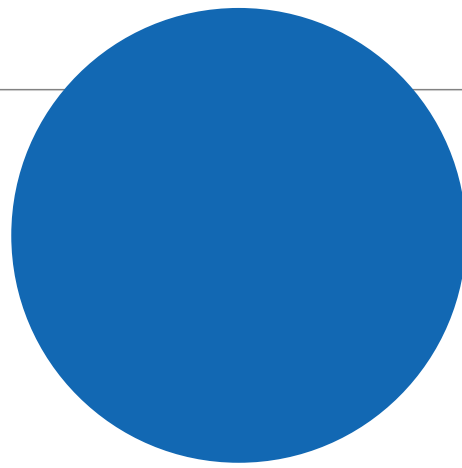
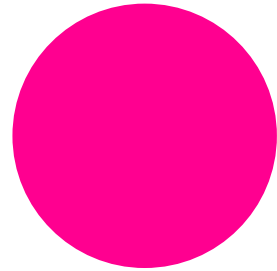




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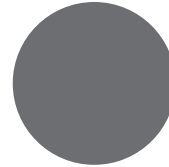


Business Perceptions Survey 2026



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1 Executive Summary

Introduction

This survey explored UK businesses' awareness, understanding and perceptions of competition and consumer protection law, including the consumer provisions within the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA) and awareness of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). It also explored businesses' views on aspects of the competition and consumer protection regimes, including factors influencing deterrence and effects on the wider business environment.

The survey was conducted by DJS Research via CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) between 12 January 2026 and 2 April 2026.

A total of 540 private sector businesses across the UK took part in the survey. Weighting by business size, sector and region/nation was applied to the final sample used for analysis, to ensure it reflected the profile of UK private sector businesses with one or more employees.

Understanding of competition and consumer protection law

Overall, businesses reported a relatively high understanding of their responsibilities under competition and consumer protection law. Around seven in ten businesses (72%) said they understood their responsibilities under competition law, while 87% of consumer-facing businesses reported understanding their responsibilities under consumer protection law. In each case this includes just over a quarter (28%) that said they understand these 'very well'.

However, understanding of more detailed or technical rules was less consistent. There was uncertainty around specific competition rules, including salary coordination between employers and immunity for reporting breaches. Knowledge gaps were also evident in some aspects of consumer protection regulation. While 56% correctly identified cancellation rights, fewer businesses recognised that pre-ticked boxes for optional payments are not permitted (28%), and over a third (36%) incorrectly believed consumers are bound by unfair contract terms.

Understanding of UK merger rules was also more limited. Fewer than two fifths (38%) of businesses with 10 or more employees said they understood these rules very or fairly well. While around three fifths (61%) felt protected by merger regulation, only 30% knew who to contact if they had concerns. Larger businesses (53%) and those trading internationally (59%) generally demonstrated greater understanding of UK merger rules.

Awareness of the consumer provisions within the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA)

Just under half (49%) of consumer-facing businesses that sell online were aware of the new rules relating to 'drip pricing'. Awareness was slightly higher for rules relating to 'fake reviews', with 58% of businesses expressing some degree of awareness. Around a quarter (27%) of the businesses asked these questions were aware of new rules relating to both drip pricing and fake reviews, and felt they were already compliant or in the process of making changes.

Awareness and perceptions of the CMA

Under one in ten (7%) of businesses identified the CMA **unprompted** as the organisation responsible for enforcing competition and consumer protection law in the UK, increasing to 20% when **prompted**. Very few businesses had direct contact with the CMA during the previous two years.

Despite this, businesses showed strong support for enforcement activity. Most (86%) said they would change their practices if they were contacted by the CMA, while enforcement measures such as fines, legal proceedings and director disqualification were widely viewed as important deterrents.



Attitudes towards competition and consumer protection

Businesses expressed strong support for competition and consumer protection more broadly. Most (94%) agreed that protecting consumers from unfair and misleading business practices is important, while 86% agreed that fair competition helps drive investment and economic growth. However, businesses were less likely (61%) to agree that there is a level playing field within the sectors in which they operate.

Summary

Overall, the findings suggest that while UK businesses are broadly supportive of the competition and consumer protection framework and generally understand their core responsibilities, awareness of the CMA is limited and understanding is less developed in more technical or complex areas of regulation, particularly merger rules and certain aspects of consumer protection. Higher levels of understanding were generally observed among larger businesses, businesses trading internationally, those in the Business and Professional Services sector, and newer businesses operating for ten years or less.



2 Introduction

Background, methodology and sampling approach

Background

DJS Research (DJS) was commissioned to conduct a survey to understand UK businesses' perceptions of the CMA and its work. This includes awareness of the CMA, the competition, merger and consumer protection regimes, high-level insights into deterrence effects and wider impacts of CMA work.

More specifically, the research aims were as follows:

- To provide a nationally representative survey of UK businesses to explore their perceptions of the CMA.
- To help map awareness and understanding of the competition and consumer protection regimes, and of the CMA (and how this varies with key business characteristics including sector and business size).
- For consumer-facing businesses, the extent to which they understand consumer provisions within the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act (DMCCA).
- To explore businesses' views on aspects of the competition and consumer protection regimes, including factors influencing deterrence and the effects on the wider business environment.

Questionnaire design

DJS worked with the CMA to design and finalise the questionnaire.

The questionnaire draft that was agreed was cognitively tested in December 2025, among a mix of businesses in terms of size and sector. All thirteen cognitive interviews were conducted via CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing). Businesses were asked the survey questions that had been agreed, whilst being prompted throughout to check their comprehension and relevance. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide any general feedback on the survey length, the introduction, how engaging and relevant they found the survey, and whether a small incentive (e.g. charity donation) or anything else might help encourage more businesses to participate. For completing the cognitive interviews, each business received a £50 voucher for their time.

The cognitive testing highlighted a few areas where the questionnaire could be improved to ensure it was as relevant as possible to the businesses in scope, while still achieving the objectives of the research. The feedback also identified that the survey was too long and highlighted areas where revisions could be made, to bring it in line with the target length of 15-20 minutes on average.

Following the revisions made to the questionnaire, identified in the cognitive interviews, a full pilot of the survey was then conducted, ahead of the full survey launch. The pilot did not reveal any significant changes were needed. At that stage the survey was also translated into Welsh, so that businesses in Wales could be asked their language preference, in accordance with Welsh Language Standards.

Sampling and data collection

The sample for the survey was designed so that it would be representative of UK businesses in the private sector with 1+ employees, with the aim of achieving 1,200 completed interviews by telephone.

To achieve this, quotas were set by business size, broad sector grouping and nation. The quota targets for larger businesses and those in the devolved nations were deliberately set so that they were over-represented (at an unweighted level), compared with their actual occurrence in the business population, to allow for more robust base sizes for analysis. Weighting was applied to the final sample achieved, by business size, sector and region/nation to ensure it reflected the profile of UK businesses with one or more employees.



An initial sampling frame of 20,000 private sector UK businesses was drawn randomly, from the commercial sample provider, Market Location, with boosts applied among larger businesses, businesses in the devolved nations, and those operating in smaller sectors (in line with the quota targets set). DJS Research also received around 3,700 replacement contacts from Market Location where the original numbers supplied were unrecognised or unobtainable, or where businesses did not qualify for the research (due to their size or not being in the private sector, for example).

In light of lower-than-expected response rates to the survey, to maximise the size and spread of the sample achieved, DJS Research purchased an additional 15,000 contacts from Datascope, who also source their business contacts from Market Location. These contacts were de-duplicated against those already obtained directly from Market Location.

To qualify to take part in the survey, respondents needed to be in senior/decision-making roles within their business (e.g. Chairman, Managing Director etc.), and businesses had to be within the private sector (i.e. not charities, voluntary organisations, or the public sector).

In total, DJS Research called a total of 36,362 telephone numbers during the fieldwork period.

The original target was 1,200 interviews; however, due to a number of fieldwork challenges (as outlined below), a total of 540 interviews were achieved.

Details of the final call outcomes and the final response rate are presented in the tables below.

Figure 1: Final call outcomes

Status	Number	% of those called	% of those answered
Number of telephone numbers called (including completes)	36,362		
<i>Of which</i>			
TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS COMPLETED	540	1.5%	1.9%
Busy/not available during fieldwork	608	1.7%	2.2%
Refused	5,423	14.9%	19.5%
Screened out (e.g. not a company)	202	0.6%	0.7%
Non qualifier	3,642	10.0%	13.1%
Other call outcomes (e.g. contact details incorrect, blacklisted, unsubscribed etc)	17,930	49.3%	64.5%
TOTAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS ANSWERED	27,805	76.5%	N/A
No reply, answerphone or call back	4,126	11.3%	N/A
Unobtainable/Number not recognised/Terminated/No dial/Telephone failure	4,431	12.2%	N/A
TOTAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NOT ANSWERED	8,557	23.5%	N/A



Figure 2: Final response rate calculation

Status	Number/%
Number of telephone interviews completed	540
Number of eligible telephone numbers*	23,961
OVERALL RESPONSE RATE	2.25%

*Excluding those who were screened out (202), non-qualifiers (3,642), those who were unobtainable (4,431) and no reply, answerphone or call back (4,126).

The sample of 540 interviews achieved has a margin of error of +/-4.19% based on a statistic of 50% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that if for example we found an awareness level of 50% for competition laws and regulations, we can be 95% confident that this figure lies between 45.81% and 54.19% if every private sector business with 1 or more employees in the UK completed the survey.

The main fieldwork stage was conducted via CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) between 12 January 2026 and 2 April 2026. The average survey length was around 19 minutes.

To enable robust subgroup analysis by business size, and knowing that larger employers are generally more difficult to engage in research, a small charity donation was offered initially to businesses with 250 or more employees, later extended to those with 50+ employees to encourage as many as possible to participate. Businesses were given the option to choose from one of three charities: ([Trees for Cities](#), [The National Association for Children of Alcoholics](#) or the [Seashell Trust](#)).

Fieldwork challenges

As noted above, a total of 540 interviews was achieved, with a good cross section of businesses, compared to the initial target of 1,200. This shortfall was due to several challenges encountered throughout the fieldwork period:

- Against a backdrop of **declining response rates via CATI over time** and, as is typical for business surveys of this nature, a high number of refusals was experienced. Overall, **the response/productivity rate was around one third of the estimated rate**, which had been based on similar surveys of this nature.
- A **significant contributing factor** was the **requirement not to disclose** that the research was being conducted on behalf of the **CMA until the end of the survey** (due to awareness questions in the survey), which limited initial engagement.
- The **topics covered** in the survey, regarding competition law and consumer protection were not deemed to be of particular interest, especially to smaller businesses, which **contributed to the challenges** involved in trying to convince them **that taking part would be a good use of their senior representative's time**.
- We knew based on experience from similar studies, positioning the survey as **exploring 'perceptions' is often insufficient to motivate participation** amongst businesses. We **designed the survey introduction with this in mind, and enhanced it further during fieldwork**, to stress the purpose and value of the research, including how the findings would be used to benefit businesses. This had limited benefit however in encouraging businesses to participate.
- **Additional measures** were introduced to support participation. These included offering a **charity donation** incentive (initially to businesses with 250 or more employees, later extended to those with 50+ employees), and relaxing the target respondent criteria from **the most senior** individual to **a senior decision-maker** within the business.



- **Follow-up emails** with further information about the research were sent out on request to businesses from the start of fieldwork. These emails outlined the purpose of the study, and how personal data would be used, helping to reassure potential participants (without disclosing who the research was on behalf of). Similar to the survey introduction, the **emails were updated part way** through fieldwork to simplify the wording, and place greater emphasis on the benefits of taking part to businesses.
- In light of these challenges, the fieldwork window was extended; additional interviewer resource was allocated, and (as outlined above) additional sample was purchased to help maximise the achieved sample size and response rate as much as possible.

It should be noted that, despite the reduced sample size, the survey of 540 UK businesses still **provides a sufficiently robust evidence base to support meaningful analysis**, overall and at subgroup level, including some comparisons by business size, sector, and trading location etc. although the smaller sample size does limit the level of sub-group analysis possible in some areas.

Analysis and reporting conventions

Owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed on graphs may not always add up to 100%.

To provide further insight into the results, sub-group analysis is provided by specific variables (e.g. business size or sector). The results for these sub-groups have been discussed where they were statistically significant (at the 95% confidence level) compared with the average (total sample) or between groups (e.g. sectors) and if the base sizes were 35 or more. Where there is a statistically significant difference between groups, this has been noted in the report as a 'significant' difference.

To enable more robust analysis, sectors were combined into the following groups:

- Primary/Manufacturing/Construction
- Retail/Transport/Hospitality
- Business/Professional Services
- Education/Health/Cultural/Leisure

Where sub-group analysis by sector is presented in this report, these groupings are used.

While we ensured representation of businesses in each of the four nations of the UK, based on the achieved fieldwork, we are not able to present findings for each nation separately as the resulting samples were too small. In our data tables, we have included combined figures for the devolved nations (that is combining findings for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

The survey data presented in this report is based on weighted data. It should be noted that the quota targets for larger businesses and those in the devolved nations were deliberately set so that they were over-represented (at an unweighted level), compared with their actual occurrence in the business population, to allow for more robust base sizes for analysis. Weights were then applied to the data for analysis, to correct for any deviations, compared with the actual business population.

Small weights by business size, sector and region/nation were applied to the data to ensure the findings are fully representative of UK private sector businesses with one or more employees. The weighting efficiency for the sample is 74.5%, which indicates that our sample matched the UK business population reasonably well and is greater than the cut-off point of 70%, hence the weighting is fit for purpose¹.

¹ Weighting efficiency shows how balanced the sample remains after adjusting the data to better reflect the population. The closer the percentage is to 100%, the more reliable and statistically efficient the weighted sample. An efficiency score which is greater than 70% is deemed to be fit for purpose.



Screening questions and demographics

Screening questions

Respondents were asked questions to determine if they qualified for the survey. To qualify, businesses needed to confirm they were in the private sector (i.e. not a charity, voluntary sector organisation, social enterprise or a public sector organisation). All businesses were required to have at least one employee excluding temporary, casual or agency staff, self-employed consultants, owners or partners.

Firmographics

Figure 3 overleaf shows that the final sample achieved (unweighted percentages and numbers are shown in brackets) provided a good cross section of businesses, which closely matched the business population, except for the deliberate over-representation of the devolved nations and larger businesses.

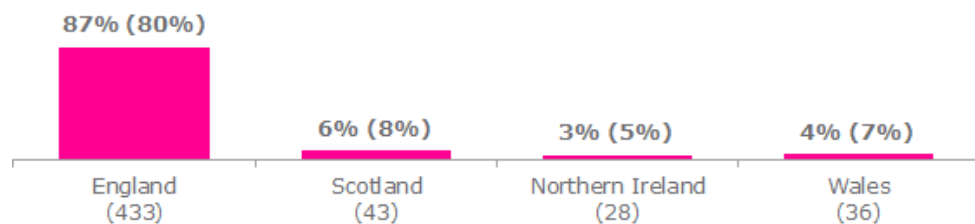
Weighting was applied by size, sector and region/nation to ensure the sample for analysis reflected the profile of UK private sector businesses with one or more employees.

Additional firmographics on the businesses that participated in the survey (including business age and turnover) can be found in the Appendix.

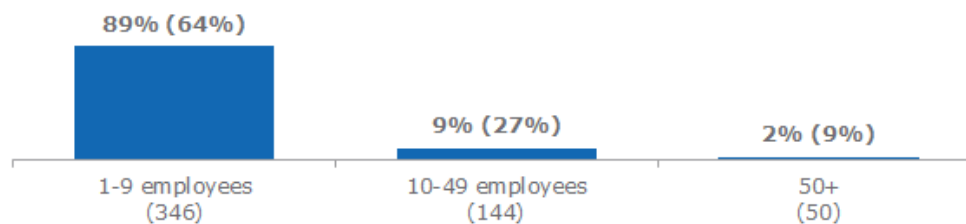


Figure 3: Business location, size and sector

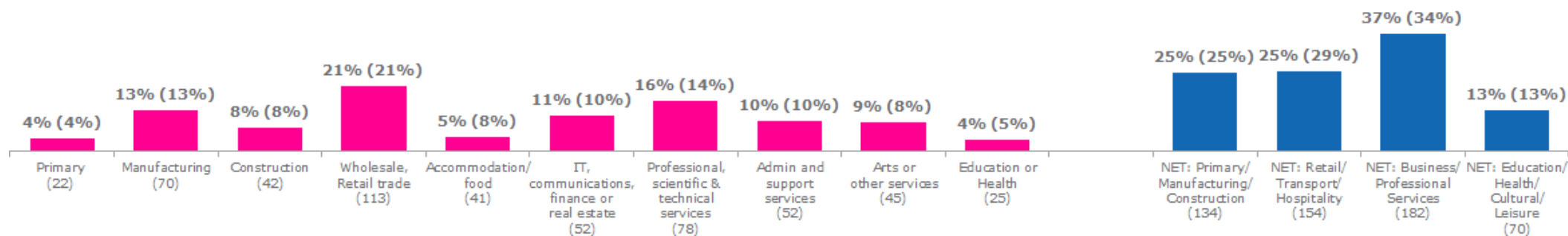
Business location



Business Size:



Business sector



Source: D06 In which region is your head office based? Q01a How many employees does the business currently employ across all sites in the UK, excluding owners and partners? Q02 Sector. **Base:** All respondents (540). **() denotes unweighted.**



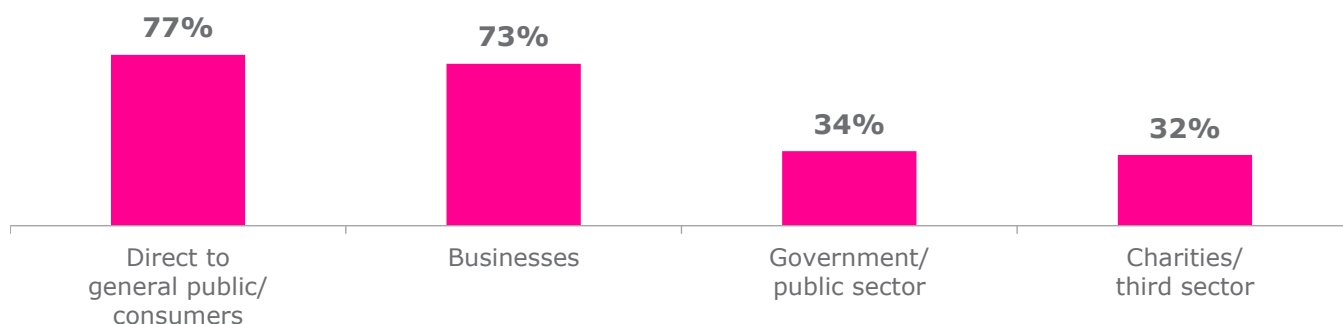
Markets and Sales Channels

Markets

All businesses were asked about the types of customers they sell to, as this information was used to filter later questions in the survey that were specifically aimed at consumer-facing businesses.

Around three quarters of surveyed businesses (77%) sell directly to consumers, slightly higher than the proportion selling to other businesses (73%). Around a third indicated they sell to the Government/public sector (34%) or charities or the third sector (32%).

Figure 4: Customer types



Source: Q03 Thinking of your types of customers, which of the following do you sell goods and/or services to?

Base: All respondents (540). Multiple choice question so the percentages will total more than 100%.

Sales channels

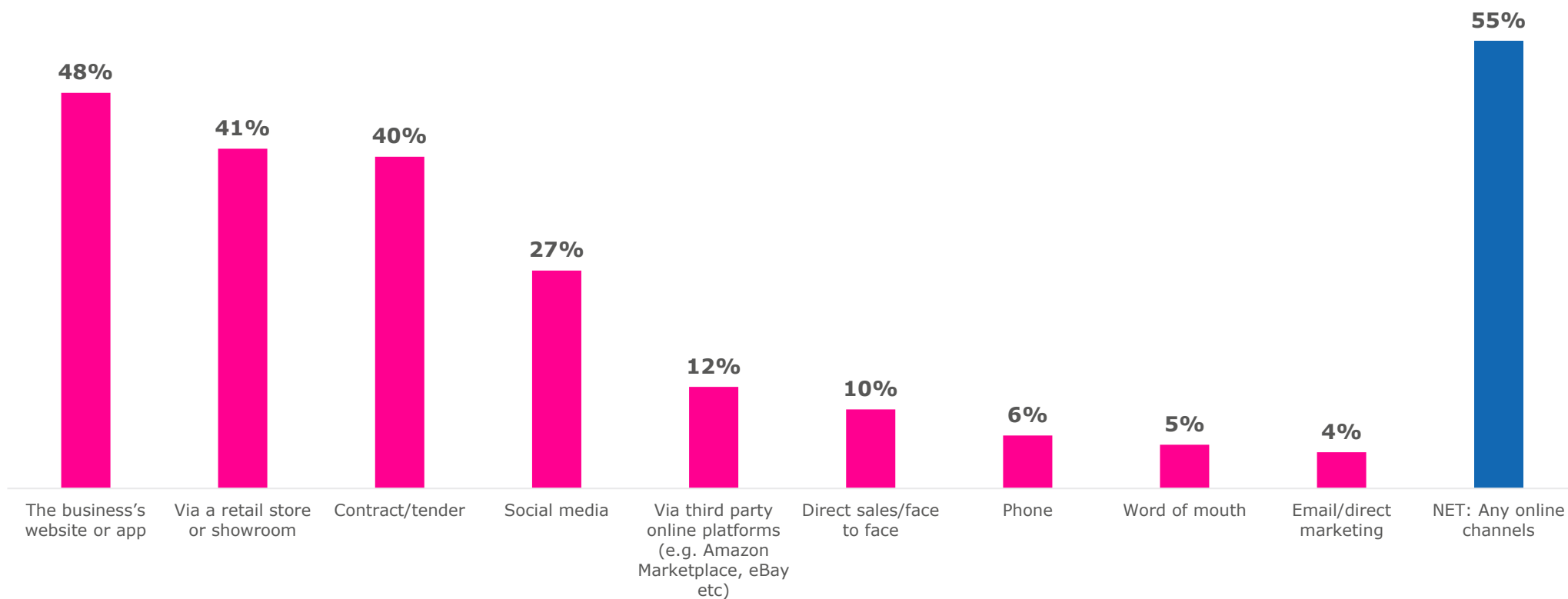
All businesses were also asked to provide details about how customers can purchase their products or services (i.e. where the purchase or transaction takes place). This information was collected because some later questions in the survey were only relevant to businesses using certain channels (namely online channels).

Figure 5 overleaf shows that digital channels are most common, with nearly half (48%) selling via a website or app, and over half (55%) using any online channel to provide products and/or services.

Two in five (41%) businesses surveyed have a physical store or showroom, or sell via contract/tender (40%). It should be noted that businesses with a business turnover under £1 million (60%) were significantly more likely to be trading online. This compares to 42% amongst businesses with a turnover of more than £1 million.



Figure 5: Sales channels



Source: Q04 And thinking next about how your customers are able to buy your products or services i.e. where the purchase or transaction takes place. Which of the following methods are available to your customers? **Base:** All respondents (540). Multiple choice question so the percentages will total more than 100%.



3 Survey results

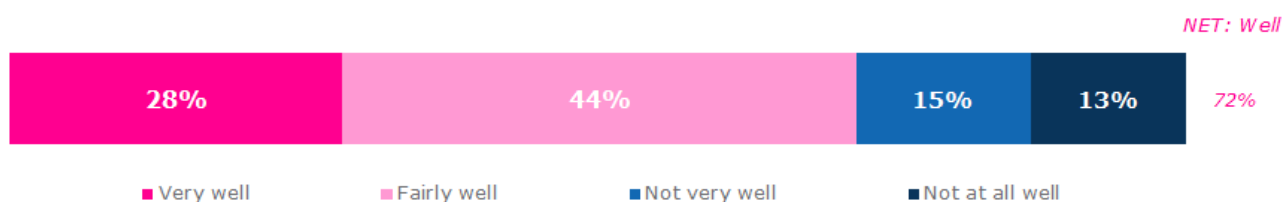
Competition laws and regulations

General understanding of responsibilities under UK competition laws and regulations

Businesses were asked to rate their understanding of their responsibilities under the laws and regulations relating to competition in the UK. Almost three quarters of businesses (72%) said they understand their responsibilities under UK competition laws and regulations, although they were more likely to say they understand them 'fairly well' (44%), than 'very well' (28%).

The findings are indicative of some variation by business size. Businesses with 50 or more employees (84%) were most likely to say they understood their responsibilities under UK competition laws and regulations, compared with 71% of those with 1–9 employees, and 78% of those with 10–49 employees. However, none of these differences were statistically significant.

Figure 6: Level of understanding of responsibilities under UK competition law and regulations



Source: Q05 Overall, how well would you say the business understands its responsibilities under the laws and regulations relating to competition that apply to businesses such as yours in the UK? **Base:** All respondents (540).

Understanding of specific UK competition rules

All businesses were provided with a list of five specific UK competition rules and asked to state whether they thought each one was 'True', 'False' or they were 'Unsure'.

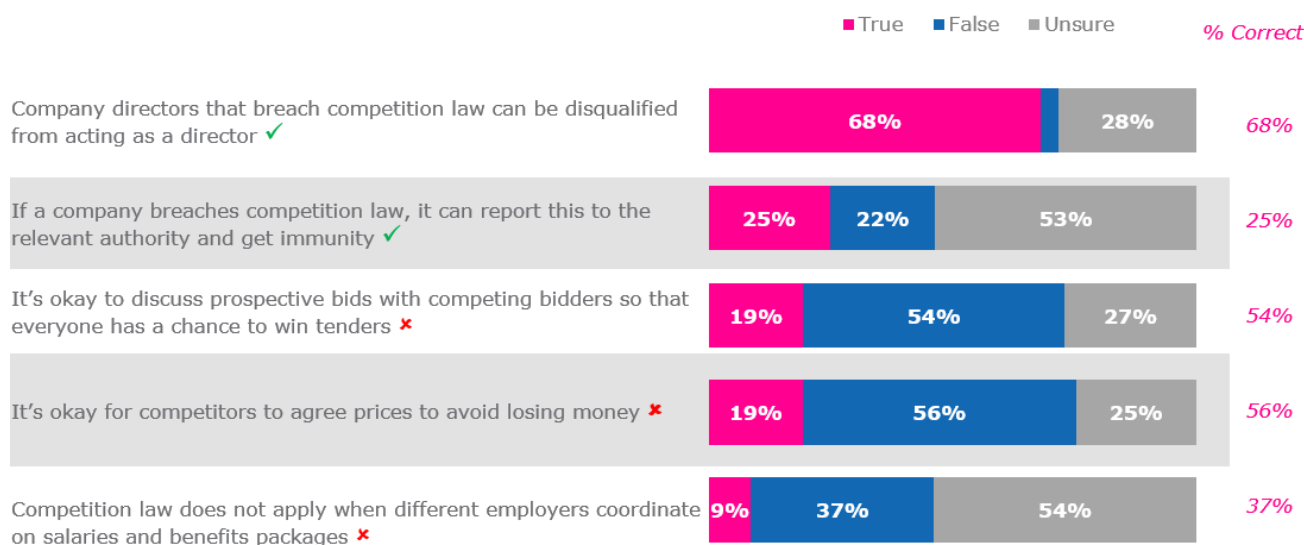
The findings indicate a general uncertainty around UK competition rules. As Figure 7 overleaf shows around half (54%) were unsure whether, 'Competition law does not apply when different employers co-ordinate on salaries and benefits packages'. A similar proportion were unsure whether a company could report breaches to the relevant authority and get immunity (53%).

Around a quarter of businesses were uncertain whether 'Company directors that breach competition could be disqualified' (28%) or whether 'It is okay for competing bidders to discuss prospective bids so that everyone has a chance to win' (27%). A similar proportion were also unsure whether 'It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money' (25%).



Please note: When interpreting Figure 7 below, please note that statements marked with a green tick indicate that the correct answer is 'True', while statements marked with a red tick indicate that the correct answer is 'False'.

Figure 7: Understanding of specific UK competition rules



Source: Q06 Under UK competition rules, do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...? **Base:** All respondents (540).

Understanding of specific UK competition rules by sector

Figure 8 below shows the three statements relating to UK competition rules where some significant differences by sector were evident. When interpreting differences between the figures, it should be noted that lower results are not necessarily negative, as the correct response to each statement varied depending on the statement.

Those in the Business and Professional Services sector were significantly more likely to correctly identify that it is 'false' that 'It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money' (66%). They were also more likely to correctly identify as 'false' the statement that 'It's okay to discuss prospective bids with competing bidders so that everyone has a chance to win tenders from time to time' (63%).

Businesses in the Business and Professional Services sector were also more likely to correctly consider it true that 'Company directors that breach competition law can be disqualified from acting as a director' (73%). In other sectors, for example the retail/transport/hospitality sector, businesses were significantly more likely to be unsure regarding competitors agreeing prices (32%) and discussing prospective bids (37%).



Figure 8: Understanding of specific UK competition rules by sector

	Total	Primary/Manufacturing/ Construction (134)	Retail/Transport/Hospitality (154)	Business/Professional Services (182)	Education/Health/Cultural/ Leisure (70)
It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money					
True	19%	24%	16%	16%	28%
False	56%	53%	53%	66% ↑	40% ↓
Unsure	25%	24%	32% ↑	18% ↓	32%
It's okay to discuss prospective bids with competing bidders so that everyone has a chance to win tenders from time to time					
True	19%	21%	18%	16%	31% ↑
False	54%	56%	45% ↓	63% ↑	39% ↓
Unsure	27%	24%	37% ↑	21% ↓	31%
Company directors that breach competition law can be disqualified from acting as a director					
True	68%	63%	65%	73% ↑	69%
False	4%	1% ↓	3%	4%	8% ↑
Unsure	28%	36% ↑	32%	22% ↓	23%

Source: Q06 Under UK competition rules, do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...? **Base:** All respondents (540).
 ↑↓ Indicates significantly higher or lower than average.

Understanding of specific UK competition rules by business size

When interpreting differences between the figures in the table, it should be noted that lower results are not necessarily negative, as the correct response to each statement varied depending on the statement.

Businesses with 10+ employees showed greater understanding of specific UK competition rules. For example, they were significantly more likely to correctly consider it false that 'It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money' (69% compared to 54% amongst businesses with 1-9 employees). They were also more likely to correctly believe it's true that 'Company directors that breach competition law can be disqualified from acting as a director' (80%, compared to 67% amongst businesses with 1-9 employees).

Figure 9: Understanding of specific UK competition rules by business size

	Total	Micro: 1-9 employees (346)	Small: 10-49 employees (144)	Medium - Very large: 50+ employees (50)	10+ employees (194)
It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money					
True	19%	20%	19%	13%	17%
False	56%	54% ↓	67%	77%	69% ↑
Unsure	25%	26% ↑	15%	10%	14% ↓
Company directors that breach competition law can be disqualified from acting as a director					
True	68%	67% ↓	81%	76%	80% ↑
False	4%	4%	1%	2%	1%
Unsure	28%	29%	19%	22%	19%

Source: Q06 Under UK competition rules, do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...? **Base:** All respondents (540).
 ↑↓ Indicates significantly higher or lower than average.

Significant differences were also evident by trading location:

- 73% of businesses that trade internationally correctly considered it false that 'It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money'. This compares to 53% of those that trade only in the UK². In addition, those that trade locally only were significantly more likely than average to be unsure whether this statement was true or false (30%).
- In addition, those businesses that trade locally were significantly more likely than average to be unsure whether 'It's okay to discuss prospective bids with competing bidders' (32%).

² These differences may be correlated with business size and should therefore be treated as indicative only.

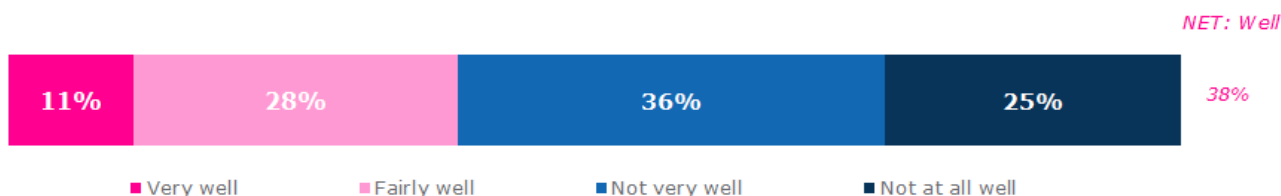


Business mergers

Understanding of rules and regulations around UK mergers

All businesses with 10 or more employees were asked how well they understand the competition rules and regulations around UK mergers³. 38% said they understand the UK merger rules well, with 11% saying they understood them very well.

Figure 10: Understanding of rules and regulations around UK mergers







Source: Q07 Now thinking about business mergers, which is typically when two or more businesses merge to become one entity one business buys all or part of another business. How well would you say the business understands the competition rules and regulations around UK mergers? **Base:** Businesses with 10+ employees (194).

There were some significant differences by business size, with levels of understanding significantly higher amongst businesses with 50 or more employees (53%). This compared to 35% amongst those businesses with 10-49 employees. Linked to this, understanding of rules and regulations about UK merger rules was significantly higher amongst those with multiple sites (54%), compared to 31% of businesses with a single site.

In addition, understanding of rules and regulations around UK merger rules was significantly higher amongst those who trade internationally (59%). This compares to 33% amongst those who trade in the UK only.

Figure 11: Understanding of rules and regulations around UK mergers by business size, number of sites and trading level

Business size	NET: % Well
10-49 employees	35%
50+ employees	53% 
Number of sites	NET: % Well
Single	31%
Multiple	54% 
Trading level	NET: % Well
International	59% 
UK only	33%

Source: Q07 Now thinking about business mergers, which is typically when two or more businesses merge to become one entity one business buys all or part of another business. How well would you say the business understands the competition rules and regulations around UK mergers? **Base:** Businesses with 10+ employees (194).  indicates significantly higher than the comparator.

³ As merger activity may be less relevant to micro businesses, questions relating to mergers were only asked of businesses with 10 or more employees.

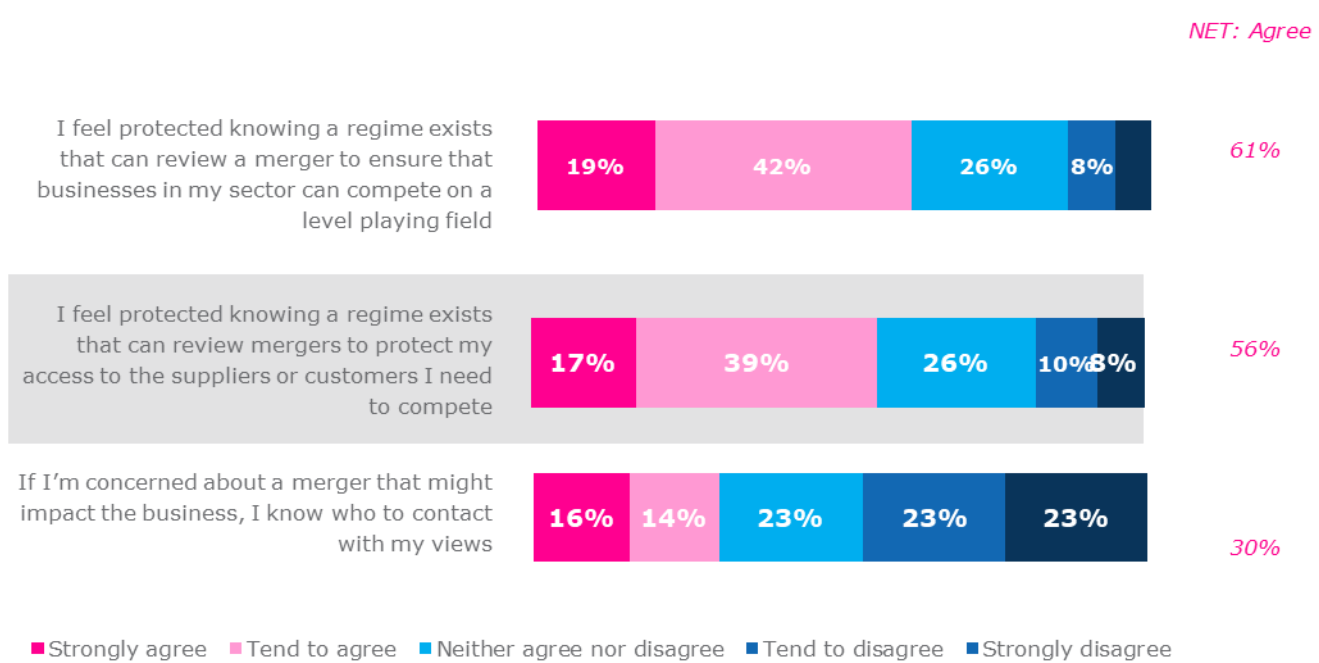


Views on merger regimes

All businesses with 10 or more employees were also asked to what extent they agree or disagree with three statements in relation to mergers and their potential effect on their business.

Around three fifths of businesses (61%) strongly or tended to agree with the statement, 'I feel protected knowing a regime exists that can review a merger to ensure that businesses in my sector can complete on a level playing field'. A similar proportion (56%) also agreed with the statement 'I feel protected knowing a regime exists that can review mergers to protect my access to the suppliers and customers I need to compete'. In contrast, three in ten businesses (30%) agree that they know who to contact with their views if they are concerned a merger might impact their business.

Figure 12: Views on merger regimes



Source: Q08 Still thinking about mergers and their potential effect on your business, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **Base:** Businesses with 10+ employees (194).

There were also some significant differences when looking at trading locations, number of sites and business size as detailed below. Although, it should be noted that these characteristics are likely to be correlated with one another.

'I feel protected knowing a regime exists that can review mergers to protect my access to the suppliers or customers I need to compete':

Businesses that **trade internationally** were significantly **more likely to agree** (74%), compared with 52% of those who traded in the UK only.

If I'm concerned about a merger that might impact the business, I know who to contact with my views':

Businesses with **multiple sites** were significantly **more likely to agree** (46%), compared with those with a single site (23%).

This was also the case amongst businesses with **50 or more employees** (49%, compared with 26% of businesses with 10-49 employees).

Source: Q08 Still thinking about mergers and their potential effect on your business, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **Base:** Businesses with 10+ employees (194).

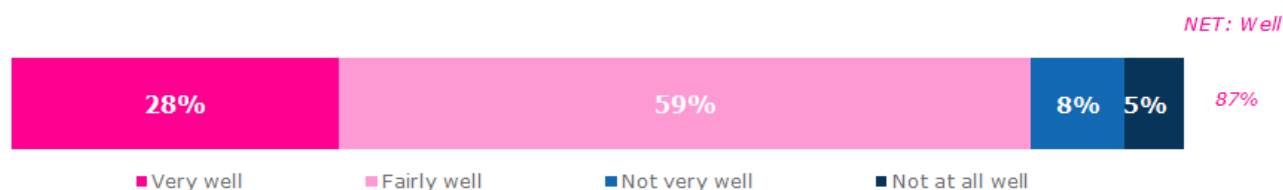


Consumer protection

Understanding about responsibilities under consumer protection law

All businesses who sell to consumers were asked how well they understand their responsibilities under consumer protection law. The majority of businesses (87%) said they understood their responsibilities well, with 28% saying they understood them very well.

Figure 13: Understand responsibilities under consumer protection law



Source: Q09 Now thinking about the laws and regulations related to consumer protection in the UK. Thinking generally, how well would you say the business understands its responsibilities under consumer protection law? **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers (389).

Sub-group analysis indicates that there were significant differences by sector and length of time in operation:

- Levels of understanding were significantly higher amongst businesses in the Business/Professional Services sector (91%). This compared to 80% of businesses in the Primary, Manufacturing and Construction sector.
- Newer businesses that have been in operation for up to ten years (94%) were significantly more likely to understand their responsibilities than businesses that had been established for 11 years or more (85%).

Understanding of specific rules and regulations related to consumer protection in the UK

All businesses were provided with a list of statements related to UK consumer protection rules, some of which were true and some false and were asked to state whether they thought each one was 'True', 'False' or they were 'Unsure'.

Understanding of consumer protection rules appeared to be highest with regards to the minimum cancellation periods, with around six in ten businesses (56%) correctly identifying that the minimum cancellation period for goods bought online is 14 days.

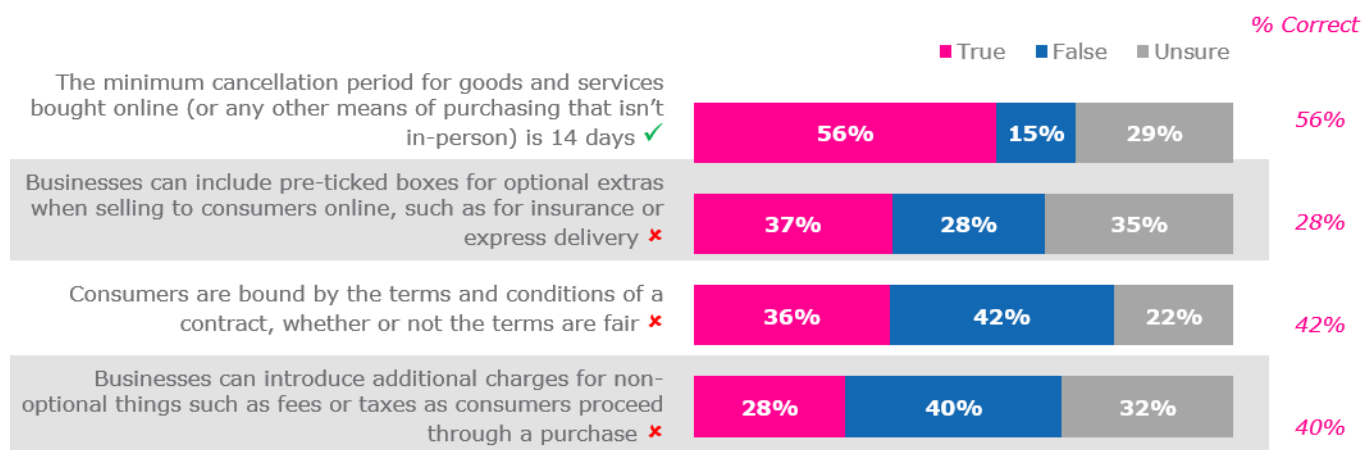
However, understanding was less consistent elsewhere. Six in ten (60%) were either unsure or incorrect on whether businesses can introduce additional charges for non-optional things such as fees or taxes as consumers proceed through a purchase, and just under three quarters (72%) were unsure or incorrect over whether businesses can include pre-ticked boxes for optional additional payments.

Just under six in ten (58%), were either unsure or incorrectly believed that consumers are bound by terms and conditions regardless of fairness.

Please note: When interpreting Figure 14 below, please note that statements marked with a green tick indicate that the correct answer is 'True', while statements marked with a red tick indicate that the correct answer is 'False'.



Figure 14: Understand of specific UK consumer protection rules



Source: Q010 And still thinking about the rules and regulations related to consumer protection in the UK. Do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...? **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers (389).

Businesses that sell online were significantly more likely to be certain about rules and regulations related to consumer protection, compared with businesses on average, however a significant proportion still were unclear.

Businesses that have been established 11+ years were also more likely than newer businesses to be unsure of the rules regarding pre-ticked boxes and cancellation periods, as highlighted in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15: Understanding of specific UK consumer protection rules by length of time in operation and whether businesses sell online

	Total	In operation up to 10 years (73)	In operation 11+ years (315)	Sell via any online channels (221)
Businesses can introduce additional charges for non-optional things such as fees or taxes as consumers proceed through a purchase				
True	28%	25%	29%	26%
False	40%	41%	40%	46% ↑
Unsure	32%	34%	31%	27% ↓
Consumers are bound by the terms and conditions of a contract, whether or not the terms are fair				
True	36%	43%	35%	40%
False	42%	30% ↓	44% ↑	42%
Unsure	22%	27%	21%	19%
Businesses can include pre-ticked boxes for optional extras when selling to consumers online, such as for insurance or express delivery				
True	37%	48% ↑	34% ↓	42% ↑
False	28%	31%	28%	29%
Unsure	35%	21% ↓	38% ↑	29% ↓
The minimum cancellation period for goods and services bought online (or any other means of purchasing that isn't in-person) is 14 days				
True	56%	67% ↑	54% ↓	62% ↑
False	15%	17%	14%	15%
Unsure	29%	16% ↓	32% ↑	23% ↓

Source: Q010 And still thinking about the rules and regulations related to consumer protection in the UK. Do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...? **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers (389). ↑↓ Indicates significantly higher or lower than average.

In addition, businesses in the Business/Professional Services sector (57%) were significantly more likely than other sectors to correctly believe it to be false that 'Consumers are bound by the terms and conditions of a contract, whether or not the terms are fair'. This compares to 34% in the Retail/Transport/Hospitality sector. Single site businesses were significantly more likely (38%) to consider this true, compared to multi-site businesses (20%).



Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA)

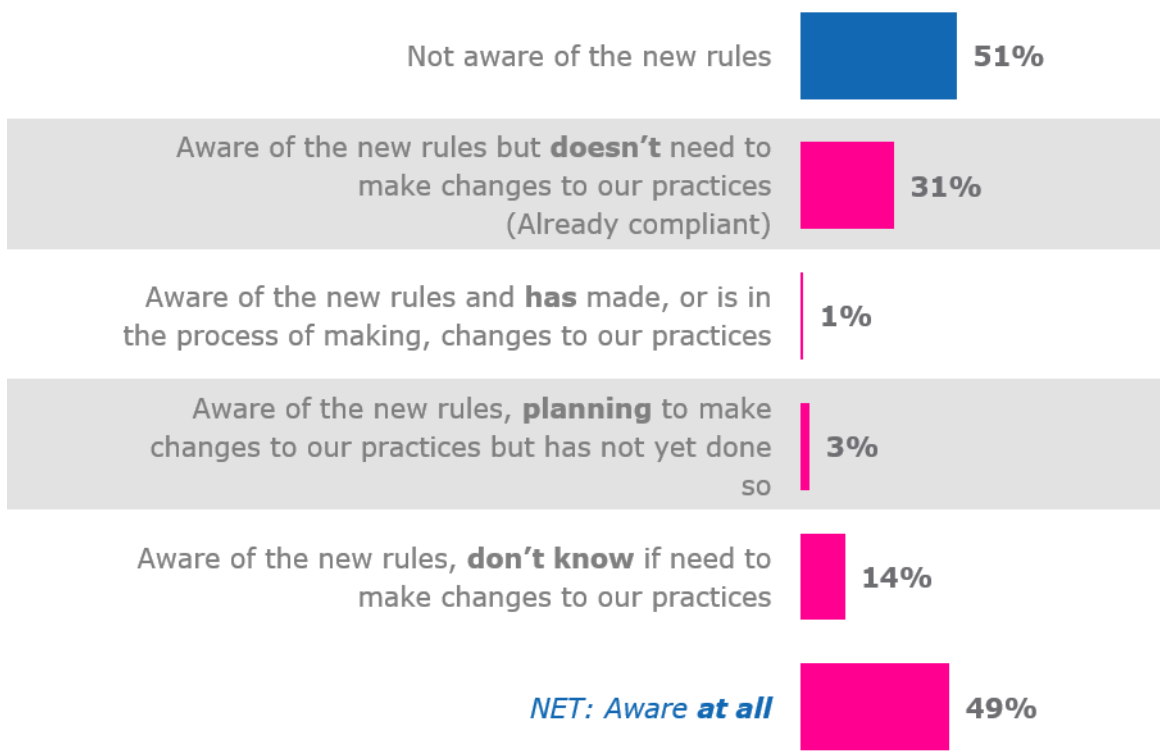
The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA) came into force in April 2025, banning some business practices and providing new powers in the enforcement of consumer protection laws.

The survey included questions to explore awareness of two aspects of the DMCCA, the bans on drip pricing (where additional mandatory charges are added to the initial price shown as a consumer proceeds with a purchase) and on the posting and commissioning of fake reviews. The analysis below focuses specifically on businesses that indicated in the survey that they sell to consumers via online channels.

Awareness of the new rules on drip pricing

Firstly, all consumer-facing businesses who sell online were asked to indicate their level of awareness in relation to the new rules on 'drip pricing'. Almost half of these businesses (49%) said they were aware of the new rules, with 31% saying they were already compliant. The remaining 51% were not aware of these new rules.

Figure 16: Awareness of the new rules on drip pricing



Source: Q013 Which of the following statements would be most accurate of your business in relation to the new rules on drip pricing. **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers and sell online (221).

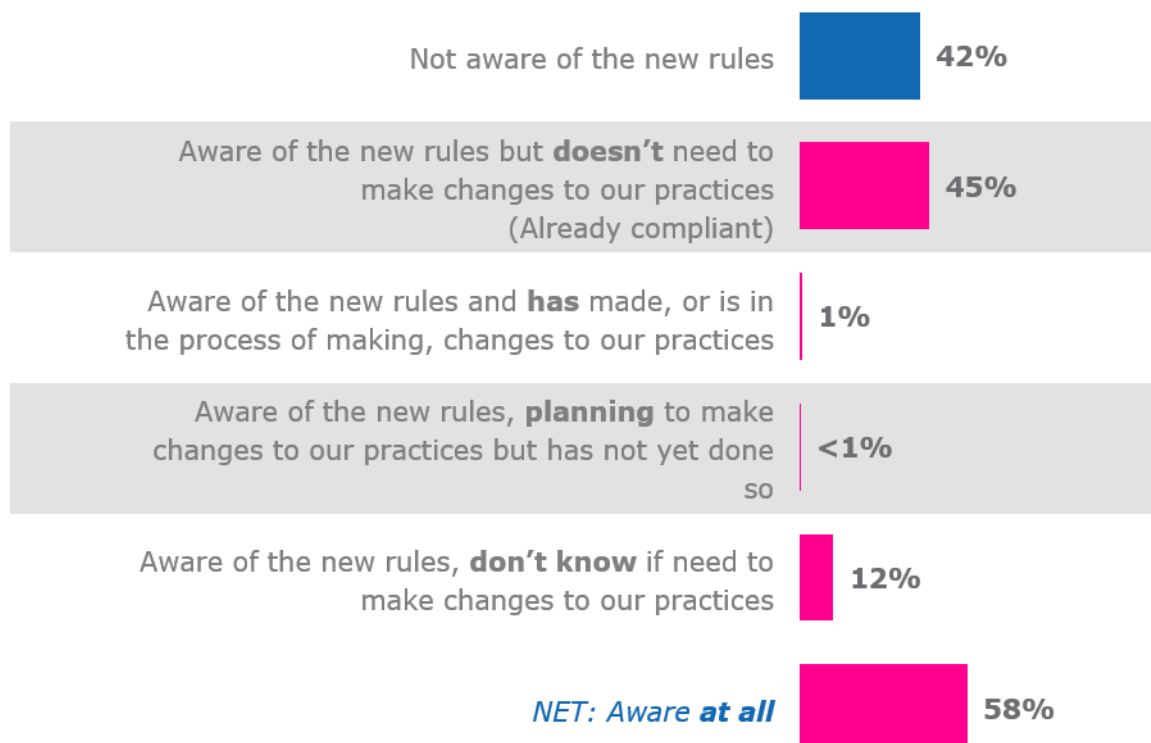


Awareness of the new rules on fake reviews

Businesses were also asked to indicate their level of awareness in relation to the new rules on 'fake reviews'.

Around six in ten consumer-facing businesses who sell online (58%) said they were aware of the new rules on fake reviews, with 45% saying they were already compliant. These figures are higher than those reported for 'drip pricing' as outlined above. The remaining 42% were not aware of the new rules at all.

Figure 17: Awareness of the new rules on fake reviews



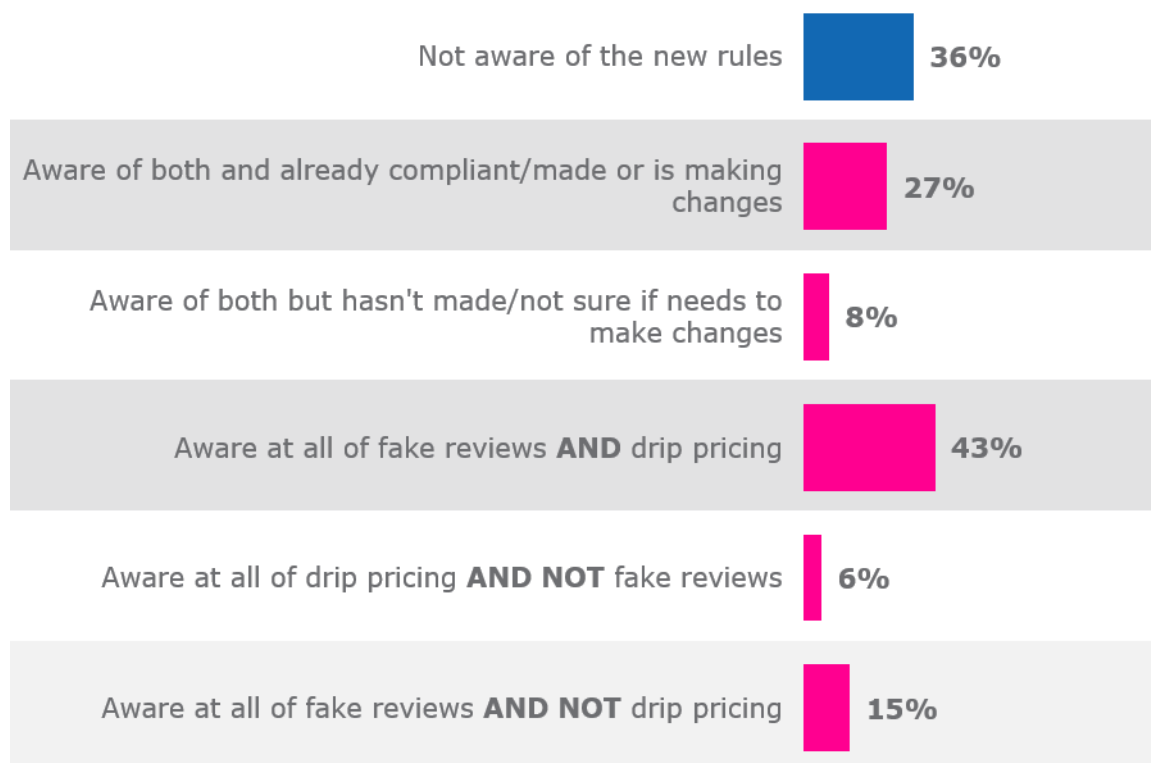
Source: Q014 Which of the following statements would be most accurate of your business in relation to the new rules on fake reviews. **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers and sell online (221).



Awareness of the new rules on drip pricing and fake reviews (combined)

Combining the figures from the two questions shows that over two fifths of consumer-facing businesses selling online (43%) were aware of both 'drip pricing' and 'fake reviews', whilst around a quarter (27%) were already compliant or making changes. 8% were aware of both sets of rules but had not made changes or were unsure whether changes were needed. 15% were aware of fake reviews but **not** drip pricing, and 6% were aware of drip pricing but **not** fake reviews. The remaining 36% were not aware of the new rules at all.

Figure 18: Awareness of the new rules on drip pricing and fake reviews (combined)

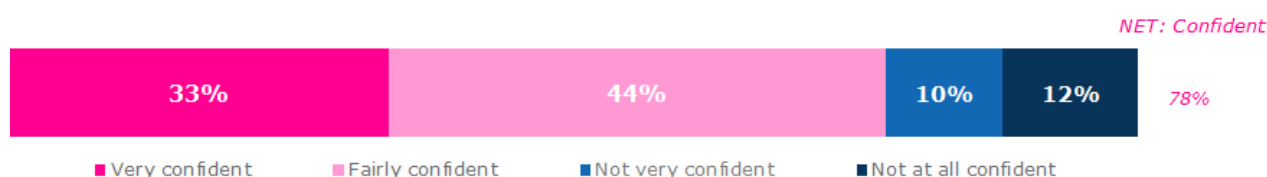


Source: Q013 Which of the following statements would be most accurate of your business in relation to the new rules on drip pricing. Q014 Which of the following statements would be most accurate of your business in relation to the new rules on fake reviews. **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers and sell online (221).

Confidence in complying with the new consumer protection provisions under the DMCCA

Consumer-facing businesses were also asked to state how confident they were in their business's ability to comply with the new consumer protection provisions under the DMCCA. Among those selling online, around three quarters of businesses (78%) said they feel confident, with a third (33%) stating they feel very confident.

Figure 19: Confidence in complying with the new consumer protection provisions





Source: Q016 And overall, how confident are you in your business' ability to comply with the new consumer protection provisions under the DMCCA? **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers and sell online (221).



There were some significant differences by years of operation, with levels of confidence significantly higher amongst businesses that had been operating for up to ten years (88%). This compared to 73% amongst older businesses that had been operating for 11 or more years.

Figure 20: Confidence with complying with the new consumer protection provisions by number of years in operation

Number of years in operation	NET: % Confident
Up to 10 years	88% 
11 or more years	73%

Source: Q016 And overall, how confident are you in your business' ability to comply with the new consumer protection provisions under the DMCCA? **Base:** Businesses who sell directly to consumers (389).  indicates significantly higher than the comparator.

When looking at significant differences by sector, the proportion 'Not at all confident' was significantly higher than average amongst businesses in the Primary, Manufacturing and Construction sector (22%).

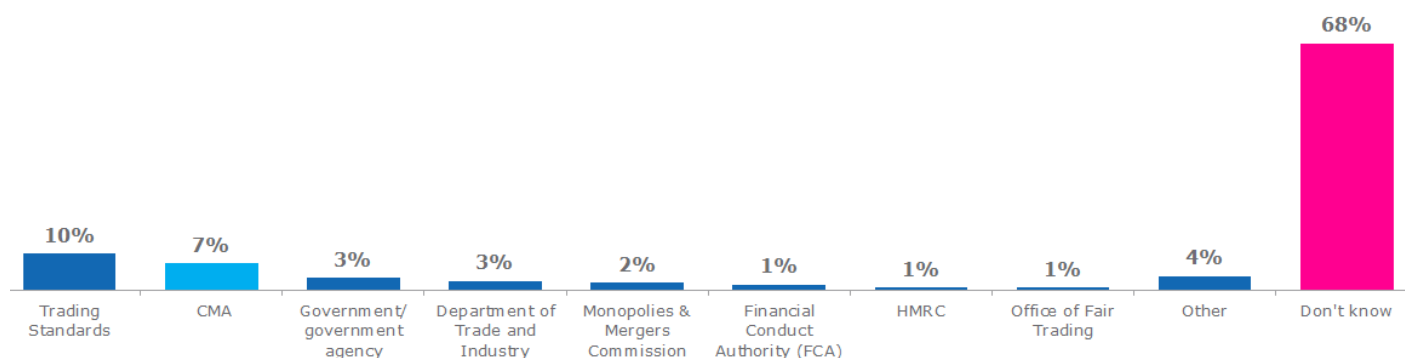


Awareness of and contact with the CMA

Unprompted awareness of the CMA

All businesses were asked to state which public body they think is principally responsible for enforcing competition and consumer protection law in the UK (unprompted). As Figure 21 below shows, awareness is low, with 7% mentioning the CMA unprompted. Two thirds of businesses (68%) were unsure.

Figure 21: Unprompted awareness of the CMA

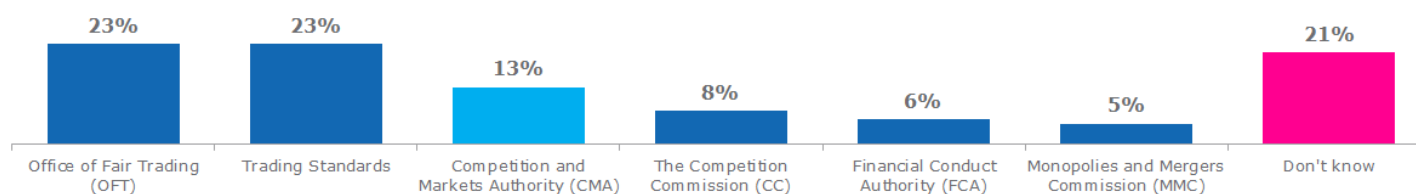


Source: Q017 Which public body do you think is principally responsible for enforcing competition and consumer protection law in the UK? **Base:** All businesses (540).

Prompted awareness of the CMA

When those who could not identify the CMA unprompted were then prompted with a list of organisations, an additional 13% (of those not aware spontaneously) selected the CMA. Businesses were more likely to consider the Office of Fair Trading or Trading Standards responsible (23% in each case). In total, 65% gave an incorrect answer, while a fifth didn't know (21%).

Figure 22: Prompted awareness of the CMA



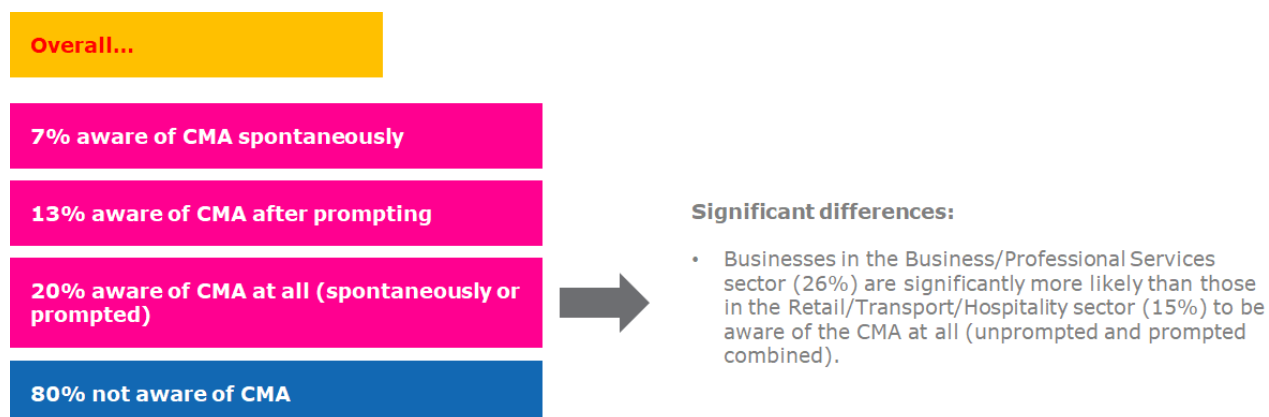
Source: Q018 Which public body do you think is principally responsible for enforcing competition and consumer protection law in the UK? **Base:** All businesses who do not know CMA is responsible for enforcing competition and consumer law in the UK (494).



Summary: Awareness of the CMA

Overall, 20% of businesses were aware of the CMA when combining 'prompted' and 'unprompted' awareness percentages.

Figure 23: Summary: overall awareness of the CMA



Source: Q017 Which public body do you think is principally responsible for enforcing competition and consumer protection law in the UK? **Base:** All businesses (540). Q018 Which public body do you think is principally responsible for enforcing competition and consumer protection Law in the UK? **Base:** All businesses (494).

Direct contact with the CMA

All surveyed businesses were asked whether they had any direct contact with the CMA in the past two years. Three of the 540 businesses surveyed said they had contact with the CMA, though none of these businesses had been involved in a CMA case during this period.

Awareness of any individual CMA actions or decisions

In addition, of the 108 businesses that were aware of the CMA, 12% reported any awareness of specific actions or decisions covered in the media that may have affected or may affect their business's commercial behaviour.



General business views about competition and consumer protection law

Business views on specific areas of competition and consumer protection law

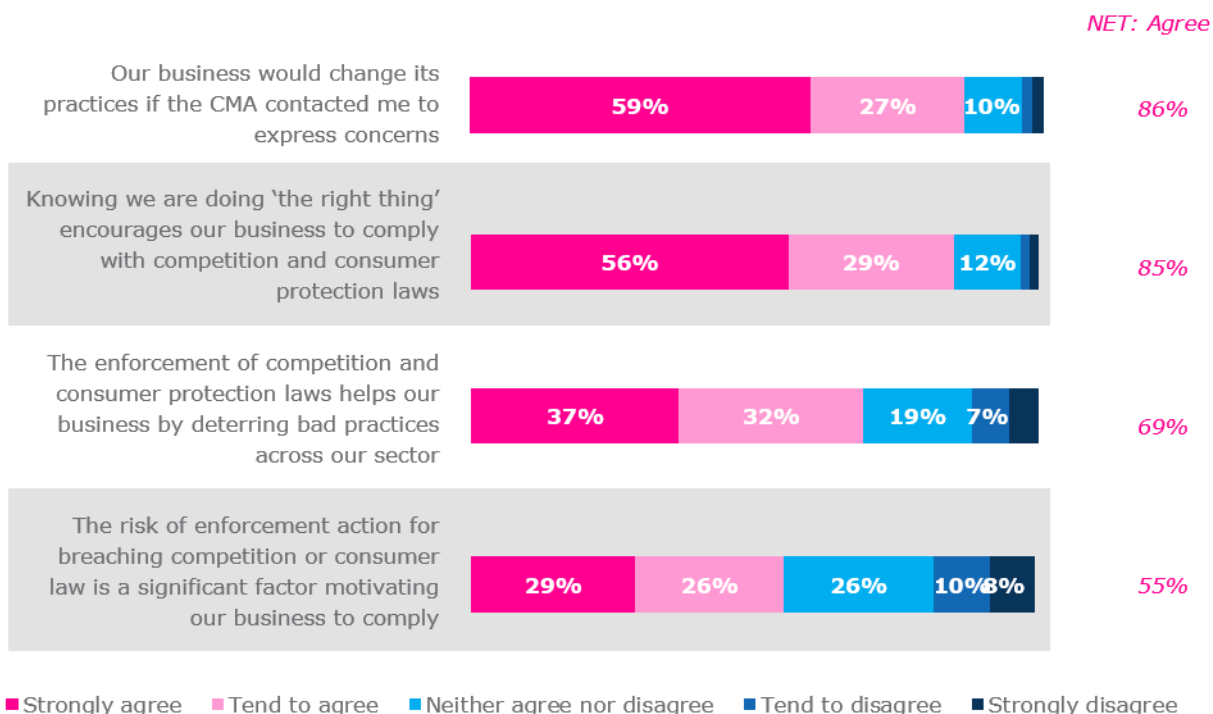
All businesses were presented with four statements that expressed potential views businesses may hold in relation to compliance with competition and consumer protection laws. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

The majority of businesses (86%) agreed that they would change their practices if the CMA contacted them to express concerns. A similar proportion (85%) also agreed with the statement, 'Knowing we are doing the 'right thing' encourages our business to comply with competition and consumer protection laws'.

Around seven in ten businesses (69%) agreed that the 'Enforcement of competition and consumer protections laws helps our business by deterring bad practices across their sector'.

Over half (55%) agreed that 'The risk of enforcement action for breaching competition or consumer law is a significant factor motivating our business to comply'. Agreement levels on this were significantly higher amongst newer businesses, with 66% of those operating for ten years or less agreeing, compared to 53% amongst those who have been operating for eleven or more years.

Figure 24: Agreement levels with specific areas of competition and consumer protection law



Source: Q019 I'm now going to read out a number of things other businesses have said about specific areas of competition and consumer protection law. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each one? **Base:** All businesses (540).

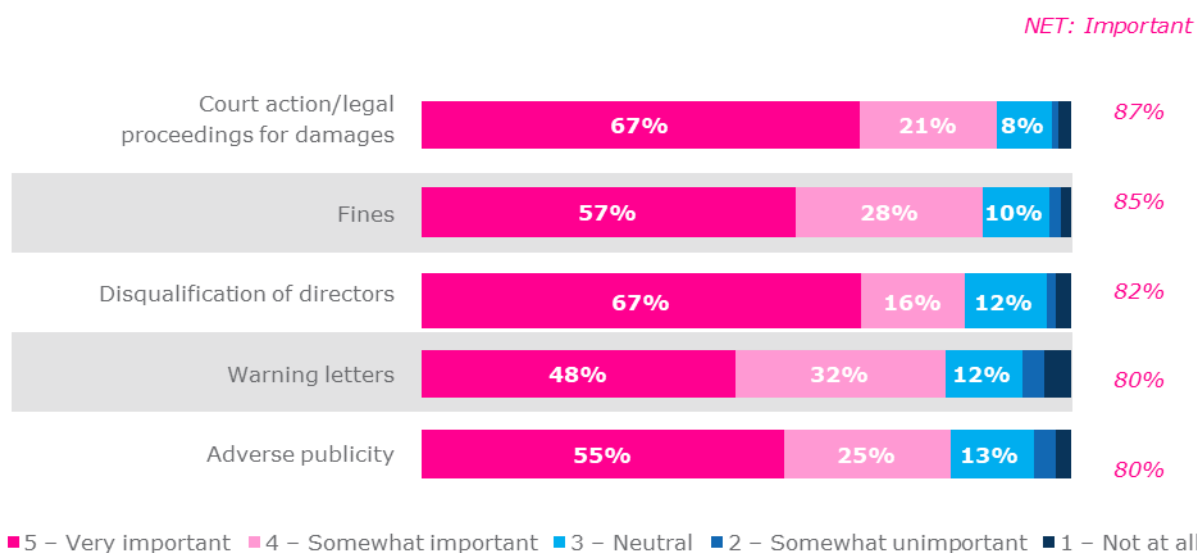


Importance of deterring breaches of competition and consumer protection law

Businesses were asked to rate the importance of five mechanisms used to deter breaches of competition and consumer protection law. These were: court action/legal proceedings for damages, fines, disqualification for directors, warning letters, and adverse publicity.

All five deterrents were perceived as important by at least four-fifths of businesses (80-87%), with court action or legal proceedings for damages rated as the most important deterrent at 87% of businesses.

Figure 25: Importance of deterring breaches of competition and consumer protection law



Source: Q020 How important do you consider the following in deterring breaches of competition or consumer protection law?
Base: All businesses (540).

Analysis of sub-groups indicates other statistically significant differences by sector:

- Businesses in the Business/Professional Services sector (90%) were significantly more likely to consider the 'Disqualification of directors' as important. This compared to 78% in all other sectors (Primary/Manufacturing/Construction, Retail/Transport/Hospitality and Education/Health/Cultural/Leisure sectors).
- Similarly, businesses in the Business/Professional Services sector (90%) were significantly more likely to consider 'Adverse publicity' to be important, compared to 65% in the Education/Health/Cultural/Leisure sector.



Impact of competition and consumer protection regimes on businesses

This final section of the report focuses on the impact of competition and consumer protection regimes on the business environment and confidence.

Attitudes towards competition and consumer protection regimes

All businesses were provided with five attitudinal statements relating to competition and consumer protection regimes and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each one.

The majority of businesses (94%) agreed that it is important to protect consumers from unfair and misleading business practices.

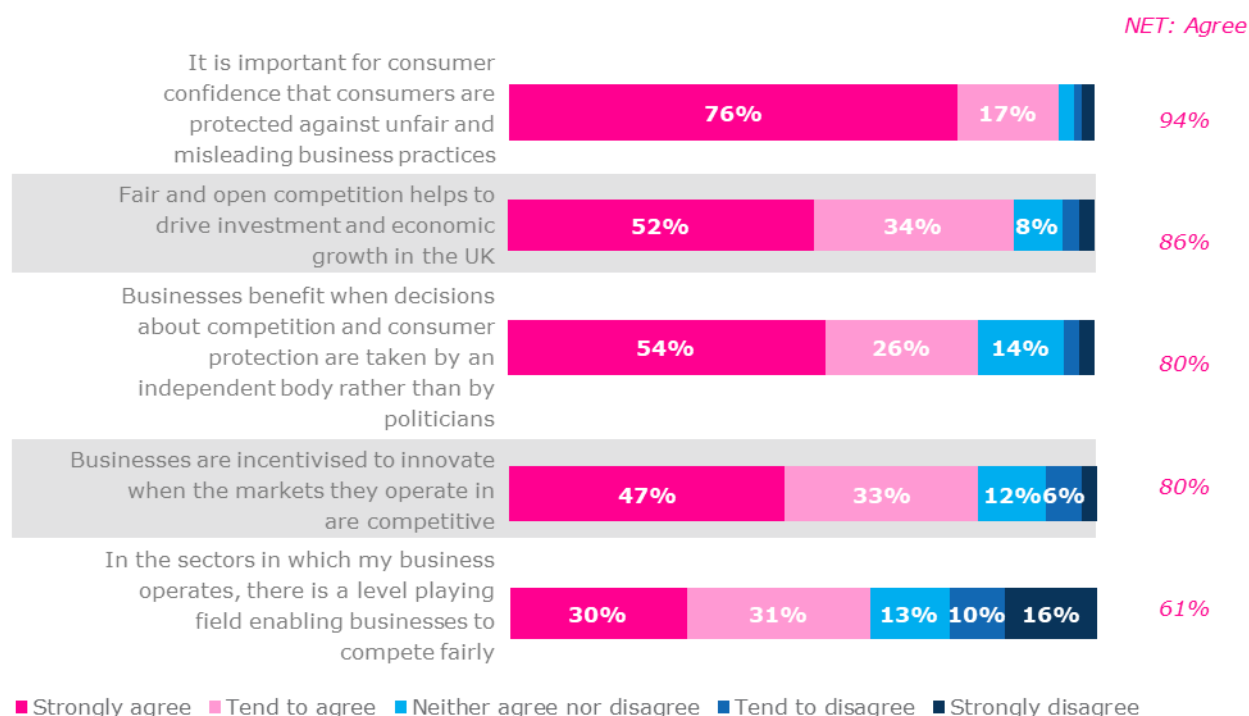
Almost nine in ten agreed (86%) that fair and open competition helps to drive investment and economic growth in the UK.

Four in five businesses (80%) agreed that businesses benefit when decisions about competition and consumer protection law are taken by an independent body rather than by politicians.

A similar proportion (80%) agreed that competitive markets incentivise businesses to innovate.

In contrast, when asked whether there was a level playing field enabling businesses to compete fairly in the sectors in which their business operates, agreement was lower than for the other statements (61%).

Figure 26: Attitudes towards competition and consumer protection law



Source: Q022 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Even if you don't have direct experience of these issues, we are still very interested in your experience **Base:** All businesses (540).



Businesses in the Business and Professional Services sector were significantly more likely than businesses in other sectors to agree that fair and open competition helps to drive investment and economic growth (91%) and also to agree that in the sectors in which they operate, there is a level playing field enabling businesses to compete fairly (67%).

Figure 27: Attitudes towards competition and consumer protection law by sector

	Total	Primary/Manufacturing/ Construction (134)	Retail/Transport/ Hospitality (154)	Business/Professional Services (182)	Education/Health/ Cultural/Leisure (70)
It is important for consumer confidence that consumers are protected against unfair and misleading business practices					
Agree	94%	90% ↓	95%	96%	93%
Disagree	4%	6%	4%	2%	4%
Fair and open competition helps to drive investment and economic growth in the UK					
Agree	86%	78% ↓	87%	91% ↑	87%
Disagree	6%	10% ↑	5%	3%	7%
In the sectors in which my business operates, there is a level playing field enabling businesses to compete fairly					
Agree	61%	61%	56%	67% ↑	56%
Disagree	25%	29%	31%	18% ↓	30%

Source: Q022 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Even if you don't have direct experience of these issues, we are still very interested in your experience **Base:** All businesses (540). ↑ ↓ Indicates significantly higher or lower than average.



4 Appendix

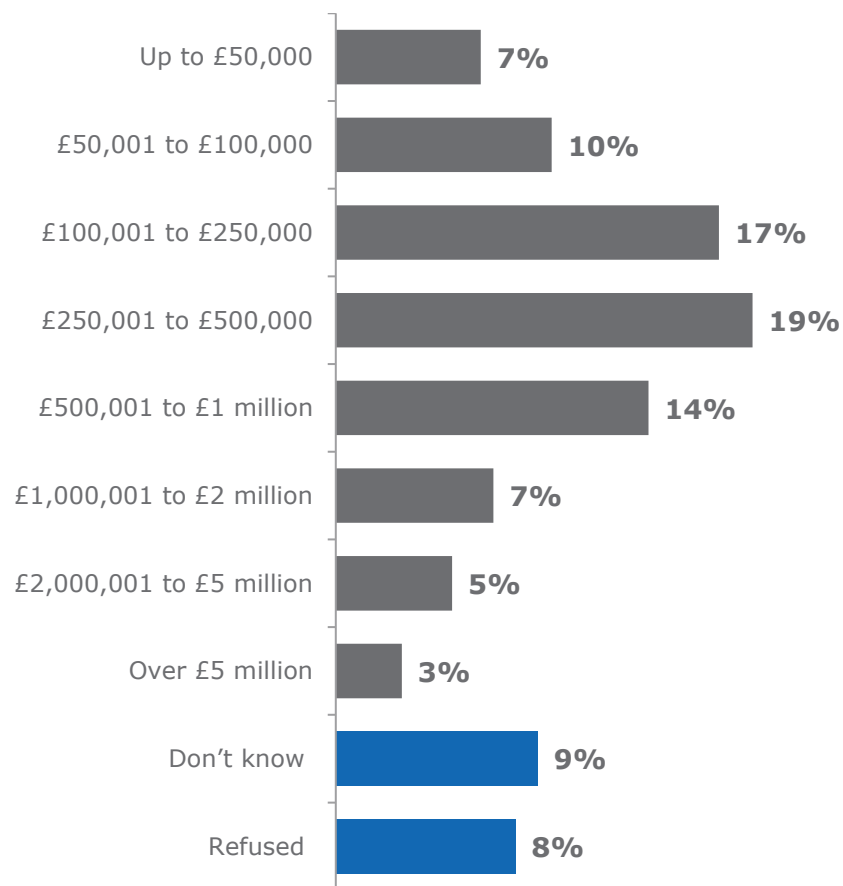


Business profile

Business turnover

The final sample covered a broad range of businesses in terms of business turnover. Around two thirds of businesses (67%) surveyed have a turnover of up to £1 million. 16% have a turnover of more than £1 million. The remaining businesses were either unsure (9%) or refused to answer the question (8%).

Figure 28: Business turnover (annual)



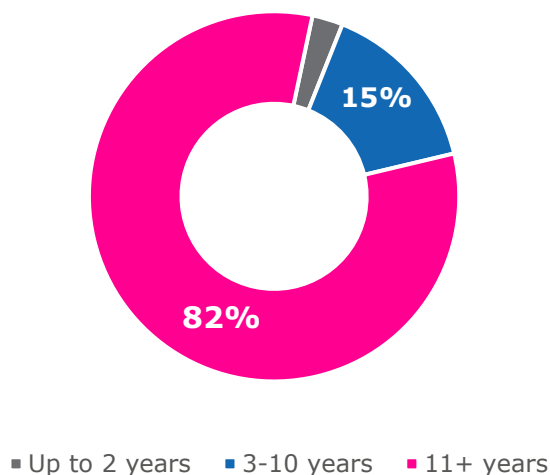
Source: D10 And what was the approximate turnover of your business in your last financial year? **Base:** All respondents (540).



Age of business

Most businesses (82%) surveyed had been established for 11 years or more. Very few had been established within the last 2 years (3%).

Figure 29: Age of business

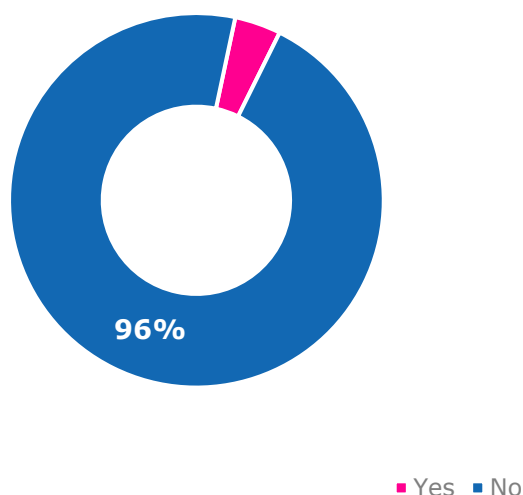


Source: D01 How many years has your business been operating? **Base:** All respondents (540).

Whether businesses have bought or been bought by another business

Only 4% of surveyed businesses have bought or been bought by another business within the last five years.

Figure 30: Whether business has bought/been bought by another in the last 5 years



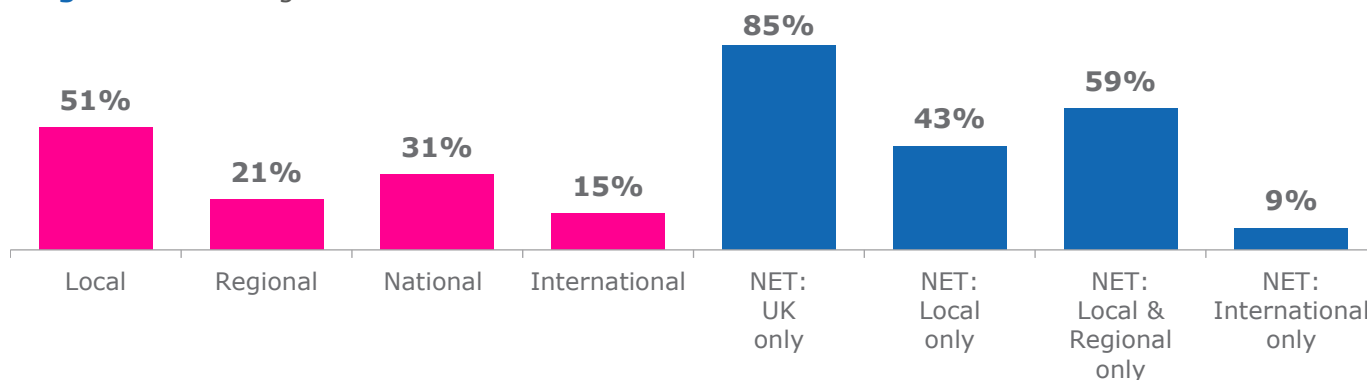
Source: D09 Has your business bought or been bought by another business in the past 5 years, or is it currently in the process of doing so? **Base:** All respondents (540).



Trading levels

When asked about their trading level, most surveyed businesses trade in the UK only (85%) and 15% at an international level.

Figure 31: Trading level

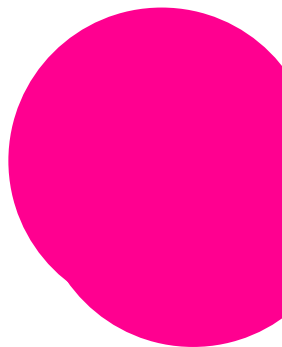
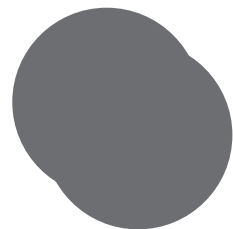
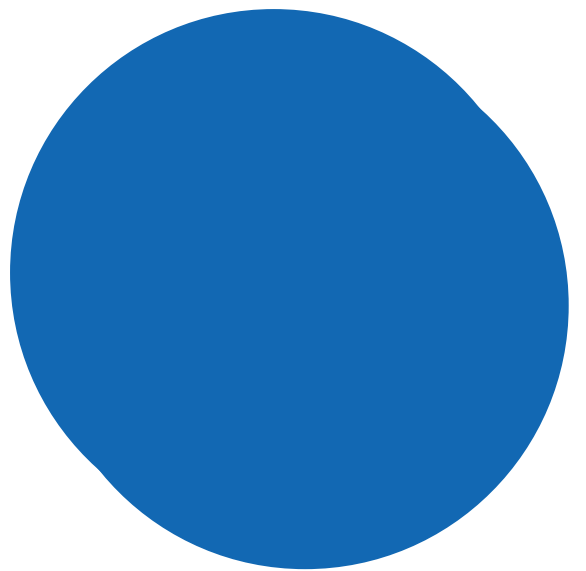


Source: D05 Does your business predominantly trade at a local level, a regional level, nationally or internationally?

Base: All respondents (540). Multiple choice question so the percentages will total more than 100%.



Questionnaire





Introduction

INTERVIEWER: ASK TO SPEAK WITH A SENIOR PERSON AVAILABLE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT THE BUSINESS

Good morning/afternoon. Can I speak to (named contact)?

My name is.... and I'm calling from DJS Research. We are working on behalf of a UK government organisation to understand views and awareness about competition and consumer protection regimes from a wide variety of businesses based in the UK. The results will be used to help better support businesses like yours in the future.

We are trying to speak a senior person in your organisation responsible for making decisions.

Could you help or tell me how to contact the right person?

The interview will last around 15-20 minutes and will be conducted under the Market Research Society Rules guaranteeing anonymity and there would be strictly no sales or other comeback from the call.

WALES ONLY: The survey can be completed in Welsh or English.

IF NEEDED:

Where did you get my details from?

The business has been selected at random from a commercially available sample provider, Market Location.



How will my data/responses be used? We can reassure you that any answer you give will only be reported in aggregate in any published report and the UK government organisation who have commissioned this survey will not be able to attribute the answers you give to you or the business.

Who are you conducting this survey on behalf of? We are not able to disclose it at this stage, as mentioning who the survey is on behalf of may influence your responses to some questions, but we will reveal it at the end of the survey and can email you a letter to confirm further details.

S05a. NOTE FOR INTERVIEWERS (INCENTIVE)

OFFERED TO BUSINESSES WITH 50 OR MORE EMPLOYEES ONLY (BUSINESS SIZE TAKEN FROM DATABASE).

If needed to encourage participation, please mention that a small charity donation can be offered as a thank-you for taking part.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		CONTINUE
2	No		CONTINUE

S01.

Base: All respondents

Would you be willing to take part?

IF NEEDED: We have a letter with further information about the research, including our privacy policy, that we can send you by email if that will help.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		CONTINUE
2	Send info email	Capture email address	SEND EMAIL V1 exc CMA
3	No		THANK & CLOSE

All respondents:

CATI – INTERVIEWER READ OUT: All interviews will be recorded for training and quality purposes.



Screeners Questions

A01.

Base: All businesses based in Wales (according to database)

Would you prefer to complete the survey in Welsh or English?

CODE ONE.

SINGLE CODE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Welsh (interviewer doesn't speak Welsh)		A02
2	Welsh (interviewer speaks Welsh)		Continue to S01 of Welsh script
3	English		Continue to S01 of English script

A02.

Base: Where Welsh language is requested, and an appointment is necessary (A01/1)

I'm sorry, but I'm not a Welsh speaker myself. To enable someone to conduct the survey in Welsh, we will need to call you back another time to complete the survey. Are you happy for us to do this?

CODE ONE.

SINGLE CODE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes	Record details for call back no later than 24 hrs after initial contact	Thank & close
2	No		Thank & close

INFOX

To begin with, we'd like to know a bit more about **<BUSINESS NAME FROM SAMPLE>**. For the rest of the survey, I shall refer to this as the business.

S02a.

Base: All respondents

Is the business based at a single site or location or do you have multiple sites, branches or offices?

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If business is part of franchise, please ask them to respond based on the part of the business they personally own/are responsible for, rather than the business as a whole

SINGLE RESPONSE



Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Single site		CONTINUE
2	Multiple sites		CONTINUE

S02b.

Base: All respondents

Can I just check...

IF MICRO OR SMALL COMPANY (SIZE ON DATABASE): Are you the most senior person with overall responsibility for the business as a whole... **IF MULTI SITE ADD (SO2A=2):** across all sites within the UK?

ADD IF NECESSARY: This may be the Owner or Managing Director

IF MEDIUM OR LARGE COMPANY (SIZE ON DATABASE): are you a senior person with overall responsibility for taking decisions on behalf of the business as a whole **IF MULTI SITE ADD (SO2A=2):** across all sites within the UK?

ADD IF NECESSARY: This may be the Owner, Managing Director or a Senior Manager

INTERVIEWER NOTE: If business is part of franchise, they must be an owner/senior manager responsible for the part of the business they own/are involved with, NOT a site/branch manager of a larger company/chain

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		CONTINUE
2	No		ASK TO BE TRANSFERRED

S03a.

Base: All respondents

Can I just check what your job title is?

OPEN RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
85	Refused (<i>do not read out</i>)		THANK & CLOSE

S03b.

Base: all respondents

INTERVIEWER CODE

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
------	-------------	-----------------	---------



1	Valid job title e.g. Owner, Partner, Managing Director, Chief Executive, Chairman, Founder, Senior Manager/Director, Company Secretary		CONTINUE
2	Not valid – e.g. PA, Receptionist		TRANSFER/ THANK & CLOSE

S04.

Base: All respondents

Is this business ...?

READ OUT

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	A private sector business (IF NEEDED: mainly seeking to make a profit)		
2	A charity, voluntary sector organisation, or social enterprise	THANK & CLOSE	
3	A public sector organisation (e.g. part of local or central government)	THANK & CLOSE	
87	None of these (<i>do not read out</i>)	THANK & CLOSE	

A. Background to business

Q01a

Base: all respondents

How many employees does the business currently employ across all sites in the UK, excluding owners and partners?

PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE TEMPORARIES/CASUALS OR AGENCY STAFF

- INCLUDE FULL AND PART TIME EMPLOYEES
- EXCLUDE SELF-EMPLOYED/CONSULTANTS
- EXCLUDE OWNERS/PARTNERS, BUT OTHER DIRECTORS COUNT AS EMPLOYEES



INTERVIEWER NOTE: If business is part of franchise, please ask them to respond based on the part of the business they personally own/are responsible for, rather than the business as a whole

Is it approximately...?

READ OUT

SINGLE RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	1-9		
2	10-49		
3	50-249		
4	250 -499		
5	500+		
85	Don't know <i>(do not read out)</i>		THANK AND CLOSE
87	Refused <i>(do not read out)</i>		THANK AND CLOSE
0	None – Sole Trader		THANK AND CLOSE

Q02a.

Base: All respondents

According to the sample provider we have [MERGE IN 'EASY DESC' FROM DATABASE]: as a general description of what your business does. Is this correct?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes	Code to 'Digital Grouping' on database	
2	No		Q02b

Q02b.

Base: where 'easy desc' is incorrect (Q02a=2)

Which of the following best describes your MAIN business sector/activity?

READ OUT

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Agriculture, forestry, fishing; mining/quarrying; or utilities (e.g. gas, water)		
2	Manufacturing		
3	Construction		



4	Wholesale, Retail trade; motor repairs; or any type of transport or storage (including courier or postal services)		
5	Accommodation or food <i>e.g. hotel, pub, takeaway,</i>		
6	IT, communications, finance or real estate <i>e.g. software firm, telecoms provider, estate agent</i>		
7	Professional, scientific & technical services <i>e.g. accountancy, solicitor, engineering</i>		
8	Admin and support services <i>e.g. recruitment agency, cleaning services</i>		
9	Education or Health <i>e.g. private nursery, dentist, care home</i>		
10	Arts or other services <i>e.g. gym, theatre, hair salon</i>		
80	Other – SPECIFY	OPEN	

Q03.

Base: all respondents

Thinking of your types of customers, which of the following do you sell goods and/or services to? To clarify, this includes customers outside of the UK.

READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

ONLY ENTER ONE RESPONSE PER OTHER CODE.

MULTI RESPONSE, ORDERED

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Direct to the general public or consumers		
2	Businesses		
3	Government or public sector customers		
4	Charities or the third sector		
80	Any other types of customer (please specify)	TEXT RESPONSE	
81	Any other types of customer (please specify)	TEXT RESPONSE	
82	Any other types of customer (please specify)	TEXT RESPONSE	
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)		



Q04.

Base: All respondents

And thinking next about how your customers are able to buy your products or services i.e. where the purchase or transaction takes place. Which of the following methods are available to your customers?

READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. ONLY ENTER ONE RESPONSE PER OTHER CODE.

MULTI RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Via a retail store or showroom e.g. on the high street		
2	The business's website or app		
3	Via third party online platforms e.g. Amazon Marketplace, eBay		
4	Social media		
10	Contract/tender		
80	Any other channel (please specify)	TEXT RESPONSE, FIXED	
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)	EXCLUSIVE, FIXED	

DP NOTE: SCRIPT TO FLIP EACH TIME THE NEXT TWO SECTIONS SO THAT HALF SEE COMPLIANCE AND MERGERS FIRST AND HALF SEE CONSUMER PROTECTION FIRST.

COMPLIANCE AND MERGER AWARENESS=Q05-Q08

CONSUMER PROTECTION=Q09-Q10



Compliance awareness – Awareness of the competition, merger and consumer protection regimes

Q05.

Base: All respondents

The following questions relate to competition laws and regulations in the UK

Overall, how well would you say the business understands its **responsibilities** under the laws and regulations relating to competition that apply to businesses such as yours in the UK?

READ OUT. CODE ONE

INTERVIEWER NOTE: We are interested in respondents' level of familiarity with competition law and/or the competition regime that applies in the UK and their understanding of their responsibilities under them.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
4	Very well		
3	Fairly well		
2	Not very well		
1	Not at all well		

Q06.

Base: All respondents

Under UK competition rules, do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...?

INTERVIEWER NOTE. ADD IF NECESSARY: (if respondent feels they cannot answer the question): Don't worry if you can't answer, as some of the questions may not be relevant to you and the business.

READ OUT. CODE ONE FOR EACH

SINGLE GRID, RANDOMISE ROWS

Code	Rows	Scripting notes	Routing
2	It's okay for competitors to agree prices to avoid losing money		
4	It's okay to discuss prospective bids with competing bidders so that everyone has a chance to win tenders from time to time		
5	Competition law does not apply when different employers coordinate on salaries and benefits packages		



6	Company directors that breach competition law can be disqualified from acting as a director		
7	If a company breaches competition law, it can report this to the relevant authority and may be able to get immunity from fines and director disqualification		

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	True		
2	False		
85	Unsure		

Q07.

Base: Businesses with 10+ employees (Q01a/2-5)

Now thinking about business mergers, which is typically when two or more businesses merge to become one entity or one business buys all or part of another business. How well would you say the business understands the competition rules and regulations around UK mergers?

NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS: We are interested in respondents' level of familiarity with the UK merger control regime, which assesses the impact of a merger on competition for UK consumers and businesses. This is different from national security screenings and takeover rules applicable to listed companies.

READ OUT. CODE ONE

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
4	Very well		
3	Fairly well		
2	Not very well		
1	Not at all well		

Q08.

Base: Businesses with 10+ employees (Q01a/2-5)

Still thinking about mergers and their potential effect on your business, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

READ OUT. CODE ONE FOR EACH

SINGLE GRID, RANDOMISE ROWS

Code	Rows	Scripting notes	Routing
1	I feel protected knowing a regime exists that can review a merger to		



	ensure that businesses in my sector can compete on a level playing field		
2	I feel protected knowing a regime exists that can review mergers to protect my access to the suppliers or customers I need to compete		
3	If I'm concerned about a merger that might impact the business, I know who to contact with my views		

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
5	Strongly agree		
4	Tend to agree		
3	Neither agree nor disagree		
2	Tend to disagree		
1	Strongly disagree		

Q09.

Base: all who sell directly to consumers Q03 = Code 1 Direct to the general public or consumers

Now thinking about the laws and regulations related to consumer protection in the UK. Thinking generally, how well would you say the business understands its **responsibilities** under consumer protection law?

NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS: We are interested in respondents' level of familiarity with consumer protection laws and regulations.

READ OUT. CODE ONE

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
4	Very well		
3	Fairly well		
2	Not very well		
1	Not at all well		

Q10.

Base: all who sell directly to consumers Q03 = Code 1 Direct to the general public or consumers

And still thinking about the rules and regulations related to Consumer Protection in the UK. Do you think it is true, false or are you unsure that...

INTERVIEWER NOTE. ADD IF NECESSARY: (if respondent feels they cannot answer the question): We are interested in your understanding of the rules and



regulations that apply to businesses in the UK generally, so don't worry if some of the questions are not relevant to your business.

READ OUT. CODE ONE FOR EACH

SINGLE GRID, RANDOMISE ROWS

Code	Rows	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Businesses can introduce additional charges for non-optional things such as fees or taxes as consumers proceed through a purchase		
2	Consumers are bound by the terms and conditions of a contract, whether or not the terms are fair		
4	Businesses can include pre-ticked boxes for optional extras when selling to consumers online, such as for insurance or express delivery		
5	The minimum cancellation period for goods and services bought online (or any other means of purchasing that isn't in-person) is 14 days		

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	True		
2	False		
85	Unsure		

Q11-12 removed after cognitive testing

Awareness of Consumer Provisions under the DMCCA

Base: all who sell directly to consumers Q03 = Code 1 Direct to the general public or consumers

The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCCA) came into force in April 2025, banning some business practices and providing new powers in the enforcement of consumer protection laws. This includes banning "drip pricing," where additional mandatory charges are added to the initial price shown as a consumer proceeds with a purchase.



It is important that we know how much support businesses need to understand and comply with the new laws, so please answer the following questions honestly and be assured that your responses are anonymous.

Q13.

Which of the following statements would be most accurate of your business in relation to the new rules on drip pricing? My business is

READ OUT. SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Not aware of the new rules		
2	Aware of the new rules but doesn't need to make changes to our practices (already compliant)		
3	Aware of the new rules and has made, or is in the process of making, changes to our practices		
4	Aware of the new rules, planning to make changes to our practices but has not yet done so		
5	Aware of the new rules, don't know if need to make changes to our practices		

Q14.

Base: all who sell directly to consumers Q03 = Code 1 Direct to the general public or consumers

The DMCCA also includes a ban on the posting and commissioning of fake reviews.

Which of the following statements would be most accurate of your business in relation to the new rules on fake reviews My business is:

READ OUT. SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Not aware of the new rules		
2	Aware of the new rules but doesn't need to make changes to our practices (already compliant)		
3	Aware of the new rules and has made, or is in the process of making, changes to our practices		
4	Aware of the new rules, planning to make changes to our practices but has not yet done so		



5	Aware of the new rules, don't know if need to make changes to our practices		
---	---	--	--

Q15 removed after cognitive testing

Q16.

Base: all who sell directly to consumers Q03 = Code 1 Direct to the general public or consumers

And overall, how confident are you in your business's ability to comply with the new consumer protection provisions under the DMCCA?

READ OUT

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
4	Very confident		
3	Fairly confident		
2	Not very confident		
1	Not at all confident		

Awareness of the CMA

Q17.

Base: all respondents

Now thinking about the enforcement of competition and consumer protection law.

Which public body do you think is principally responsible for enforcing Competition and Consumer Protection Law in the UK?

DO NOT READ OUT – CODE 1 IF SAY 'COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY' OR 'CMA'. SLIGHT VARIATIONS SUCH AS 'COMPETITION AND MARKETING AUTHORITY' ARE ALSO ACCEPTABLE. CODE 2 FOR ANYTHING ELSE, OR OTHERWISE DON'T KNOW

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Competition and Markets Authority or CMA		
2	Something else - SPECIFY	TEXT RESPONSE & TICK BOX	
85	Don't know		



Q18.

Base: those who do not know CMA is responsible for enforcing Competition and Consumer Law in the UK (Q17/2,85)

Which one of the following do you think is principally responsible for enforcing Competition and Consumer Protection Law in the UK?

READ OUT. CODE ONE

Interviewer note: If mention more than one, ask which is the main/principal body responsible.

SINGLE RESPONSE, RANDOMISE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)		
2	Office of Fair Trading (OFT)		
3	The Competition Commission (CC)		
4	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)		
5	Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC)		
6	Trading Standards		
85	Don't know		

High-level insights on deterrence

To clarify, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is the principal body with responsibility for enforcing competition and consumer law in the UK.

Q19.

Base: all respondents

I'm now going to read out a number of things other businesses have said about specific areas of competition and consumer protection law. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each one?

READ OUT. CODE ONE FOR EACH

SINGLE GRID, RANDOMISE ROWS

Code	Rows	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Knowing we are doing 'the right thing' encourages our business to comply with competition and consumer protection laws		
2	The enforcement of competition and consumer protection laws		



	helps our business by deterring bad practices across our sector		
3	The risk of enforcement action for breaching competition or consumer law is a significant factor motivating our business to comply		
4	Our business would change its practices if the CMA contacted me to express concerns		

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
5	Strongly agree		
4	Tend to agree		
3	Neither agree nor disagree		
2	Tend to disagree		
1	Strongly disagree		

Q20.

Base: all respondents

How important do you consider the following in deterring breaches of competition or consumer protection law?

READ OUT. CODE ONE FOR EACH
SINGLE GRID, RANDOMISE ROWS

Code	Rows	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Disqualification of directors		
2	Court action/legal proceedings for damages (IF NEEDED: claims in court brought by those who have suffered harm as a result of the anti-competitive conduct e.g. consumers)		
3	Fines		
4	Adverse publicity		
5	Warning letters		

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	1 - Not at all important		
2	2 - Somewhat unimportant		
3	3 - Neutral		
4	4 - Somewhat important		
5	5 - Very important		
85	Don't know (do not read out)		

**Q21.****Base: those who are aware of CMA (Q17/1 or Q18/1)**

Which, if any, individual CMA actions or decisions have you heard about in the media or by word-of-mouth which have already or may affect your business's commercial behaviour?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Any (please specify)	TEXT RESPONSE & TICK BOX	
2	None		
85	Don't know		



Impacts on the business environment and business confidence

INFO2.

Base: all respondents

We would now like to ask about your views on the effects of the competition and consumer protection regimes more generally.

Q22.

Base: all respondents

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. Even if you don't have direct experience of these issues, we are still very interested in your opinions.

READ OUT. CODE ONE FOR EACH

SINGLE GRID, RANDOMISE ROWS

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	It is important for consumer confidence that consumers are protected against unfair and misleading business practices		
2	Fair and open competition helps to drive investment and economic growth in the UK		
3	Businesses are incentivised to innovate when the markets they operate in are competitive		
6	Businesses benefit when decisions about competition and consumer protection are taken by an independent body rather than by politicians		
7	In the sectors in which my business operates, there is a level playing field enabling businesses to compete fairly		

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
5	Strongly agree		
4	Tend to agree		
3	Neither agree nor disagree		
2	Tend to disagree		
1	Strongly disagree		



Additional firmographics and re-contact

D01.

Base: All respondents

Before we finish, I'd just like to ask a few more general questions about you and your business. If your business is part of a franchise, please respond based on the part of the business you personally own/are responsible for, rather than the business as a whole

How many years has your business been operating?

IF NEEDED: i.e. since it was first established, even if this was under a different ownership model.

Is it... ?

DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Under 1 year		
2	1-2 years		
3	3-5 years		
4	6-10 years		
5	11-20 years		
6	Over 20 years		
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)		

D02-D04 removed after cognitive testing

D05.

Base: all respondents

Does your business predominantly trade at a local level, a regional level, nationally or internationally?

DO NOT READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

MULTI RESPONSE

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Local		
2	Regional		
3	National		
4	International		

|



D06.

Base: all respondents

In which region is your head office based?

READ OUT IF NEEDED.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	North East		
2	North West		
3	Yorkshire and The Humber		
4	East Midlands		
5	West Midlands		
6	East		
7	London		
8	South East		
9	South West		
10	Wales		
11	Scotland		
12	Northern Ireland		

D07.

Base: all respondents

Has your business had direct contact with the CMA in the past two years?

DO NOT READ OUT

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		
2	No		
85	Don't know		

D08.

Base: those who have had contact with CMA in past two years (D07/1)

Has your business been part of a CMA case in the past two years?

DO NOT READ OUT

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes		
2	No		
85	Don't know		



D09.

Base: all respondents

Has your business bought or been bought by another business in the past 5 years, or is it currently in the process of doing so? This includes a part of your business being bought or buying part of another business.

DO NOT READ OUT, PROBE IF YES.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes – our business has bought another business/part of another business or in the process of doing so		
2	Yes – business/part of business was bought by another business or in the process of being bought		
3	No		

D10.

Base: all respondents

And what was the approximate turnover of your business in your last financial year?

DO NOT READ OUT. CLARIFY TO CODE ACCURATELY.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list (columns)	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Up to £50,000		
2	£50,001 to £100,000		
3	£100,001 to £250,000		
4	£250,001 to £500,000		
5	£500,001 to £1 million		
6	£1,000,001 to £2 million		
7	£2,000,001 to £5 million		
8	£5,000,001 to £10 million		
9	£10,000,001 to £25 million		
10	Over £25 million		
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)		
86	Refused (<i>do not read out</i>)		

C01.

Base: All respondents

Would it be OK if DJS Research re-contacted you if we need to further clarify any of the responses you have given in this survey today?

SINGLE RESPONSE



Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes (VERIFY CONTACT DETAILS)	-	
2	No	-	
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)	-	

C02.

Base: All respondents

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) have commissioned DJ5 Research, an independent market research agency to conduct this research on their behalf.

Would it be OK if the CMA contacted you for any further research on these topics?

ADD REASSURANCES AS NECESSARY: Agreeing to be contacted in principle doesn't commit you to participating in any further research and the CMA wouldn't be provided with any contact details for you unless it decided to conduct follow-up research and you were selected to be invited to take part.

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes (VERIFY CONTACT DETAILS)	-	
2	No	-	
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)	-	

C03.

Base: All respondents

We would like to send you further information on this survey and how your data will be used via email. Are you happy for us to email this information to you?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Yes (VERIFY CONTACT DETAILS)	SEND INFO EMAIL V2	
2	No		
85	Don't know (<i>do not read out</i>)		



S05b.

Base: Where charity donation offered (S05a/1)

And finally, can you please confirm which charity you would prefer us to make a small donation to on your behalf:

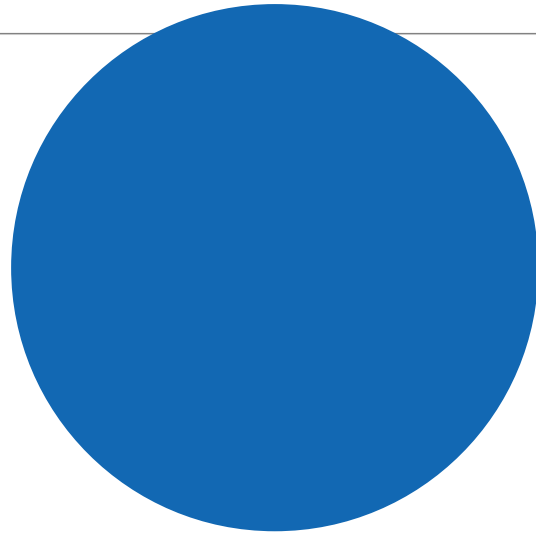
SINGLE RESPONSE

Code	Answer list	Scripting notes	Routing
1	Cities for Trees (a UK charity dedicated to planting and caring for urban trees)		
2	The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (a UK charity helps children and adults that have been affected by a parent's drinking and/or other addictions).		
3	Seashell Trust – a charity that educates and supports children and young adults from across the UK with the most complex disabilities		

Thank and close: Thank you for your time. The results of this survey will help the CMA to understand its organisational performance. The CMA will report on findings later in the year, and these will be considered by the CMA's senior leadership team and Board.



For more information

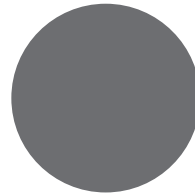


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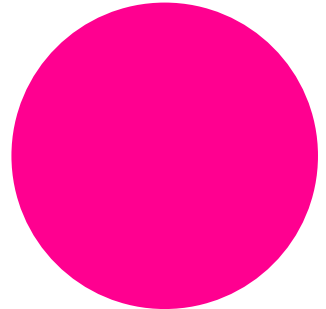
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