

2017 Business Survey

Between mid-June and early August 2017, SEMLEP conducted a telephone survey of 2,370 businesses in the region. The survey aimed to identify economic issues and opportunities, to support the growth of local businesses and the local economy. The survey was representative of the size, sector and geography of the c80,000 businesses in the area. This was the fourth business survey conducted by SEMLEP, since 2013.

BUSINESS LOCATION

South East Midlands is a positive location for business:



65%

rated the South East Midlands region as a 'good' place to do business (66% in 2015)

Positive and improving perceptions of the physical infrastructure, with the following rated at least 'good':



Rail network:

70% (61% in 2015)



Road network:

67% (60% in 2015)



Transportation of freight:

64% (52% in 2015)

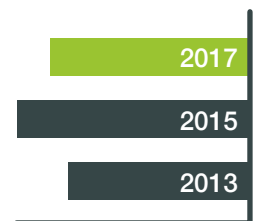
BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Positive current performance:

43%

of businesses said performance had improved over the past 12 months

(50% in 2015 but up from 39% in 2013)



while **16%** said it had deteriorated (11% in 2015 / 20% in 2013)

Optimism for the future:



55%

of businesses expect performance to improve in the next 12 months



while **8%** expect it to deteriorate

BREXIT

Negativity and uncertainty over Brexit, with access to single market, labour and skills key concerns:



12%

of businesses said leaving the European Union will have a positive impact



35%

no notable impact



32%

a negative impact



22%

were unsure of the impact

VACANCIES, SKILLS SHORTAGES AND SKILLS GAPS

Skills are a key issue for local businesses:

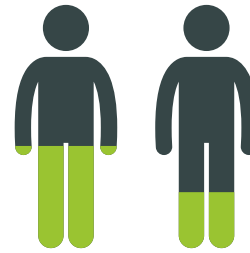


33%

of businesses cited lack of skilled labour as a key constraint on growth
(remains the top cited constraint as in 2015)

42%

of businesses had vacancies in the last 12 months
(40% in 2015)



23%

had hard-to-fill vacancies
(18% in 2015)



29%

reported skills gaps amongst current staff
(33% in 2015)



22%

said they found skills shortages amongst potential recruits when trying to fill vacancies
(also 22% in 2015)

APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Gradual increase in apprenticeships, with scope for further growth:



13% currently employ apprentices
(9% in 2014)

36% would consider employing apprentices

42% of businesses offer work experience

INNOVATION

Notable numbers of businesses are innovating, although there has been a slight decline over time:

25% of businesses innovated in the last 12 months
(28% in 2015)



31% expect to innovate in the next 12 months
(36% in 2015)



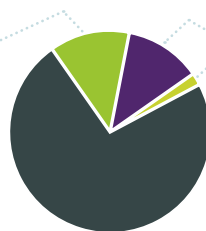
8% of businesses have links with universities/colleges for R&D purposes
(12% in 2015)

SEMLEP

Gradual increase in awareness of SEMLEP, although there is scope to increase its profile and use of growth initiatives:



13% of businesses aware of SEMLEP
(8% in 2013)



12% of businesses had heard of the **Velocity Growth Hub**, including **2%** that had used it in the last 12 months

Priorities SEMLEP should focus on:



Providing support to businesses (**26%** - remains top cited since 2015)



Helping ensure supply of skilled labour to meet business demand (**14%**)



Funding new investment/projects (**14%**)