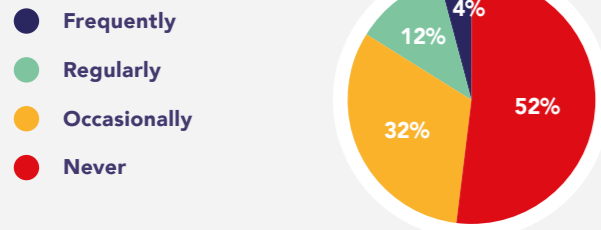


Economic Trends

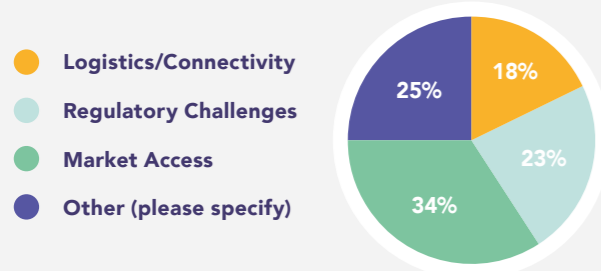
The Q3 2024 Economic Trends survey of Cork Chamber members gathered insights into their experiences during July, August and September. Sponsored by PTSB, this survey offers a snapshot of the business outlook and experiences of engaging in business with Northern Ireland.

NORTHERN IRELAND CONNECTION

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT WITH NORTHERN IRELAND



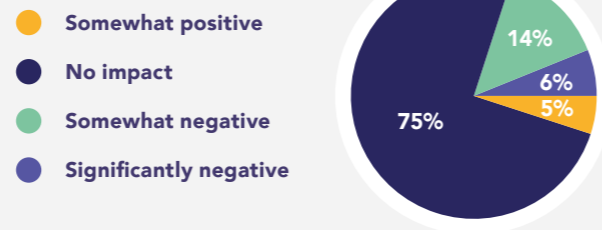
PRIMARY CHALLENGES IN DOING BUSINESS WITH NORTHERN IRELAND



The survey results revealed that market access (34%) was identified as the top challenge in doing business with Northern Ireland. Additionally, regulatory challenges (23%) and logistics/connectivity (18%) were flagged as key obstacles.

One in five business respondents (20%) have been negatively affected by Brexit in terms of trade and operational connectivity with Northern Ireland, while 75% report no impact.

BREXIT IMPACTS

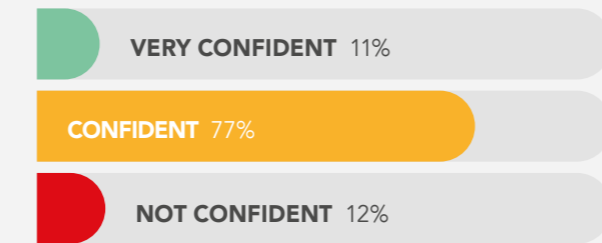


TOP 3 NEEDED SUPPORTS

1. Networking opportunities
2. Enhanced air connectivity
3. Enhanced rail connectivity

The survey revealed the top three supports that businesses believe would most benefit their connection with Northern Ireland.

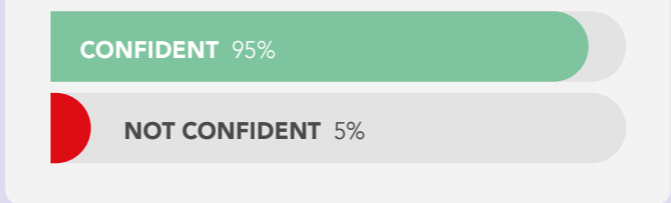
CONFIDENCE IN THE IRISH ECONOMY



Confidence in the Irish economy rose to 88% in Q3, up from 72% in Q2 and 77% in Q1 2024.

Rising business costs (25%) were the top reason for a lack of confidence, followed by housing supply (14%) and skills shortages/inflation (11%).

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE



Business confidence from an overall financial perspective remains high at 95%, consistent with Q1 and Q2 of 2024.

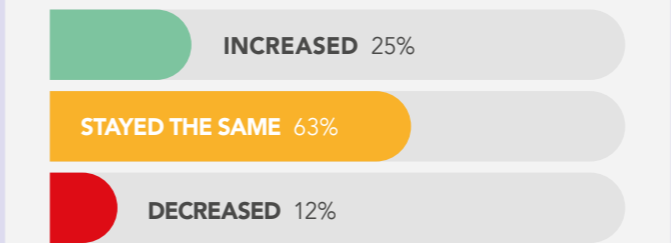
TOP THREATS TO BUSINESS GROWTH

1. Skills availability
2. Changing consumer spending/Reduced orders and cost of energy/raw materials
3. Availability of housing/Rental Accommodation

The top threats to business growth are led by skills availability, followed by changing consumer spending/reduced orders and rising energy and raw material costs. Housing availability for employees and cyber attacks also pose significant concerns.

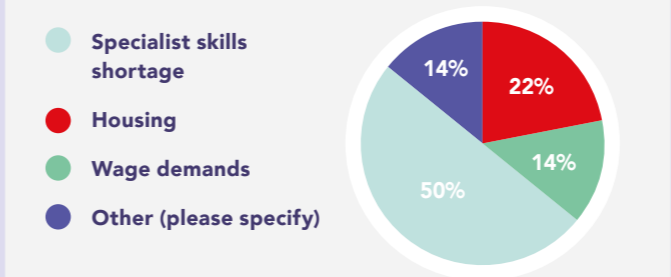
EMPLOYMENT DATA

DID YOUR EMPLOYEE NUMBERS CHANGE OVER Q3 2024?



One quarter of respondents reported an increase in employee numbers during Q3, down from 36% in Q2. Meanwhile, 63% experienced no change (up from 54% in Q2), and only 12% reduced their workforce.

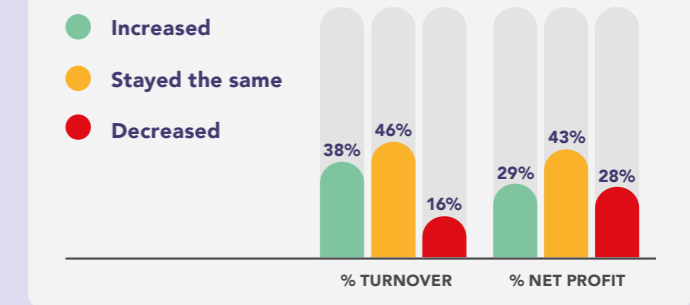
TOP BARRIERS TO FILLING VACANCIES



Out of the 45% of respondents that have vacancies advertised, 44% are finding it difficult to fill them (i.e. remaining unfilled for greater than 3 months since initial advertisement).

The clear leading barrier to filling open vacancies is a specialist skills shortage (50%), followed by housing (22%) and wage demands (14%).

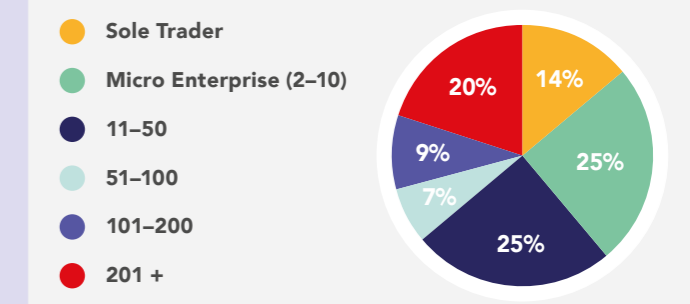
TURNOVER AND NET PROFIT Q3 2024



The proportion of businesses reporting an increase in turnover fell to 38% in Q3 (down from 51% in Q2), while those reporting a decrease also dropped to 16% (from 20% in Q2), with 46% seeing no change.

In respect of net profits, 29% reported a net profit increase in Q3 2024, compared to 33% in Q2. Those reporting a decrease has risen to 28% in Q3, compared to 20% in Q2.

RESPONDING BUSINESSES



The responding businesses represent a broad range of sectors: Life Sciences & Manufacturing (11%), Agriculture, Food & Drinks (5%), ICT & Digital Economy (4%), Tourism, Hospitality, Retail & Leisure (12%), Culture, Arts, Community & Media (7%), Built Environment (14%), Education & Training (2%), Services (including Financial) (36%), Transport, Energy & Maritime (7%), Health (2%).

We thank members for your valued insights and engagement with this survey. Your participation is vital. All previous quarterly economic surveys can be found on www.corkchamber.ie.