members.

- Promoted on @hacknecouncil and @hackneybusiness twitter pages

## **Response Rate**

A total of 129 responses were received to this consultation from different businesses.

## Executive Summary

### **About your business**

- The highest percentage of businesses were in Hoxton East and Shoreditch (**28 - 22.4%**). Hoxton West and Shoreditch were the second highest (**15 - 12%**), closely followed by Dalston (**14 - 11.2%**)
- The majority of businesses stated that their business property is not a Council property (**105 - 82%**), with a small percentage stating it is (**23 - 18%**)
- There was a variety of industry/sectors selected, with the top two being “Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services” and “Retail” (**30 responses each - 23.81%**)
- The majority of businesses, just over three quarters, stated that their business is currently closed (**97 - 75.8%**), with just under a quarter stating that they are still open (**31 - 24.2%**)
- The majority of businesses, almost two thirds, stated that they do have a Hackney business rates account (**82 - 64.1%**), with just over a third stating that they do not (**46 - 35.9%**)

### **About your staff**

- The majority of businesses stated that they “employ staff” (**74 - 58.73%**).
- The majority of businesses stated that they had 1-10 employees (**87 - 83.65%**) on their payroll as of 19 March 2020
- The majority of businesses, just over three quarters, stated that they did not have to make redundancies as a result of the pandemic (**83 - 76.1%**), with just under a quarter stating that they did (**26 - 23.9%**)
- The majority of businesses, at just over three quarters, stated that they had to furlough staff as a result of the pandemic (**83 - 77.6%**), with under a quarter stating that they didn’t (**24 - 22.4%**)
- The highest percentage response was “Yes” to those businesses that do employ freelancers or contractors (**69 - 54.8%**), with a smaller but not significant percentage difference stating “No” (**57 - 45.2%**)
- Of the 69 businesses who responded to this question, all of them stated “Yes” to cutting or removing entirely their staff hours since the start of the pandemic

### **Your business income**

- The majority of businesses, at just over three quarters, have suffered a loss of between 76% - 100% of their income since the start of the pandemic (**96 - 76.2%**). Only one business stated that they have suffered no loss
- The majority of businesses have stated that any further drop is not sustainable (**73 - 57.9%**)

### **Accessing support**

- The highest percentage response relates to those who have accessed or are in the process of applying for the “Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme” **(64 - 22.7%)**
- The highest percentage response of those who have applied for but have been found “not eligible” to receive, relates to “Retail, Hospitality and Leisure - Grant Fund or Small Business Grant Fund” **(28 - 32.18%)**
- The highest percentage response relates to those who are accessing business support information and guidance from the Government website **(103 - 22.64%)**, closely followed by the Hackney Council website **(98 - 21.54%)**
- The majority of businesses are satisfied with how well Hackney Council has kept them informed about Coronavirus support and guidance **(87 - 68.5%)**
- The majority of businesses, at two thirds, think that the support provided by the Government is not enough **(84 - 66.7%)**
- The highest percentage response relates to those who would like a lobby central government for more support **(91 - 30.64%)**

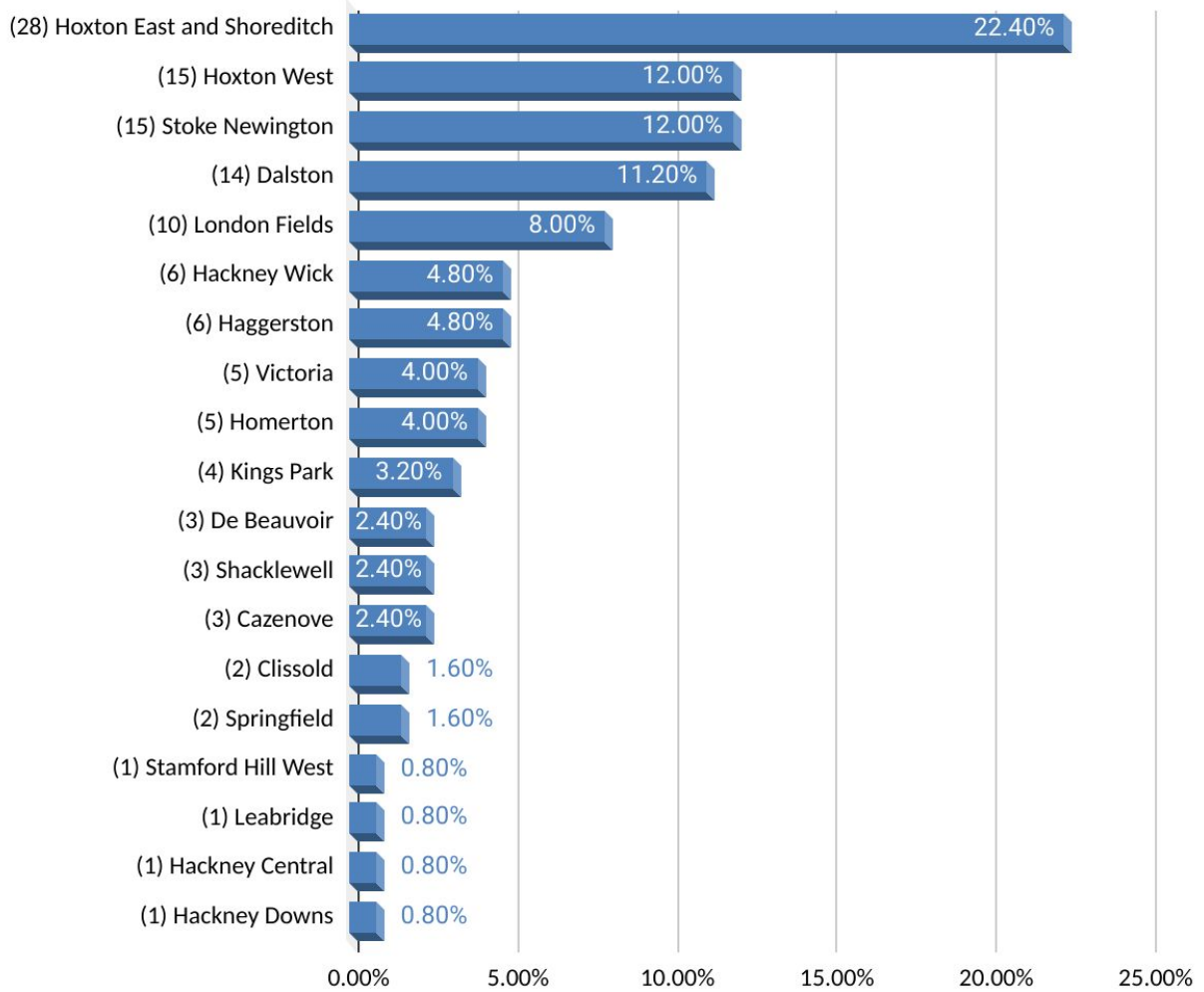
### **The next phase**

- The highest percentage response for those thinking about the next 3-6 months and what the biggest concerns are, relates to those who are most concerned about being able to pay rent and utilities **(103 - 16.35%)**
- The majority of businesses are reducing their outgoings to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic **(63 - 55.3%)**
- The highest percentage response relates to those who stated that they will easily reopen once the Government restrictions are lifted **(67 - 59.8%)**
- The majority of businesses have stated that they will need further support from the Government or Hackney Council in the next 3-6 months **(109 - 89.3%)**.

# Summary of Responses

## About your business

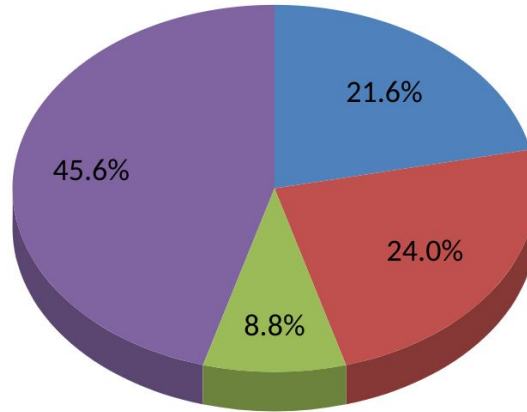
### Q2. Business location by Ward (Base 125)



The highest percentage of businesses were in Hoxton East and Shoreditch (28). Hoxton West and Shoreditch were the second highest (15), closely followed by Dalston (14).



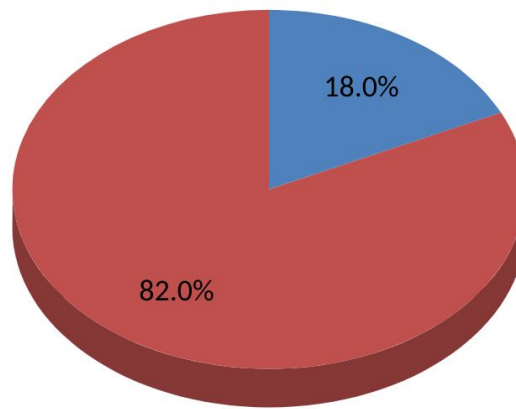
**Business location by Area (Base 125)**



● North Hackney ● Central Hackney ● East Hackney ● South Hackney

The highest percentage of businesses were in South Hackney (57), followed by Central Hackney (30), North Hackney (27) and East Hackney (11).

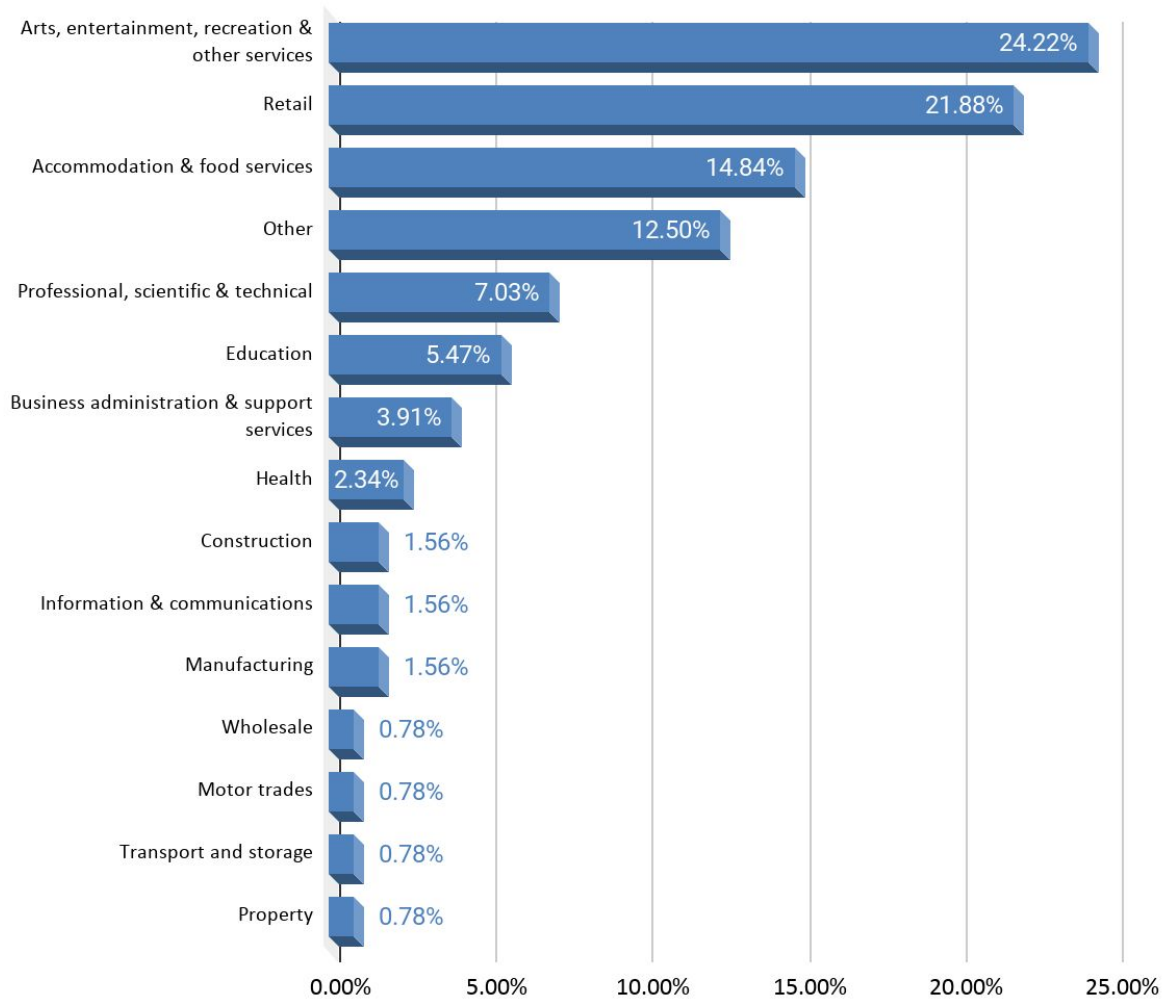
**Q3. Is this a Council property? (Base 128)**



● Yes ● No

The majority of businesses stated that their business property is not a Council property (105), with a small percentage stating it is (23).

#### Q4. Industry/Sector (Base 128)

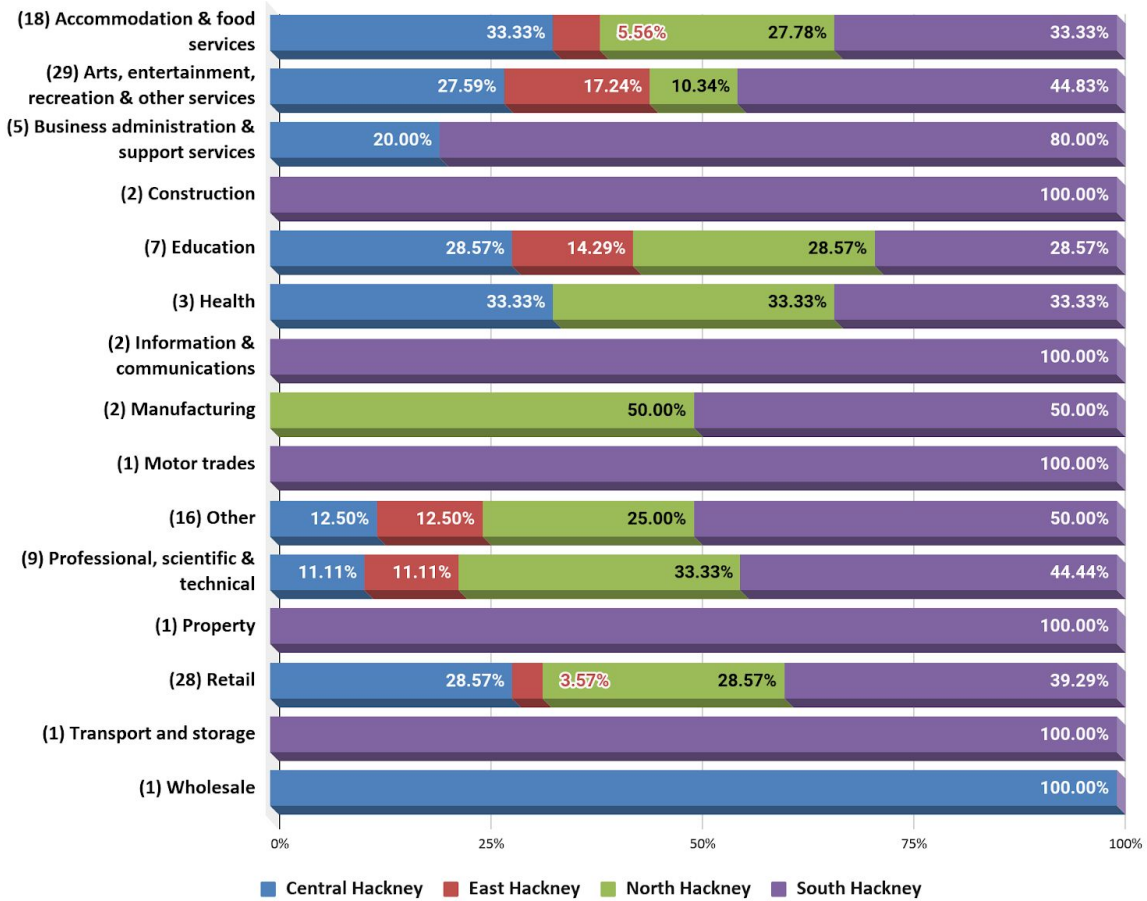


There was a variety of industry/sectors selected, with the top two being “Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services” and “Retail” (31 and 28 respectively).

Those who stated “Other” included the following:

- Hairdressers/Salon
- Childcare/ day nursery
- Co-Working (Facility hire)
- Non profit
- Shared workspace

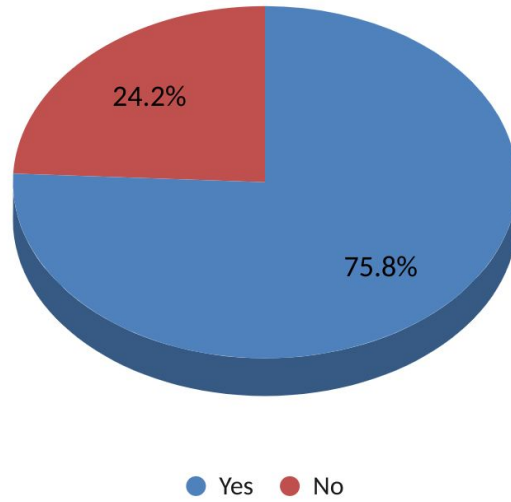
## Industry/Sector by Hackney Area



**Q6. If you are a workspace provider, please state how many business tenants are within your spaces in Hackney?**

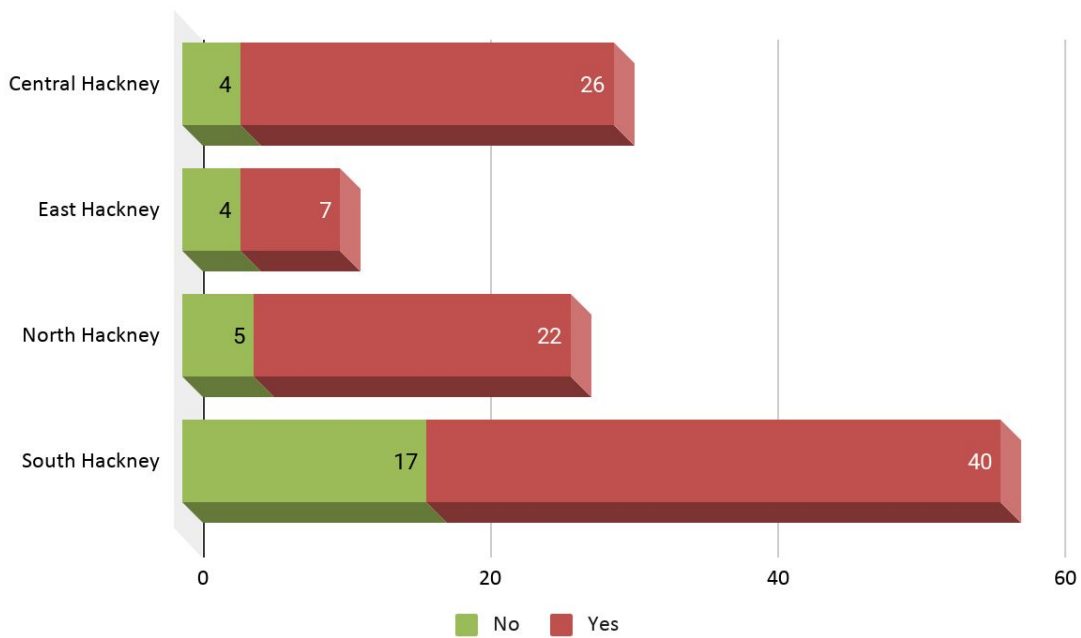
The list of business names and how many business tenants are within their spaces in Hackney, can be found in the appendix at the end of the report.

**Q7. Is your business currently closed? (Base 128)**

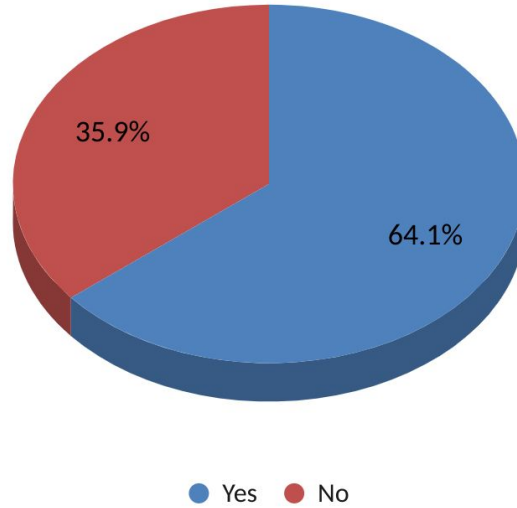


The majority of businesses, just over three quarters, stated that their business is currently closed (97), with just under a quarter stating that they are still open (31).

**“Is your business currently closed?” by Hackney Area**



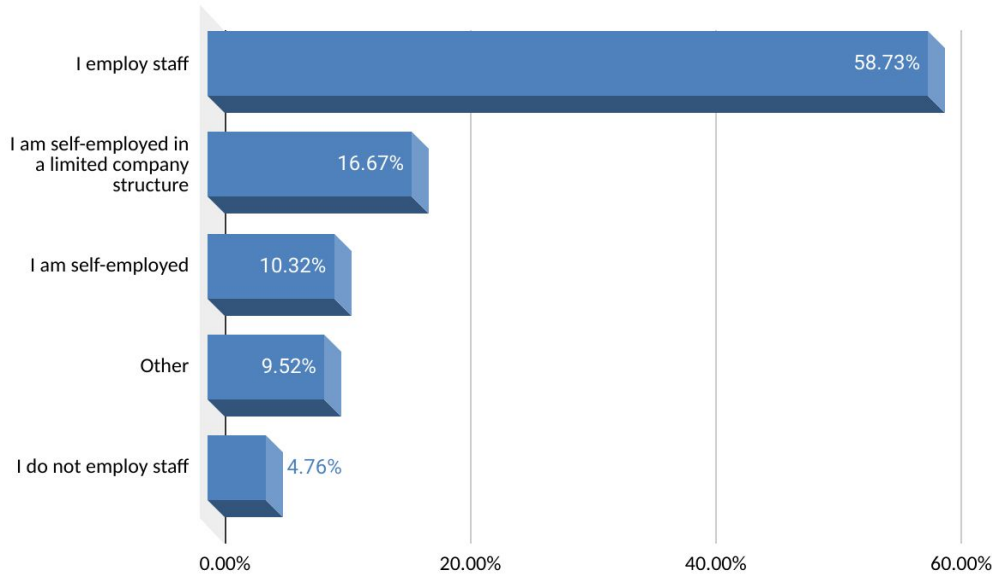
**Q8. Do you have a Hackney business rates account? (Base 128)**



The majority of businesses, almost two thirds, stated that they do have a Hackney business rates account (82), with just over a third stating that they do not (46).

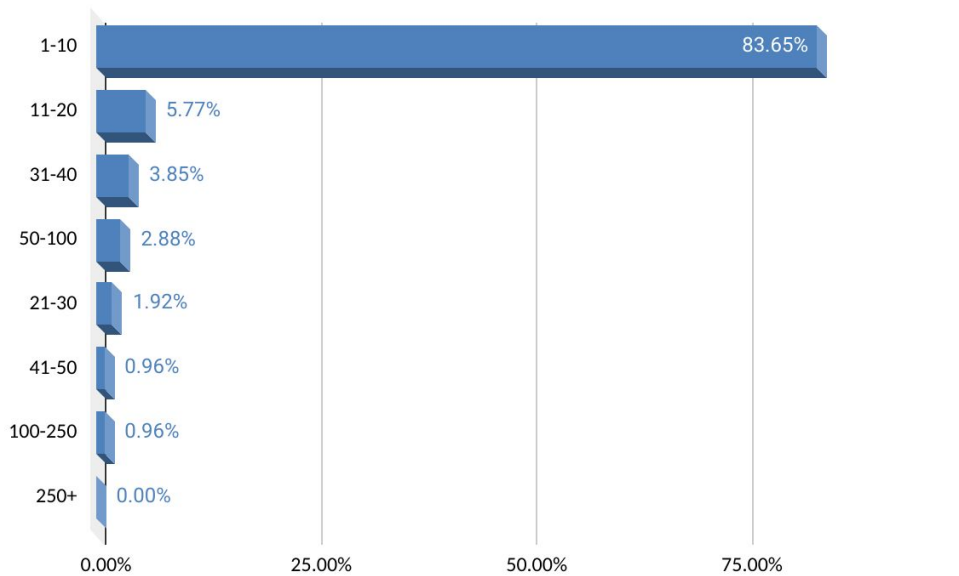
## About your staff

**Q9. Please let us know if you employ staff, if you are self-employed or self-employed under limited company structure (Base 126)**



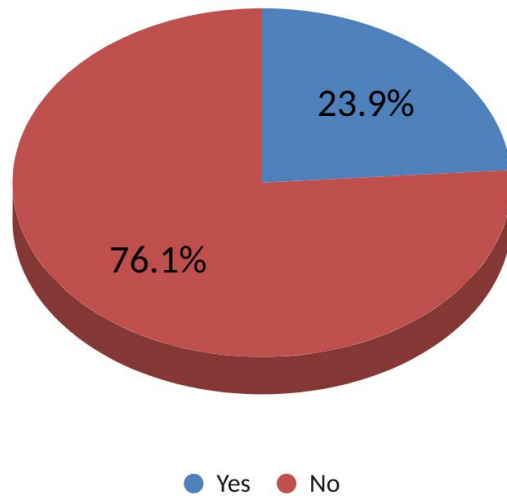
The majority of businesses stated that they “employ staff” (74). This is followed by those who are “self-employed in a limited company structure” (21), just “self-employed” (13), “other” (12) and those who “do not employ staff” (6).

**Q10. How many employees did you have on payroll on 19 March 2020? (Base 104)**



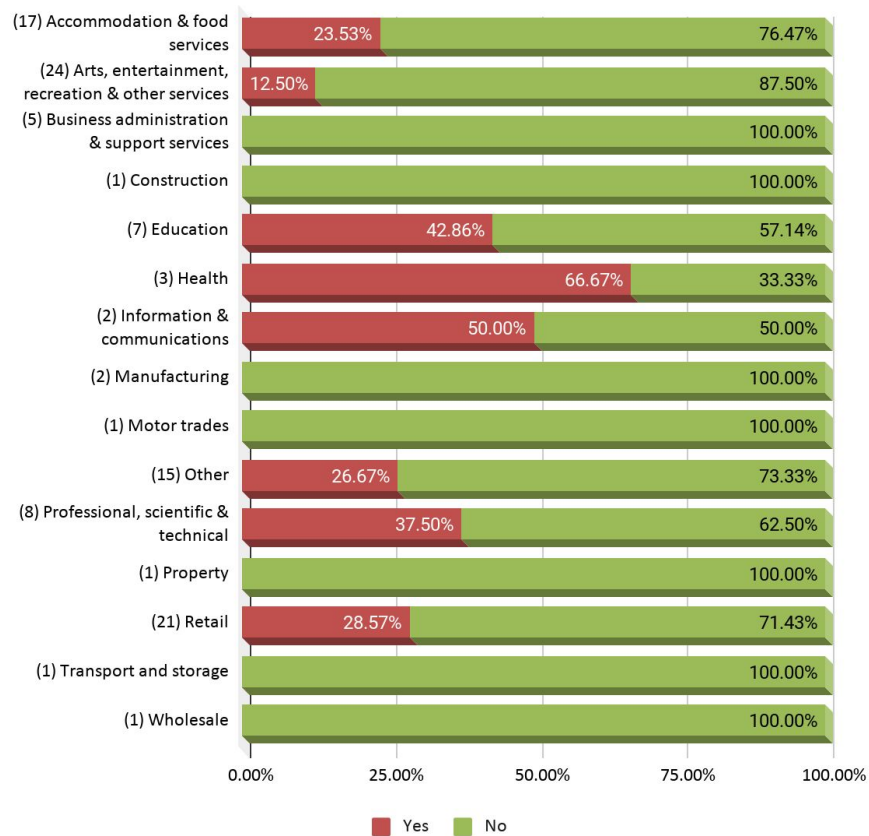
The majority of businesses stated that they had 1-10 employees (87) on their payroll as of 19 March 2020.

**Q11. Have you had to make any redundancies as a result of the pandemic? (Base 109)**

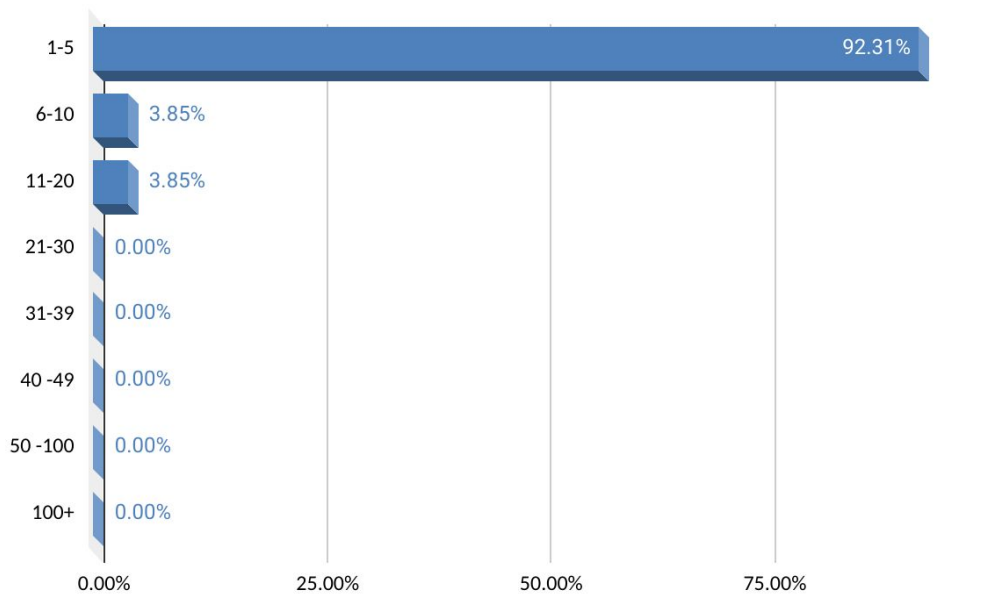


The majority of businesses, just over three quarters, stated that they did not have to make redundancies as a result of the pandemic (83), with just under a quarter stating that they did (26).

**“Have you had to make any redundancies as a result of the pandemic?” By Industry/Sector**

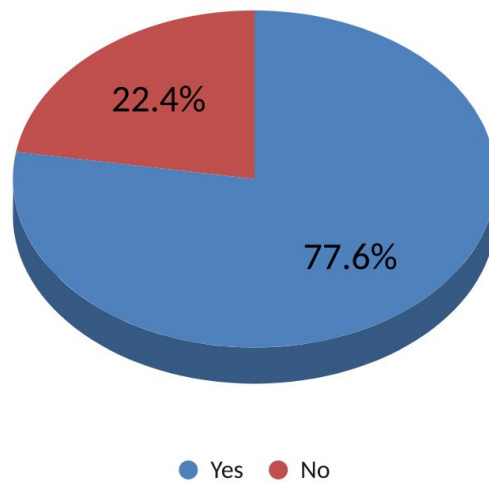


**Q12. Please state how many? (Base 26)**



Of those who had to make redundancies, the majority number was between 1-5 staff (24).

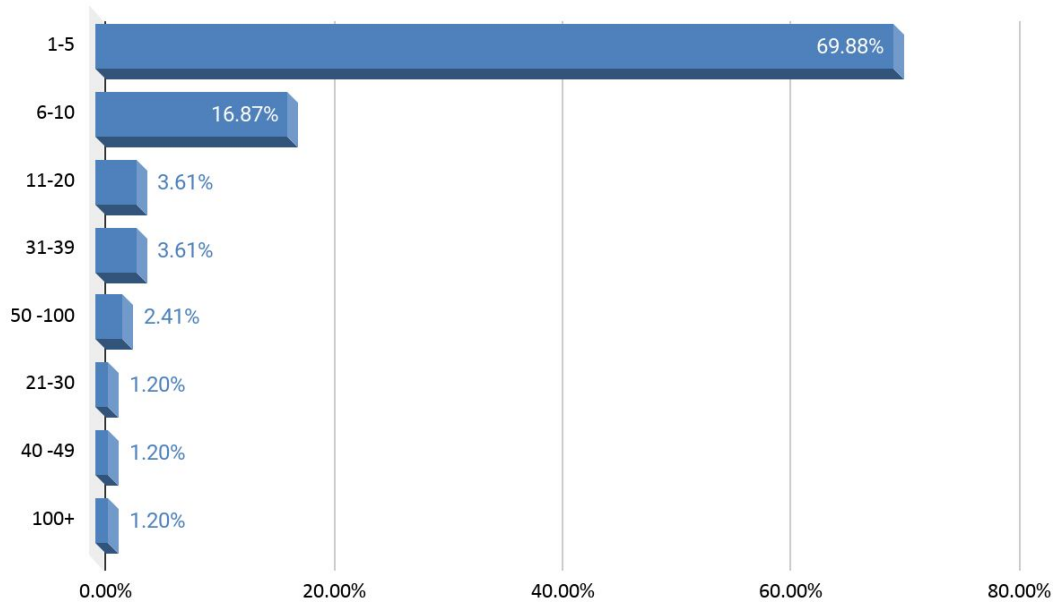
**Q13. Have you had to furlough staff as a result of the pandemic? (Base 107)**



The majority of businesses, at just over three quarters, stated that they had to furlough staff as a result of the pandemic (83), with under a quarter stating that they didn't (24).

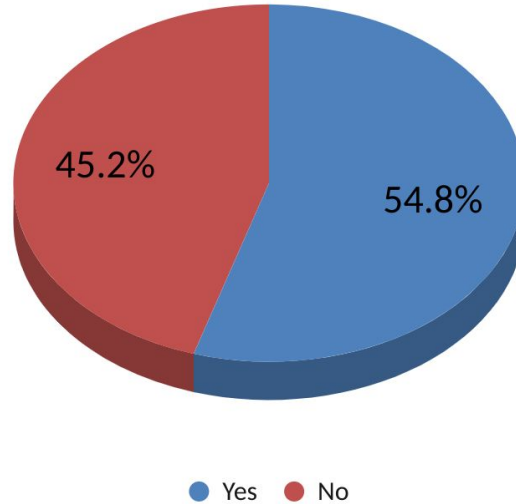


**Q14. Please state how many? (Base 83)**



Of those who had to furlough staff, the majority number was between 1-5 staff (58), then 6-10 staff (14). All others were a much smaller number.

**Q15. Do you employ freelancers or contractors? (Base 126)**



The highest percentage response was “Yes” to those businesses that do employ freelancers or contractors (69), with a smaller but not significant percentage difference stating “No” (57).

**Q16. Have their hours been cut or removed entirely since the start of the pandemic? (Base 69)**

Of the 69 businesses who responded to this question, all of them stated “Yes” to cutting or removing entirely their staff hours since the start of the pandemic.

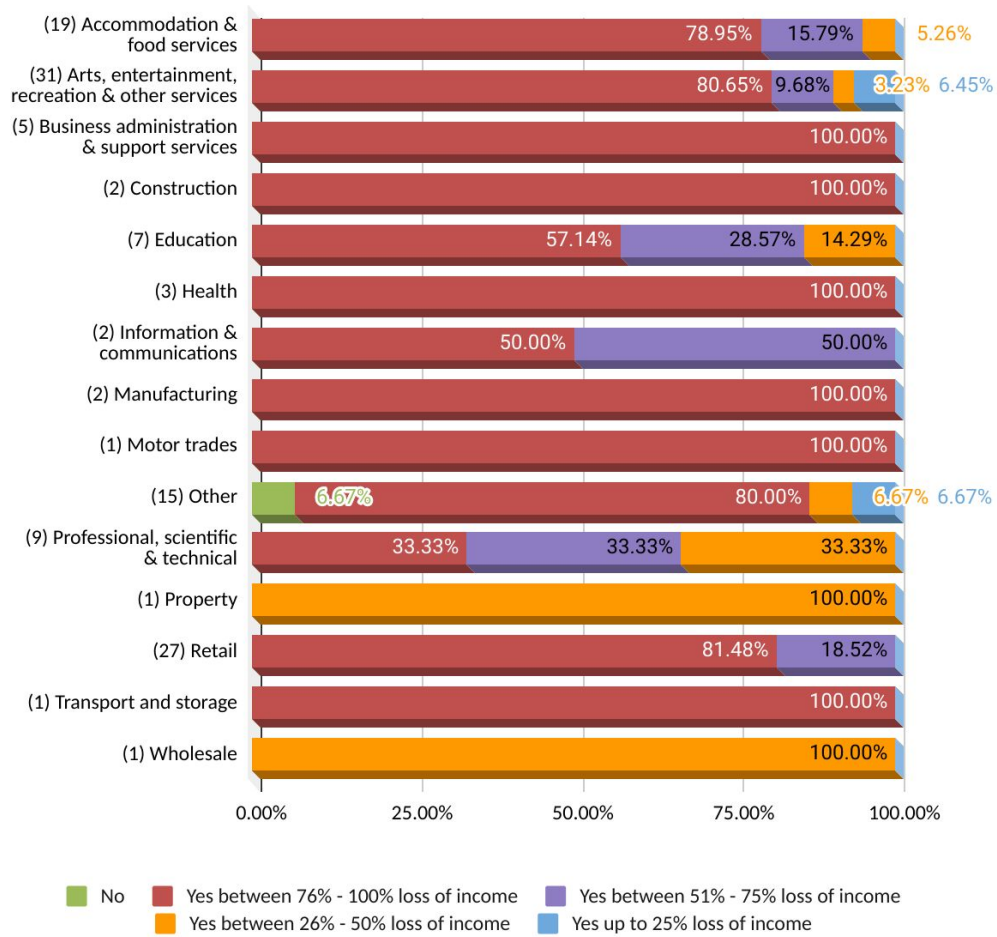
## **Your business income**

**Q17. Have you suffered losses to your business income since the start of the pandemic?**

**(Base 126)**

The majority of businesses, at just over three quarters, have suffered a loss of between 76% - 100% of their income since the start of the pandemic (96). Only one business stated that they have suffered no loss.

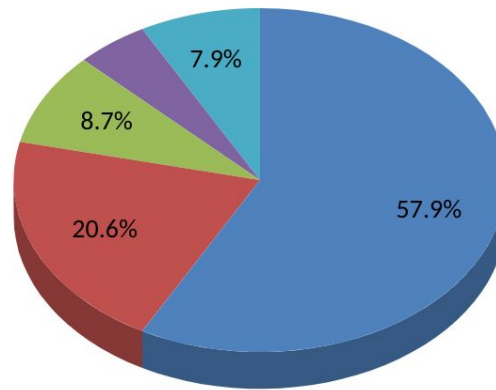
**“Have you suffered losses to your business income since the start of the pandemic?” by Industry/Sector**



**“Have you suffered losses to your business income since the start of the pandemic?” by Hackney Area**



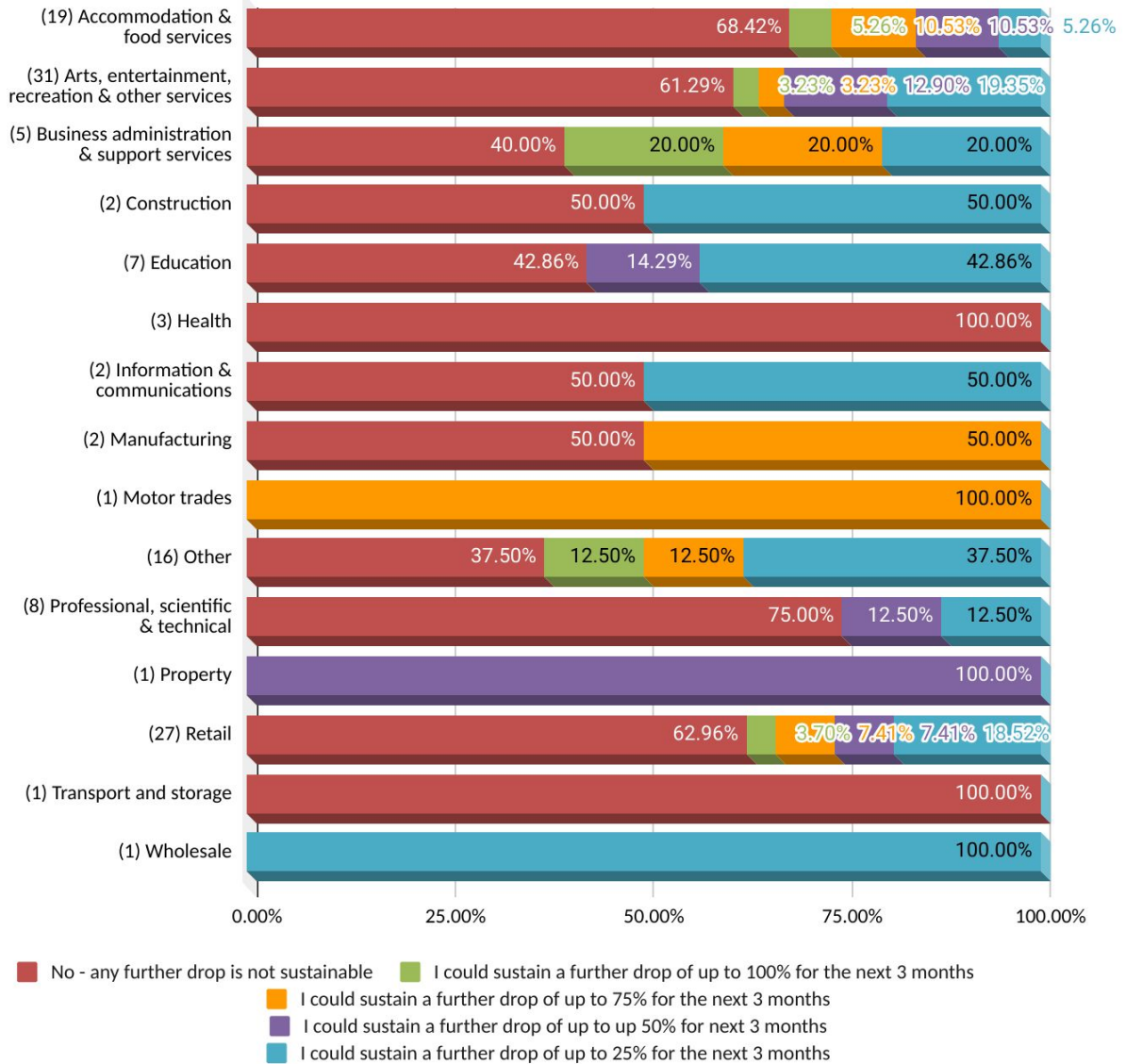
**Q18. Thinking about the viability of your business over the next 3 months could you or could you not sustain a further drop in income? (Base 126)**



- No - any further drop is not sustainable
- I could sustain a further drop of up to 25% for the next 3 months
- I could sustain a further drop of up to up 50% for next 3 months
- I could sustain a further drop of up to 100% for the next 3 months
- I could sustain a further drop of up to 75% for the next 3 months

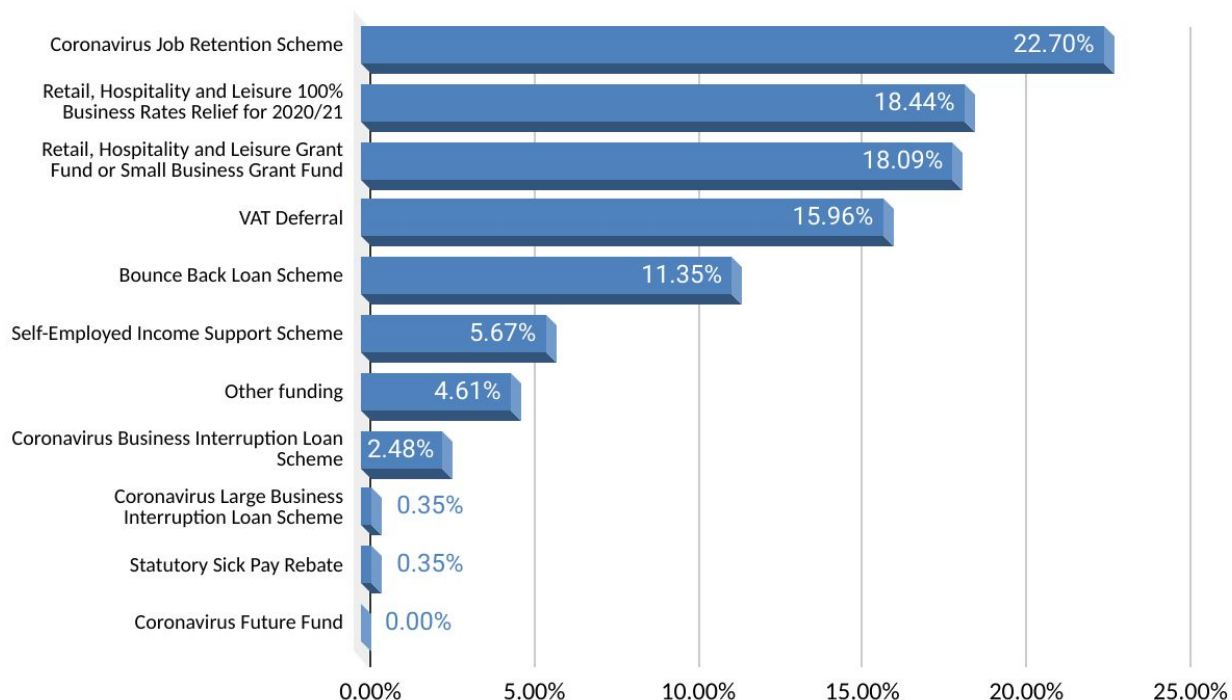
The majority of businesses have stated that any further drop is not sustainable (73). This is followed by those who could sustain a further drop of up to 25% (26), then up to 50% (11), then up to 75% (10) and then those who could sustain a further drop of up to 100% for the next 3 months.

**“Thinking about the viability of your business over the next 3 months could you or could you not sustain a further drop in income?” by Industry/Sector**



## Accessing support

**Q19. Please tick all the financial support you have accessed or are in the process of applying for. You can find information about all these schemes on the Government website (Base 282 responses)**

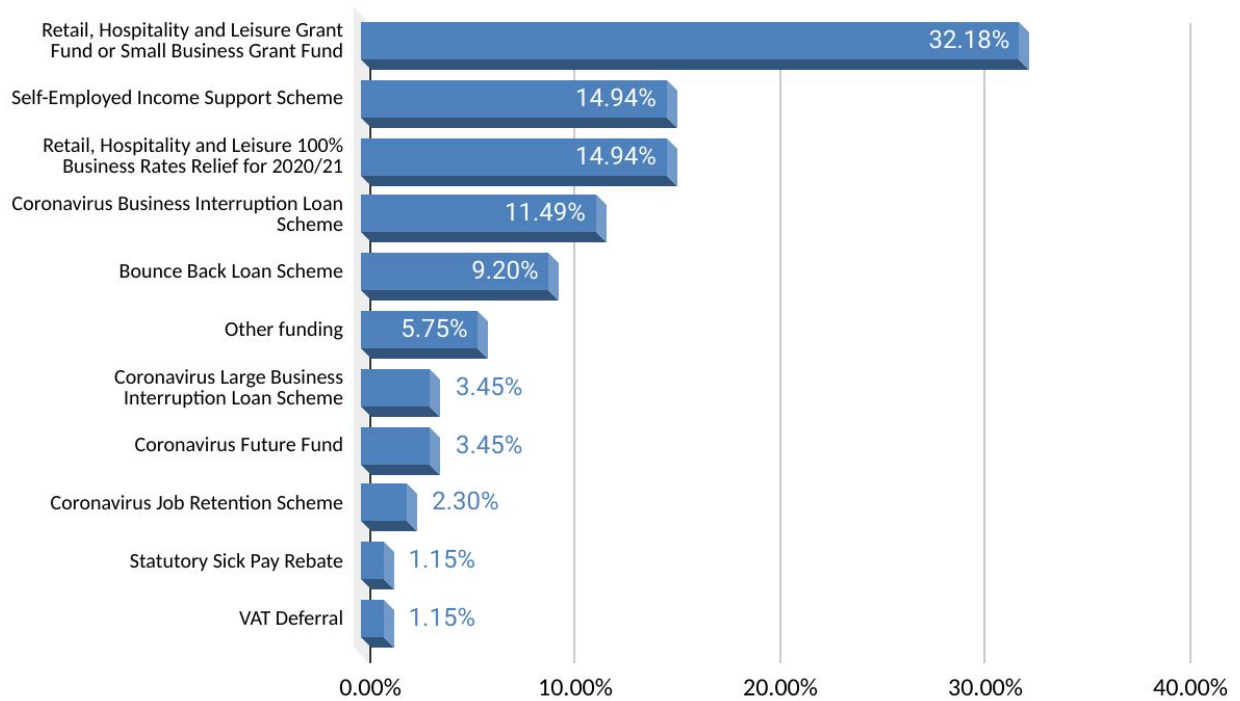


The highest percentage response relates to those who have access or are in the process of applying for the “Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme” (64). This is followed by “Retail, Hospitality and Leisure - 100% Business Rates Relief for 2020/21” (52), “Retail, Hospitality and Leisure - Grant Fund or Small Business Grant Fund” (51), “VAT Deferral” (45) and “Bounce Back Loan Scheme” (32). All others account for a much smaller percentage.

There were 25 comments from those who specified “Other funding”, and the key themes are below:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Count</u>
Fund schemes	8
Grants scheme	8
Other	3
Universal credit	2
Business rates deferral	1
Job retention scheme	1
Furlough pay	1
Bounce back loan	1
Mayor of London	1

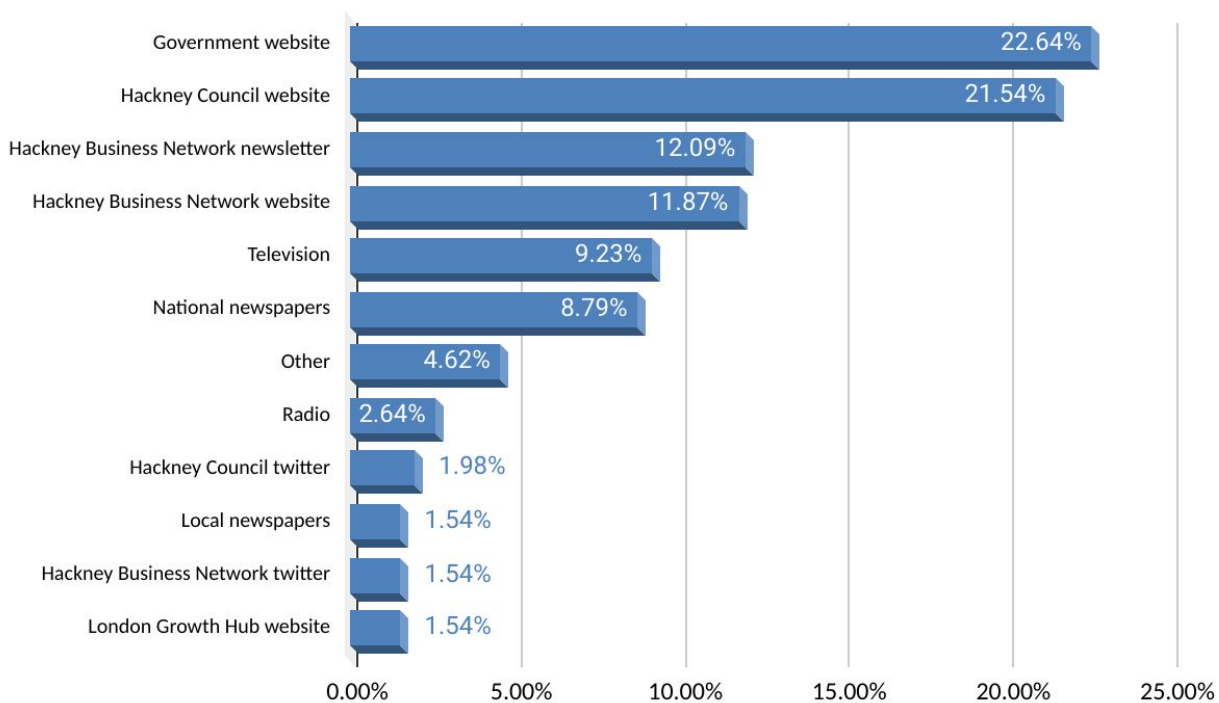
**Q20. Please tick all of the financial support you have applied for but have been found "not eligible" to receive (Base 87)**



The highest percentage response relates to “Retail, Hospitality and Leisure - Grant Fund or Small Business Grant Fund” (28). This is followed by “Self-Employed Income Support Scheme” and “Retail, Hospitality and Leisure 100% Business Rates Relief for 2020/21” (13 each), “Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme” (10) and “Bounce Back Loan Scheme” (8). All others account for a much smaller percentage.



**Q21. Where are you accessing business support information and guidance during this period? (please tick all that apply) (Base 455 responses)**

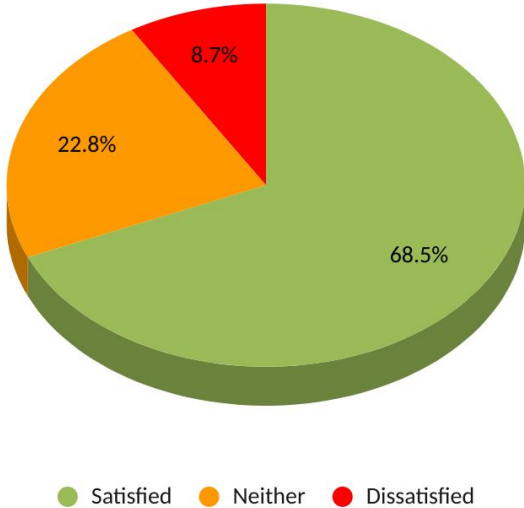


The highest percentage response relates to those who are accessing business support information and guidance from the Government website (103), closely followed by the Hackney Council website (98). Hackney Business Network newsletter and website are the next most accessed (55 and 54 respectively), followed by television (42) and national newspapers (40). All others account for a much smaller percentage.

There were 22 comments from those who specified “Other”, and the key themes are below:

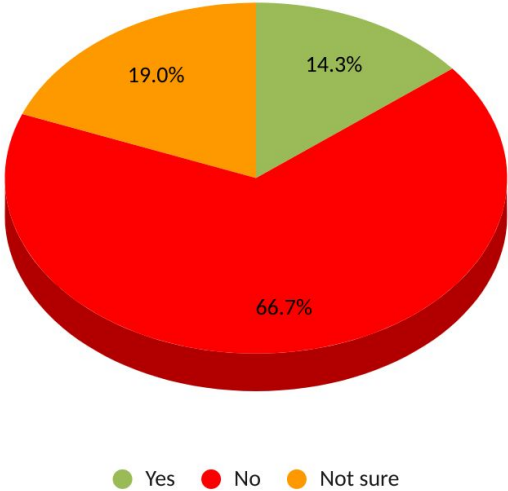
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Count</b>
Business or industry representation group	10
Accountants	6
Internet	4
Word of mouth	1

**Q22. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how well Hackney Council has kept businesses informed about coronavirus support and guidance? (Base 127)**



The majority of businesses are satisfied with how well Hackney Council has kept them informed about Coronavirus support and guidance (87). Just under a quarter gave a neutral response (29) with a small percentage being dissatisfied (11).

**Q23. Do you think the support provided by the Government is enough? (Base 126)**

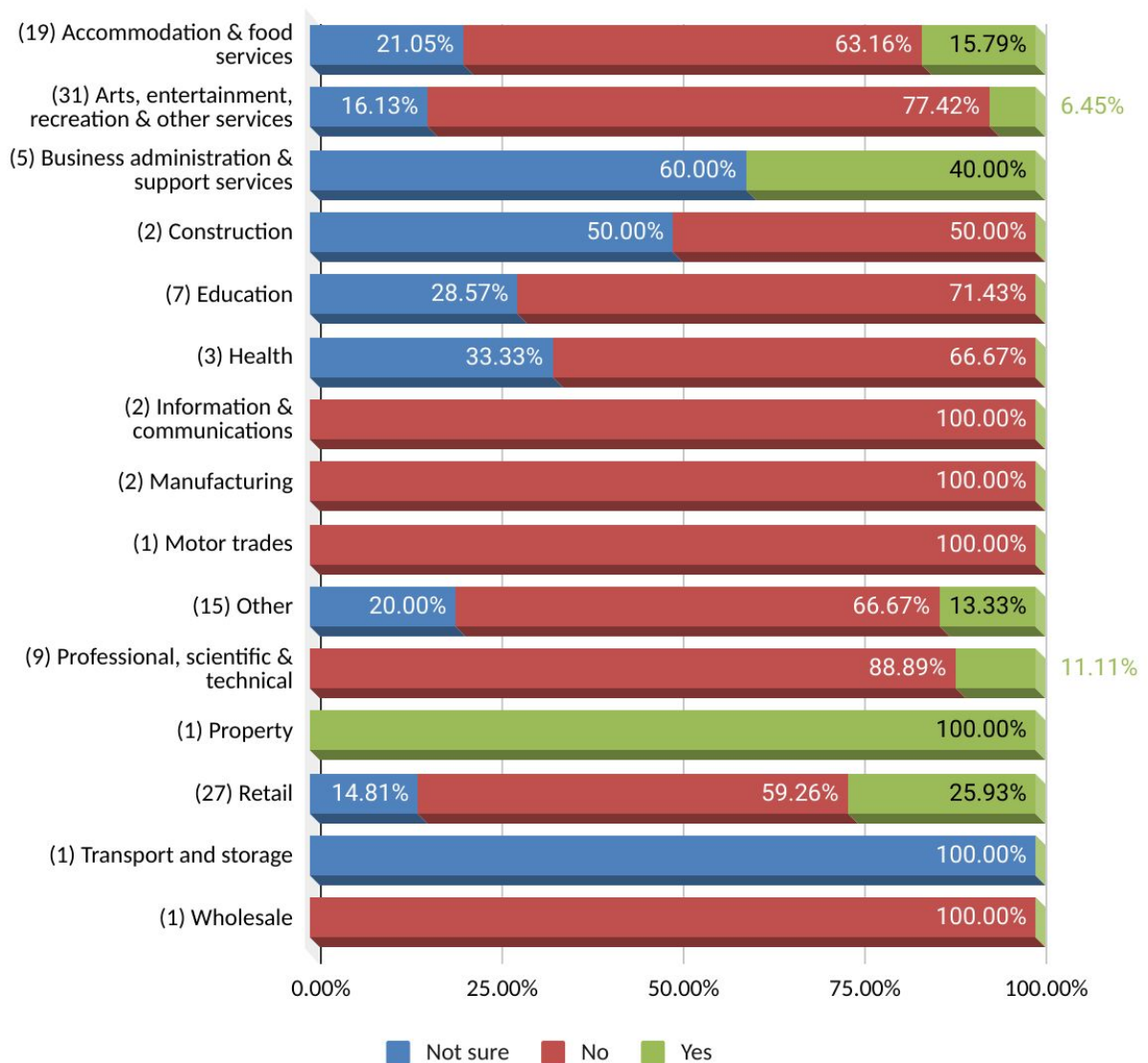


The majority of businesses, at two thirds, think that the support provided by the Government is not enough (84). Only 14% stated yes to this question (18).

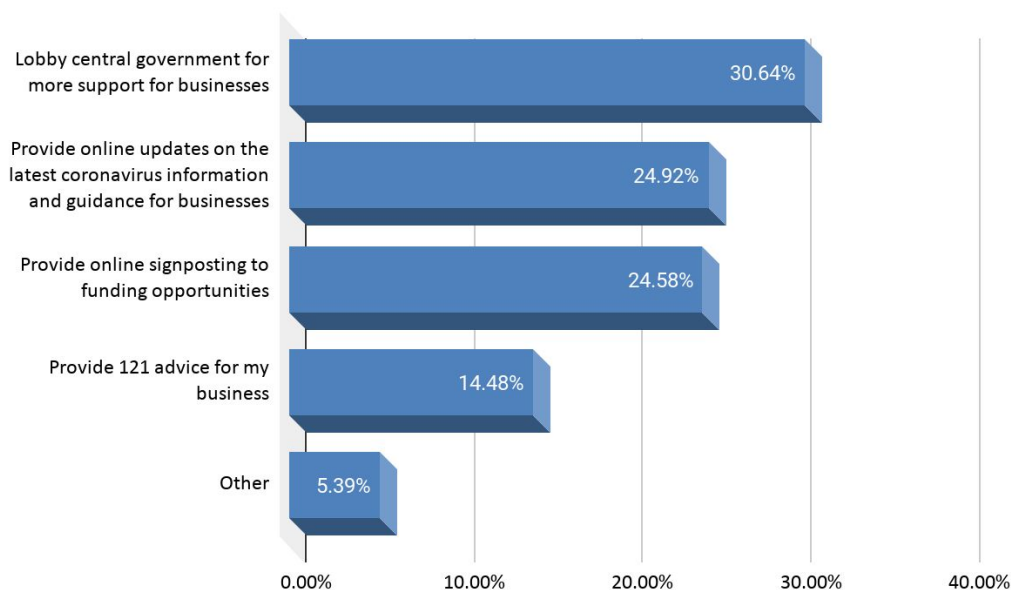
There were 76 comments from those who specified “No or Not Sure”, and the key themes are below:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Count</b>
Ongoing high rent and low or not income - not accounted for by Government support	25
Government grant criteria too restrictive	14
Other	14
Self-employed and feel support is low from Government	12
Need for Government to provide tailored support for sectors	11

**“Do you think the support provided by the Government is enough?” by Industry/Sector**



**Q24. How would you like Hackney Council to support your business? (tick all those that apply) (Base 297 responses)**



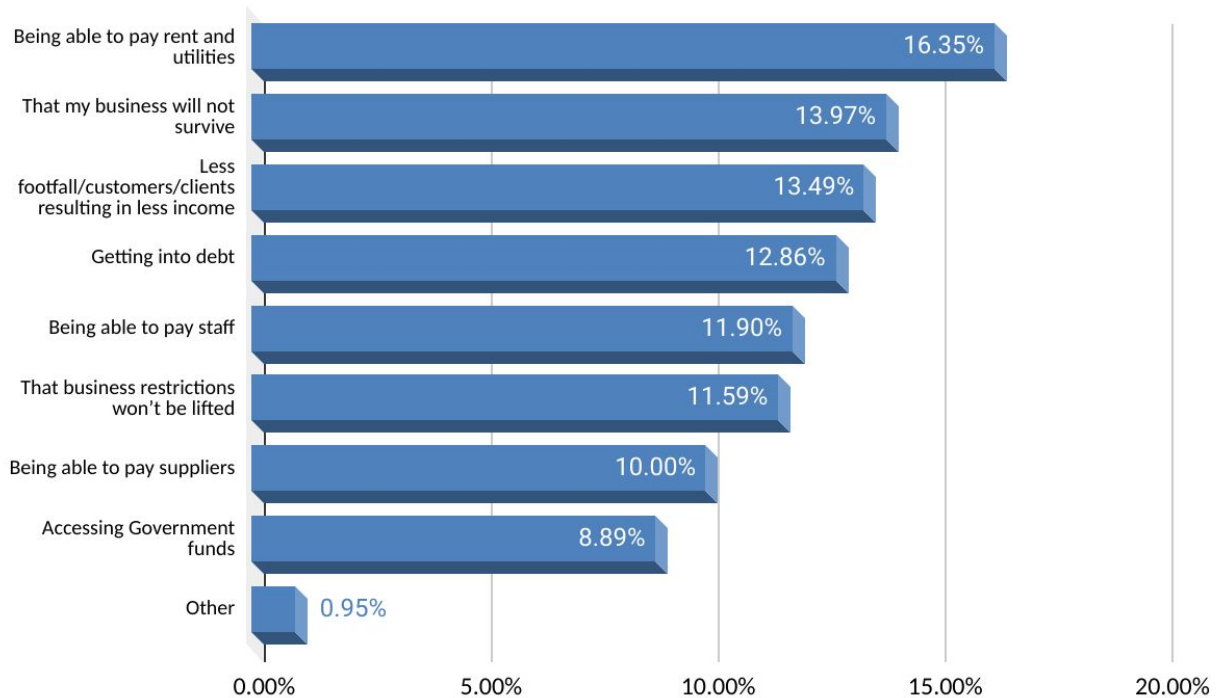
The highest percentage response relates to those who would like a lobby central government for more support (91). This is followed by those who would like to be provided online updates on the latest coronavirus information and guidance (74), to provide online signposting to funding opportunities (73) and to provide 121 advice (43). Only a small percentage stated “Other” (16).

There were 18 comments from those who specified “Other”, and the key themes are below:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Count</b>
Financial support	6
Other	4
Lobby for sector specific support from Government	3
Support with landlord and rent negotiations	3

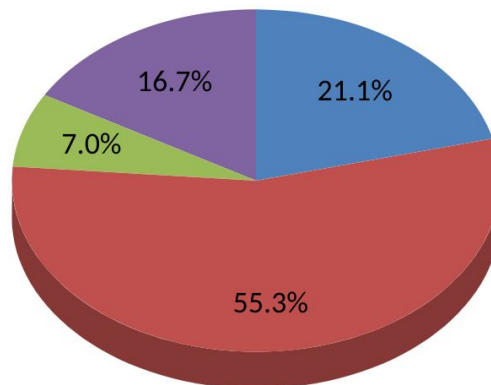
## The next phase

**Q25. Thinking about the next 3 - 6 months, what are your biggest concerns? (Tick all that apply) (Base 630 responses)**



The highest percentage response relates to those who are concerned about being able to pay rent and utilities (103). All other responses raise big concerns for businesses when looking at the trend of the chart.

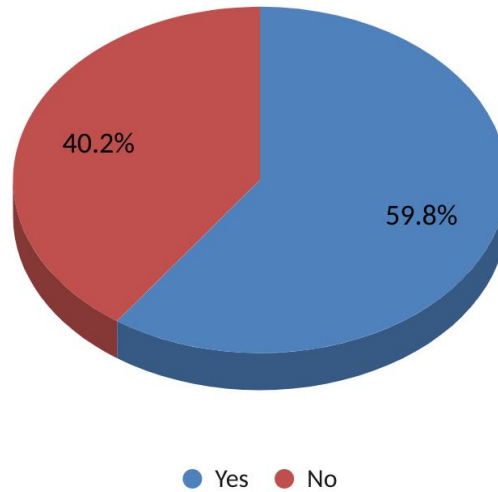
**Q26. What measures are you putting in place to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on your business? (Base 114)**



● I have changed my business model ● I have reduced outgoings  
● I am running my business online now ● Other

The majority of businesses are reducing their outgoings to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic (63). This is followed by changing their business model (24), other (19) and running their business online (8).

**Q27. If you have closed your business due to the Government restrictions will you be able to easily reopen once these are lifted? (Base 112)**

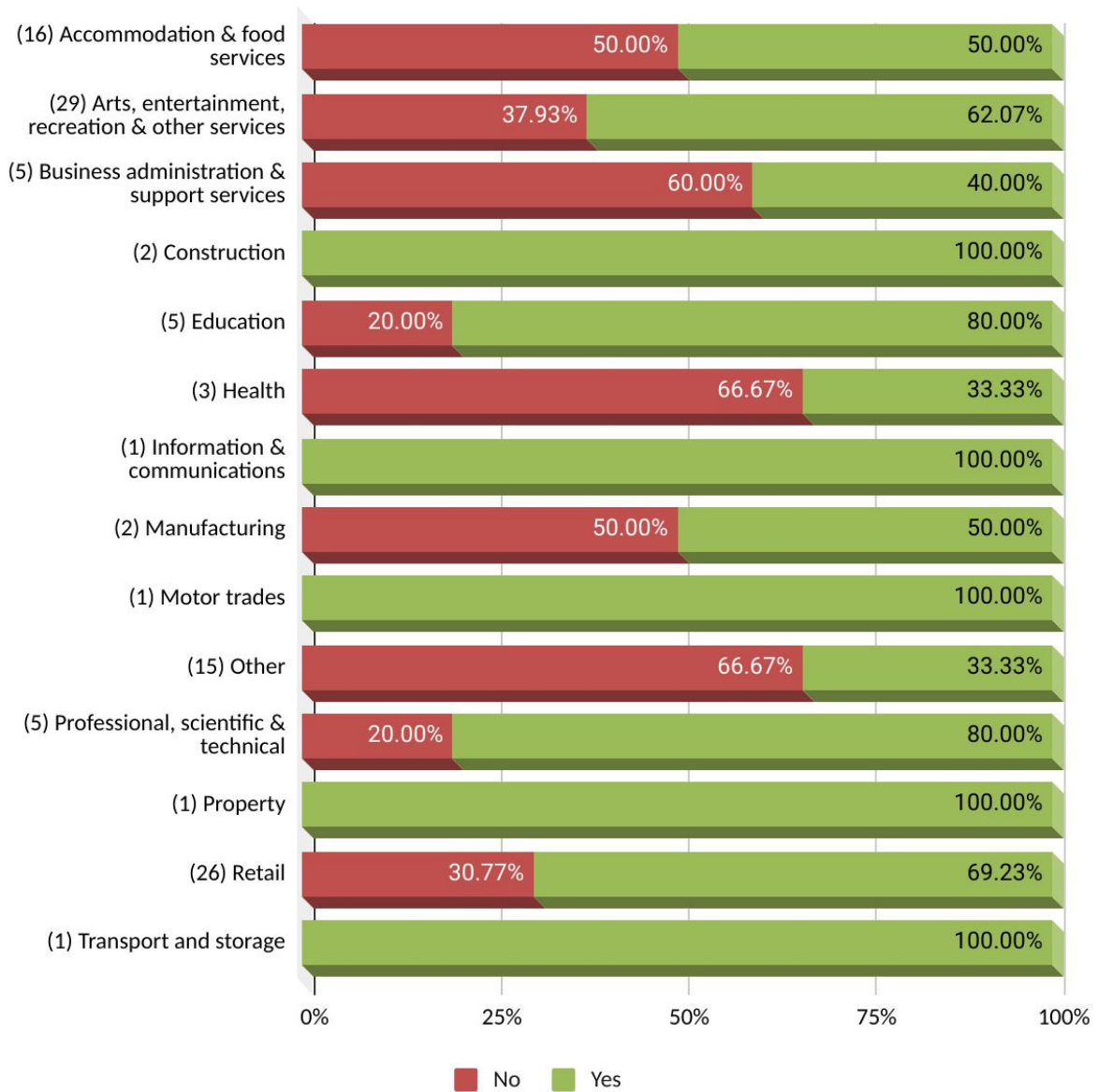


The highest percentage response relates to those who stated that they will easily reopen once the Government restrictions are lifted (67).

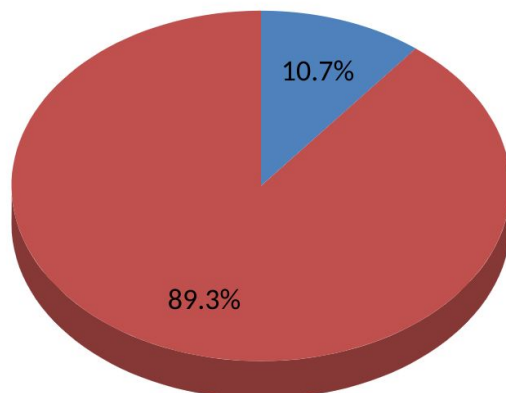
There were 53 comments from those who specified “Other”, and the key themes are below:

<b><u>Theme</u></b>	<b><u>Count</u></b>
Social Distancing	34
Other	17

**“If you have closed your business due to the Government restrictions will you be able to easily reopen once these are lifted?” by Industry/Sector**



**Q28. What support do you think you will need from the Government or Hackney Council in the next 3 - 6 months? (Base 122)**



● I won't need further support ● I will need further support

The majority of businesses have stated that they will need further support from the Government or Hackney Council in the next 3-6 months (109).

There were 104 comments from those who specified “I will need further support”, and the key themes are below:

<b><u>Theme</u></b>	<b><u>Count</u></b>
Financial support to pay for overheads	71
Other	20
Business rate reduction	5
Sector specific support	4
Rent freeze for commercial premises	4
VAT/TAX holiday	2

**Q29. Do you have any other comments you would like to share?**

There were 38 comments to this question, and these can be found in the appendix at the end of the report.



# APPENDIX

**Q29. Do you have any other comments you would like to share?**

- *All workers should be given an immunity / antibody test before being allowed back to work and those who have not got antibodies in their blood should be put on further support until they do have the antibodies or a vaccine is found.*
- *Antisocial behaviour is making it the worst, the same as PANDEMIC !!!*
- *As soon as we go back to business we need to buy a lot of protection stuff for workers, customers and require money whiles we will be receiving less cos everything has to be done properly*
- *Businesses like ours who employ local young people and support families, schools and charities are really struggling as we have no source of income. - We work with the Council closely and with schools; a grant of £10k would allow us to survive the pandemic - This would be an invaluable lifeline*
- *Due to the nature of our business which is direct sales and customer acquisition we have been impacted completely as the virus is only controlled via social distancing which is the selling point of our business that we go face to face to the targeted audience of our clients either via B2B, Events or Residentially to increase their customer base. We have been closed since March*
- *During the pandemic process, I continued to pay my Hmrc taxes and all business related expenses, but my business has been furlough for 3 months.*
- *Every year March-June is our busiest period and this year all our projects have either been cancelled or paused.*
- *Grant - we have to pay suppliers contractors rent insurances and we got nothing to pay*
- *Hackney should liaise with private landlords about reducing or suspending rent for a couple of months or until the pandemic is over. Our cash flow is stretched to breaking point.*
- *I am very grateful to the government for the furlough scheme but feel it now needs to be changed (ahead of August) to allow more flexibility so people can help their employees get everyone back to work in a way that mitigated the risk of bankruptcy*
- *I and other businesses are struggling to pay the rent. And the landlord is not being helpful, rather they are bullying us we feel like. I wish there is some sort of law to stop them from acting like this. Coronavirus Act 2020 is only protecting us up to the end of June but a lot of businesses will struggle to keep the business going til for a much longer period. We need help!!*
- *I can only comment further that I wish the government and the council would look more into the future. We will have to learn to live and work with this virus and perhaps others. The government seems very focused on making people feel as if the crisis is over but the R rate, the death toll and the financial disasters are saying otherwise. I would like to see the UK as a whole react better to this than to take measures after it is too late, to be clear with communication and to re-prioritise their agenda of the economy in favour of public health.*
- *I feel as though I've been hung out to dry. The creative industry contributes a huge amount to the UK economy and yet the large number of us who are microbusinesses are just being left to fend for themselves.*
- *I just need financial support. The rent costs £4300 on it's own, not including bills or running of the business (Website etc)*

- *I really hope we are able to access a small business grant, I think we could survive if we do. Thank you for your communication and support at this time, it's appreciated. Thank you for speaking out on behalf of Hackney businesses.*
- *I think social distancing in Hackney is not great. It is going to become harder with more queues necessary outside of more shops. As a small business how do we manage that? I think the council and law enforcement needs to be out on the streets talking and informing people more and statistics on what the level of infection is like in the community widely publicised would be good.*
- *I think they are all covered in the earlier sections of this survey. The short and long term future of the charity revolves around the Hoxton Hall group (Hoxton Hall Ltd, the charity, and Hoxton Workspaces Ltd, the trading company) being seen as one contiguous unit. Hoxton Workspaces underpins the charity's viability and the charity's vital community role and should, therefore, qualify for charity rates relief, as does Hoxton Hall Ltd.*
- *I would be so grateful if someone could get in touch with me re the small business grant. 07970440675*
- *I would like Hackney Council to support small independent business in Hackney Central as a priority. The range and diversity of locally based established business and start up's will support and help to consolidate the investment made in Hackney Central as a vibrant and diverse shopping centre. If support isn't available as a priority, many of the, already struggling, major national retailers will desert the area and leave a waste land of vacant premises. Evidence suggests that this was starting to happen due to high rents and business rates prior to the pandemic.*
- *I would like to see the Council to source lower value print work from local printers without having to go through complicated tendering processes that many local small businesses do not have the resources to fill in. I have been in Hackney 33 years and never had a print order placed or been contacted by anyone from the council. I understand orders of over £2500 might need to be on a proper tender but lots of work must be produced at lower values. This would really help stimulate the local economy. I also think Hackney would get good value if there was more flexibility.*
- *I would really like to know where categories that are supported by grants and the £51000 rateable value comes from as I am £1000 over that (at £52000 rateable value) and feel that as a small business I lose out on the grants others received - yet I had 100% business loss and have high ongoing costs to pay to keep the business*
- *I'm also not sure what other help I can get ?*
- *It appears that HM Treasury are determined that some 1.9 million small limited companies, and the 7.5million they provide employment for, are to be the collateral damage ... that's 98% of small private sector companies/34.7% private sector company employment [Ref: Business population estimates for the UK and regions 2019: detailed tables (Table 3: UK Legal Status)]*
- *How many of these millions make up the 1.1 million employers who are furloughing staff and the 8.7 million furloughed employees?*
- *It's been tough but I think it's going to be tougher once we reopen because we'll have all the normal overheads and probably half the income because we will only be able to have 3 customers in the shop at a time, massively reducing our sales capacity.*

- *Just that I'm very worried about reopening and clients can't have blowdrys I make the most money with this . I have clients that come in every week for a blow drys some twice a week . It's very scary what to tell them*
- *More financial support*
- *most small businesses will fail anyway, just survive the bigger ones with a good credit history that will get help from the government*
- *No, I think I have barked up the tree enough. So now the government will or will not listen to the Nursery I don't know but he needs to come out and visit the nursery like mine and then he will see why I am raising my voice so loud.*
- *Please advise where I can apply for the Apply for the coronavirus Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. The Discretionary Grant Fund supports small and micro businesses that are not eligible for other grant schemes.*
- *Shoreditch & Hackney is famous globally for its night time economy. Our venue showcases unsigned up-and-coming music talent in a small premises and the rent has evolved due to our success in Shoreditch attracting a big amount of people in a small space. We need help with that rent.*
- *Thank you Hackney Council for lobbying the central government on behalf of sole traders and market traders who have not received any financial support or income from the government during the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- *Thanks to everyone at Hackney Council for being so supportive, transparent and communicative to date - it's been incredibly helpful.*
- *Up until this point we are immensely grateful to Hackney Council for their financial help and support, and hope and pray they can help us further to survive this catastrophic pandemic.*
- *"We are yet to see what the proposed changes to the furlough scheme from august are, but if it requires significant financial input from employers that have been closed since March then it will not be viable for most, including ourselves.*
- *At the moment an issue that hasn't been Publicly discussed is redundancy in light of the furlough changes. We are having to look at the start dates of all of our staff and are forced to consider if we will need to make redundancies based on a combination of actual salary cost, and whether they are coming up to a start date anniversary which would entitle them to an extra week's pay for each anniversary passed. This is not an insignificant amount for a business with no income and is not payable by the government furlough scheme. Our staff don't deserve this, and we cannot actually afford redundancies at this point, but we will be even less able to afford them as time marches on.*
- *Would also be great to see increased support for businesses who want to encourage their employees to cycle to work, including grants to buy bikes.*
- *Yes, business needs to be health checked . When open and not pay rent only way I see to assess its health*
- *Yes my small businesses received the grants but decided not to use their license fees, which leave FOuntlondon not receiving rents - I think the government needs to be clear that the grant scheme is for paying overheads not taking the money and leaving the premises.*
- *Yes, I believe the Council should be more supported to day nurseries as they provide a valuable service to the local community. Funding support should have been easy*

*accessible and higher rate payers should NOT have been penalised in accessing 'Small Business Grant'.*