



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Unpublished – not for wider sharing

COVID-19 Employer Pulse Survey

Wave 2 findings

- Fieldwork 12th - 31st October 2020
- 1,197 GB employers of all sizes and sectors

NR

and

NR

Employers, Health and Inclusive Employment

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

INQ000626549_0001

Business impacts of COVID-19

Business status

- During the fieldwork period, **79%** of employers that the survey reached said they had **were currently open/trading**, while **16%** had **recently reopened** after a period of closure, and **5%** were **temporarily closed**.

Working hours and Furlough

- **17%** of employers had staff who were working **reduced hours in October** (down from 24% in June/July).
- **38%** of employers had employees who were on either part-time or full-time **furlough** leave (down from 61%). In total, three quarters (74%) of employers had furloughed staff at some point due to Covid.
- Of those employers who currently or previously had furloughed staff, **15%** said they had arranged off-the-job training or development opportunities.

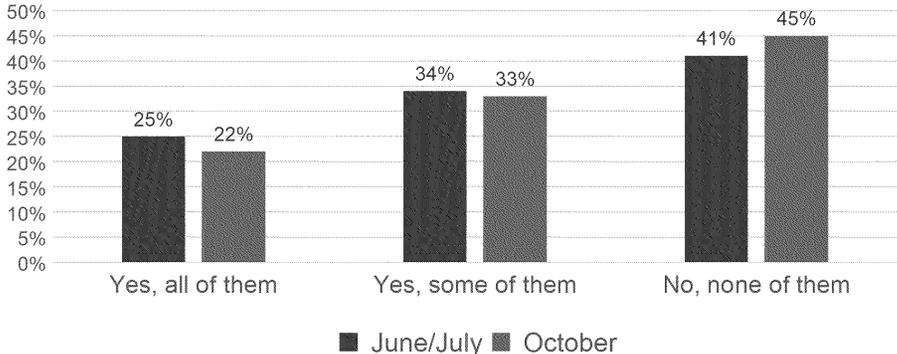
Working from home

- **55%** of employers had some or all of their staff working from home (down from 59%).

Pension contributions

- **3%** of all employers said they had decreased pension contribution rates for some or all of their staff as a direct result of COVID-19.

Are any of your employees currently working from home?



Recruitment, Kickstart, and redundancies

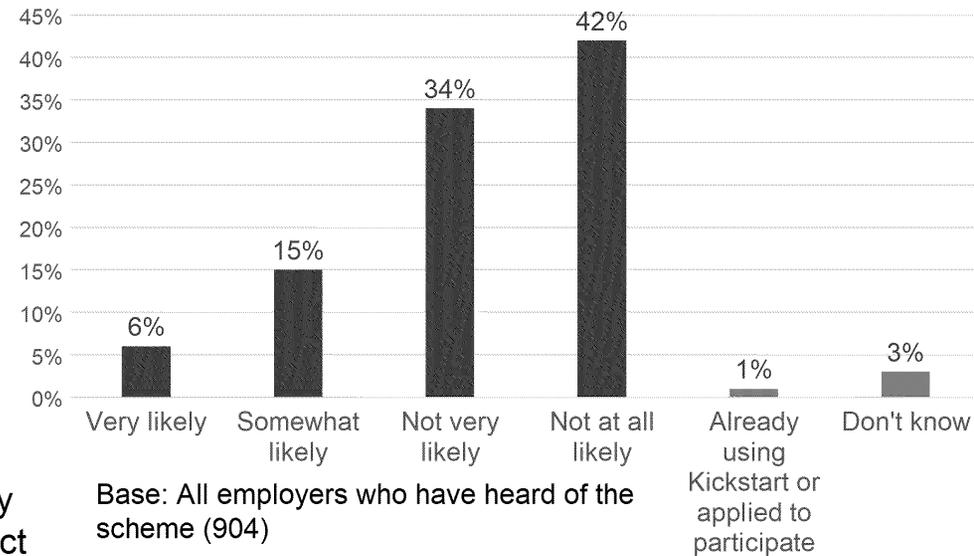
Recruitment and Kickstart

- At the time of fieldwork, **31%** of employers had plans to recruit (up from 28%).
- **72%** of employers were aware of the Kickstart scheme.
- Of those who were aware of Kickstart, **21%** were likely or very likely to use it, while **76%** were not very or not at all likely to use it and **1%** were already using the scheme or had applied to use it.

Redundancies

- At the time of the fieldwork, **18%** of all employers said they had already had to make staff **redundant** due to the impact of COVID-19 (up from 8% in June/July).
- **13% of all employers** said they were making plans for future redundancies, **8%** said they **didn't know**, and **79%** said they were **not currently making redundancy plans**.

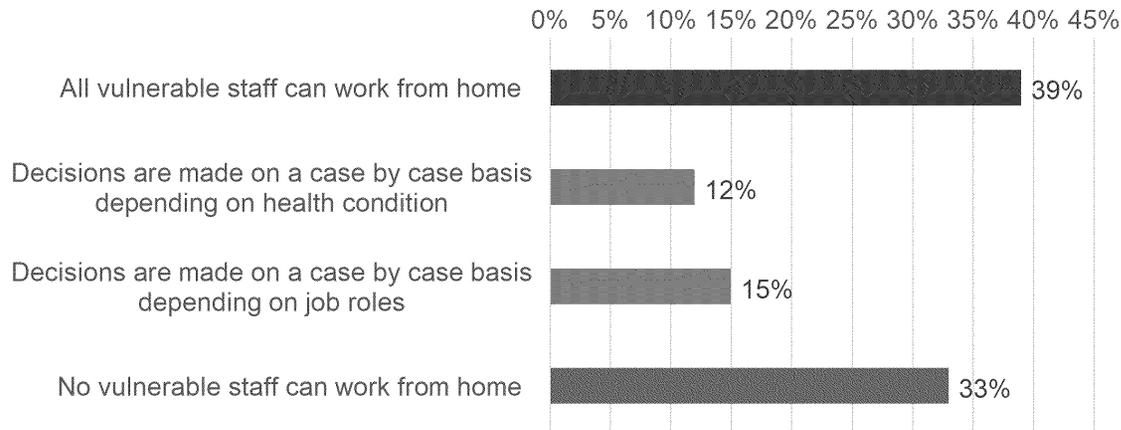
Plans to use Kickstart among those employers who were aware of the scheme



Workforce management: Vulnerable employees and home working

- **47%** of employers said they were aware of having employees who may be **vulnerable to COVID-19**.
- **39%** of all open businesses or organisations with vulnerable staff where some or all staff were working in a workplace said **all their employees who are vulnerable to COVID-19** were able to work from home.
- A third of employers (33%) stated that **none** of their vulnerable staff could do so.
- Sometimes a **case-by-case decision** as to whether a vulnerable employee could work remotely was made (12% of employers decided by taking into account the employees' health condition, 15% took into account their job role).

Ability of vulnerable employees to work from home

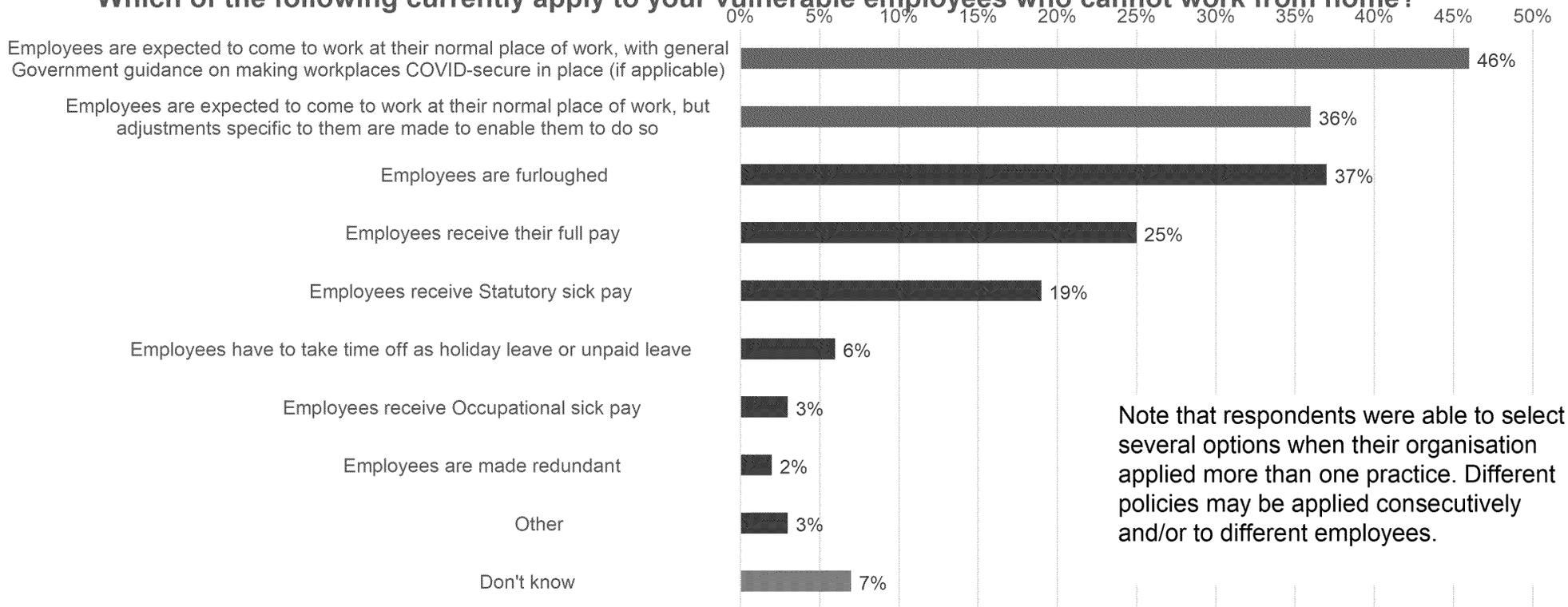


Base: All employers currently open who have vulnerable staff, and where not all staff are working from home or furloughed (641)

Workforce management: Vulnerable employees who cannot work from home

While some employers expected some or all of their vulnerable employees to come to their normal place of work where home working was not possible, others chose to furlough vulnerable staff members or pay some form of sick pay.

Which of the following currently apply to your vulnerable employees who cannot work from home?



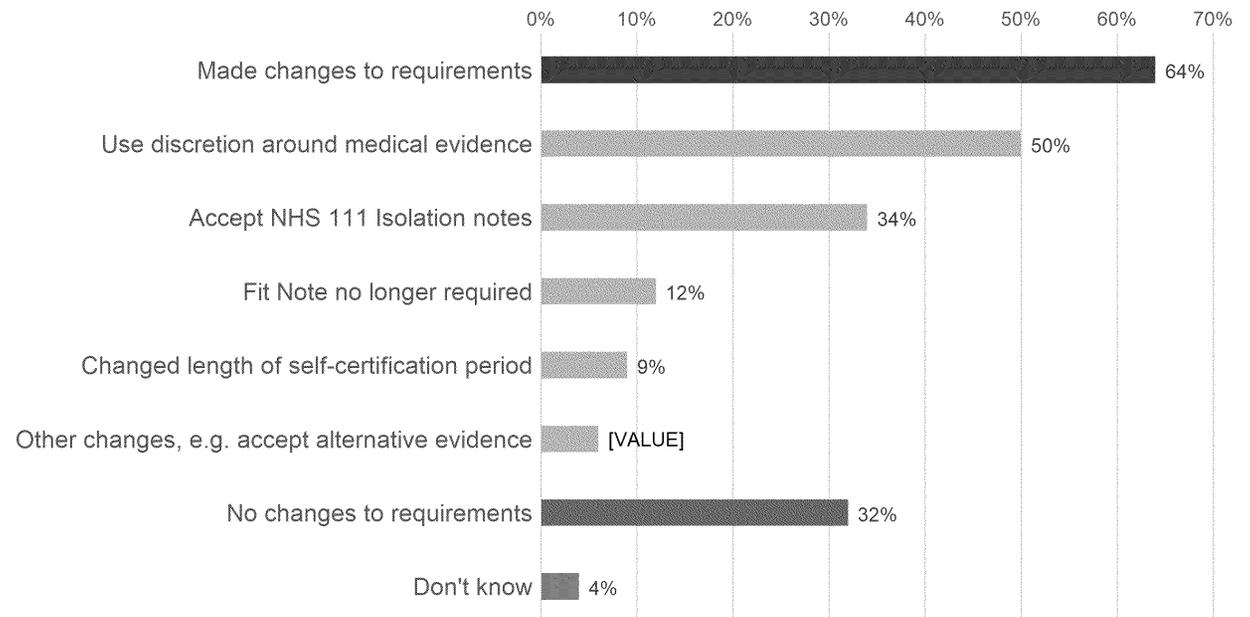
Note that respondents were able to select several options when their organisation applied more than one practice. Different policies may be applied consecutively and/or to different employees.

Base: All employers currently open where not all vulnerable staff can work from home (415).

Changes to evidence requirements for sickness absence and self-isolation

- **Almost two in three (64%)** employers reported making changes to their certification requirements due to the pandemic, with half (50%) of all employers saying they used discretion around medical evidence.
- **One in eight (12%) no longer required a Fit Note** and **9%** have changed the length of the **self-certification period** for employees. **One in three (34%)** said they accepted the NHS 111 Isolation note..

Changes to requirements for medical evidence for sickness or self-isolation due to COVID-19

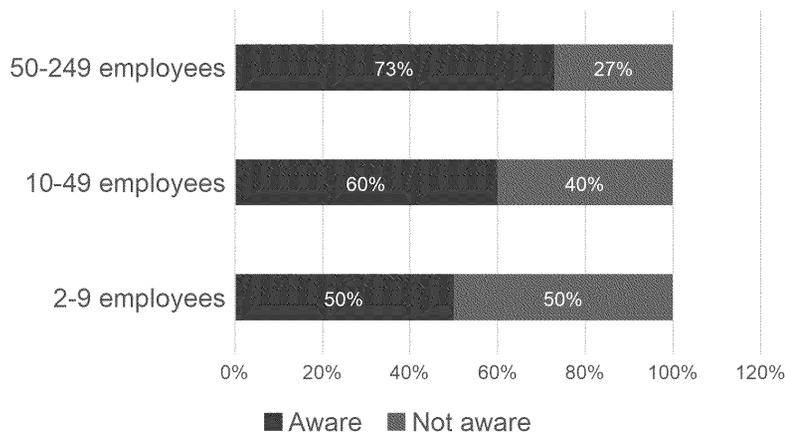


Base: All employers currently trading (1154)

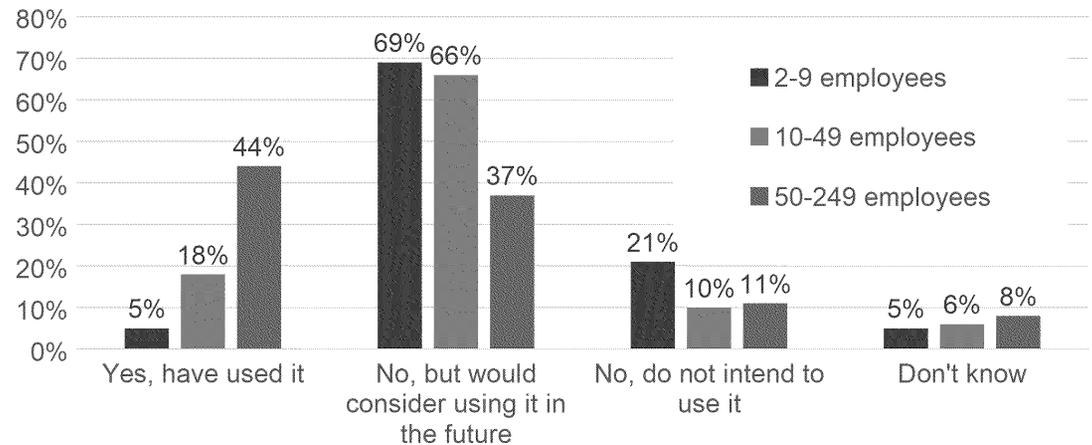
Sick pay: Awareness and use of the SSP Rebate scheme

- **Half (53%)** of all micro, small, and medium-sized employers were **aware** of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme.
- How many staff an organisation employed related to that employer's use of the scheme: **44%** of those medium employers who were aware of the scheme had already used it, compared to **18%** of small and **5%** of micro employers.
- **Two thirds (67%)** of employers who were aware of the scheme **would consider using it in the future**, although 21% of micro, 10% of small, and 11% of medium employers said they did not intend to use it.

Awareness of the SSP Rebate Scheme by employer size



Use of the SSP Rebate Scheme among those employers who were aware of it



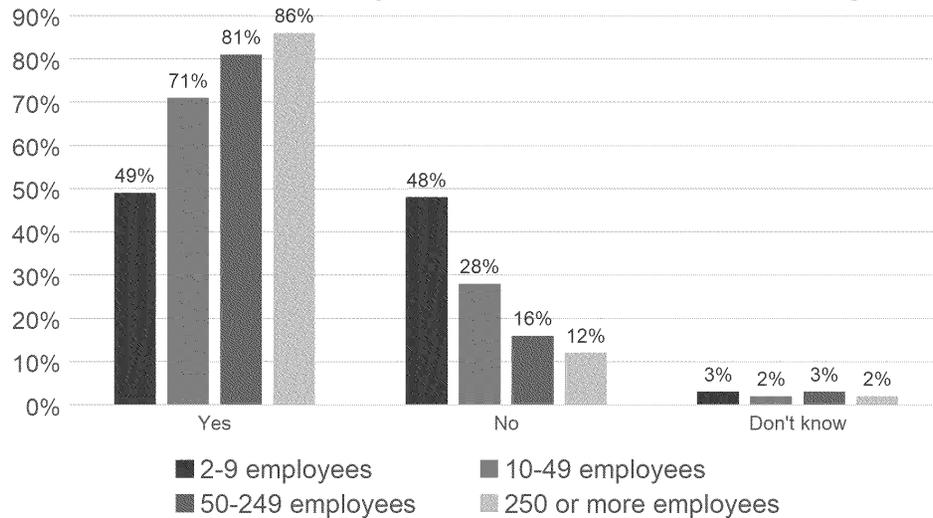
Base: All micro/small/medium employers currently trading (1041)

Base: All micro/small/medium employers who have heard of the scheme (609)

Health impacts of COVID-19 and use of Occupational Health services

- **More than half** (54%) of all employers said they had a system in place for assessing and monitoring the physical and mental health and wellbeing of employees, but this varied by employer size.
- **44%** of employers who had monitoring systems in place said they had noticed an increase in health conditions since the start of COVID-19, with mental health conditions being the most frequently mentioned at 39%.

Whether employers have a health/wellbeing monitoring system in place by employer size



Base: All employers currently trading (1154)

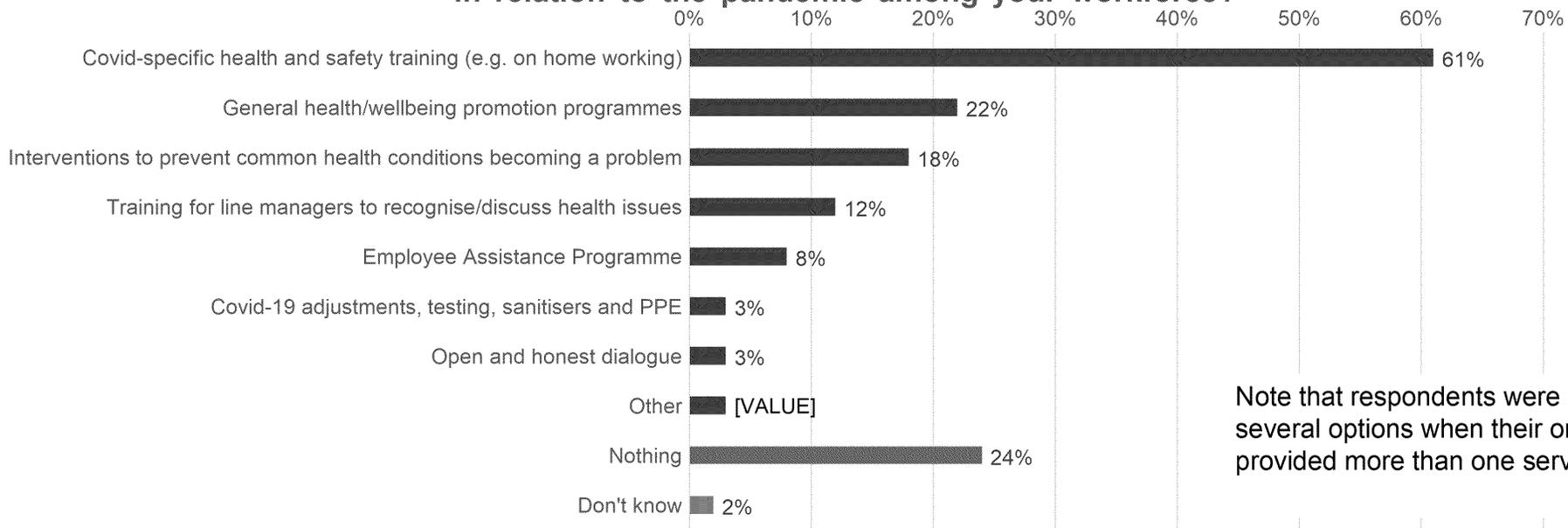
Occupational Health (OH) services

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, **one in five** (22% wave 1, 19% wave 2) employers said they had **access to OH services**.
- **15%** of employers currently trading had used OH services **in relation to COVID-19** (Wave 1: 10%), including **8%** who had not previously had access to OH. Examples of uses are:
 - support with public health guidance,
 - advice on working from home

Health impacts of COVID-19 and employers' response

- **Three quarters** (74%) of all employers (70% of micro, 89% of small, 91% of medium, and 97% of large employers) say they have provided services or taken action in response to COVID-19 to prevent or address any health issues in relation to the pandemic among their workforce.

Which of the following have you provided in response to COVID-19, to prevent or address any health issues in relation to the pandemic among your workforce?



Note that respondents were able to select several options when their organisation provided more than one service.

Base: All employers currently trading (1154)

Methodology

Fieldwork wave 2

- 12th – 31st October 2020
- 1,197 interviews
- Response rate 12%* (initial sample), additional sample was purchased towards the end of fieldwork to reach the required no of interviews.
- GB employers with a workforce of 2+

Sequential multi-mode data collection

- Small/medium-sized employers:
Online survey (one week) followed by a telephone survey (two weeks)
- Large employers:
Contacted by phone straight away

Mode	Completed interviews
Online	693
Telephone	504
Total	1,197

Sample

- Sample drawn from the DBS, a commercial database with over 1.8 million business enterprises
- Disproportionate stratification to allow for analysis by size
- RIM weighting was applied to the coded data to ensure that it was reflective of the GB employer population (sector and size)
- With design weights applied, the overall effective sample size is 612 and the confidence interval for all businesses is +/-3.6ppts

Employer size	Completed interviews	Interview %	Population %
	442	37%	82%
	392	33%	15%
	249	21%	2%
	114	10%	1%

Questionnaire

Businesses...

- continuing to operate → full set of questions (15')
- temporarily closed → shorter route (5')
- permanently closed → screened out

Survey completed by the most senior person with responsibility for personnel issues in the organisation

*The survey response rate was lower compared to wave 1. Feedback from the phone interviews suggested that more businesses were refusing to take part because they were over-stretched and declining to give out contact details for the relevant HR colleagues while working from home.