

# Covid-19 – Online Business Survey

Prepared for: Great Yarmouth Tourism and  
Business Improvement Area

26 March 2020

Prepared by:



On behalf of:



## Introduction and Methodology and approach

This report evaluates the immediate and ongoing impacts of Covid- 19 to Tourism Business in Greater Yarmouth, as we as assessing the long-term economic impact.

### Methodology

The results are based on a weekly online survey to businesses in the Greater Yarmouth area. It uses a structured questionnaire, adapting some questions and adding / removing other questions as the situation evolves. We are using a 'Have your say' online platform style survey, based on personalised email invitations to fill in a short online questionnaire. The survey allows to closely monitor the immediate impact of COVID - 19 on an ongoing basis. The survey is fully managed in-house by Destination Research using Typeform software package, which offers full online and mobile functionalities. The results of the survey are being used and distributed by GYT BIA.

### Outputs

A weekly report will be produced reflecting on the very latest industry sentiment. This and subsequent reports will include a summary of immediate reactions, longer term recovery plan actions as well as economic impact assessment of the COVID-19 on the local economy in the context of the latest Cambridge Model results. This report includes responses from 20 March at 2pm and 26 March, 2020 (10am). The sample size is 162 responses.

The report includes a breakdown of responses up to the first major government announcement regarding employment benefits (20 March, 6pm) and responses since that announcement and until 10 am on 26 March.

### Outcomes

Ultimately, the research should allow Greater Yarmouth Tourism and Business Improvement Area (GYTBIA) to:

- Provide a forum for consistent and comprehensive analysis of the implications of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the local tourism industry.
- Act as the one-stop-shop communications channel for the local tourism industry in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19).



## Report for period between 20 March 2020 and 26 March 2020 - Key developments:

### **20 March 2020**

- The Government strengthens the tone on social distancing
- A grant will cover 80% of wages up to £2,500 for those employees kept on the payroll.
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme
- Cash flow support via the tax system - Deferring next quarter of VAT payments.

### **22 March 2020**

- The Government released a statement confirming that visits to second homes, campsites, caravan parks etc. do not constitute essential travel. They advise people to stay in their primary residence to limit pressure on services.

### **23 March 2020**

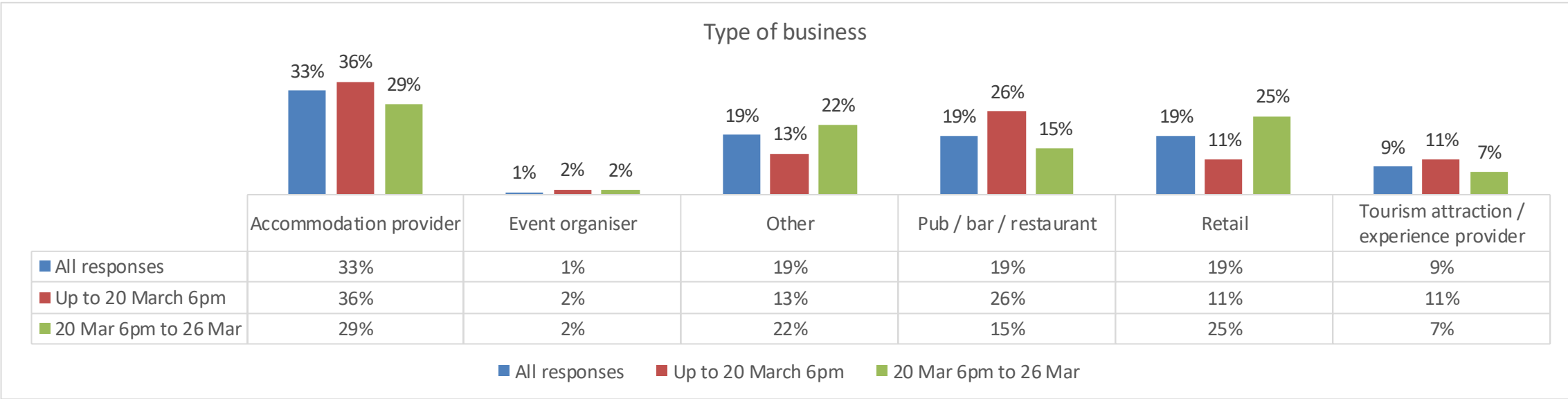
- People in Britain are only allowed to leave their homes for only “very limited purposes” - shopping for basic necessities; for one form of exercise a day; for any medical need; and to travel to and from work when “absolutely necessary”.
- Guidance on the closure of all non-essential businesses and premises as part of further social distancing measures. This directive applies to any business providing holiday accommodation including short-term lets such as hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, boarding houses and caravan sites.



## Research Outputs – Business Profile

Accommodation providers account for about a third of all responses. Following the Government announcement on 20 March, there was an increase in the proportion of responses by retail outlets and a decrease in responses from pubs, bars and restaurants.

‘Other’ businesses include laundry services, estate agents, barbers / hair dressers and other types of food provision (fish and chip shop, Ice-cream parlours and food takeaways)

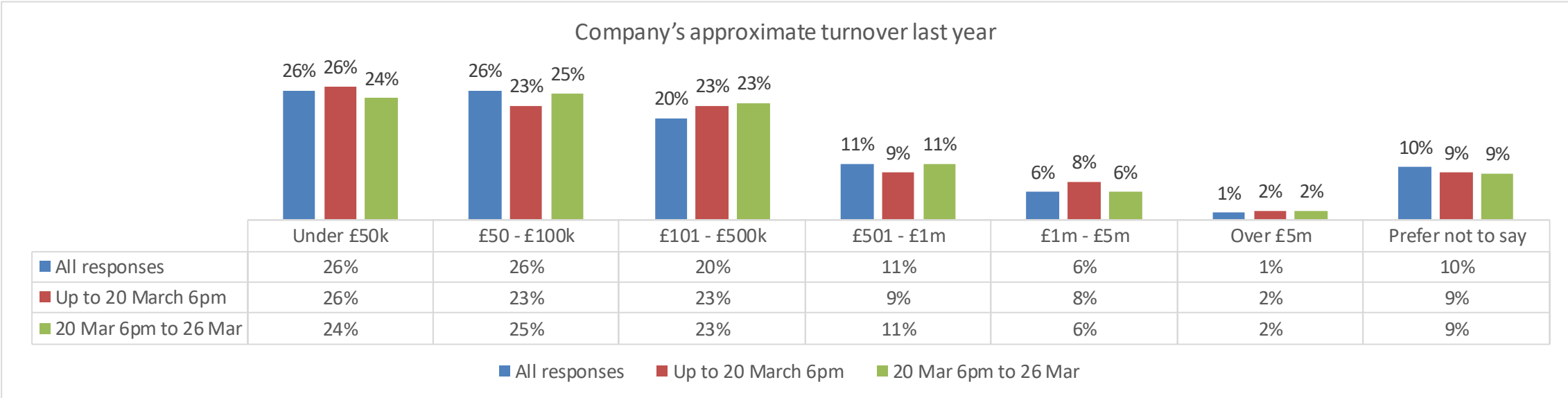


Q: What type of business do you run?



## Research Outputs – Business Profile

Businesses with turnover up to £500k account for three quarter of all responses. Turnovers under £50k, between £50K - £100k and between £101k and £500k account for about a quarter of all responses each. One in ten respondents prefer not to disclose their turnover.



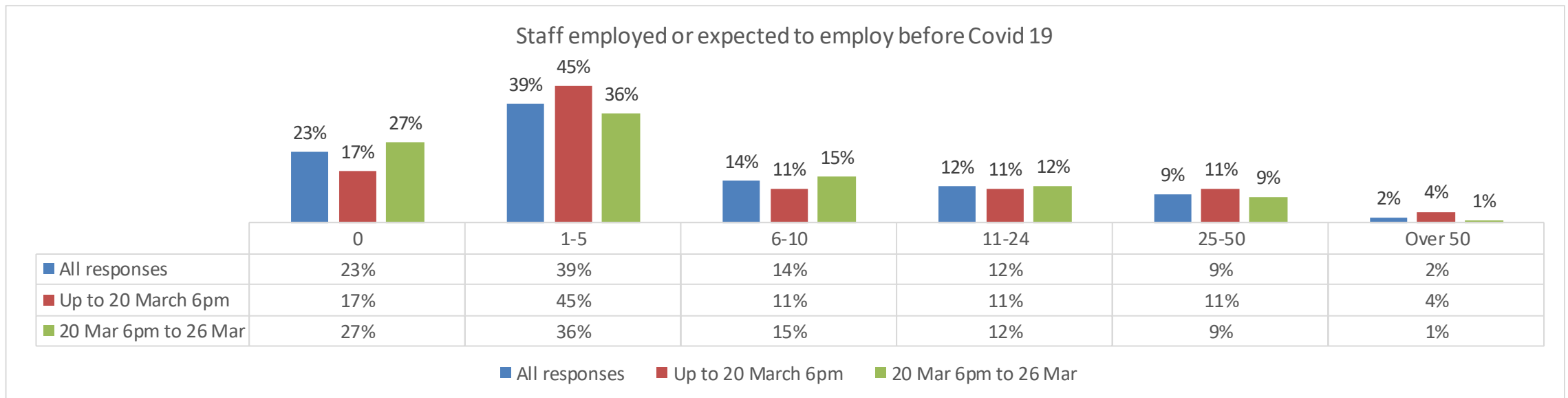
Q: What was your company's approximate turnover last year?



## Research Outputs – Staff and employment changes

Overall about two in five (39%) employ between 1 and 5 people. About a quarter (22%) did not employ anyone. About a third (35%) employed between 6 and 50 people, evenly split between these groups (6-10 employees, 11-24 and 25 – 50 employees).

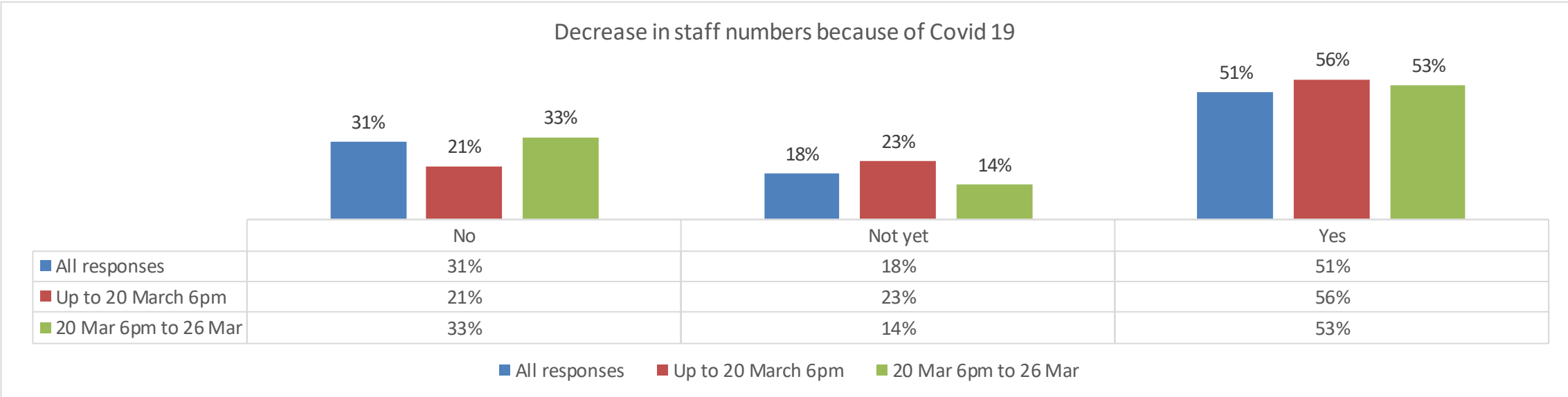
Following the announcement on 20<sup>th</sup> March there was an increase in the proportion of respondents not employing anyone and a reduction in those in the 1-5 staff group.



Q: How many staff did you employ or expected to employ before the start of the Covid 19 crisis?

## Research Outputs – Staff and employment changes

About half of businesses (51%) reported a decrease in staff numbers because of Covid 19. Interestingly, there was only a marginal decrease in the proportion of respondents that decreased their staff numbers following the Government announcement on 20 March (A grant will cover 80% of wages up to £2,500 for those employees kept on the payroll).

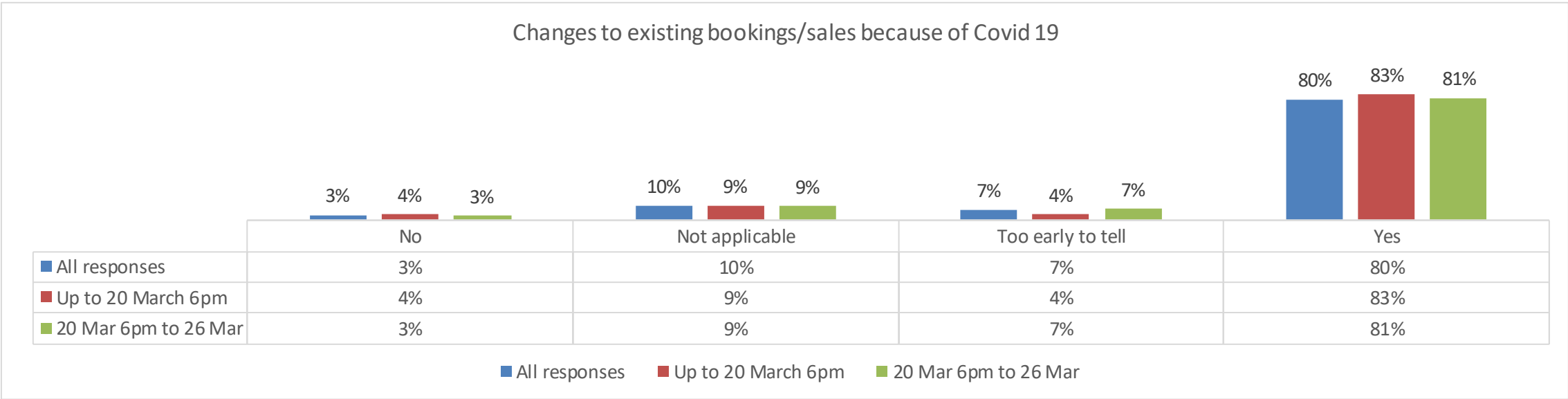


Q: Have you had to decrease you staff because of Covid 19?



## Research Outputs – Impact on bookings and turnover

Four in five report changes to existing bookings/sales because of Covid 19 such as changes to dates or other details but not outright cancellations of bookings. This proportion has remained constant at about 80% throughout the week.



*Q: Have there been any changes to existing bookings/sales because of Covid 19?  
Changes to dates or other details but not outright cancellations of bookings*

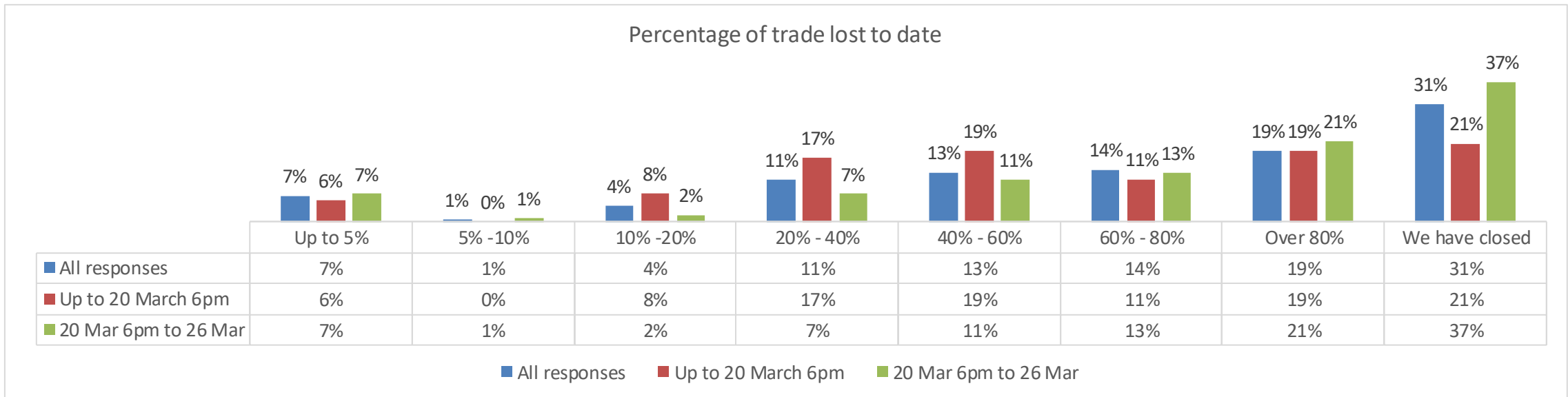




# Covid-19 – Online Business Survey – Research Results

## Research Outputs – Impact on bookings and turnover

Covid-19 is having significant impacts on the local tourism industry. Over a quarter (28%) report trade losses of up to 60%. Just under a third (31%) of respondents report business closures. The proportion has increased from 21% up to 6pm on 20<sup>th</sup> March, to 37% for the period between after 6pm on 20<sup>th</sup> March and 26<sup>th</sup> March.

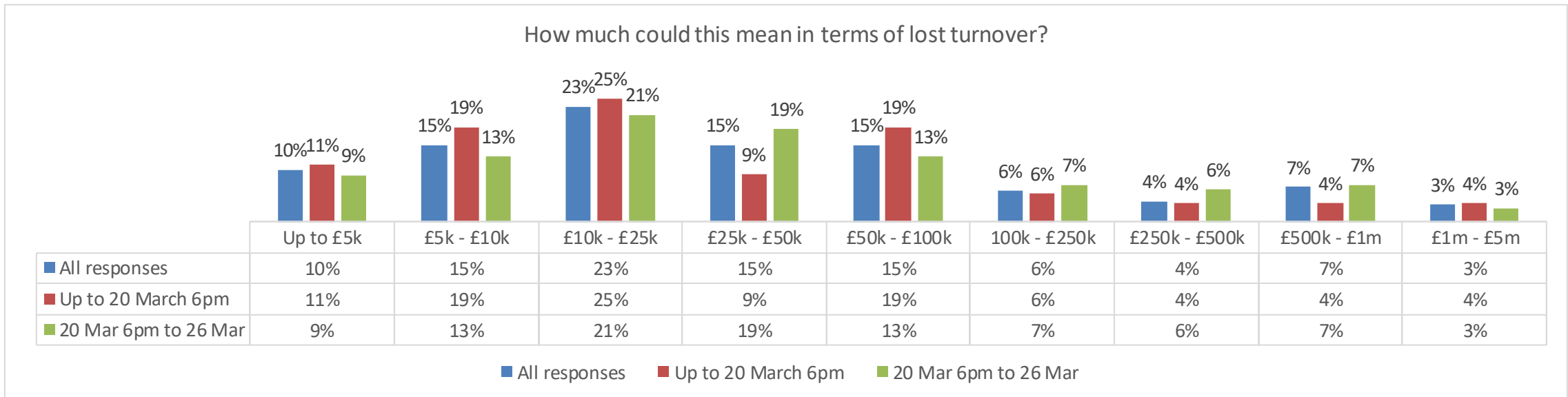


Q: If your trade has decreased what percentage of trade would you say you have lost to date?



## Research Outputs – Impact on bookings and turnover

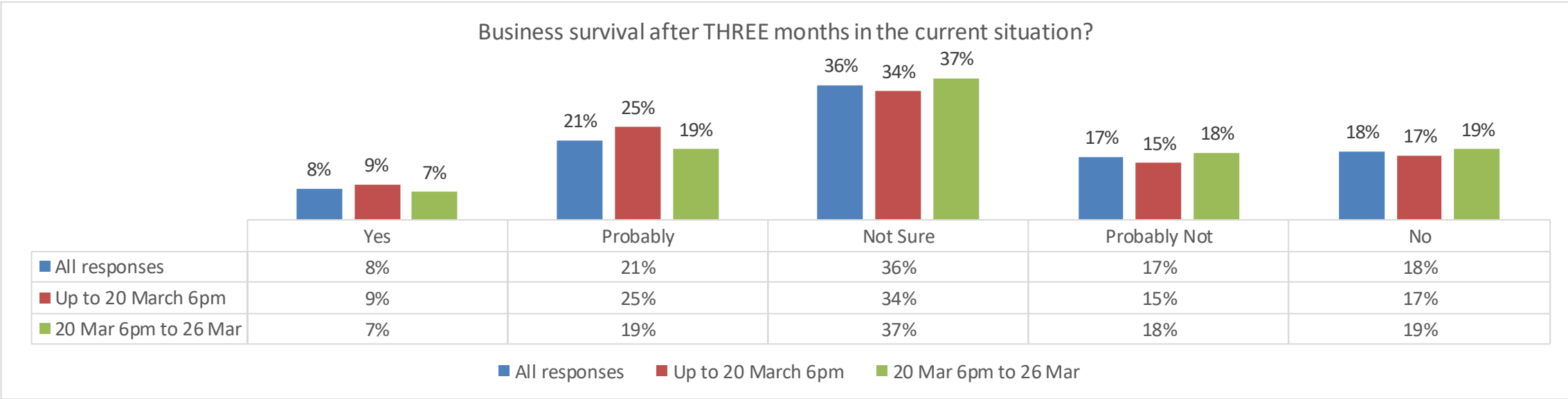
Most businesses (23%) are reporting losses of between £10k and £25k. However, the proportion of respondents reporting losses of between £25k and £50k has jumped from 9% up to 6pm on 20<sup>th</sup> March to 19% between then and 26 March (10am).



Q: Approximately how much could this mean in terms of lost turnover?

Research Outputs – Business Survival

Just over a third (35%) predict that their business probably won't survive for THREE months in the current situation. A further 36% said they were not sure and 29% expect to survive after three months in the current situation of lock down.

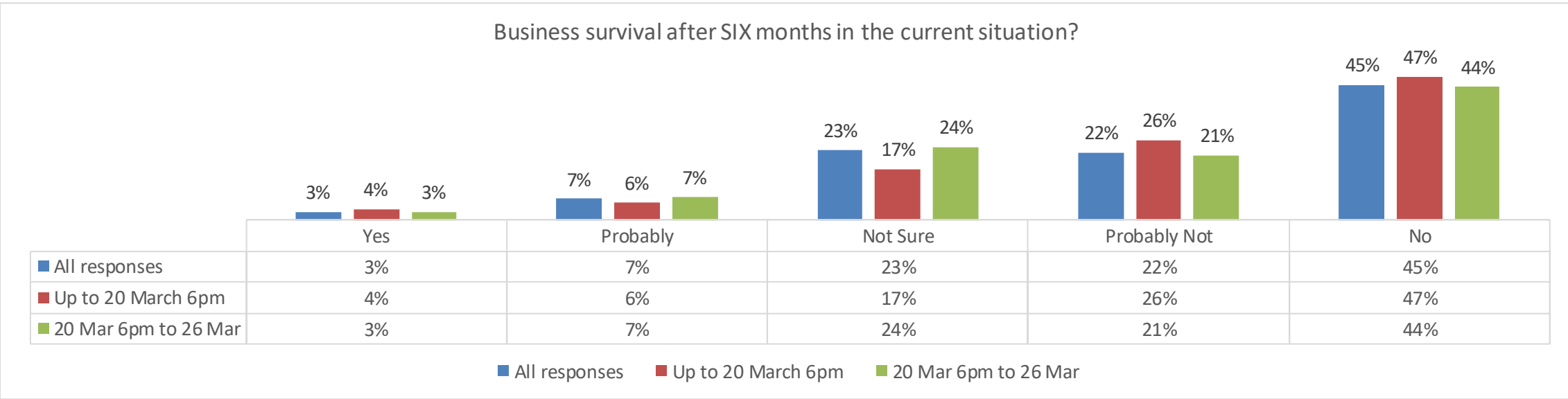


Q: Would your business survive for three months in the current situation?



## Research Outputs – Business Survival

Just over a two third (67%) predict that their business probably won't survive for SIX months in the current situation. It is encouraging to see that as a result of the Government's announcement on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> March there has been a drop in the proportion of businesses expecting to close down after six months, from 73% to 65%.

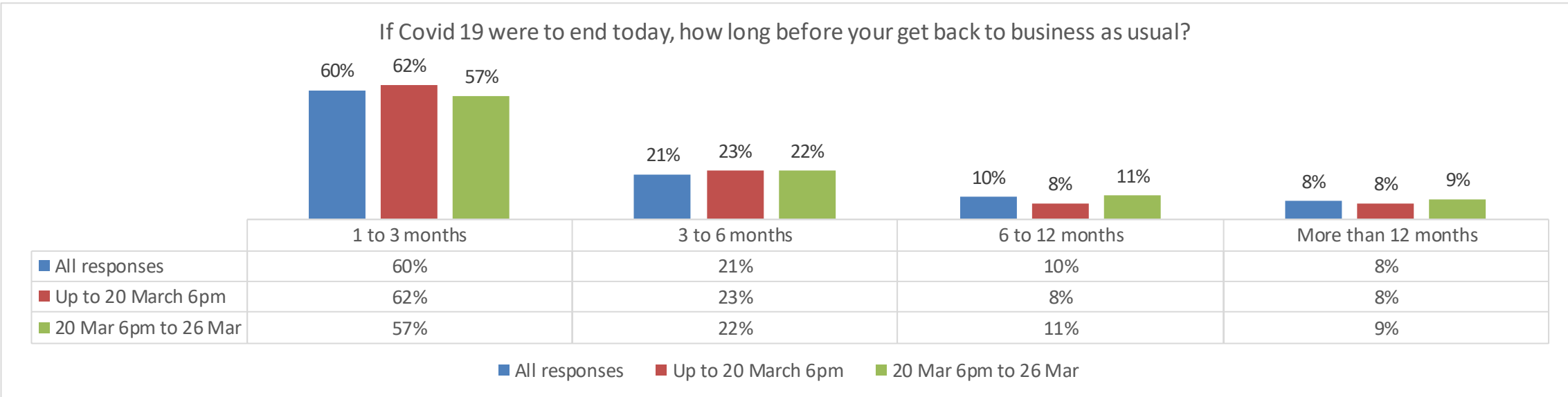


Q: Would your business survive for six months in the current situation?



## Research Outputs – Business Recovery

If Covid 19 were to end today, about three in five (60%) estimate it would take them between 1 and 3 months to get back to business as usual. As you would expect, this is changing almost daily. As of 26 March the proportion of respondents predicting a 1 to 3 month period of recovery dropped to 57%, whereas those who predict a 6 to 12 month recovery period increased from 8% to 11%.



Q: Finally, If Covid 19 were to end today, how long would you estimate it would take for your company to get back to business as usual?



## Research Outputs – Further opinions

Respondents we asked to give their opinion about the impact Covid-19 is having on their turnover and on their organisations generally as well as resources and support – they anticipate needing in the future. The three questions are:

- Do you have any further comments regarding lost turnover?
- Do you have any other comments about the immediate impact of Covid 19 to your organisation?
- What resources and support – including financial and human resources – do you anticipate needing in the future?

The large number of cancellations has resulted in many businesses suffering from cash flow problems and needing urgent financial support from the Government.

The lack of income is putting pressure on businesses trying to cover staff costs, rent and bills. Many report uncertainty as to how long they will be able to stay in business.





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