

The Marches Growth Hub Telemarketing Data Summary

November 2020

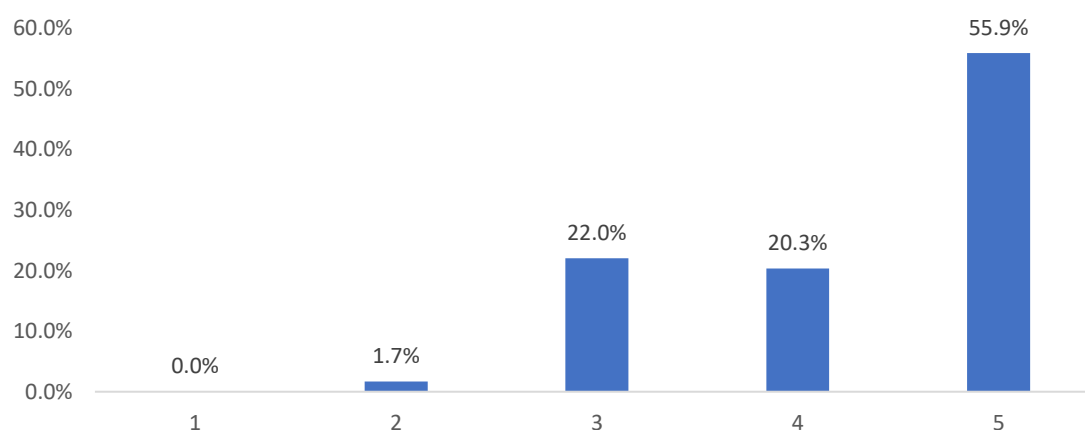
Intro

- 441 businesses were surveyed between the 14th July and 1st October 2020.
- 59 were from the Marches LEP area.
- The local authority in the Marches with the most respondents was Shropshire with 25, followed by Herefordshire with 20 and then Telford and Wrekin with 14.

Survival

- As part of the questionnaire, businesses were asked to rate their chances of survival on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 very unconfident and 5 being very confident) in the next 12 months.
- 55.9% (33) of businesses from the Marches LEP area reported that they were very confident of survival. This is a higher percentage than the West Midlands average of 48.3%.
- None of the businesses surveyed from the Marches area said they were very unconfident of survival over the 12 months following completing the survey.

Business Survival Chances in the Marches LEP Over the Next 12 Months (1 very unconfident, 5 very confident)



Concern

- Businesses were also asked to rate how concerned they were about certain things on a scale of: Concerned, Neutral and Not Concerned.
- The area where the most Marches businesses reported concern was “EU Exit” with 33.9% (20). This was followed by both “Taxation” and “Supply Chain Disruption” with 30.5% (18).
- 84.7% (50) of the Marches businesses said they were not concerned about digitalisation, the highest of any of the topics.

Table 1 – Percentage of businesses who are “Concerned” about various areas

	Concerned	Neutral	Not Concerned
EU Exit	33.9%	10.2%	55.9%
Taxation	30.5%	27.1%	42.4%
Supply Chain Disruption	30.5%	13.6%	55.9%
Cashflow	28.8%	16.9%	54.2%

	Concerned	Neutral	Not Concerned
Lack of Sales Leads	25.4%	30.5%	44.1%
Inflation	22.0%	25.4%	52.5%
Business Rates	16.9%	11.9%	71.2%
Competition	16.9%	28.8%	54.2%
Exchange Rates	13.6%	16.9%	69.5%
Digitalisation	3.4%	11.9%	84.7%

Expectations

- Businesses were asked how they anticipate various parts of their business to change over the next 12 months.
- 30 (50.8%) businesses from the Marches LEP area expect to see an increase in sales bookings over the 12 months following completion of the survey. This is over twice the amount who expect an increase in cash reserves, 14 (23.7%).

Table 2 – Business expectations over the next 12 months

	Decrease	No Change	Increase
Sales Bookings	11.9%	37.3%	50.8%
Profitability	16.9%	42.4%	40.7%
Turnover	16.9%	42.4%	40.7%
Cash Reserves	11.9%	64.4%	23.7%

Prices

- 93.2% (4) of businesses surveyed from the Marches LEP area reported they had hadn't had to increase prices over the 3 months prior to being surveyed.
- 79.7% (47) of businesses do not expect to have to increase their prices over the next 3 months.

Investment

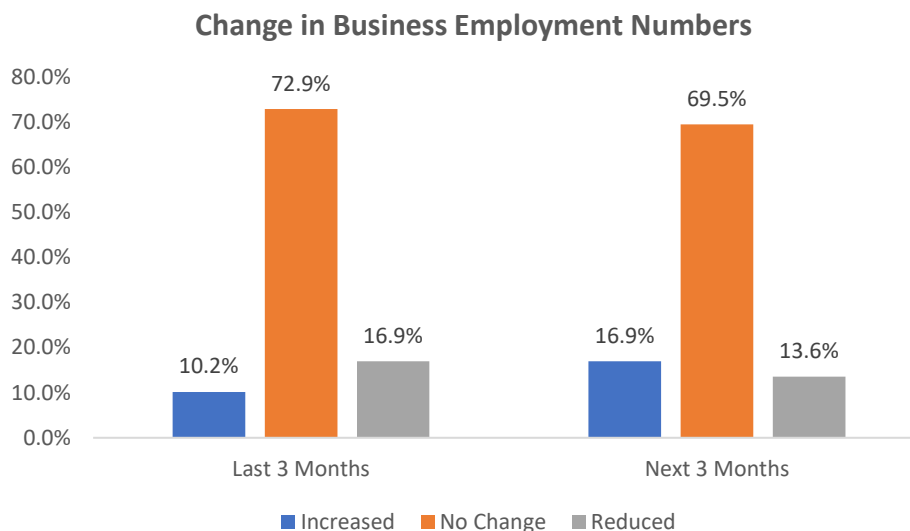
- Businesses were asked whether their investment or plans for investments had changed in the 3 months prior to completing the survey. In all areas, the majority of businesses from the Marches LEP area reported that their investment plans remained unchanged.
- The area where most businesses reported an increase in investment plans was "IT Upgrades and or Business Digitalisation" with 18.6% (11).

Table 3 – Business investment in various areas

	Increased	Reduced	Unchanged
IT Upgrades and or business digitalisation	18.6%	11.9%	69.5%
Training	13.6%	16.9%	69.5%
Plant Machinery	5.1%	15.3%	79.7%
New or Expanding Premises	6.8%	6.8%	86.4%

Employee Numbers

- Businesses were asked about whether their employee numbers had changed in the previous 3 months, and their expectations about the next 3 months.
- In the Marches LEP area, businesses were more optimistic about the next 3 months. A total of 10 (16.9%) businesses expected employee numbers to increase in the 3 months after completing the survey, compared to only 6 (10.2%) businesses who saw employee numbers increase in the 3 months prior to the survey.



Financial Support Schemes

- 49 (83%) of the businesses surveyed from the Marches LEP area said they had taken advantage of the Covid-19 support schemes.
- 50 businesses from the Marches LEP area answered questions about their experiences of Covid-19 support programmes. Of these:
 - 48 (96%) were satisfied with the ease of the application process and the timescales when it came to accessing funds.
 - 47 (94%) were satisfied with the communication with the funding body and the security of the process.

Contact Preferences

- 37 (62.7%) of the businesses surveyed from the Marches LEP area said they were happy to receive their local growth hub monthly newsletter, whilst 36 (61.0%) said they were happy for the growth hub to get in touch with them to discuss their answers and see what they can offer them to help their business.