

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 22 February 2024

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) to deliver real-time information to help assess issues affecting UK businesses and economy, including financial performance, workforce, trade and business resilience. These are official statistics in development.

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Release date:
22 February 2024

Next release:
7 March 2024

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1 . Main points

- Although more than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported that their turnover had decreased in January 2024 compared with December 2023, this was down 3 percentage points when comparing December 2023 with November 2023; conversely, 16% reported their turnover was higher, broadly stable over the same period.
- When looking ahead to March 2024, more than one in five (22%) trading businesses expect their turnover to increase, up 4 percentage points from expectations for February 2024; while 10% reported that they expect their turnover to decrease, down 4 percentage points over the same period.
- More than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in January 2024 when compared with December 2023, while 12% of businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold over the same period; an increase of 3 percentage points and 2 percentage points respectively when comparing December 2023 with November 2023.
- Nearly half (48%) of trading businesses reported that they were not considering raising prices in March 2024.
- Fewer than 1 in 10 (6%) businesses with 10 or more employees experienced global supply chain disruption in January 2024, broadly stable with previous months; of those businesses, 46% reported the conflict in the Middle East as the main reason for their disruption.
- More than one in five (22%) trading businesses reported that their overall performance decreased in January 2024 compared with the same calendar month last year, broadly stable with December 2023; in comparison, nearly a quarter (24%) of trading businesses reported that they expect their overall performance to increase over the next 12 months, down 2 percentage points from early January 2024.

These are official statistics in development and we advise caution when using the data. The BICS questions and topics are regularly reviewed, and questions are often added, removed or amended to reflect changing circumstances and analytical priorities.

2 . Headline figures

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 102 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 5 February to 18 February 2024.

The data reported within BICS bulletins and datasets are estimates that are subject to [uncertainty](#), for example, sampling variability and [non-sampling error](#). Further information on quality is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#), and we regularly update [confidence intervals](#) associated with the survey questions.

Single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 92 are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: November 2023 article](#).

More about economy, business and jobs

- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

Figure 1: Headline figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. For presentational purposes, some response options have been combined, excluded, or both.
2. For presentational purposes, “prices” data show an increase to prices bought and sold compared with the previous calendar month.
3. Data are plotted in the middle of each wave.

The percentage of businesses that reported they were trading in early February 2024 was 94%, with 86% fully trading and 9% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 4% of businesses reported “temporarily paused trading” and 2% reported “permanently ceased trading” as their business’s trading status.

3 . Financial performance

Turnover

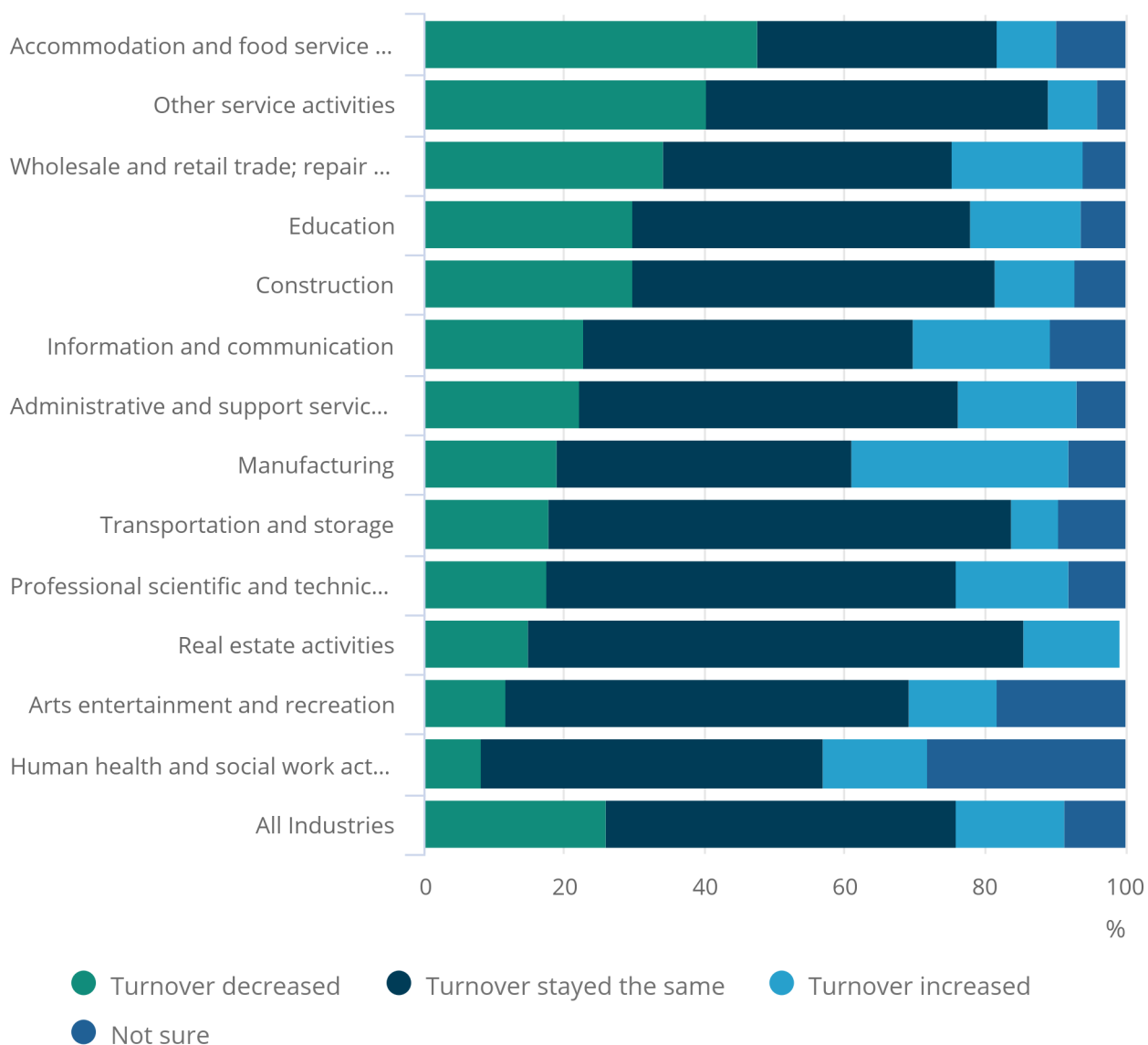
Trading businesses were asked how their turnover in January 2024 compared with December 2023, excluding any seasonal trading.

Figure 2: More than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported that their turnover had decreased in January 2024 compared with December 2023

Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 January 2024

Figure 2: More than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported that their turnover had decreased in January 2024 compared with December 2023

Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 January 2024



Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding, and because percentages less than 1% have been removed for disclosure purposes.
2. "Mining and quarrying" and "Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities" have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in "All industries".

The percentage of trading businesses that reported their turnover had decreased in January 2024 compared with the previous calendar month was 26%, down 3 percentage points compared with December 2023. Over the same period, 50% reported their turnover had stayed the same, broadly stable over the same period.

In early February 2024, nearly a quarter of trading businesses (24%) reported that economic uncertainty is currently having an impact on their turnover, broadly stable with early January 2024.

Across all industries, other reported challenges affecting turnover included:

- cost of raw materials (18%), broadly stable with early January 2024
- competition (16%), broadly stable with early January 2024
- cost of labour (14%), broadly stable with early January 2024

However, despite reports of these challenges, 34% of trading businesses indicated that they were not currently experiencing any turnover challenges. This is also broadly stable with early January 2024.

Turnover expectations

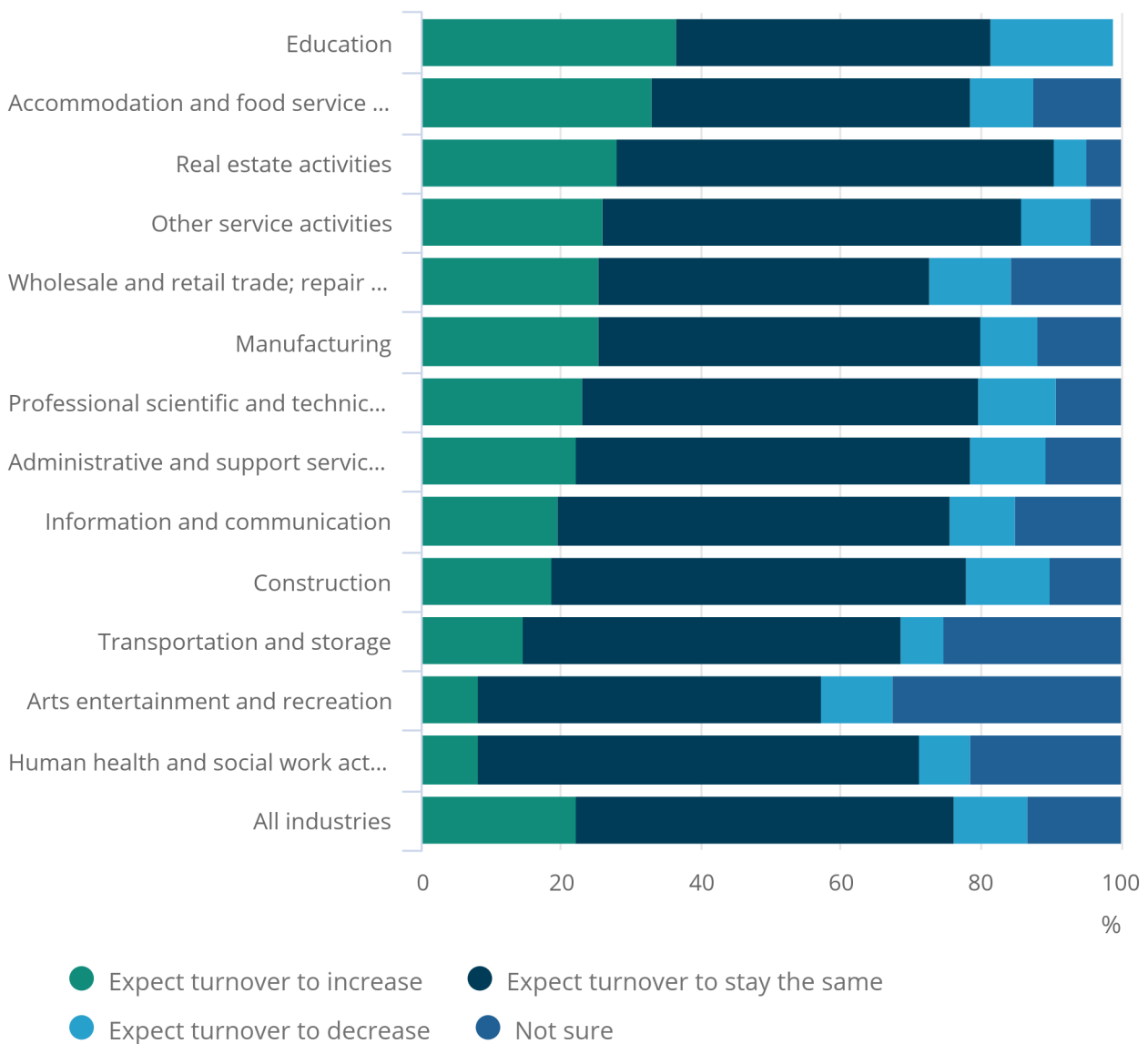
Trading businesses were asked about their turnover expectations for March 2024, excluding any seasonal trading.

Figure 3: More than 1 in 5 (22%) trading businesses reported that they expected their turnover to increase in March 2024

Turnover expectations, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 March 2024

Figure 3: More than 1 in 5 (22%) trading businesses reported that they expected their turnover to increase in March 2024

Turnover expectations, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 March 2024



Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

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2. “Mining and quarrying” and “Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities” have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in “All industries”.
3. Caution should be taken when interpreting expectations questions as the employees responding on behalf of businesses may not have full oversight of all of their business’s future expectations.

While 26% of trading businesses reported lower turnover in January 2024, 22% expect their turnover to increase in March 2024. This is up 4 percentage points from expectations for February 2024, and the largest proportion reported since the question was introduced in April 2022.

In contrast, 10% of trading businesses expect their turnover to decrease in March 2024, down 4 percentage points from February 2024. This is the smallest proportion reported since the question was introduced in April 2022. This suggests businesses continue to be more optimistic about the months ahead.

4 . Prices

Prices bought and prices sold

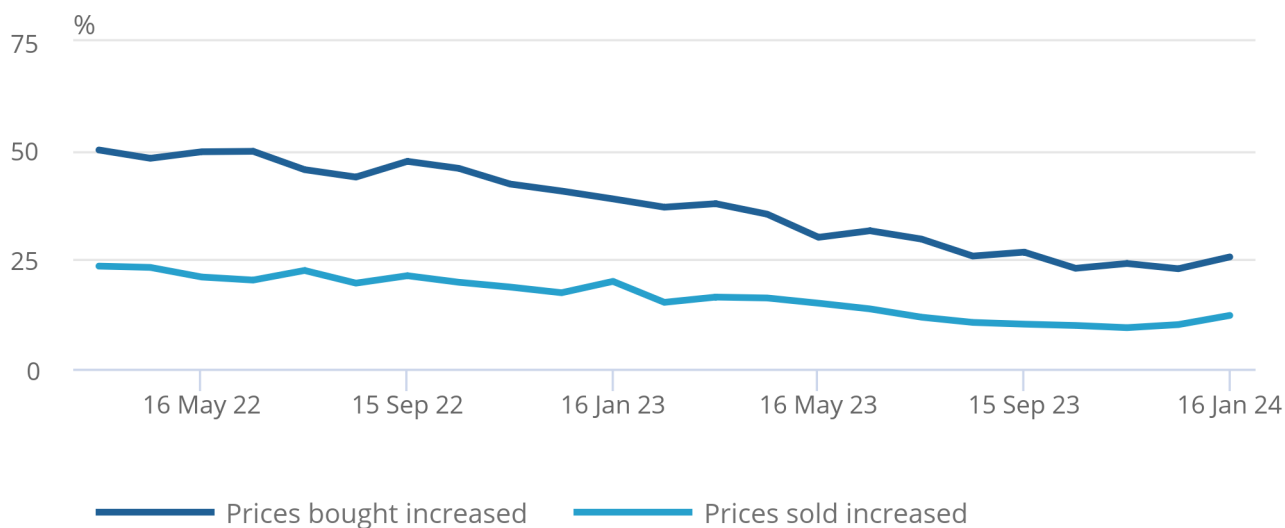
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked how the prices of goods or services they bought and sold in January 2024 compared with December 2023.

Figure 4: More than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in January 2024 compared with December 2023

Prices bought and sold increased, businesses currently trading, broken down by response option, weighted by count, UK, 1 March 2022 to 31 January 2024

Figure 4: More than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in January 2024 compared with December 2023

Prices bought and sold increased, businesses currently trading, broken down by response option, weighted by count, UK, 1 March 2022 to 31 January 2024



Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. For presentational purposes, some response options have been removed.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

Latest estimates suggest a small rise in the percentage of businesses reporting an increase in the prices of goods or services bought, with 26% of businesses reporting an increase in January 2024. This is up 3 percentage points when compared with December 2023, and the largest proportion reported since September 2023.

Conversely, more than 1 in 10 (12%) trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold in January 2024 compared with December 2023. This is also up 2 percentage points and the largest proportion reported since June 2023.

Further response options broken down by industry and size bands can be found in our [accompanying dataset](#).

Prices expectations

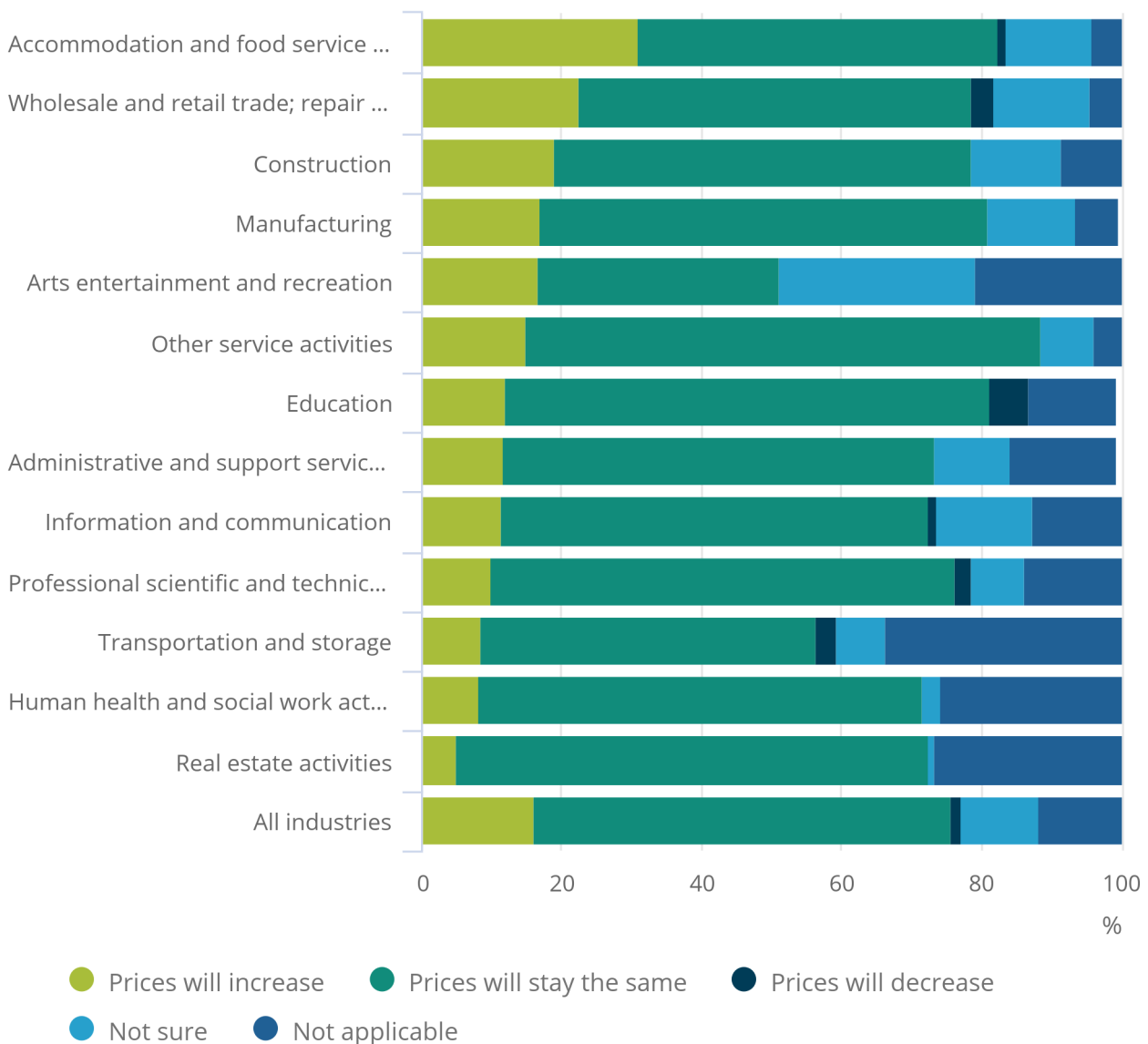
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked what their expectations were for the prices of goods or services they sell in March 2024.

Figure 5: Nearly one in six (16%) trading businesses expect to raise the prices of goods or services they sell in March 2024

Price expectations, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 March 2024

Figure 5: Nearly one in six (16%) trading businesses expect to raise the prices of goods or services they sell in March 2024

Price expectations, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 March 2024



Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding, and because percentages less than 1% have been removed for disclosure purposes.
2. “Mining and quarrying” and “Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities” have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in “All industries”.
3. Caution should be taken when interpreting expectations questions as the employees responding on behalf of businesses may not have full oversight of all of their business’s future expectations.

The percentage of businesses that expect to raise the prices of goods or services they sell in March 2024 (16%), remains broadly stable with February 2024.

In contrast, the proportion of businesses who reported that they expect prices to stay the same rose 2 percentage points to 60% over the same period. Meanwhile, 2% of businesses expected prices to decrease, broadly stable with February 2024.

Price rise reasons

In early February 2024, businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked what, if anything, was causing them to consider raising their prices in March 2024.

Nearly half (48%) of trading businesses reported that they were not considering raising prices in March 2024, broadly stable with February 2024.

In comparison, labour costs continued to be reported as the top reason for businesses considering raising prices, with 22% reporting this, broadly stable with February 2024.

Across all industries, the other most reported reasons for businesses considering raising prices included:

- energy prices (18%), down 4 percentage points from February 2024
- raw material prices (18%), down 2 percentage points from February 2024
- finance costs (11%), down 4 percentage points from February 2024

Passing on costs

In early February 2024, businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked how much of their business's input price increases they had passed on to their customers over the last six months.

More than a quarter (28%) of businesses reported that they had not passed on input price increases; while 18% reported they had passed on less than 50%, and 9% reported that they had passed on 50% or more.

Further response options on all prices questions broken down by trading status, industry and size bands can be found in our [accompanying dataset](#).

5 . Supply chains

Global supply chain distribution

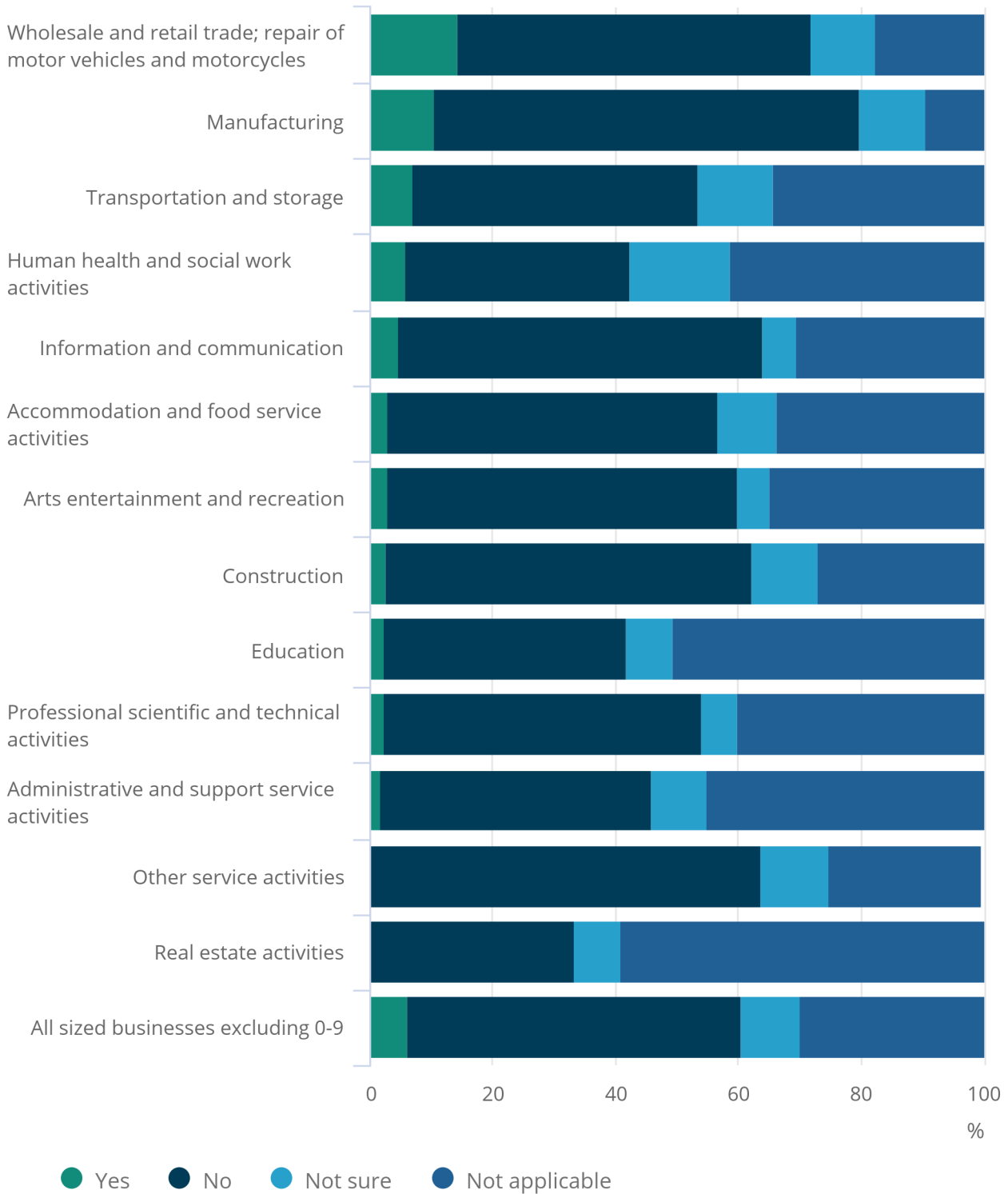
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked whether they had experienced any global supply chain disruption in January 2024.

Figure 6: In January 2024, 6% of businesses with 10 or more employees experienced global supply chain disruption

Global supply chain disruption, businesses not permanently stopped trading with 10 or more employees, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 January 2024

Figure 6: In January 2024, 6% of businesses with 10 or more employees experienced global supply chain disruption

Global supply chain disruption, businesses not permanently stopped trading with 10 or more employees, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 January 2024



Notes:

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2. "Mining and quarrying" and "Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities" have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in "All industries".

The percentage of businesses with 10 or more employees who reported experiencing global supply chain disruption in January 2024 was 6%, broadly stable with December 2023.

Of those businesses with 10 or more employees who reported issues, 46% reported the conflict in the Middle East as the main reason for their disruption. The other most reported reasons included:

- the UK exiting the EU (15%), broadly stable with December 2023
- a shortage of materials (13%), down 6 percentage points from December 2023

Further details, including the full list of response options broken down by industry and size band, are available in our [accompanying dataset](#).

6 . Business concerns

Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked what their main concern for their business was when looking ahead to March 2024.

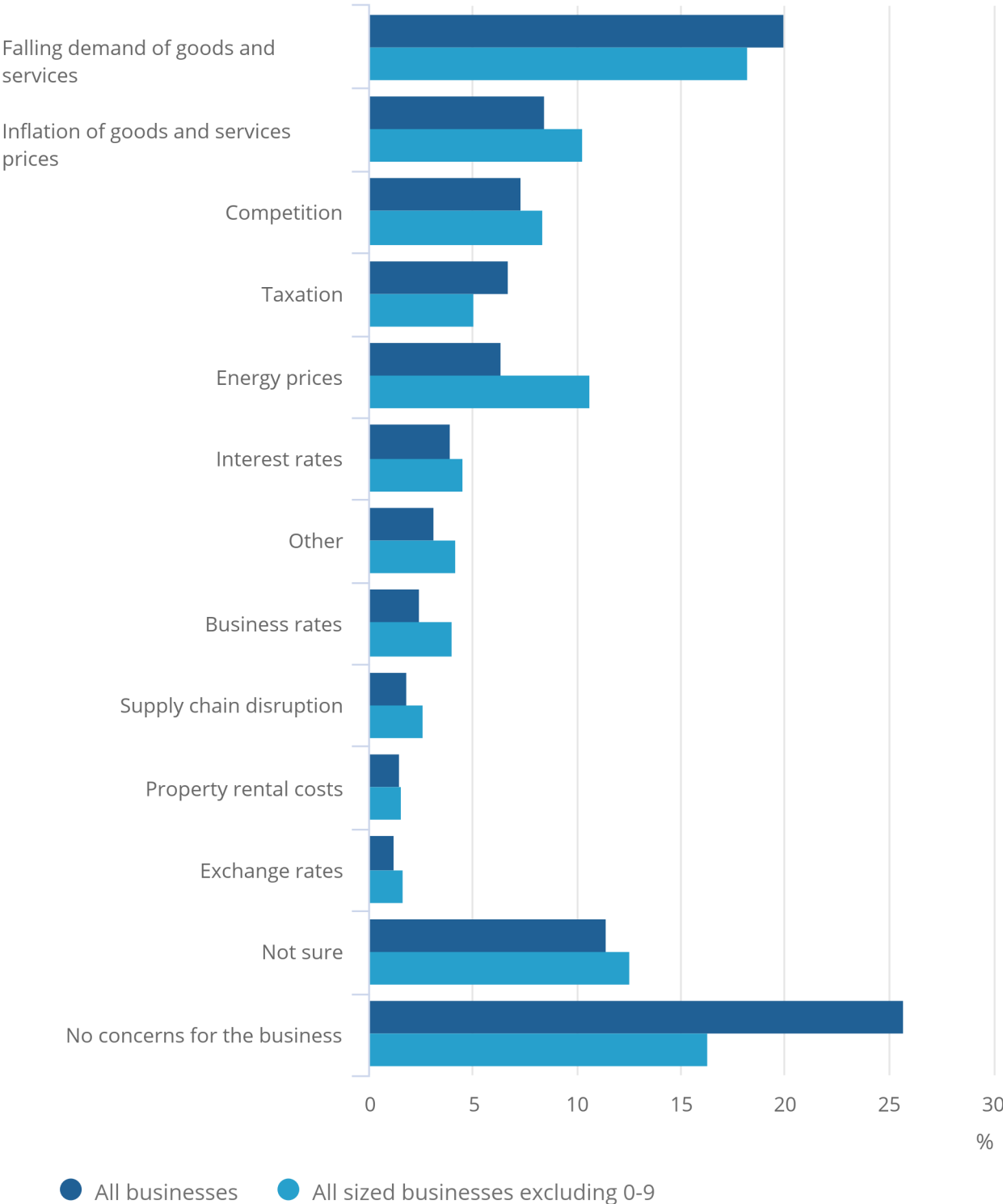
Businesses were asked for their main concern; this does not mean they do not have any other concerns for their business.

Figure 7: Nearly two-thirds (63%) of businesses reported some form of concern for their business when looking ahead to March 2024

Business concerns, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by response option, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 March 2024

Figure 7: Nearly two-thirds (63%) of businesses reported some form of concern for their business when looking ahead to March 2024

Business concerns, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by response option, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 March 2024



Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding, and because percentages less than 1% have been removed for disclosure purposes.
2. Caution should be taken when interpreting expectations questions as the employees responding on behalf of businesses may not have full oversight of all of their business's future expectations.

When looking ahead to March 2024, 63% of businesses have some form of business concern, broadly stable with concerns for February 2024.

The three main concerns reported by businesses for March 2024 were:

- falling demand of goods and services (20%), up 2 percentage points from February 2024
- inflation of goods and services (9%), broadly stable with February 2024
- competition with other UK businesses (7%), broadly stable with February 2024

The percentage of businesses that reported no concerns was 26% for March 2024, down 3 percentage points from February 2024.

Further details, including the full list of concerns broken down by industry and size band, are available in our [accompanying dataset](#).

7 . Business performance

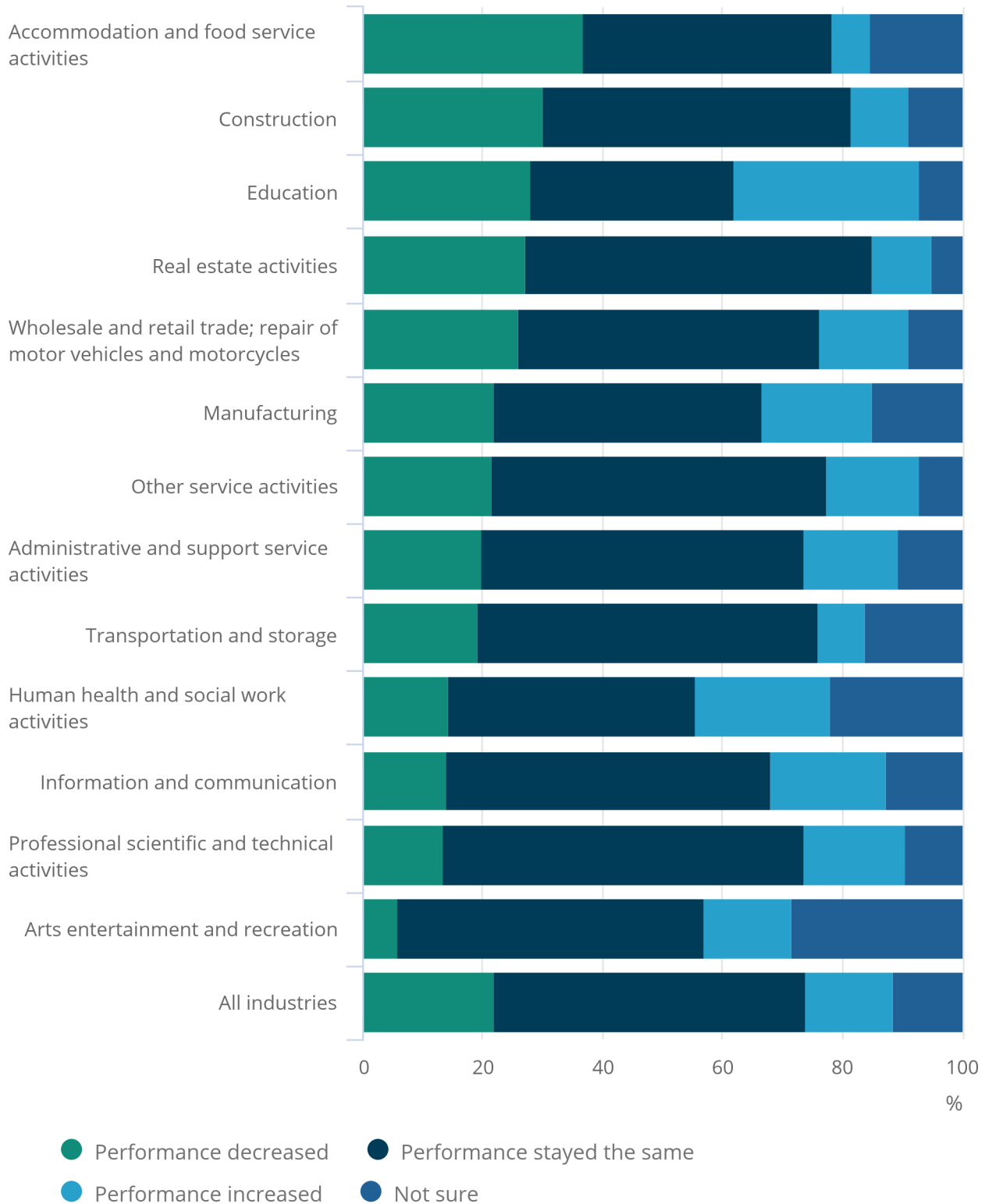
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked how they would describe their overall performance in January 2024 compared with January 2023.

Figure 8: More than one in five (22%) trading businesses reported their performance had decreased in January 2024 compared with January 2023

Business performance, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 January 2024

Figure 8: More than one in five (22%) trading businesses reported their performance had decreased in January 2024 compared with January 2023

Business performance, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 January 2024



Notes:

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In January 2024, 22% of trading businesses reported a performance decrease compared with the same month a year ago. This is broadly stable with the proportion reported for December 2023. In contrast, 15% of trading businesses reported that their performance had increased over the same period.

When asked in early February 2024, nearly a quarter (24%) of trading businesses reported that they expect their overall performance to increase over the next 12 months, down 2 percentage points from early January 2024. The proportion expecting their performance to stay the same was 47%, and those expecting their performance to decrease was 10%, both broadly stable over the same period.

8 . Business Insights and Conditions Survey data

[Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#)

Dataset | Released 22 February 2024

Weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. This dataset includes additional information collected as part of the survey not presented in this publication. These are official statistics in development.

[Business insights and impact on the UK economy confidence intervals](#)

Dataset | Released 22 February 2024

Confidence intervals for weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. These are official statistics in development.

Access to microdata

You can access the microdata for Waves 1 to 101 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) through the Secure Research Service (SRS). The BICS microdata for each wave are released on a rolling basis in the week following the publication of each wave. The microdata are made confidential and do not disclose information on any specific business.

Only researchers accredited under the [Digital Economy Act, as explained on the UK Statistics Authority website](#) are able to access data in the SRS. You can apply for accreditation through the [Research Accreditation Service \(RAS\)](#). You need to have relevant academic or work experience and must successfully attend and complete the assessed Safe Researcher Training.

To conduct analysis with microdata from the SRS, a project application must be submitted to the [Research Accreditation Panel \(RAP\), as explained on the UK Statistics Authority website](#). To access the SRS, you must also work for an organisation with an Assured Organisational Connectivity agreement in place.

9 . Glossary

Reporting unit

The reporting unit is the business unit to which questionnaires are sent. The response from the reporting unit can cover the enterprise as a whole, or parts of the enterprise identified by lists of local units.

10 . Measuring the data

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#), which was updated on 24 January 2022.

The BICS is voluntary, and the results are official statistics in development. More information is available in our [Guide to official statistics in development](#).

Table 1: Sample and response rates for Wave 100, 101 and 102 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	25 January 2024 Publication Wave 100	8 February 2024 Publication Wave 101	22 February 2024 Publication Wave 102
Sample	39,431	39,262	39,197
Response	10,655	10,408	10,471
Rate	27.0%	26.5%	26.7%

Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Response rates for all waves can be found in the accompanying dataset.

The results are based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly BICS, which captures businesses' views on financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. The Wave 102 survey was live for the period 5 February to 18 February 2024. For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 5 February to 18 February 2024 article](#).

Coverage

The BICS sampling frame is based on the same industries as our Monthly Business Survey (MBS). The MBS covers the UK for production industries only, and Great Britain for construction, retail and services industries. The MBS is an important input to the output measure of gross domestic product (GDP) which includes monthly GDP.

For detailed information on the industries covered by the MBS and BICS, see our [GDP\(o\) data sources catalogue](#). The following are some industries that are excluded from MBS and BICS:

- agriculture
- oil and gas extraction
- energy generation and supply
- public administration and defence
- public provision of education and health
- finance and insurance

For more information on the methodology of producing the BICS, such as [weighting](#), please see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#).

11 . Strengths and limitations

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#).

12 . Related links

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators](#)

Bulletin | Updated frequently

Early data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These real-time indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and innovative methods. These are official statistics in development.

[Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: November 2023](#)

Article | Released 9 November 2023

Estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on trading status, financial performance, workforce and business resilience.

13 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 22 February 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 22 February 2024](#)