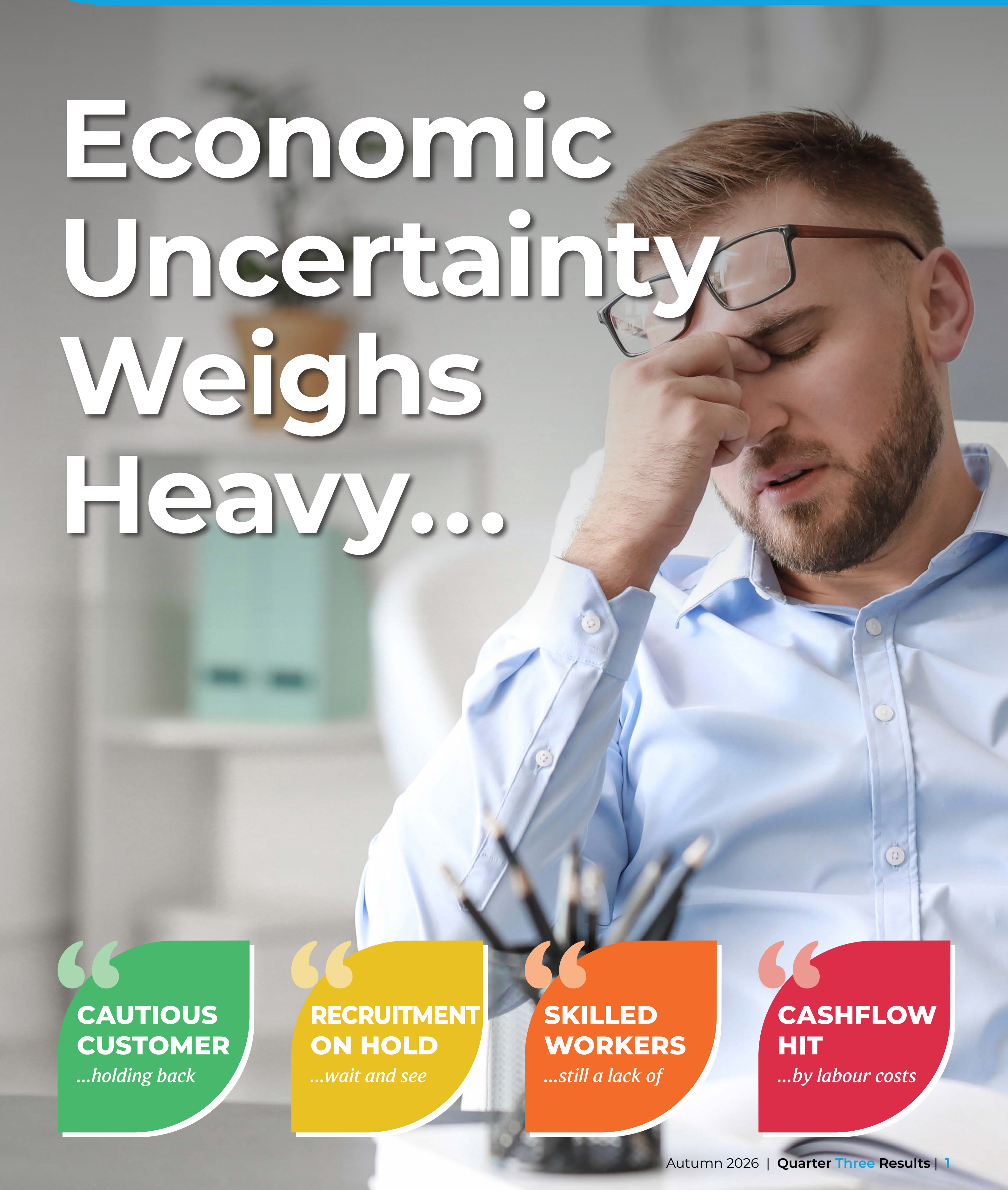
quarterly

economic survey results

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

Quarter Three Results 2026

Economic Uncertainty Weighs Heavy...



CAUTIOUS CUSTOMER
...holding back

RECRUITMENT ON HOLD
...wait and see

SKILLED WORKERS
...still a lack of

CASHFLOW HIT
...by labour costs

Economic and Political Uncertainty...

Upcoming budget creating tax hike fears!

- **Uncertainty is holding business back**
- **Cashflow and confidence down for many**
- **Finding the right staff is still difficult despite record numbers of unemployed**

We want to hear your views...

Each quarter Shropshire Chamber takes part in the British Chambers of Commerce national economic survey. In this report, you will see the results for Shropshire, trending from as far back as 2009. If you and your company would like to take part in these surveys, please contact policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk giving your name, company name and the email to which invitations should be sent.

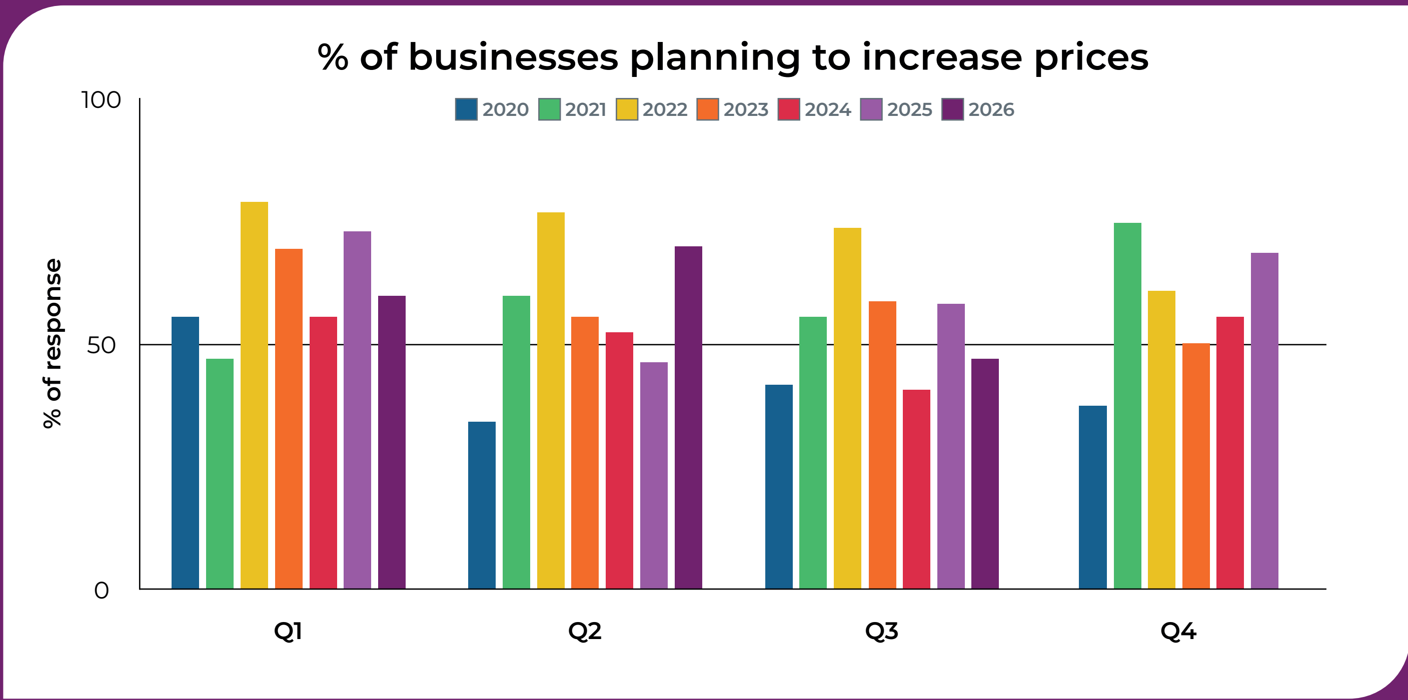
Please note this is only open to businesses in **Shropshire** and **Telford & Wrekin**, and Chamber Membership is not required to take part. Those in neighbouring counties should approach the British Chambers of Commerce to locate their nearest BCC Accredited Chamber.

This survey is open to businesses from all sectors including public sector and the third sector. The survey is open to any size of business from micro's, who employ no staff, to the very largest businesses. The data is used both locally and nationally to lobby those in power on the main topics of concern. The national survey is highly respected and is used by Central Government and the Bank of England to understand the economic situation and pressures facing businesses in the UK.

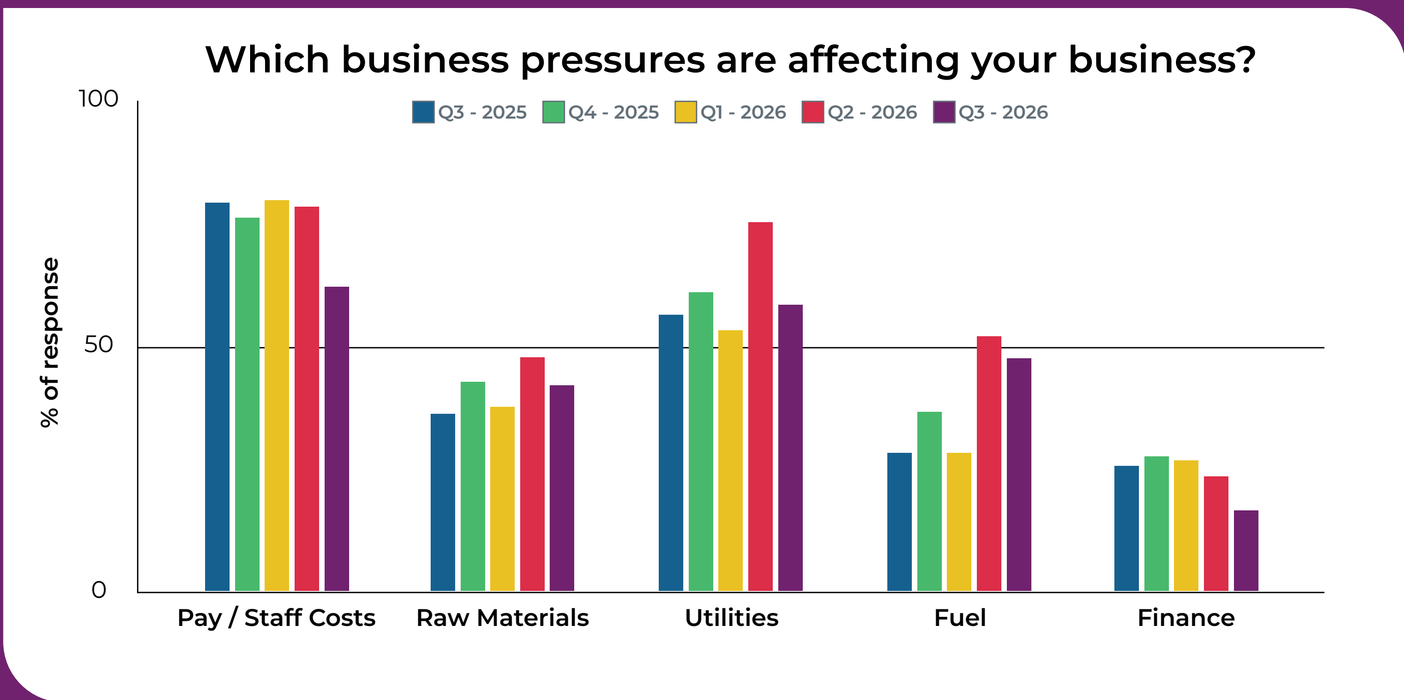
The greater our business voice, the more valuable the information becomes, so we want to encourage every business, Chamber member or not, to add their voice to this vital survey.

Headline News...

Price vs Cost Comparison

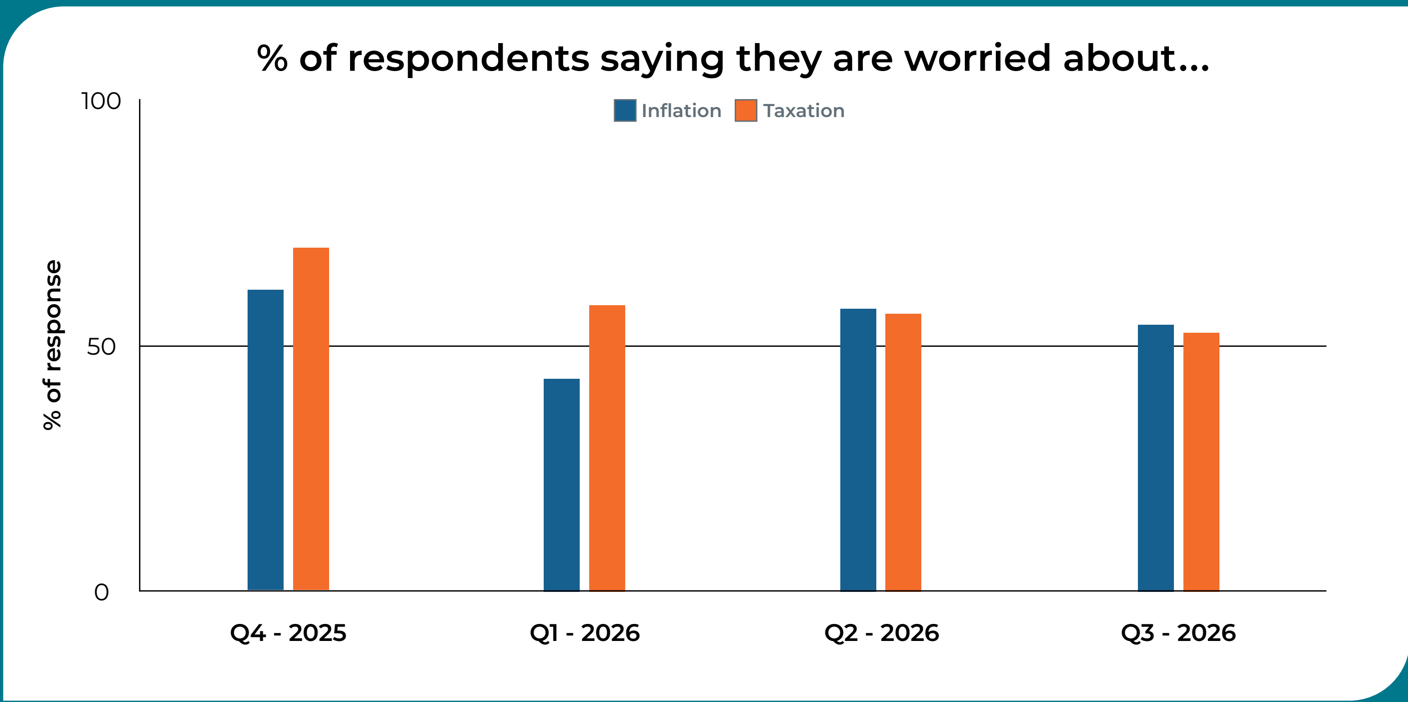


Business Pressures Affecting YOU

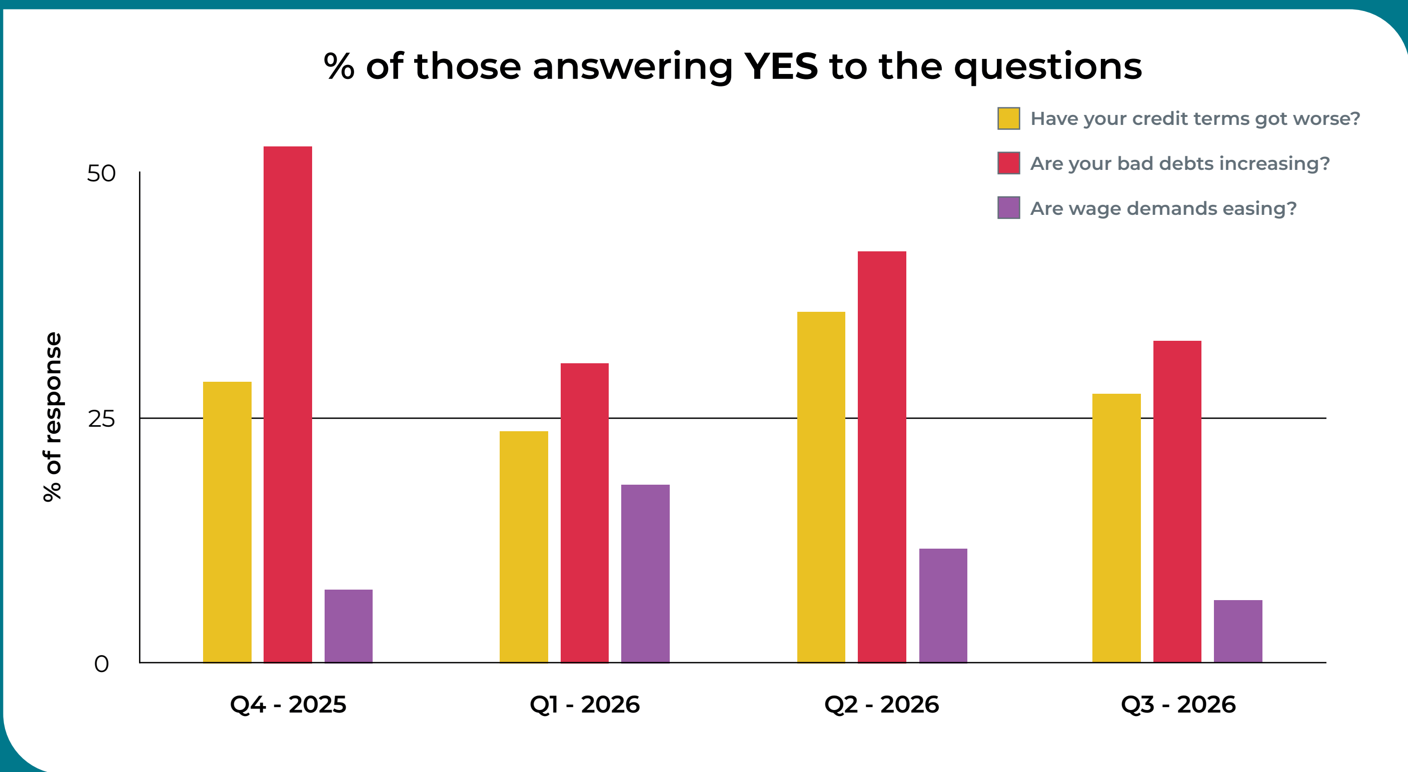


Headline News...

Inflation and Taxation Fears



Credit Terms, Bad Debts and Wage Demands



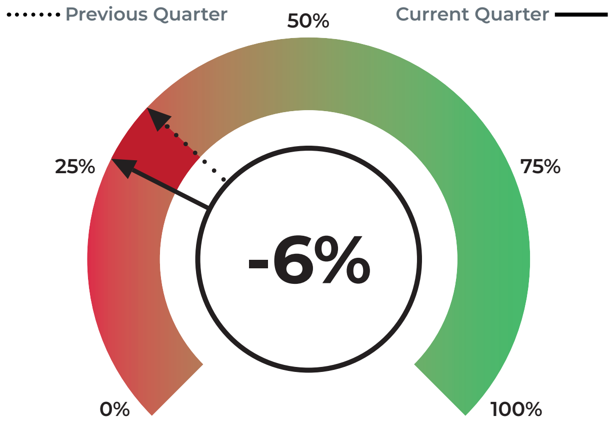
DOMESTIC (UK) SALES
INCREASES

UK Sales Past:

"UK sales are stable and likely to remain so over the next three months, but economic uncertainty, cautious customers and rising project costs are delaying investment and limiting growth."
Manufacturing Sector

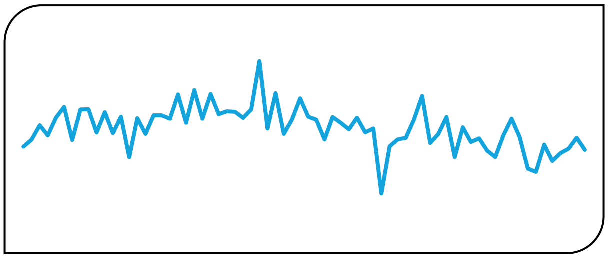
Top General Concerns:

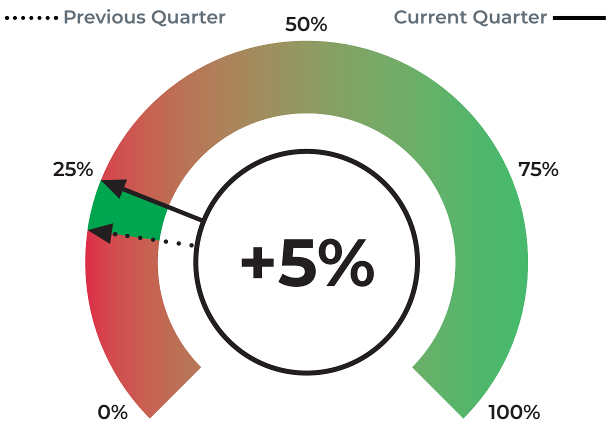
- *Delayed Projects*
- *Funding Constraints*



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **UK SALES** on the previous quarter

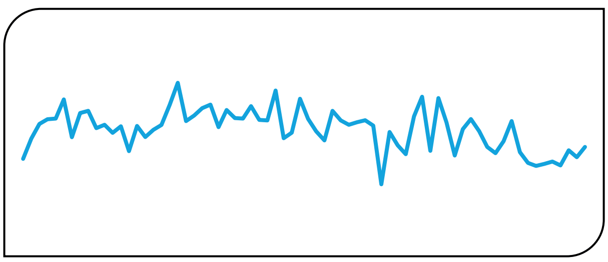
2009 **UK Sales Past** **2026**





% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **UK ORDERS** on the previous quarter

2009 **UK Sales Future** **2026**



UK Sales Future:

"Demand has increased significantly since we improved our online visibility. People now know we exist, and we are receiving more referrals."
Health & Social Care Sector

Top General Concerns:

- *Lack of Demand*
- *Lack of Bidding Opportunities*

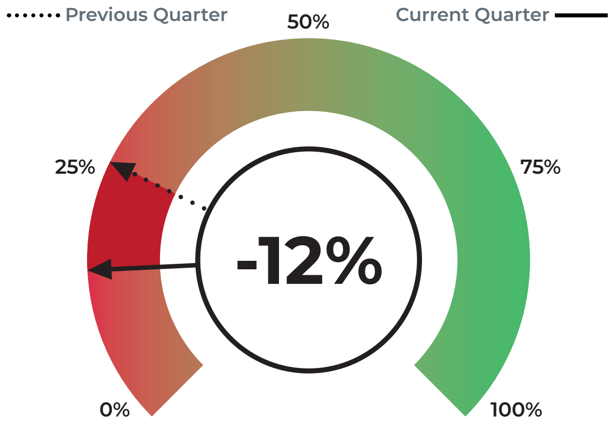
EXPORT SALES
INCREASES

Export Sales Past:

"Customers are postponing jobs for months because their own customers are delaying projects."
Manufacturing Sector

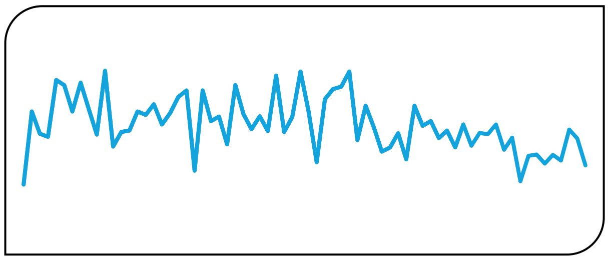
Top General Concerns:

- *Increased Material Costs*
- *Increased Staff Costs*



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT SALES** on the previous quarter

2009 **Export Sales Past** **2026**

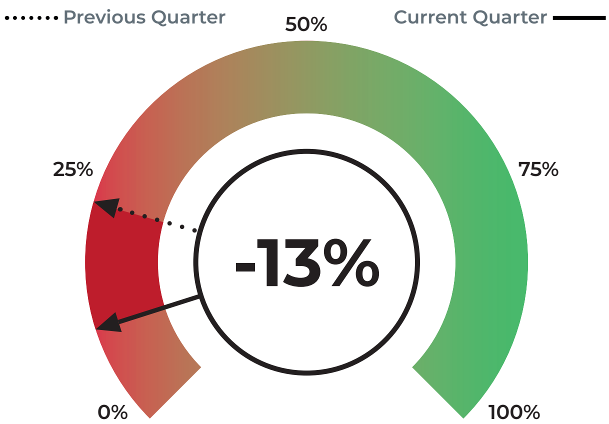


Export Sales Future:

"The uncertainty in the global markets due to tariffs, war and now weather is impacting order books."
Manufacturing Sector

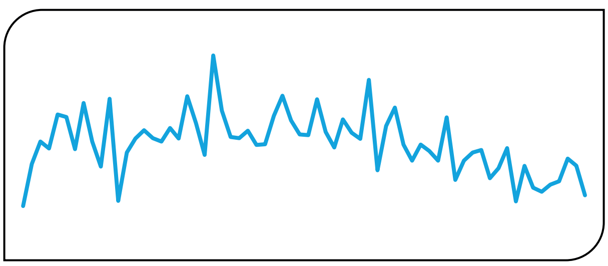
Top General Concerns:

- *Global Instability*
- *Brexit Shadow*



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **EXPORT ORDERS** on the previous quarter

2009 **Export Sales Future** **2026**



WORKFORCE PAST & FUTURE

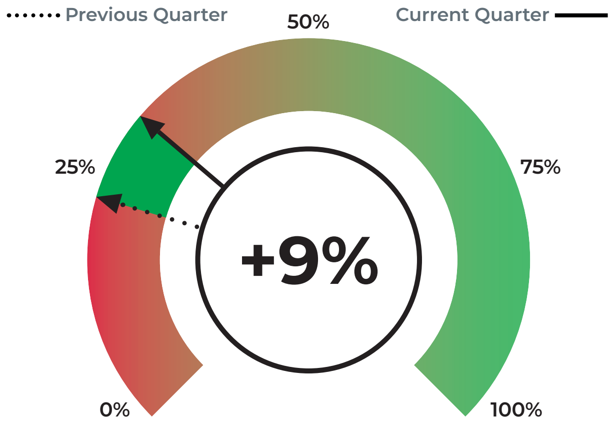
INCREASES

Workforce Past:

"We are subcontracting components because employing new staff has become too expensive, and changing employment regulations make replacing staff through natural turnover too much of a gamble."
Manufacturing Sector

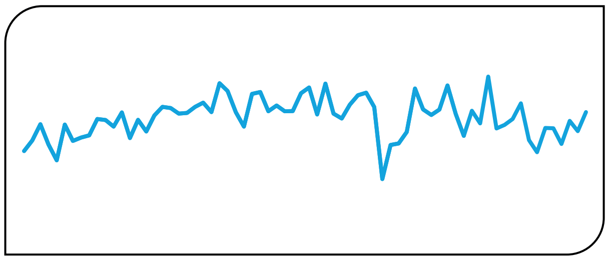
Top General Concerns:

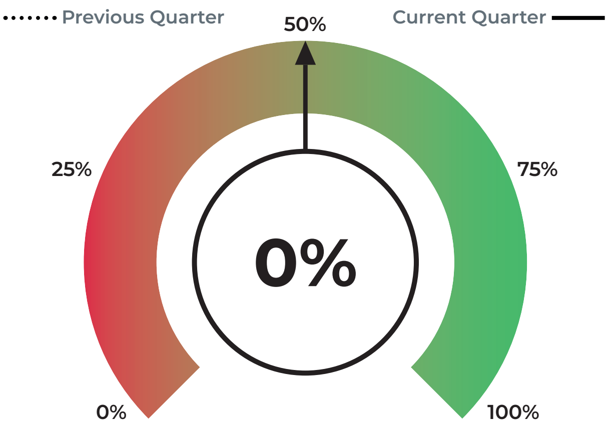
- *Employment Law Changes*
- *Cost of Staff*



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in **WORKFORCE** numbers on the previous quarter

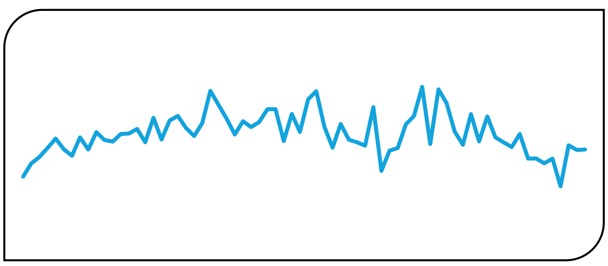
2009 **Workforce Past** **2026**





% of respondents expecting a rise or fall in **WORKFORCE** numbers on the previous quarter

2009 **Workforce Future** **2026**



Workforce Future:

"We will retain employees in the short term, but continued cost increases from Government policy are likely to reduce staff numbers over time."
Hospitality Sector

Top General Concerns:

- *Lack of Good Candidates*
- *Further Employment Reforms*

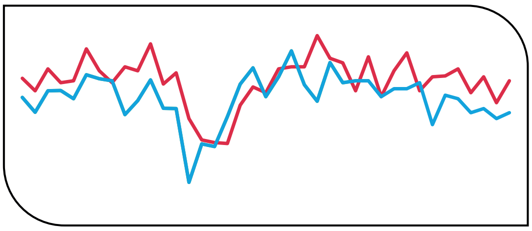
SKILLS & RECRUITMENT

Top General Concerns:

- *Lack of Good Candidates*
- *Sectors Locally Not Being Promoted Through Careers Information*

Companies Recruiting:

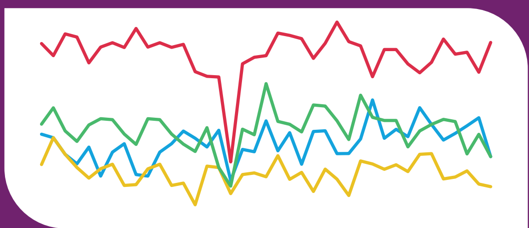
2017 Recruited Faced Difficulties 2026



"Recruitment remains difficult, especially for skilled and operational roles, because limited local transport makes employment inaccessible to people without their own vehicle. We want to grow our workforce, but this depends on finding suitable local candidates and improving transport and skills infrastructure."
Manufacturing Sector

Staff Types:

2017 Part-Time Full-Time Temporary Permanent 2026

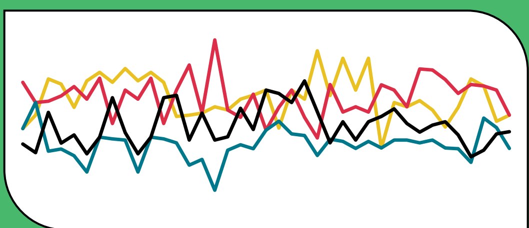


"We have a shortage of skilled poultry shed builders, an ageing workforce and limited young people coming through, while our remote location and poor transport make recruitment difficult."
Engineering Sector

"We are finding it difficult to recruit shop-floor staff, both through advertising ourselves and using agencies."
Manufacturing Sector

Post Types:

2017 Clerical Professional - Managerial Skilled Manual-Technical Semi-Skilled & Unskilled 2026



"We are finding it difficult to recruit professional workers for smaller towns in Shropshire."
Professional Services Sector

"It is difficult to find suitable staff because people are reluctant to leave secure jobs, suggesting a serious lack of confidence in the economy."
Hospitality Sector

CASH FLOW
INCREASES

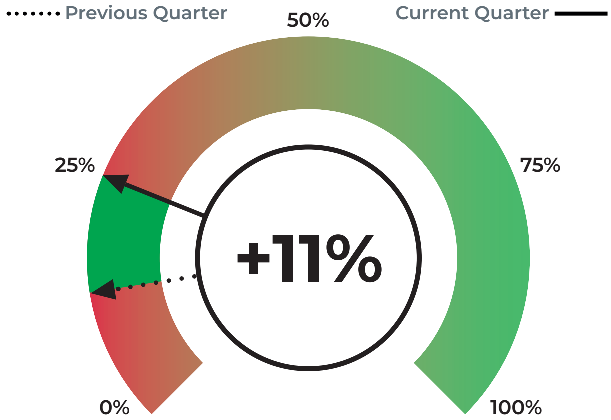
Cash Flow:

"Additional Government-imposed costs have reduced our cash flow, affecting our investment proposals."
Hospitality Sector

"Exports sales increased together with capacity where deposits are taken, hence cash flow increase."
Manufacturing Sector

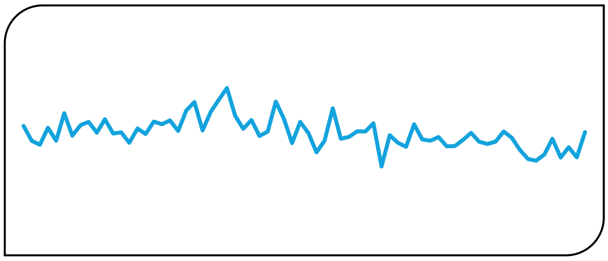
Top General Concern:

- *Reduced cash flow due to increased staff cost and subdued markets*

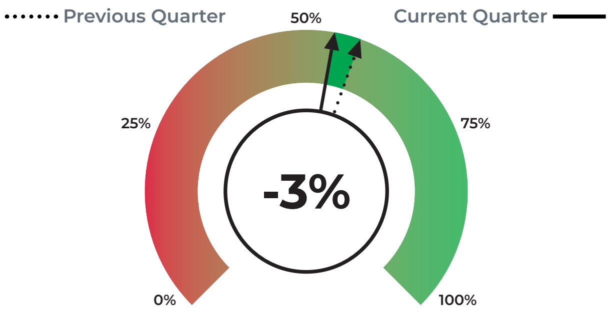


% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **CASH FLOW** on the previous quarter

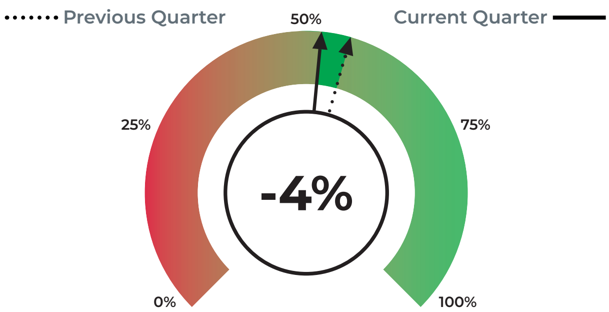
2009 **Cash Flow** **2026**



FEAR FACTORS



% of respondents seeing **INFLATION** as a fear factor compared to last quarter



% of respondents seeing **TAXATION** as a fear factor compared to last quarter

Fear Factors:

"We are fortunate to have an exclusive, patented product that is mainly exported; without it, our UK business would reduce staff to less than a quarter of the current level."
Manufacturing Sector

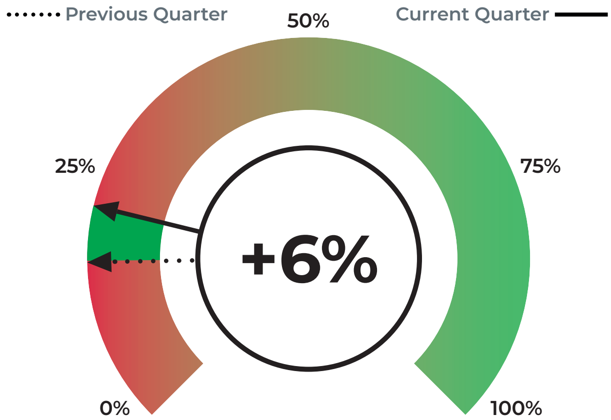
"Everyone's costs are affecting us through a knock-on effect. Unless we make radical changes that work, we may be forced to close because this is not sustainable."
Service Sector

INVESTMENT
INCREASES

Plant & Machinery:

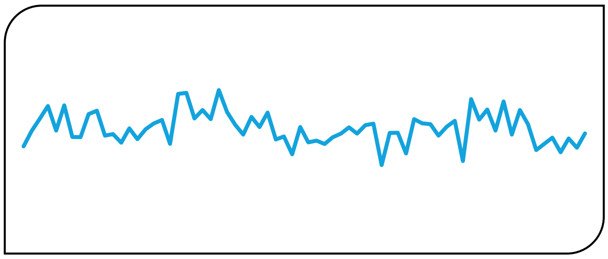
"Overheads have increased as we continue trying to grow in our third year."
Construction Sector

"Due to the steep increase in staff costs, utility costs and materials, we cannot invest for the future or even for now."
Manufacturing Sector

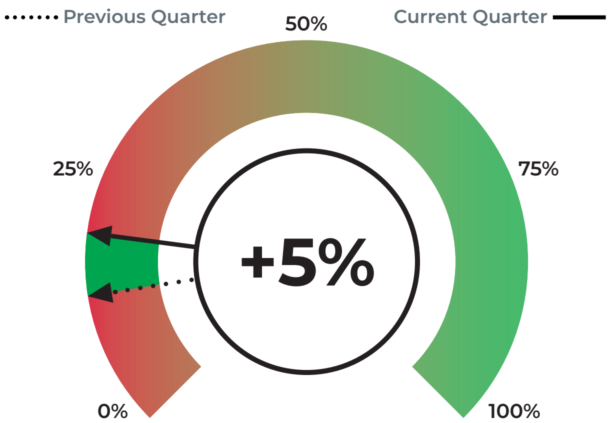


% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **P&M INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009 **Plant & Machinery** **2026**

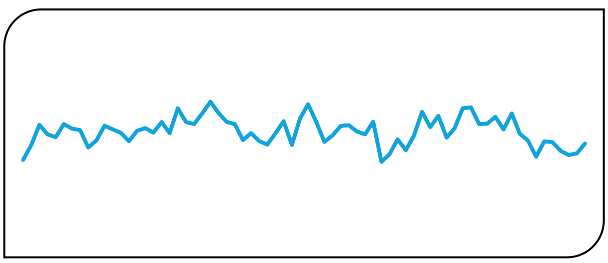


Training:



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **TRAINING INVESTMENT** on the previous quarter

2009 **Training** **2026**



"Ongoing demands for additional knowledge and skill sets is reducing productive time, while our detailed induction takes longer to upskill staff and improve standards, adding further costs to output."
Construction Sector

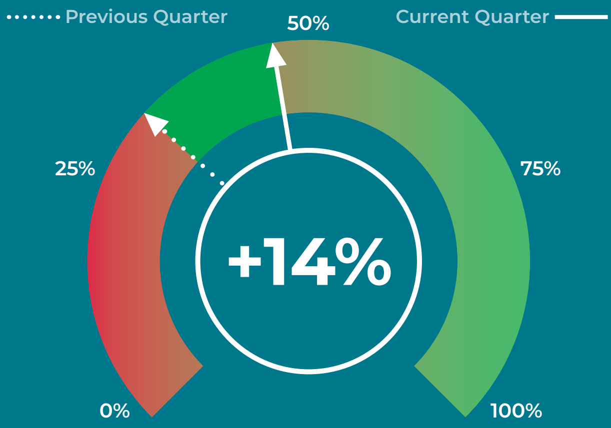
"Training costs are a concern, and with higher wage costs, we have to reduce our training budget."
Professional Services Sector

CONFIDENCE
INCREASES

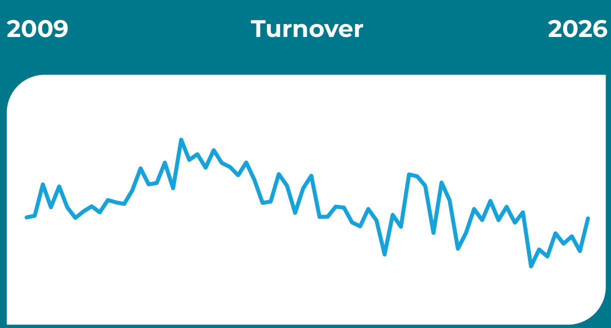
Turnover Confidence:

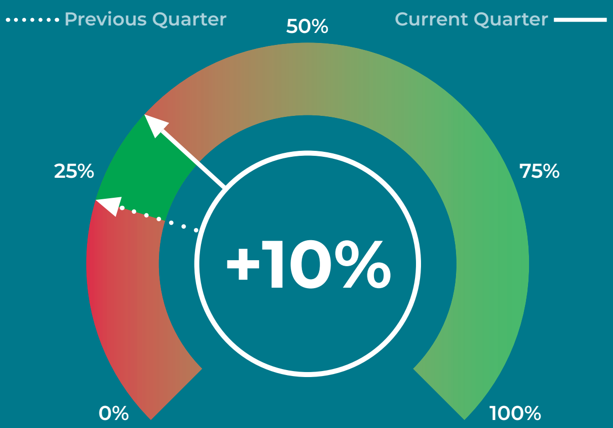
"We expect turnover and profitability to remain broadly stable over the next year, as economic uncertainty, cautious customer investment and rising operating costs limit short-term growth."
Manufacturing Sector

"Our costs keep rising, but Shropshire Council and NHS contracts limit what we can charge; the 2% and 1.7% uplifts are not enough to match inflation and new employment-related costs."
Health & Social Care Sector



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **TURNOVER** on the previous quarter





% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in increased **PROFITABILITY** on the previous quarter

Profitability Confidence:

"The UK Government focuses on major cities instead of funding the Shires, while local councils lack the money for our current contract work."
Professional Services Sector

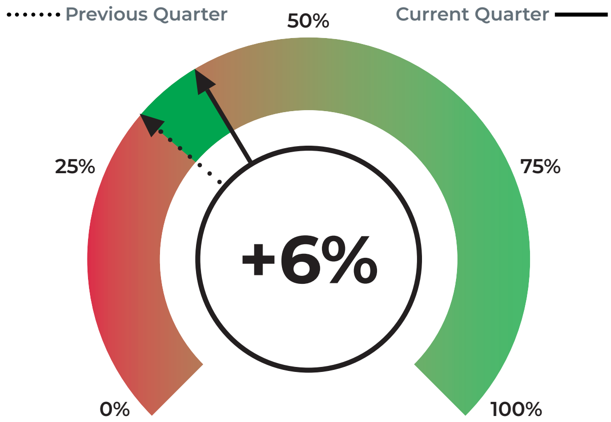
"The National Minimum Wage increase, combined with sick pay having no waiting day, has had a significant monthly impact."
Services Sector

CAPACITY | PRICE vs COST

Capacity:

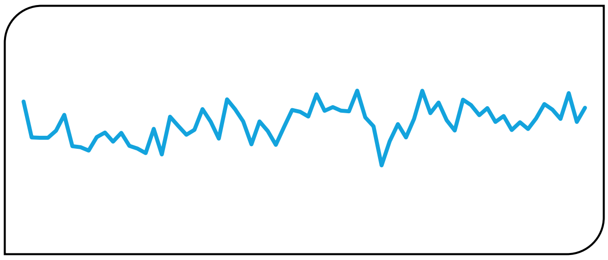
“We are operating below capacity because recruiting skilled local staff is difficult and transport infrastructure limits access to work. Rising labour, materials, energy and other costs may also require some price increases over the next three months.”
Manufacturing Sector

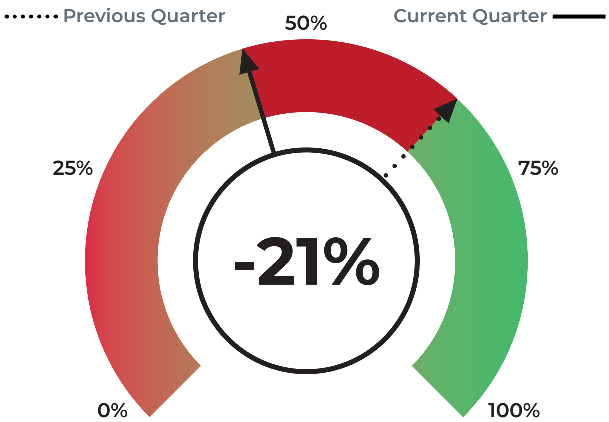
“We are limited in what we can charge the council and NHS, whose uplifts do not cover the minimum wage increase. We are seeking more private contracts to cover costs and achieve a sustainable profit.”
Health & Social Care Sector



% of respondents reporting a rise or fall in **FULL CAPACITY WORKING** on the previous quarter

2009 **Full Capacity** **2026**





% of respondents expecting to **INCREASE PRICES** compared to the previous quarter

Price vs Cost:

“Insurance premiums are generally flat or falling at the moment, so our income will also remain flat or decline.”
Professional Services Sector

“Rising labour, materials, utility and fuel costs continue to squeeze our margins, and will inevitably affect future pricing decisions.”
Manufacturing Sector

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

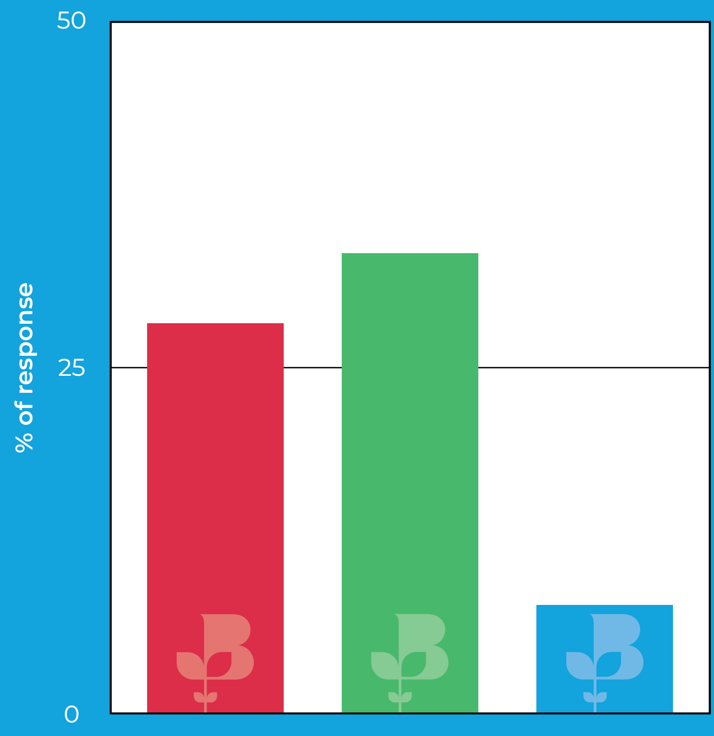
Business Pressures:

1 Have your credit terms got worse?

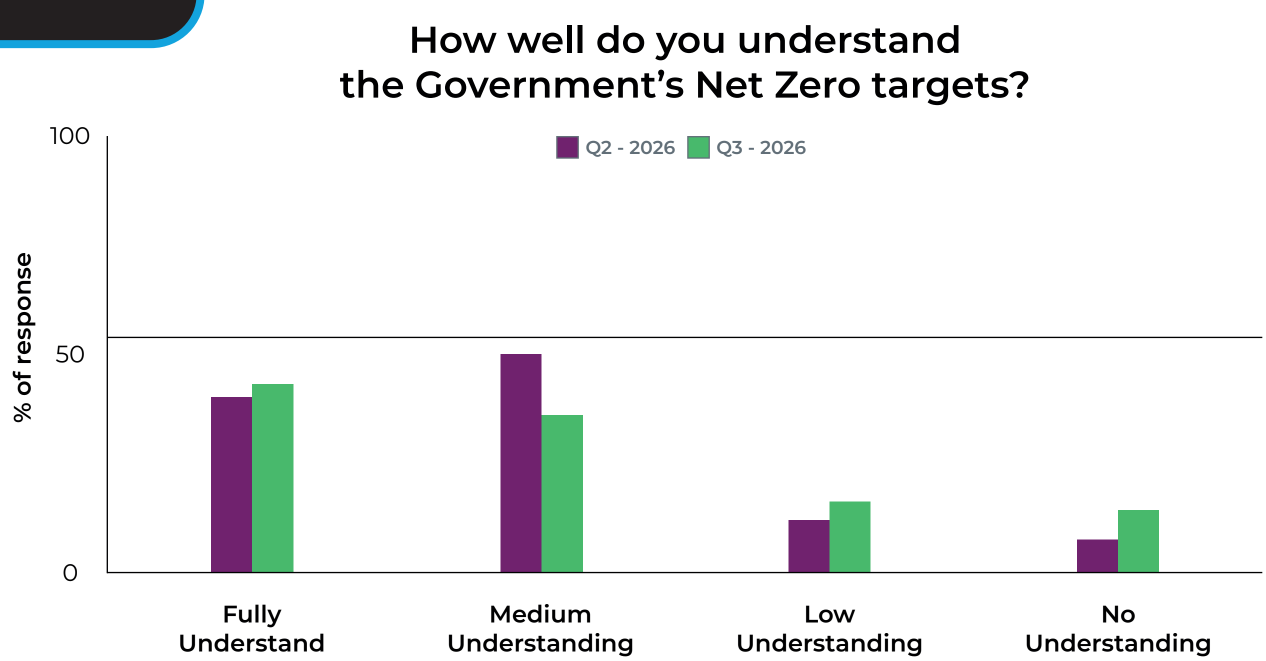
2 Are your bad debts increasing?

3 Are wage demands easing?

Graph shows the % of those who said YES to each question

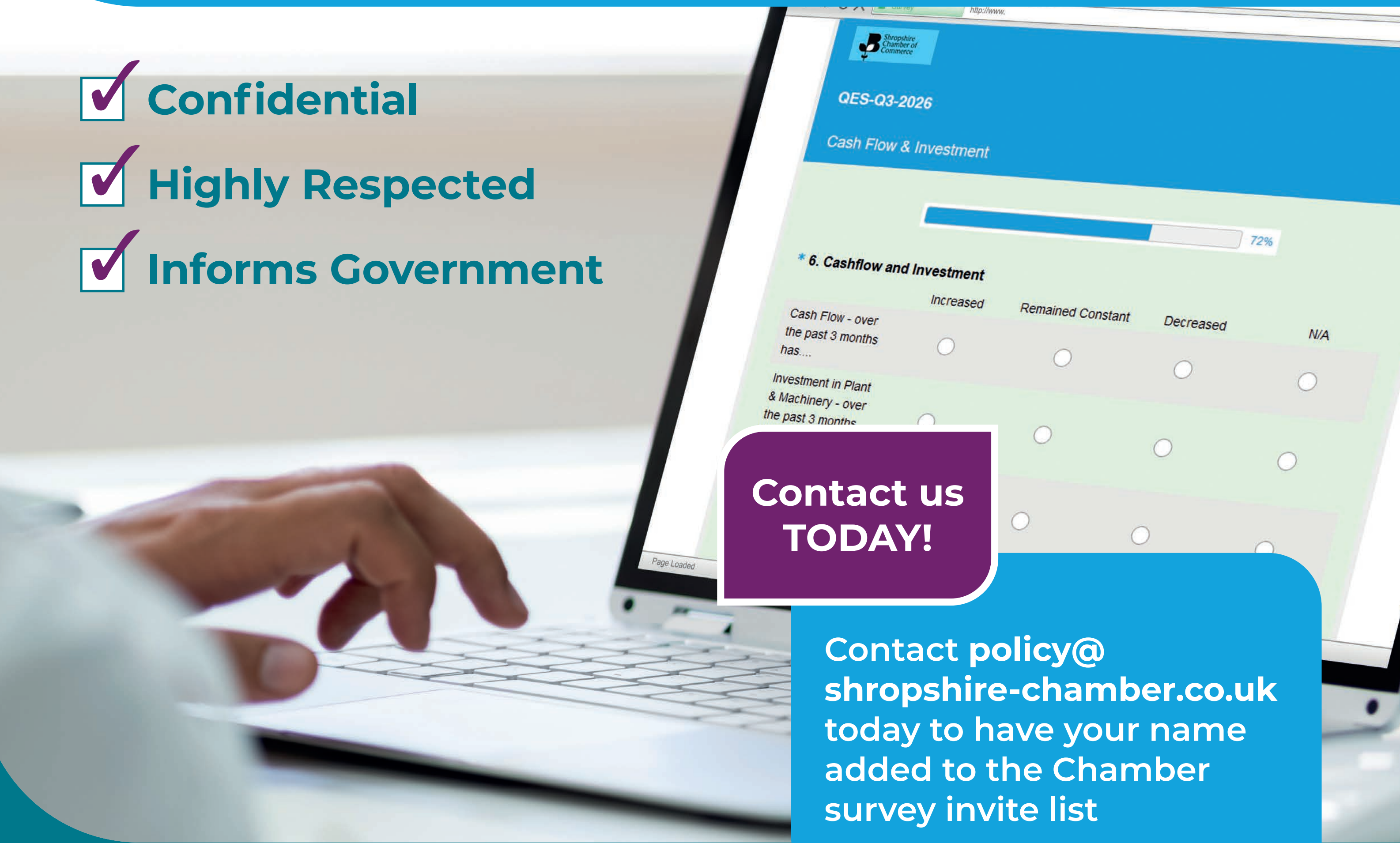


Net Zero Targets:



your voice MATTERS!

The greater the voice, the greater the influence we can have to support you



- ☑ Confidential
- ☑ Highly Respected
- ☑ Informs Government

Contact us TODAY!

Contact **policy@shropshire-chamber.co.uk** today to have your name added to the Chamber survey invite list

About the QES

The **Quarterly Economic Survey (QES)** is the flagship economic survey from the **British Chambers of Commerce**. **Shropshire Chamber** is responsible for the collection of data, for the survey, in both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. The data gives Shropshire Chamber vital economic indicators, facts which are used to lobby, inform Chamber strategy, as well as to support the local business community.

The national collated data, the largest and most highly respected survey of its type, is used to inform and lobby Government departments, assist the Bank of England, and inform a wide variety of other relevant bodies and economists. The survey happens four times per year.

Every Single Business Voice Matters!

The greater the voice, the greater the influence we can have to support you and your business. **All businesses from Shropshire / Telford & Wrekin are welcome**, Chamber member or not, sole trader to multinational. It is anonymous to ensure you can speak freely.

If you would like to discuss partnering with us for the next Quarterly Economic Survey, please contact Ruth Ross on:

r.ross@shropshire-chamber.co.uk

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce

British Chambers of Commerce Accredited