



SEPA

NetRegs Awareness Survey 2020/21

Scotland Results

Report

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Executive summary

Background and objectives

SEPA, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, is a public sector agency that acts as the environmental regulator and flood warning authority in Scotland. In partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), SEPA provides the NetRegs website, NetRegs.org.uk, and NetRegs e-newsletter, which offer free guidance to businesses in Scotland and Northern Ireland on corporate environmental responsibility, applicable key environmental legislation and economic benefits related to adopting a responsible environmental approach to business. Throughout 2020, the website has also included information to help businesses keep informed on the current situation surrounding Coronavirus. The website provides guidance for all businesses but is targeted mainly at small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Progressive was commissioned to conduct the 2020 research among SMEs in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to provide an up-to-date picture of current attitudes and awareness in relation to the NetRegs website and environmental issues. The research aimed to measure:

- Awareness of existing environmental legislation
- Internal systems, policies and/or behaviours relating to environmental management
- Attitudes towards respondents' own companies' environmental impact
- Perceived benefits attached to improved environmental performance
- Previous interactions with external organisations regarding environmental information and issues
- Awareness and use of the NetRegs website
- Benefits of using the NetRegs website

Previous surveys had been run to assess awareness of NetRegs and estimate the benefits of using the site, most recently by Progressive in 2016. The research therefore aimed to draw comparisons with previous waves where feasible. Comparisons are summarised in Appendix 1.

Method and sample

In total, 447 interviews were conducted with Scottish SMEs during October to December 2020, somewhat less than the target 500. The fieldwork was constrained by the coronavirus restrictions: many target businesses were operating under restrictions throughout, with staff working from home, and/or their premises closed for some/all of the fieldwork period.

The survey was conducted by Progressive's telephone interviewers using Computer-Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The questionnaire was largely based on the 2016 version, although it was amended slightly to include new areas of interest to SEPA. The CATI fieldwork was supplemented by an online survey, which was designed to support respondents not in their workplace and/or who were time limited. In total 36 of the 447 responses were received through the online route.

The sample was designed to ensure a reasonable spread of SMEs were included in relation to industry sector and business size. The survey script also ensured that interviewers spoke to the person in the business who deals with environmental issues and decisions, such as waste management or water and energy use. The sample was designed to focus on Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Hotels and

Restaurants, and Transport, in line with previous surveys; however, other sectors, such as Education, Financial Services and Food and Drink Manufacturers, were also included to ensure the sample was broadly representative of all SME businesses in Scotland. Full details of the sample profile are included in the main body of this report.

Key Findings

Measures to address environmental issues

The vast majority of SME businesses in Scotland have taken some action to reduce harm to the environment. When asked what, if any, practical measures their organisation had ever introduced aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment, the majority of respondents (77%) spontaneously mentioned at least one measure, and this figure rose to 94% when respondents were prompted with a list of possible measures. The most common measures implemented were cutting down business waste (mentioned by 70%), improving energy efficiency or water reduction (64%) and reducing the use of single-use plastics (58%).

Respondents from the largest organisations (50+ employees) were most likely to report undertaking nearly all of the harm reduction measures.

Hotels and Restaurants were the most likely to have undertaken a range of measures, including reducing single use plastics, making energy efficiency or water reduction improvements and cutting down business waste. Perhaps unsurprisingly Transport companies were the most likely to mention reducing transport emissions. Agricultural businesses were especially proactive with respect to assessing business impact on the environment, carrying out environmental improvements and taking measures to adapt to climate change.

Very few respondents reported that they had **never** introduced any measures to reduce harm to the environment. However, among those who had not the most common reasons given were that they had never thought about it or don't have time.

Implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS) or Environmental Policy

Across the sample as a whole, just over one in five (20%) said their company had an Environmental Management System (EMS), such as an ISO 14001, BS 8555 or Green Ticks standard. The proportion with an EMS in place was far higher, however, amongst the larger companies (42%), while the smallest organisations were least likely to have an EMS (12%). Respondents working in the Construction industry were the most likely to report having an EMS (31%). Four-fifths of those with an EMS consider it to be very effective/effective; there were no differences by business size or sector.

Those respondents who reported that they did not have an EMS were asked if they had an environmental policy. In total, 55% of these organisations reported having an environmental policy. Again, the larger organisations were most likely to have an environmental policy. Healthcare and Hotels and Restaurants were most likely to have an Environmental Policy.

The most common reasons given for taking steps to improve environmental performance were compliance with a mandatory requirements (mentioned by 22%), financial pressures (15%), protecting the environment (14%) and improving their reputation / green credentials (14%).

The most frequently reported benefits of taking these steps included reduced operating costs (54%), reduced risk of prosecution or fines (49%) and improved relationships with customers (48%). These

benefits could be highlighted in communications encouraging businesses to implement measures to improve their environmental performance.

The survey also asked those **who did not** have an EMS or environmental policy how useful they felt such a policy would be. The majority of this sub-group did not feel an EMS or environmental policy would be useful (67% overall said it would be of no use or of little use). Only 22% felt it would be quite or very useful, although 10% said they did not know. The smallest organisations were least likely to think an EMS or environmental policy would be quite or very useful (18% of those with fewer than 10 employees thought this). Promoting the purpose and benefits of having an EMS or policy might help improve uptake.

As a further measure of the commitment of businesses to environmental harm reduction, respondents were also asked how likely they were to invest money in improving their environmental performance over the next 12 months. In total, 47% reported that they were very or quite likely to invest. Reflecting the general pattern of response, the smallest organisations were least likely to predict investment in their environmental performance (40% v 52% 10-49 and 57% 50+). Therefore, targeting communications to smaller organisations to make it clear that environmental policies and/or investment are relevant to them might help improve rates of future investment.

Two fifths (41%) have started to think about the steps their business will need to take to achieve the Scottish Government's target of Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2045. Businesses in the Transport (55%) and Agricultural (53%) sectors were more likely than those in other sectors to say they have been thinking about Net Zero. Businesses in Construction (66%) were most likely to say they have **not** been thinking about it.

Awareness of the environment and legislation

When respondents were asked to state (without any prompting) what activities, if any, their organisation undertakes which could be regarded as harmful to the environment, 49% spontaneously mentioned at least one. However, when prompted with a list of potentially harmful activities, the proportion reporting that their company undertook at least one rose to 94%. Clearly some of the harmful activities are not 'top of mind' among respondents, suggesting a need to raise awareness of these issues.

Taking the spontaneous and prompted responses together, the most commonly mentioned harmful activities were transport (mentioned by 68%), storing waste on site prior to removal (57%), storing chemicals, fuels or oils (53%) and undertaking an activity that could create noise, smell or dust (37%).

It was also important to understand how aware SME businesses are of relevant environmental legislation. When prompted with a list of regulations and legislation, the majority recognised at least one, with awareness highest for Hazardous Waste or Special Waste regulations (82%), Duty of Care for Waste regulations (70%), and Food Waste Regulations (70%).

There was a very clear pattern in responses across business size for this question, with the largest organisations being the most aware of each of the regulations / legislation. These findings provide further evidence of a need to raise awareness of environmental issues among the smallest businesses.

It is not sufficient to have simply heard of regulations, businesses have to have read and understand them. On the whole businesses feel they have a partial understanding of the regulations, but only around a quarter feel they fully understand them. This falls to 15% of those aware who feel they fully understand the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases regulations.

Sources of information, advice and support

Overall, 53% of the sample had ever been in contact with any business support organisations to discuss environmental issues – although this figure was higher among the largest organisations (70%, v 48% of the smallest organisations). The most commonly mentioned organisation was SEPA (22%), followed by the local council (13%). A large number of sector specific organisations were also listed. It is encouraging that SEPA was mentioned by around a fifth of businesses, although there is clearly scope to increase the proportion of businesses contacting organisations for information and advice on environmental issues.

Awareness and use of NetRegs

In total, 14% of respondents reported that they were aware of NetRegs. Reflecting previous findings, awareness was higher among the larger organisations (23%, v 11% among the smallest companies). Respondents from Construction businesses were most likely to say they had heard of NetRegs (29%), while those from the Hotels and Restaurants (6%) and from the Transport (6%) sectors were least likely to be aware of the website. The research therefore suggests that there continues to be considerable scope to raise awareness of the NetRegs website and the benefits it can offer businesses.

Just over half (54%) of those who had heard of NetRegs said that they had used it. This equates to 8% of the total sample of businesses who have used the site. Just less than half (46%) of these businesses used the site at least once a month. Ratings of NetRegs in terms of usefulness and individual aspects of the website were generally positive. The highest ratings were given for the legislation lists, the website guidance pages and the GPP series.

Benefit of NetRegs

Those who used NetRegs were asked if the use of NetRegs had led to their company becoming more resource efficient. Around three fifths (56%) said it has had a positive impact, while a third (36%) said it has not. Six firms said they could attribute no savings to using the site, while ten made savings of up to £500 a year, and two made savings in excess of £500 a year.

Information sources

Finally, the survey focused on information sources that respondents were likely to use to find out about environmental issues relating to their business. The most commonly mentioned information source was internet searches (83%). The other main sources of information used were information sent through the post (such as information from SEPA and other organisations) (used by 51% of businesses), email newsletter (50%), conversations with colleagues and briefings from subject experts (48%) and trade magazines, journals and industry reports (47%).

Just 6% stated they would not use any information sources at all. Any action that SEPA can take to ensure a good web presence when searching for relevant terms will help organisations find them as a source of advice.

Conclusions

SME businesses in Scotland are clearly motivated to ensure that they operate in a way that minimises any harmful impact on the environment. Almost all respondents reported that their business had implemented measures to reduce environmental harm, although motivations to do so were varied. They also understand the business benefits of implementing environmental protection measures,

such as reducing operating costs, reducing the risk of prosecution and improved relations with customers. However, there were significant variances in findings by size of company, with larger organisations (with more than 50 employees) the most aware of potentially harmful activities and the relevant legislation, and the most likely to have taken steps to reduce their environmental impact. The smallest companies (those with less than 10 employees) tended to have lower levels of awareness, and were also less likely to perceive value in implementing or investing in measures to reduce environmental impact.

The research, therefore, suggests that the smaller SMEs in Scotland require information and advice on how their operations could potentially harm the environment, and how they could minimise these harms. There is also a need to persuade these organisations of the business benefits and opportunities that investment in such harm reduction measures could bring.

As noted in previous surveys, there is scope to raise awareness amongst all SME businesses of the NetRegs website. Indeed, the internet is the key source of information on environmental issues and SEPA was the organisation most likely to have been contacted by those who have previously sought advice in this area (indicating a high level of trust and confidence in its advice). However, the NetRegs site itself is not being widely utilised by SME companies.

As noted in the previous wave of this research, the findings therefore provide clear evidence of the potential value of NetRegs, as well as the need for it, especially amongst smaller SMEs. Promotion of the site, with a focus on smaller SMEs, and including information about the value of engagement in environmental harm reduction measures, will drive visits to the site and potentially lead to improved environmental performance within this sector.

Introduction

Background and Objectives

Background

SEPA, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, is a public sector agency that acts as the environmental regulator and flood warning authority in Scotland. In partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), SEPA provides the NetRegs website, NetRegs.org.uk, and NetRegs newsletter, which offer free guidance to businesses in Scotland and Northern Ireland on corporate environmental responsibility, applicable key environmental legislation and economic benefits related to adopting a responsible environmental approach to business. The website provides guidance for all businesses but is targeted mainly at small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Since 2002, SEPA has commissioned a number of telephone surveys of SMEs in the UK to gauge awareness of the NetRegs website, knowledge of environmental legislation, and environmental performance. Over the course of the research, its scope has narrowed from 28 business sectors in 2002 down to just 10 by 2009. This allowed for a more representative data set to be developed.

Up to and including 2013 the survey was administered across the UK, with results produced for the UK as a whole, and for each of the four nations where sample sizes were sufficient. From 2016 onwards, the Survey has been of relevance only to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The survey has been administered as a telephone interview, with separate surveys (online) undertaken to quantify the impact of using the NetRegs site on the business. The 2020/21 survey combined both elements within a single survey.

Aims and objectives

The research aimed to measure:

- Awareness of existing environmental legislation
- Internal systems, policies and/or behaviours relating to environmental management
- Attitudes towards respondents' own companies' environmental impact
- Perceived benefits attached to improved environmental performance
- Previous interactions with external organisations regarding environmental information and issues
- Awareness and use of the NetRegs website
- Benefits of using the NetRegs website

The research was designed to meet current information requirements while bearing in mind the desire to provide time series analysis to track change since the previous waves of the survey.

This report outlines 2020 findings from the survey of SMEs in Scotland; an equivalent report is available outlining findings from Northern Ireland. Comparisons to 2009 and 2016 data, where relevant, are provided in Appendix 1. A combined report, providing an overview of findings for the whole NetRegs area, has also been provided separately.

Method and sample

Introduction

In total, 447 interviews were conducted with Scottish SMEs between October and December 2020, somewhat less than the target 500.

The fieldwork was constrained by the coronavirus pandemic. The fieldwork was initially scheduled to run over the period mid-March to end-May 2020. The national lockdown meant that fieldwork had to be suspended as it was not an 'essential service'. Once the economy began to open up over the summer, consideration was given as to an appropriate date to commence fieldwork. A number of test fieldwork shifts were run in mid-August. Strike rates were extremely low. It appeared at that stage businesses had not yet put in place effective working from home communications which made it extremely difficult to contact key staff using the sample information: in some cases phones went unanswered; in others, getting transferred to the most appropriate person to undertake the interview proved a challenge. Many SMEs were working extremely hard at getting their business up-and-running again within new covid-constraints, so finding time to participate was limited. Further, many businesses were still not contactable (not yet open/out-of-business). It was therefore agreed to allow a further period of acclimatisation before commencing fieldwork.

Fieldwork was commenced on 14 October 2020. Strike rates were initially low, but gradually picked up in Scotland. They remained extremely low in Northern Ireland where coronavirus rates were higher, and ongoing restrictions remained more stringent. It was therefore agreed to focus all fieldwork on the Scottish sample for the first few weeks. Fieldwork dates were therefore:

- Scotland: Substantive fieldwork undertaken 14 October to 15 December
- Northern Ireland: 14 October to 24 February, with the substantive fieldwork during 2021

Small numbers of interviews were collected during the tester sessions (to determine if fieldwork could be run successfully) during August and September 2020.

To boost the numbers, and to provide an option for respondents not reachable by phone, an online version was also produced. The online survey was open during October and November 2020. In total 36 of the 447 responses were received through the online route.

The questionnaire was largely based on the 2016 version, although it was amended to reflect emerging areas of interest to SEPA; to include questions on the benefits of the NetRegs website, previously addressed in a separate (online) survey; and a short section on how use of the site has changed since the pandemic. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included at Appendix 2.

Sampling

The sample was designed to ensure a good spread of SMEs were included in relation to industry sector and business size. The survey script also ensured that interviewers spoke to the person in the business who deals with environmental issues and decisions, such as waste management or water and energy use. The final sample profile is outlined in Table 1. The sample was designed to focus on Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Hotels and Restaurants, and Transport. These were also the core sectors included in the 2016 and 2009 surveys.

A note on business size

A sample of businesses in Scotland was purchased to be used as the sampling frame for the research. This sample had business size and sector detailed for each contact on the file. This information was used for quota control purposes to ensure a good spread of businesses was included in the research. However, a question was also asked in the survey about the number of employees the business had, and this data has been used for analysis and reporting (rather than the business size detailed on the sample file). In instances where the respondent did not know their business size, the sample categorisation information has been used. The overall spread is broadly similar, although there are slightly more very small businesses (<10 employees) and slightly fewer mid-size businesses (10-49 employees) in the Scottish sample when using respondents' own estimates compared to the quota targets derived using the sample file data.

As in 2016, it was agreed not to screen businesses of 250+ employees out of the survey. The final number of organisations over 250 was small (just 4 respondents in the Scottish sample).

The final dataset was weighted to reflect the target employee split (54% 1-9 employees, 29% 10-49 employees and 17% 50+ employees) and the target business sector profile.

The overall sample size of 447 provides a dataset with a margin of error of between $\pm 0.92\%$ and $\pm 4.64\%$, calculated at the 95% confidence level (the market research industry standard)¹.

Table 1: Sample profile

Industry sector	Unweighted		Weighted	
	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	76	17%	72	16%
Construction	63	14%	63	14%
Healthcare	54	12%	63	14%
Hotels and Restaurants	65	15%	67	15%
Transport	64	14%	67	15%
Education	20	4%	18	4%
Equipment and machinery	19	4%	18	4%
Financial services	13	3%	22	5%
Food and drink manufacturer	24	5%	18	4%
Retail and wholesale	21	5%	18	4%
Other	28	6%	22	5%
Business size	No.	%	No.	%
<10 employees	259	58%	241	54%
10-49 employees	137	31%	129	29%
50+ employees	50	11%	76	17%
Unsure	1	<1%	1	<1%

¹ Please note that the survey did not use random sampling which means that we cannot provide statistically precise margins of error or significance testing as the sampling type is non-probability. The margins of error outlined should therefore be treated as indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample.

Analysis and reporting

This report outlines the 2020 survey findings for the Scotland sample, providing analysis by industry sector (with a focus on the core sectors noted earlier, where larger sample sizes allow sub-group analysis) and business size.

Reporting conventions

Throughout this report, differences between sub-groups, such as size of business and industry sector, have been noted. Due to small base sizes for industry sector, not all differences are statistically significant to the 95% confidence level and should, therefore, be treated as indicative.

Standard notation is used in tables with '*' used to indicate results of less than 1% and '-' used to indicate no respondents gave a particular answer. For ease of reading the results, '1%' and '2%' notations have been left off some of the charts.

For questions using ratings scales, mean scores have been calculated as follows:

- Usefulness: scored from 1 (of no use) to 4 (very useful) or from 1 (not at all useful) to 4 (very useful), depending on the question wording
- Likelihood: scored from 1 (very unlikely) to 4 (very likely)
- Satisfaction: scored from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied).

Where such mean scores are presented, these exclude all 'don't know / not applicable' responses.

Research findings

Measures to address environmental issues

Measures taken to prevent or reduce harm to the environment

Respondents were asked what, if any, practical measures their business had ever introduced aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment. Interviewers first coded respondents’ spontaneous, top of mind responses and then prompted them with a list of measures. Across the sample as a whole, 77% spontaneously mentioned at least one measure their business had implemented. However, when prompted with a list of possible measures, this figure rose to 94% overall.

As illustrated by Table 2, there was some variation in responses across core industry sectors and by business size. The smallest organisations were least likely to report implementing any of these measures spontaneously. The Hotels and Restaurants sector was most likely to spontaneously cite any actions taken to reduce harm to the environment.

Table 2: Whether companies reported introducing practical measures aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment (spontaneous and all responses) (Q13, Q14)

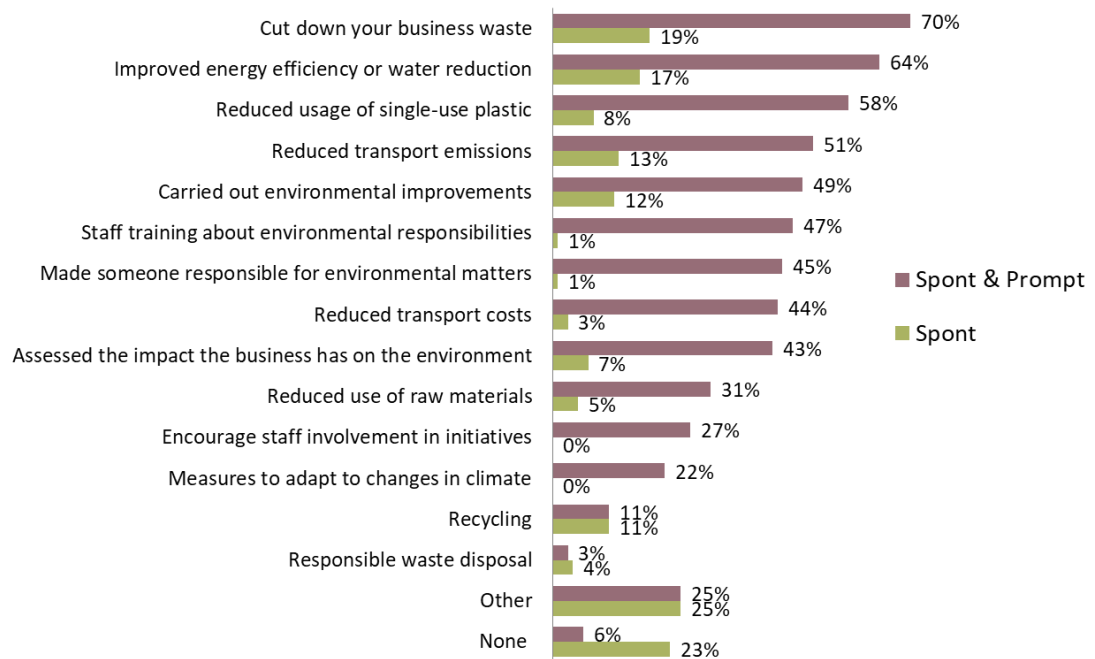
Business size	Proportion taking at least 1 action		Base	
	Spontaneous	Spont & prompt	Spontaneous ¹	Spont & prompt
<10	73%	93%	245	259
10-49	83%	96%	122	137
50+	84%	98%	44	50
Core sector				
Agriculture	74%	96%	68	76
Construction	71%	96%	58	63
Healthcare	81%	95%	53	54
Hotels & Restaurants	87%	97%	60	65
Transport	71%	91%	58	64
Sample average	77%	94%	411	447

Note 1: Q13 was not included in the Online Survey, hence the lower base for this question

Figure 1 shows the detailed responses to this question; as can be seen here, the most common spontaneous responses were cutting down on business waste (mentioned by 19%), improved energy efficiency (17%), reduced transport emissions (13%) and carrying out environmental improvements (12%). Most other options were spontaneously mentioned by relatively few respondents.

However, upon prompting with the list of practical measures, a significantly higher proportion reported undertaking all of these activities. The majority reported cutting down on business waste (mentioned by 70%), and improved energy efficiency or water efficiency (64%), as well as measures such as reducing use of single use plastics (58%). While a quarter (23%) of respondents initially said they had not introduced any practical measures to reduce their impact on the environment, when prompted with the list of possible measures this fell to 6%.

Figure 1: Practical measures introduced aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment (spontaneous and prompted) (Q13, Q14)



Base (all): Spont (Q13)=411, Prompt (Q14)=447

‘Other’ responses were given by 103 respondents spontaneously; examples of the initiatives raised were:

- Reduce waste / waste management (16)
- Slurry storage and management (12)
- Renewable energy / reduced energy use (12)
- Use more environmental equipment / materials (12)
- Water waste management (8)

Respondents from the largest organisations (50+ employees) were most likely to report undertaking nearly all of these measures.

As detailed in Table 3, there was also variation in responses across the core industry sectors. For example, Hotels and Restaurants were the most likely to have undertaken a range of measures, including reducing single use plastics (87%), making energy efficiency or water reduction improvements (84%) and cutting down business waste (81%). Transport companies were the most likely to mention reducing transport emissions (77%). Agricultural companies were most likely to mention assessing business impact on the environment (57%), carrying out environmental improvements (61%) and measures to adapt to climate change (45%).

Table 3: Practical measures undertaken by core industry sector (Q13, Q14)

Practical measures to protect / reduce harm (spontaneous and prompted)	Agriculture	Construction	Healthcare	Hotels & Restaurants	Transport
Assessed impact business has on the environment	57%	45%	33%	44%	33%
Carried out a programme of environmental improvements	61%	44%	46%	49%	40%
Made someone in the company responsible for environmental matters	35%	54%	38%	51%	39%
Made any energy efficiency or water reduction improvements	71%	64%	60%	84%	43%
Cut down business waste	71%	66%	71%	81%	43%
Reduced use of single use plastics	57%	45%	53%	87%	42%
Reduced transport emissions	47%	59%	35%	42%	77%
Reduced transport costs	40%	55%	34%	36%	56%
Reduced use of raw materials	36%	40%	33%	26%	19%
Staff training on environmental responsibilities	41%	51%	50%	61%	34%
Encourage staff involvement in environment initiatives	14%	25%	28%	38%	18%
Measures to adapt to climate change	45%	19%	24%	24%	5%
Other environmental activity	33%	28%	28%	23%	20%
None of these / nothing	4%	4%	5%	3%	9%
Base	76	63	54	65	64

Circular economy

Respondents were asked if they had heard of the circular economy. As shown on Figure 2 below, a quarter (25%) were aware of the term, while three-quarters were not. Larger businesses were significantly more likely to have heard of it. There were also differences across the sectors, with Healthcare (at 12%) and Transport (at 16%) significantly less likely than Agriculture (at 30%) to have heard the term.

That said, almost all respondents are either currently undertaking activities or are in the process of adopting activities consistent with the circular economy principles. In particular 88% are repairing items with a view to extending lifespan, and 70% are recycling/reusing items. Over half (57%) are moving to redesign processes or products so as to reduce waste. Notably, as yet, far fewer – 10% of respondents – are using waste heat.

Size of business does not impact of the likelihood of adopting these activities, but there are variations between sectors. Agriculture, Construction and Hotels and Restaurants businesses are more likely to be adopting these activities. Both Healthcare and Transport are performing less well than some of the other sectors with respect to re-use and repair; this may reflect the nature of their businesses (the use of PPE and sterile equipment; and the need to maintain a vehicle stock that meets ever-increasing

standards). Therefore, there may be a greater emphasis on process and product redesign within these sectors.

Figure 2: Aware of the Circular Economy (Q15)

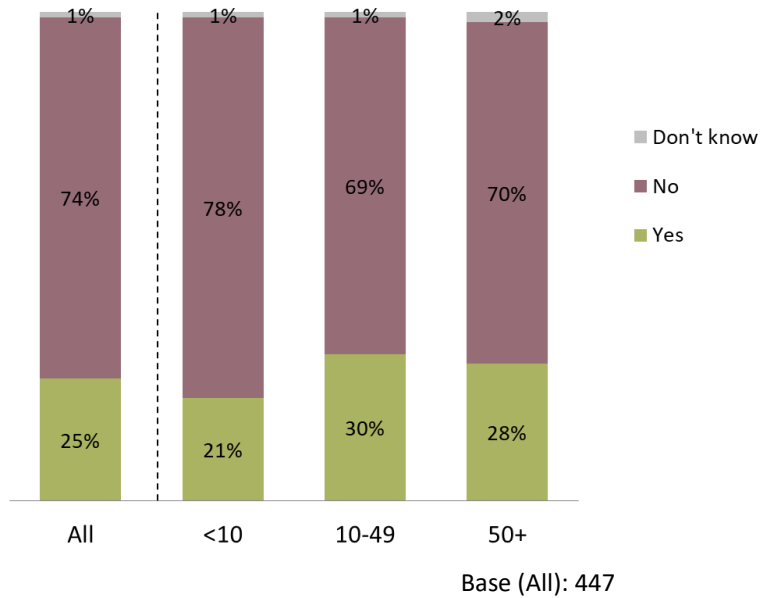


Table 4: Adopted elements of the Circular Economy (Q16)

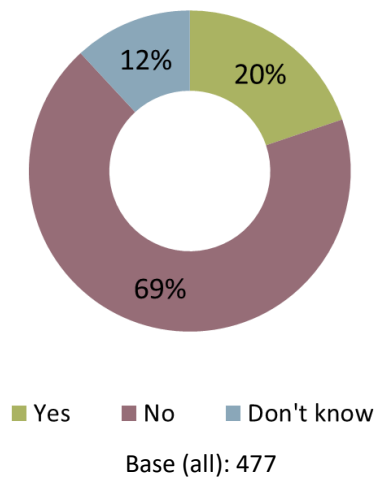
Adopted elements of the Circular Economy	Full sample	Agriculture	Construction	Healthcare	Hotels & Restaurants	Transport
Repair items to extend their life	88%	95%	92%	83%	91%	81%
Reuse materials or use pre-used goods instead of brand new ones	70%	74%	84%	55%	67%	60%
Redesign processes or products to reduce waste	57%	65%	60%	55%	70%	34%
Use waste heat	10%	22%	14%	9%	9%	-
Base (all)	447	76	63	54	65	64

Implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS) or Environmental Policy

Adoption of an Environmental Management System

Across the sample as a whole, 20% said their company had an Environmental Management System such as an ISO 14001, BS 8555 or Green ticks standard (see Figure 3). Twelve per cent said they did not know, but most (69%) said they did not have an EMS.

Figure 3: Whether companies have implemented an Environmental Management System (Q9)



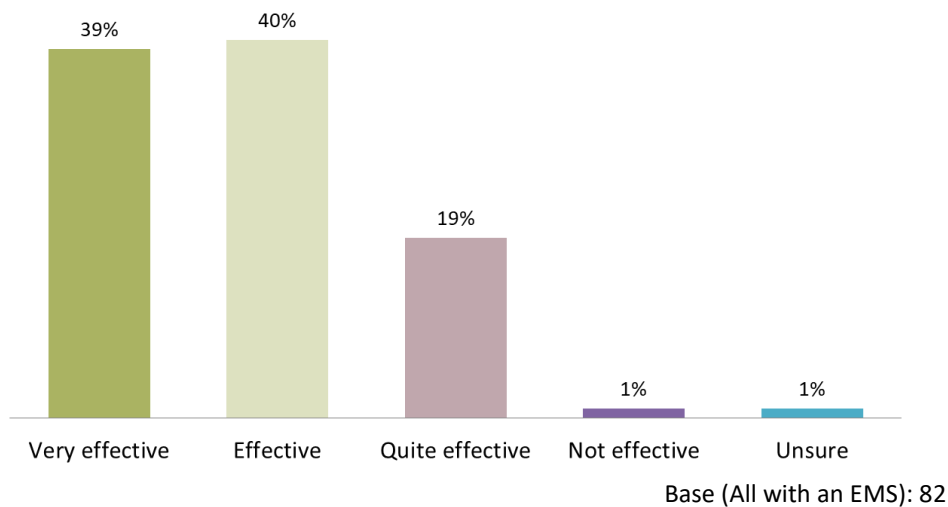
The proportion of companies with an EMS varied in relation to business size and core industry sector, as outlined in Table 5. Those with fewer than 10 employees were least likely to have an EMS (12%), compared to two-fifths of those with 50+ employees (42%). Respondents working in the Construction industry were more likely to report having an EMS (31%) than those working within other sectors.

Table 5: Whether companies had an EMS by business size and core industry sector (Q9)

Business size	Proportion with an EMS	Base
<10	12%	259
10-49	20%	137
50+	42%	50
Core sector		
Agriculture	18%	76
Construction	31%	63
Healthcare	15%	54
Hotels & Restaurants	16%	65
Transport	19%	64
Sample average	20%	447

As shown on Figure 4 over, four-fifths (79%) of those with an EMS considered it very effective/effective. There were no significant differences by size of businesses, or between the core sectors. Around a fifth (19%) considered the EMS to be quite effective; just one business said it was not effective.

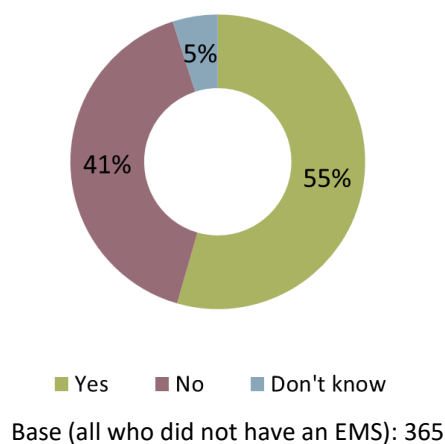
Figure 4: Effectiveness of the EMS (Q10)



Adoption of an Environmental Policy

Those who did not have an EMS in place were asked if they had an Environmental Policy and around half (55%) said yes (see Figure 5). Medium sized (70%) and larger (69%) organisations were more likely to have an environmental policy than smaller organisations (44%). In terms of industry sector, those in Healthcare (71%) and Hotels and Restaurants (64%) were the most likely to have such a policy.

Figure 5: Whether companies without an EMS have an environmental policy (Q11)



Taking these two questions together (as shown in Table 6), almost two thirds (64%) of the sample overall had either an EMS or an environmental policy in place. Again, there was variation between businesses in terms of size and sector in relation to having this kind of policy in place. As shown in Table 6, the medium sized (76%) and larger (82%) organisations were more likely to have an EMS or environmental policy, than smaller organisations with less than 10 employees (51%). Transport businesses were the least likely to have an EMS or environmental policy (45%).

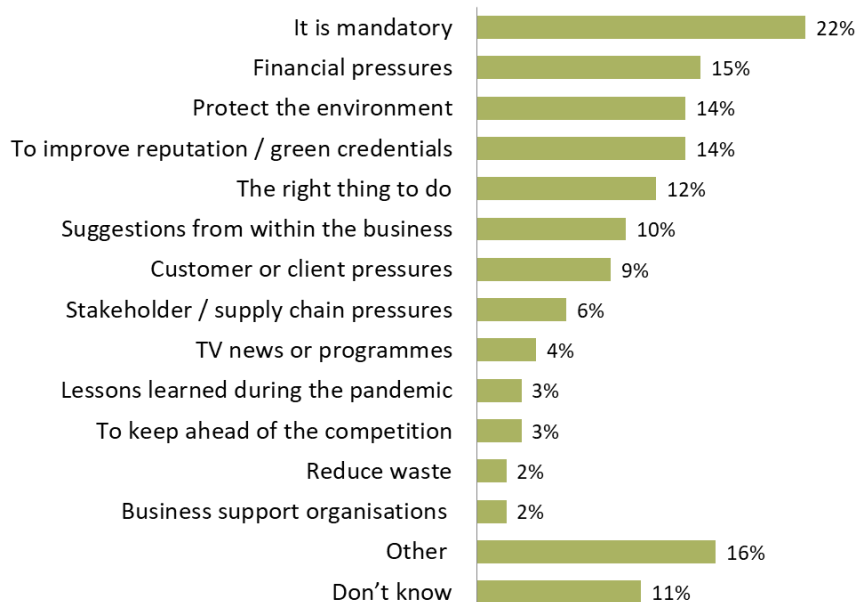
Table 6: Whether companies had an EMS/environmental policy by business size and core industry sector (Q9, Q11)

Business size	Proportion with environmental policy	Base
<10	51%	259
10-49	76%	137
50+	82%	50
Core sector		
Agriculture	58%	76
Construction	65%	63
Healthcare	76%	54
Hotels & Restaurants	70%	65
Transport	45%	64
Sample average	64%	447

What prompted improvements to environmental performance

Respondents who had mentioned taking any actions to improve their environmental performance, or who had an EMS or environmental policy in place, were asked what had prompted them to take these steps. As illustrated in Figure 6, compliance with a mandatory requirement was the top reason given for taking action (mentioned by 22%). Financial pressures (15%), protecting the environment (14%) and improving their reputation / green credentials (14%) were the next most common reasons for taking steps to improve environmental performance.

Figure 6: What prompted respondents to take steps to improve their environmental performance (Q19)



Base (all who had taken at least one action to improve performance, and/or who had an EMS or environmental policy): 442

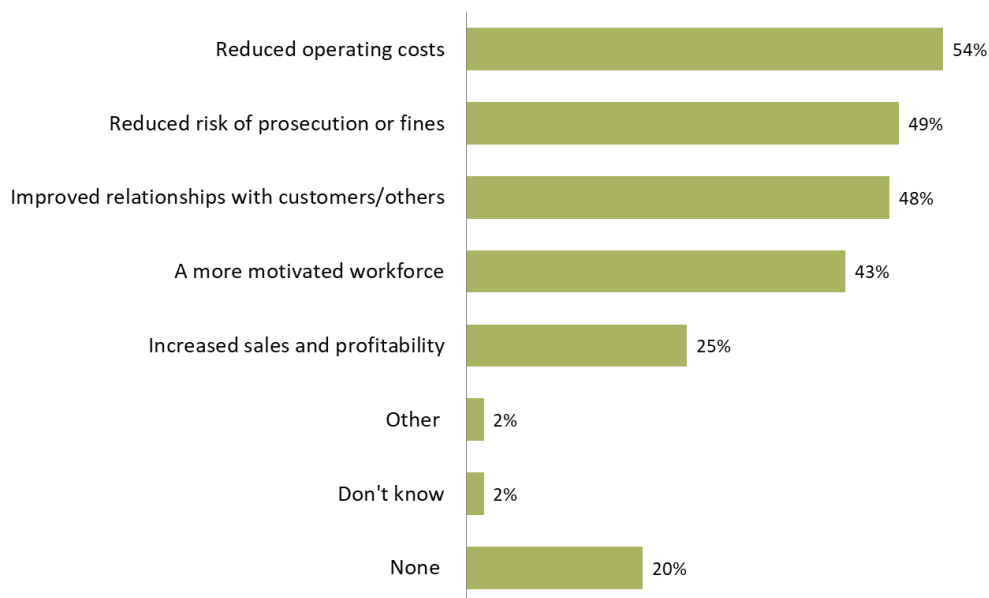
The largest organisations were more likely than the smallest to mention suggestions from within the business (20% of those with 50+ employees v 4% of those with <10 employees), to improve green credentials (22% v 10%), customer or client requests or pressures (18% v 4%), and supplier pressures (16% v 3%).

There were very few differences in responses to this question in relation to the core industry sectors, with the exception of Hotels and Restaurants being less likely than others to say they were prompted by legislation (14%).

Benefits of making environmental improvements

These respondents were also asked whether their business had benefited as a result of taking steps to improve environmental performance. The most commonly reported benefits were reduced operating costs, and reduced risk of prosecution or fines (both mentioned by around half the sample – 54% and 49% respectively) – see Figure 7.

Figure 7: Benefits to the business of environmental improvements (Q18)



Base (all who had taken at least one action to improve performance, and/or who had an EMS or environmental policy): 442

The likelihood of reporting each of these benefits increased with the size of the business, with the largest organisations tending to report the greatest benefits. Larger businesses (more than 10 employees) were more likely to report benefits from reduced operating costs (60% of 10-50 employees and 65% of 50+ employees v 48% of <10 employees), and improved relationships with customers/others (55%/58% v 42%).

Among the core industry sectors, the following patterns emerged:

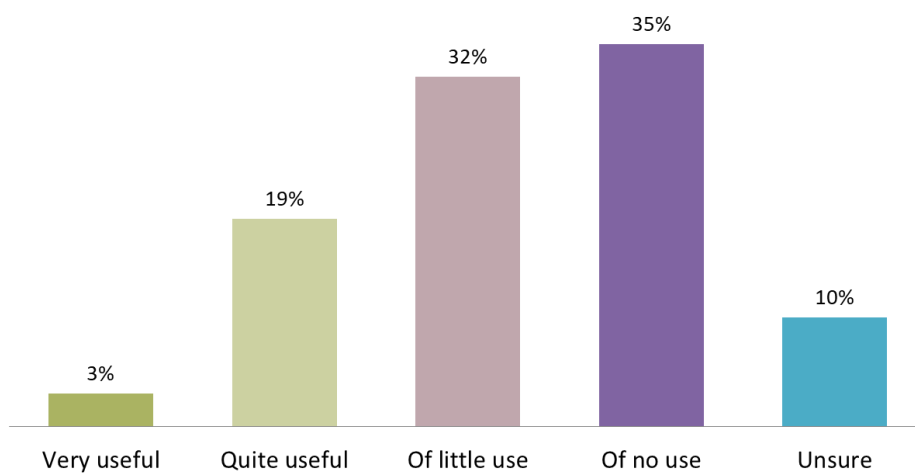
- Hotels and Restaurants (71%) were most likely of all the core sectors to report reduced operating costs
- Hotels and Restaurants (37%) and Agricultural businesses (34%) were most likely to mention increased sales and profitability
- Businesses from the Construction sector (65%) and Hotels and Restaurants (61%) were most likely to report improved relationships with customers/others

- Businesses from the Healthcare sector (26%) were least likely to report reduced risk of prosecution or fines
- Hotels and Restaurants (58%) were most likely to mention a more motivated workforce

Perceived usefulness of an EMS or Environmental Policy

The survey also asked those **who did not** have an EMS or environmental policy how useful they felt such a policy would be. The majority did not feel this would be useful (67% overall said it would be of no use or of little use). Only 22% felt it would be quite or very useful, while 10% said they did not know (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: How useful an EMS or environmental policy would be (Q12)



Base (all **without** an EMS or environmental policy): 164

Since two-thirds (69%) of the largest organisations already had a policy in place, the base size for this question among businesses of 50+ employees was small. However, there was a difference in responses between the small and medium-sized organisations in relation to perceived usefulness of an EMS or environmental policy, with 46% of those with 10-49 employees saying they thought this would be very or quite useful, compared to only 18% of the small (<10 employees) businesses.

Reasons for not taking measures to reduce harm to the environment

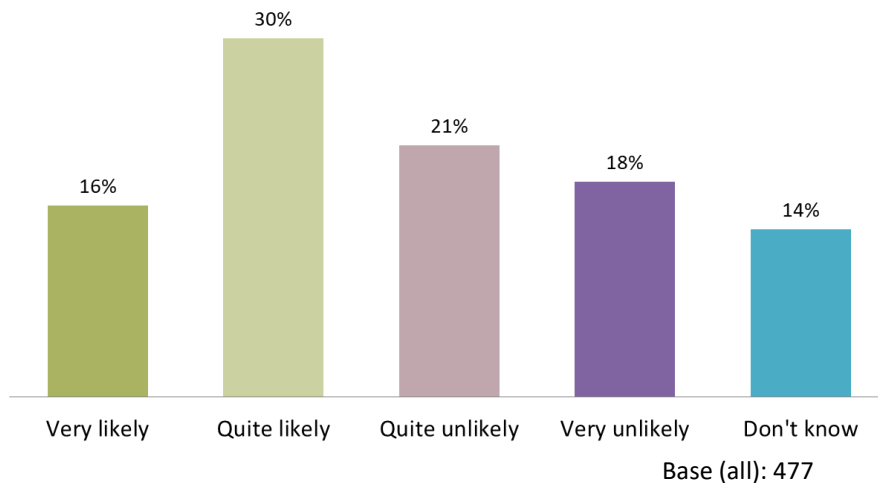
Just five businesses had not taken any measures to prevent or reduce harm to the environment – that is, they did not have an environment system or policy in place, they had not taken any actions to prevent or reduce environmental harm from their business, and they had not taken any circular economy actions. These businesses were asked what had prevented them from taking measures to reduce harm to the environment. Their responses were:

- Never thought about it: 2
- It is too expensive: 1
- Don't have time: 1
- Already have enough to do: 1
- Don't do anything that harms the environment: 1
- Don't know: 1

Likelihood to invest in environmental performance

All respondents were asked how likely they were to invest money in improving their environmental performance over the next 12 months. Almost half (47%) reported that they were very or quite likely to invest, while 40% said they were quite or very unlikely to do this, and 14% said they did not know (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Likelihood to invest in environmental performance in the next 12 months (Q20)

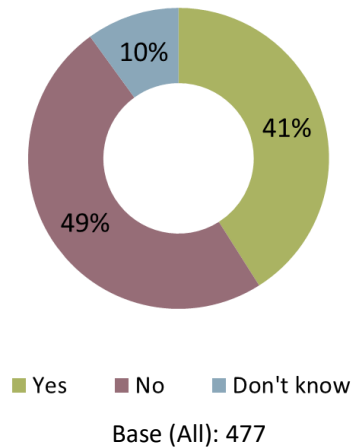


There was a clear pattern in responses to this question based on the size of the organisation, the smallest organisations being least likely to anticipate investment in their environmental performance (40% said it was very or quite likely) compared to the medium sized firms (52% of those with 10-49 employees) and the largest organisations (57% of those with 50+ employees).

The Hotels and Restaurants sector was found to be the most likely to consider investing in improving their environmental performance over the next 12 months. In total, 59% of respondents within this sector considered such investment to be very or quite likely.

Respondents were asked specifically whether their business had thought about the steps they would need to take to achieve the Scottish Government's target of Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2045. Two-fifths (41%) reported that they had, while 49% said they had not, and 10% said they did not know (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Has business thought about steps needed to achieve Net Zero Carbon emissions target by 2045 (Q24)



A quarter (23%) of large organisation (50+ employees) said they don't know, significantly more than other businesses (7% to 9%).

Businesses in the Transport (55%) and Agricultural (53%) sectors were more likely than those in other sectors to say they have been thinking about Net Zero. Businesses in Construction (66%) were most likely to say they have **not** been thinking about it.

Awareness of the environment and legislation

Activities that may harm the environment

Respondents were asked what activities, if any, their organisation undertakes which could be regarded harmful to the environment. Across the whole sample, 49% spontaneously mentioned at least one activity their business did which could be regarded as harmful to the environment, although this rose to 94% when prompted with a list of potentially harmful activities.

There was some variation in responses across core industry sectors and by business size, as outlined in Table 7. As shown here, the smallest organisations were least likely to report undertaking harmful activities (46% spontaneous; 90% when prompted).

Transport (65%) and Construction (64%) businesses were most likely to spontaneously mention such activities. When prompted, similarly high proportions of businesses in all sectors mentioned harmful activities.

Table 7: Whether businesses reported undertaking harmful activities by business size and core industry sector (spontaneous and all responses) (Q7, Q8)

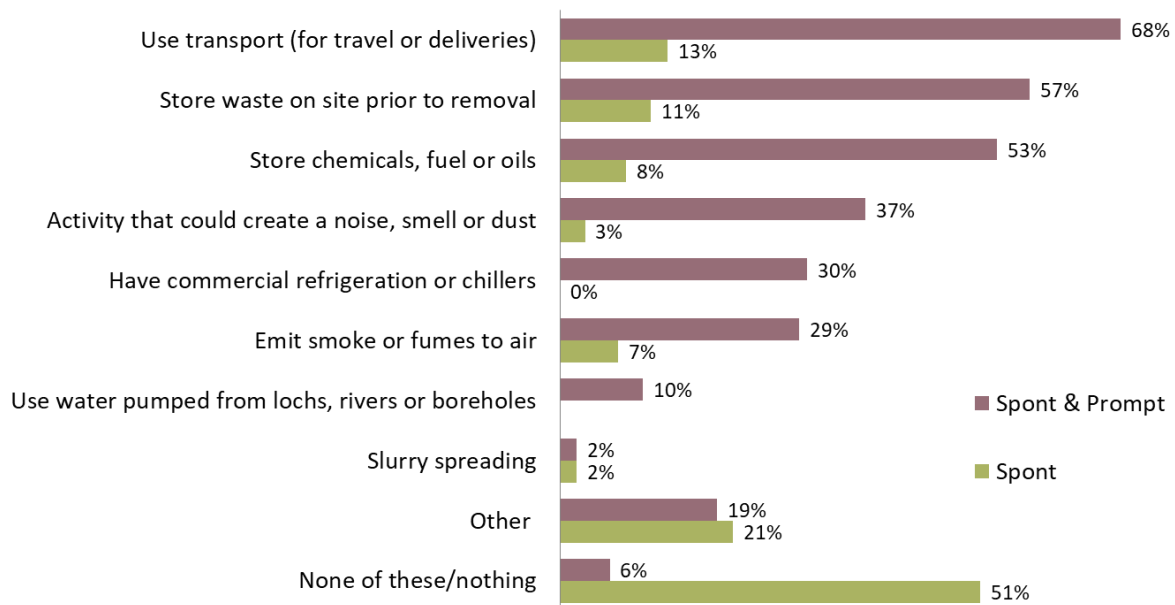
Business size	Proportion undertaking at least 1 harmful activity		Base	
	Spontaneous	Spont & prompt	Spontaneous*	Spont & prompt
<10	46%	90%	245	259
10-49	58%	98%	122	137
50+	43%	98%	44	50
Core sector				
Agriculture	56%	96%	68	76
Construction	64%	94%	58	63
Healthcare	45%	92%	53	54
Hotels & Restaurants	32%	96%	60	65
Transport	65%	100%	58	64
Sample average	49%	94%	411	447

* Note Q7 was not included in the Online Survey, hence the lower base for this question

Figure 11 shows the detailed responses to this question. Around half (51%) said ‘none’ when asked for a spontaneous response. The most common activity mentioned spontaneously was using transport for travel or deliveries, mentioned by 13%.

However, when prompted with the list, a substantially higher proportion mentioned each of these harmful activities. Taking the spontaneous and prompted responses together, 68% mentioned transport, 57% said they store waste on site prior to removal, 53% store chemicals, fuels or oils, and 37% reported undertaking an activity that could create noise, smell or dust. Six percent reported doing none of the activities on the prompted list.

Figure 11: Activities undertaken which could be regarded as harmful to the environment (spontaneous and prompted) (Q7, Q8)



Base (all): 447

Among the 85 respondents who spontaneously mentioned an ‘other’ activity that may harm the environment, the types of issues raised were:

- Waste/ clinical waste / hazardous materials
- Electricity overuse/heating
- Water disposal / contamination
- Use carbon fuels / fuel spillages
- Use of chemicals/pesticides
- Packaging and plastics / non-recyclable materials

Taking spontaneous and prompted responses together, the smallest organisations were the least likely to report storing waste on site prior to removal (45% <10 said they did this, v 71% of 10-49 and 70% of 50+), or have commercial refrigeration or chillers (20%, v 40% and 44%); while the largest organisations were most likely to report storing chemicals, fuel or oils (76%, compared to 43% of <10 and 57% of 10-49). The smallest organisations were also the most likely to say they did ‘none of these’ (10% <10, v 2% 10-49 and 2% 50+).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the activities undertaken varied by industry sector. Among the core industry sectors, the following patterns emerged:

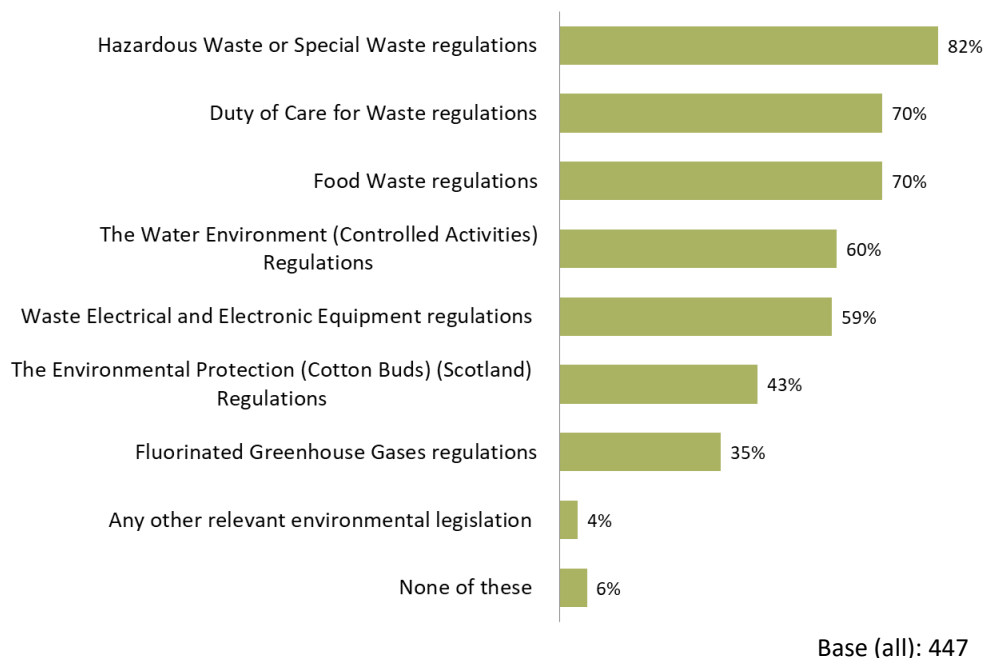
- The sector most likely to store waste on site prior to removal was Hotels and Restaurants (76%)
- Hotels and Restaurants (86%) was also the most likely sector to use have commercial refrigeration or chillers
- Transport companies (91%) were the most likely to use transport for travel or deliveries, followed by Construction (80%)

- Agriculture businesses (82%) were the most likely to report storing chemicals, fuels or oils; while Construction (75%) and Agriculture (69%) were most likely to carry out activities that create noise, smell or dust.

Awareness of environmental regulation and legislation

The survey also addressed awareness of relevant legislation; respondents were therefore asked which of the following environmental regulations / legislation they had heard of. Awareness was highest for the Hazardous Waste regulation (82%), Duty of Care for Waste regulations (70%), and the Food Waste regulations (70%). The only regulations that less than half of the sample had heard of were the Environmental Protection (Cotton Buds) regulations, with 43% recognition, and the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases regulations, with 35% recognition. Less than one in ten (6%) said they had not heard of any of the listed regulations.

Figure 12: Environmental regulation or legislation respondents had heard of (Q5)



There was a very clear pattern in responses across business size for this question, with the largest organisations being the most aware of the regulations / legislation.

Among the core industry sectors:

- Transport businesses were least likely to be aware of the regulations – with 13% of businesses saying they knew none of the listed regulations
- Agriculture businesses (74%) and Construction businesses (72%) were most likely to have heard of the CAR regulations
- Hotels and Restaurants (82%) and Healthcare (76%) were most likely to be aware of the Food Waste Regulations; and
- Healthcare (92%) were most likely to be aware of the Hazardous Waste Regulations

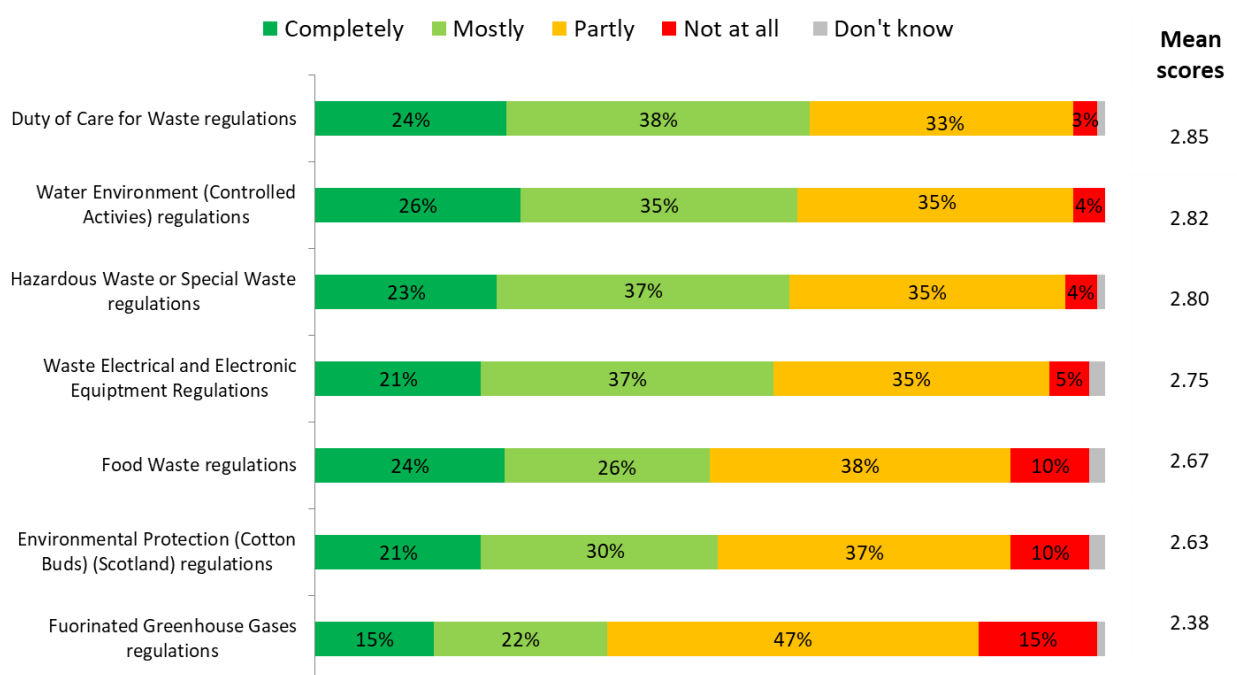
Those who were aware of each type of regulation were asked to what extent they understood the regulations. Figure 13 below summarises the responses. It shows that on the whole businesses have at least a partial understanding of the regulations, but only around a quarter feel they fully understand them. This falls to around 15% who feel they fully understand the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases regulations.

There was a very clear pattern in responses across business size for this question, with the largest organisations being the most likely to completely/mostly understand the regulations, especially with respect to Food Waste regulations, and the Hazardous or Special Waste regulations

There were some differences across the core sectors:

- Hotels and Restaurants (82%) and Healthcare (67%) were the most likely to completely/mostly understand the Food Waste regulations.
- Hotels and Restaurants were the most likely to completely/mostly understand the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) regulations (74%).
- Healthcare organisations were most likely to completely/mostly understand Hazardous or Special Waste regulations (80%).

Figure 13: Understanding of regulations (Q6)

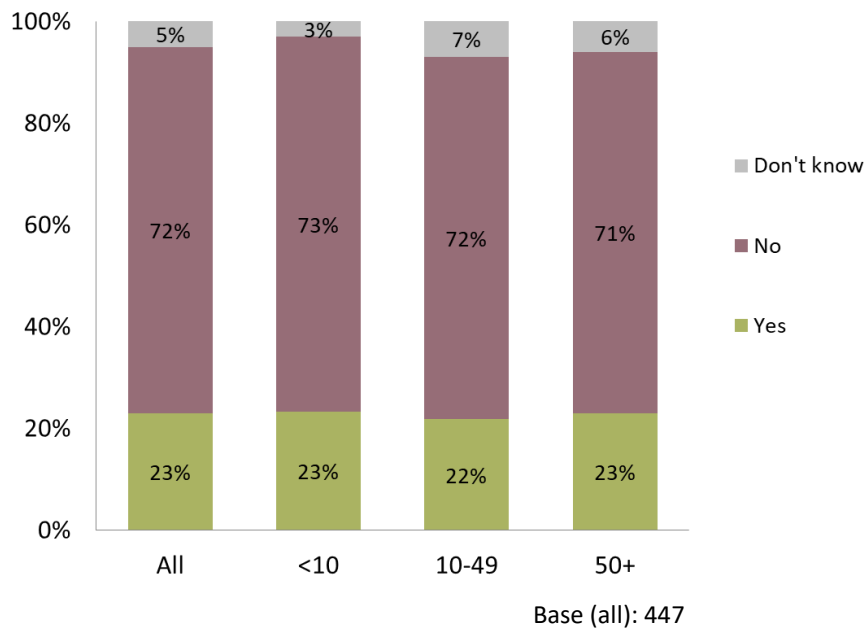


Base (Those who had heard of each type of legislation): 153-363

Permits, licences and exemptions

All respondents were asked whether their business requires a permit, licence or exemption from SEPA in order to carry out its activities. Overall, 23% confirmed that this is a requirement (see Figure 14). As the figure illustrates, there were no significant differences by size of organisation.

Figure 14: Whether respondents' companies need a permit, licence or exemption from SEPA (Q4)



Among the core industry sectors, Construction (41%) and Agriculture (35%) businesses were most likely to report needing a permit.

Sources of information, advice and support

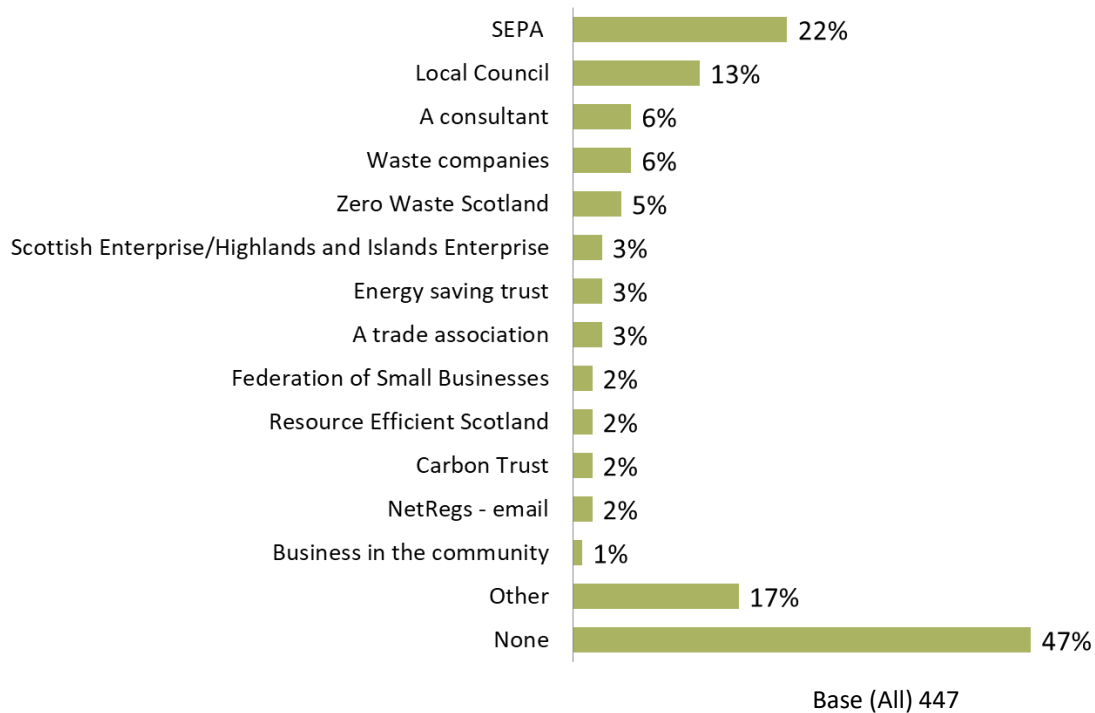
Contact with business support organisations

Respondents were asked which organisations they had contacted to discuss environmental issues. Overall 53% said that they had contacted an organisation about an environmental issue (see Figure 15). The largest organisations were most likely to have sought support (70% of businesses with 50+ employees, compared to 52% of medium sized businesses and 48% of the small businesses).

Within the core sectors, Agriculture (65%) and Construction (61%) businesses were most likely to have sought support, while Healthcare (45%) and Transport (42%) were least likely.

The most commonly mentioned organisations which businesses had gone to for support were SEPA (22% of the total sample), followed by the local council (13%). A proportion of respondents (17%) also mentioned other support organisations not listed, although there was no consistent pattern to emerge in this data. Instead a wide range of specific organisations were named. A full list has been provided separately.

Figure 15: Business support organisations contacted (Q21)



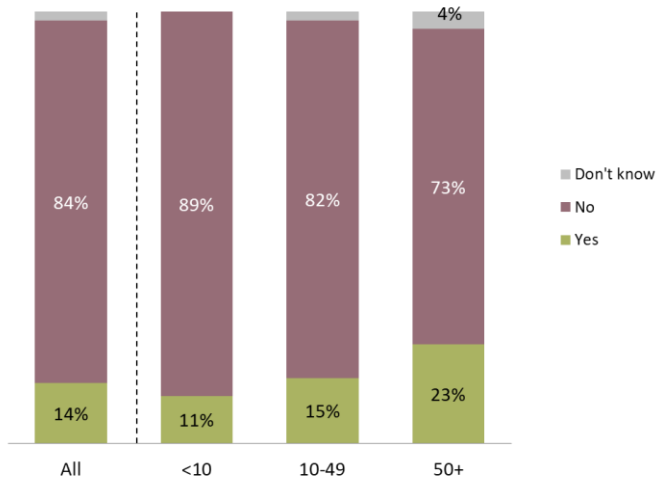
Larger businesses were more likely than small businesses to contact SEPA (28% v 17% 10-49), the Energy Savings Trust (10% v 3% 10-49 and 0% <10), to use a consultant (10% v 3% <10) and the Carbon Trust (8% v 0% <10). Medium sized businesses were more likely than small businesses to take advice from Zero Waste Scotland (9% v 2% <10) and SE/HIE (6% v 1% <10).

Awareness and use of NetRegs

Awareness of NetRegs

A number of questions were asked specifically about the NetRegs website. First, respondents were asked whether they had heard of the NetRegs website. As shown in Figure 16, the majority (84%) were not aware of NetRegs, although awareness was higher among the larger organisations (23% had heard of it, compared to 11% among the smallest companies).

Figure 16: Whether respondents had heard of the NetRegs website (Q25)



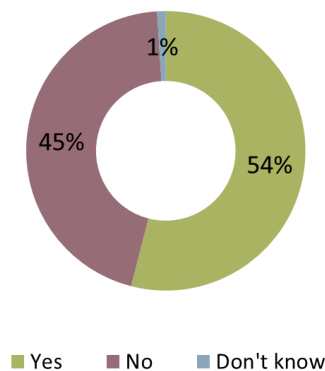
Base (all): 447

Among the core industry sectors, respondents from Construction businesses were most likely to say they had heard of NetRegs (29%). Businesses from the Hotels and Restaurants (6%) and Transport (6%) sectors were least likely to be aware of NetRegs

Use of NetRegs

Those who had heard of NetRegs were asked if they had ever used the website, and just over half (54%) said that they had done so. This equates to 8% of the total sample of 447 respondents who had used the NetRegs website (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: Whether respondents had used the NetRegs website (Q27)

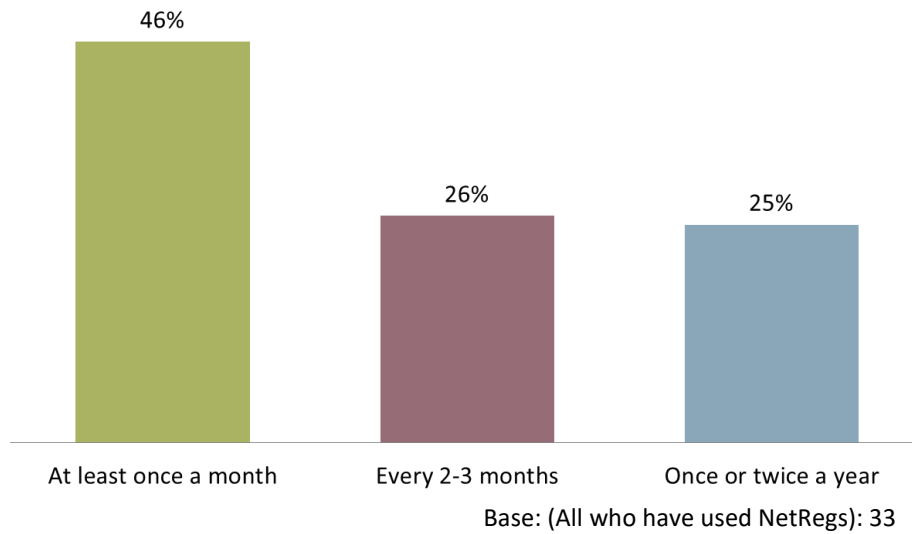


Base (All who had heard of NetRegs): 62

Those who have used NetRegs were asked some questions about their use and experience of the site. It is stressed that the only 33 businesses were eligible to respond to these questions so the base for analysis is very small.

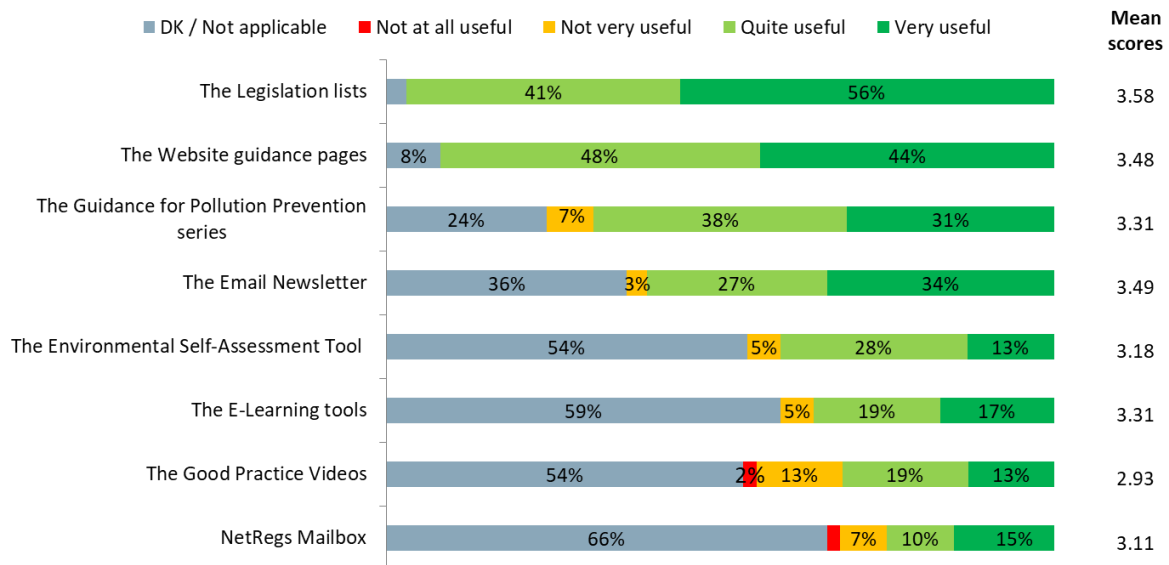
Around half of those using NetRegs visit the site at least once a month, while a quarter are fairly infrequent visitors, using the site just once or twice a year (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Frequency of using NetRegs (Q29)



As Figure 19 shows, the features of the NetRegs site that most visitors find useful are the Legislation lists (97% find this very or quite useful); the Website Guidance pages (92%), the GPP series (69%), and the email newsletter (61%).

Figure 19: Usefulness of aspects of NetRegs (Q28)



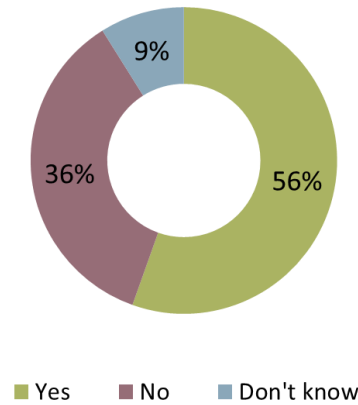
Base (all who had used NetRegs): 33

Amongst those who use the NetRegs website, usage increased during the pandemic for 15% of businesses (5 respondents). Respondents indicated they were spending more time on the site during the pandemic on the website guidance pages (3 respondents), the legislations lists (3 respondents) and the good practice videos (1 respondent).

Benefits of NetRegs

All those who used NetRegs were asked if the use of NetRegs had led to their company becoming more resource efficient. As shown on Figure 20, nearly three fifths (56%) said it has had a positive impact, while a third (36%) said it has not.

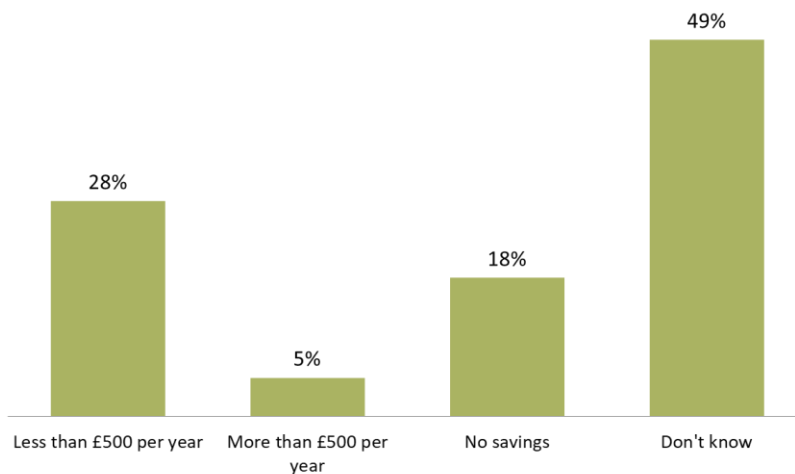
Figure 20: Whether use of NetRegs has led to resource efficiencies (Q33)



Base (All who have used NetRegs) = 33

All businesses using NetRegs were asked if they could provide an estimate of any savings made by using the site (Figure 21); for example, by avoiding fines, remediation costs and consultancy fees; efficiency savings; and from supporting the organisation’s environmental management system. Six firms said they could attribute no savings to using the site, while ten made savings of up to £500 a year, and two made savings in excess of £500 a year.

Figure 21: Estimate of savings generated using NetRegs (Q34)



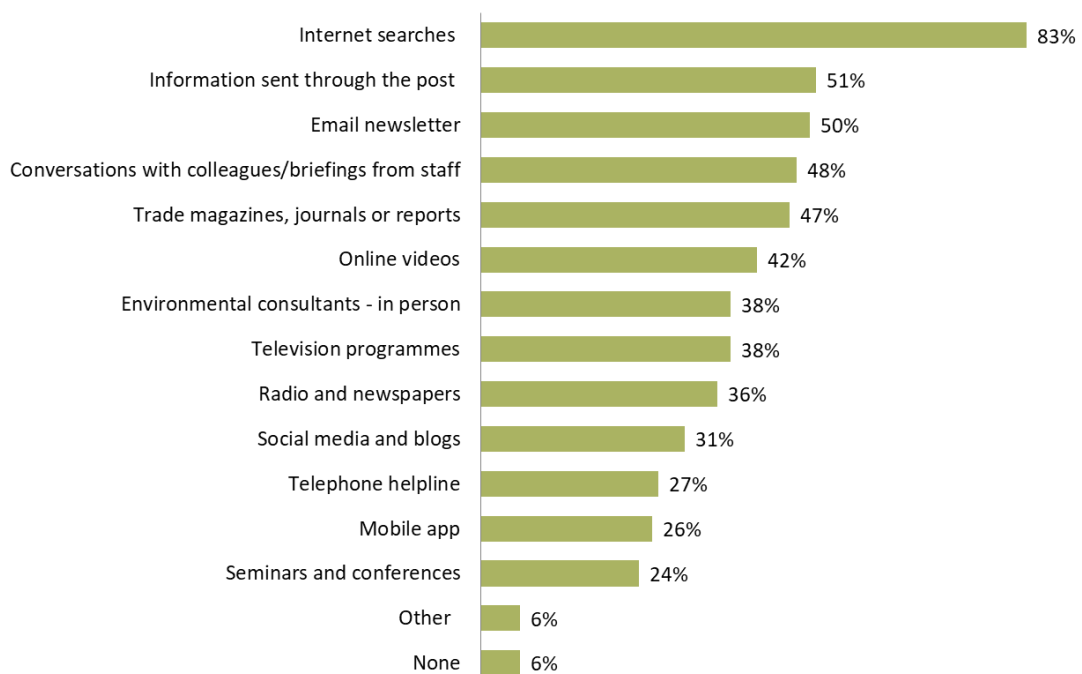
Base (All who have used NetRegs) = 33

Information sources

Finally, the survey focused on information sources that respondents were likely to use to find out about environmental issues relating to their business.

As shown in Figure 22, the most commonly mentioned information source was internet searches – in total 83% identified the internet as something they would use. The other main sources of information used were information sent through the post, such as information from SEPA and other organisations (used by 51% of businesses); email newsletters (50%); conversations with colleagues and briefings from subject experts (48%); and trade magazines, journals and industry reports (47%). Very few respondents identified sources of information not suggested on the survey list (6%), and only a small proportion (6%) stated they would not use any information sources at all.

Figure 22: Information sources likely to use for environmental information related to business (Q22)



Base (all): 447

There were some sub-group differences in response to this question, including:

- Medium and large businesses were more likely than small businesses to mention using consultants (44% of those with 10-49 employees and 46% with 50+ employees v 32% of businesses with <10 employees); seminars and conferences (29% 10-49 and 34% 50+ v 18% <10); and conversations with colleagues (56% 10-49 and 59% 50+ v 41% <10).
- Hotels and Restaurants and Healthcare businesses were more likely to mention social media and blogs (Hotels/restaurants 48%; Healthcare 40%) and TV programmes (Hotels/restaurants 55%; Healthcare 50%)
- Agriculture businesses (70%) were more likely to mention trade magazines, journals and industry reports
- Transport businesses (24%) were least likely to mention using visits to/from consultants

Summary and conclusions

Summary of key findings

The majority of businesses that participated in the research reported that their organisation undertakes activities that could be harmful to the environment (94%). However, for many awareness of such activities was not top of mind - only 49% were able to state without prompting any activities they their company did which could potentially be environmentally damaging. It is encouraging, however, that the vast majority of SME businesses in Scotland (94%) have taken at least some action to reduce potential harm to the environment. The most common measures implemented were cutting down on waste, improved energy efficiency or water reduction and reduced usage of single use plastic.

In total, 20% of respondents said their company had an Environmental Management System, such as an ISO 14001, BS 8555 or Green Ticks standard, while 55% of those who did not have an EMS reported having an environmental policy.

The most common reasons given for taking steps to improve environmental performance were to comply with legislation, financial pressures, to protect the environment and to improve the business's reputation and green credentials.

Only around two-fifths (41%) of businesses have started to think about the steps that they will need to take in response to the Scottish Government's target to achieve Net Zero Carbon emissions by 2045. Most (74%) were unaware of the term circular economy, but almost all had adopted elements of the circular economy, typically repairing items to extend their life (88%) or reusing goods or materials (70%).

Given that many businesses are motivated to take environmental harm reduction measures in order to reduce the risk of prosecution, it is also important to understand how aware SME businesses are of relevant environmental legislation. When prompted with a list of regulations and legislation, the majority (94%) recognised at least one, with awareness highest for Hazardous Waste or Special Waste regulations (82%), Duty of Care for Waste regulations (70%) and Food Waste regulations (70%).

As well as investigating the actions that businesses had taken to reduce environmental harm, the research also explored where businesses in Scotland seek advice and support on such issues. Over half of respondents reported that their business had sought support to ensure that they comply with legislation and operate in an environmentally friendly way, most commonly from SEPA or their local council. The survey also explored information sources that respondents were likely to use to find out about environmental issues relating to their business. The most commonly mentioned information source was internet searches. Any action that SEPA can take to ensure a good web presence when searching for relevant terms will help organisations find them as a source of advice.

However, when asked specifically about the NetRegs website, only a minority of respondents (14%) reported that they were aware of it, while around half of these businesses had actually used it (8% of the total sample). The research therefore suggests that there is some considerable scope to raise awareness of the NetRegs website and the benefits it can offer businesses. Those using the site, found the Legislation lists, the Website guidance pages the GPP series particularly useful. Most of those using the site said it helped make their business more efficient.

Conclusions

SME business in Scotland are clearly motivated to ensure that they operate in a way that minimises any harmful impact on the environment. Almost all respondents reported that their business had implemented measures to reduce environmental harm, although motivations to do so were varied. They also understand the business benefits of implementing environmental protection measures, such as reducing operating costs, reducing the risk of prosecution and improved relations with customers. However, there were significant variances in findings by size of company, with larger organisations the most aware of potentially harmful activities and the relevant legislation, and the most likely to have taken steps to reduce their environmental impact. The smallest companies tended to have lower levels of awareness, and were also less likely to perceive value in implementing or investing in measures to reduce environmental impact.

The research, therefore, suggests that the smaller SMEs in Scotland require information and advice on how their operations could potentially harm the environment, and how they could minimise these harms. There is also a need, however, to persuade these organisations of the business benefits and opportunities that investment in such harm reduction measures could bring.

One method which could be used to raise awareness amongst all SME businesses is the NetRegs website. Indeed, the internet is the key source of information on environmental issues. However, the NetRegs site itself is not being widely utilised by SME companies.

The findings therefore provide clear evidence of the potential value of NetRegs, as well as the need for it, especially amongst small SMEs. Promotion of the site, with a focus on smaller SMEs, and including information about the value of engagement in environmental harm reduction measures, will drive visits to the site and potentially lead to improved environmental performance within this sector.

Appendix 1: Comparisons to 2016 and 2009 findings

This appendix details comparisons between the 2009, 2016 and 2020 data for Scotland. These should be read and interpreted in conjunction with the limitations outlined below, and treated as indicative only.

Limitations

2020 survey

There are a number of differences in sampling and questionnaire design in the 2020 survey which should be borne in mind when comparing data to the previous findings.

As was the case in the previous surveys, the sample was designed to ensure that a good spread of SMEs was included in relation to industry sector and business size, with a focus on the core sectors of Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Hotels and Restaurants, and Transport.

The approach adopted with respect to business size was the same as in 2016: slightly higher targets than in previous years for the proportion of larger organisations (50+ employees) and businesses of 250+ employees were not screened out (as in 2016, the number of such businesses was small).

As noted in the method section, the coronavirus restrictions severely impacted on the fieldwork; it was suspended for several months, and then proceeded very slowly once commenced. Measures were taken to improve strikes rates. These included implementing an online boost survey and taking the decision to lift the tight interlocking quotas that had been placed on sector and size. While the target of 500 was not reached, some 447 responses were achieved. The sector profile was broadly in line with targets. However, the proportions falling into each size category *within each of the sectors* was slightly different to the previous surveys. The sample has been weighted to reflect the target sample (and to bring into line with the sample achieved in 2016).

The 2009 survey

The 2009 main survey report was mainly based on overall survey findings covering all countries of the UK, since all four countries were included in the previous research when the Environment Agency in England and Wales were involved in delivering NetRegs. Data for Scotland cannot be compared with the overall data for the UK. A summary report from 2009 was available for Scotland only data, and comparisons have been made to the figures available in this summary document. However, some of the base size descriptions in the tables included in the 2009 Scotland report did not make it clear exactly what figures the percentages are based on or if and how certain questions were filtered. Where there is any doubt about how figures have been calculated this is noted in the commentary.

Questionnaire changes 2016, 2020

Finally, there have been changes to the questionnaire in 2016 and again in 2020 in order to streamline the survey and to provide SEPA with the most useful data to meet their current information needs. This means that some of the questions are not directly comparable across years.

In particular in 2020 new questions were added on:

- Effectiveness of the EMS
- The Circular Economy
- Preparation for Net Zero Carbon Emissions
- The frequency of use of NetRegs, efficiency gains from NetRegs and Financial impacts
- Impact of Covid on the use of NetRegs

A small number of questions were deleted to accommodate additions and slight changes have been made to prompted lists.

This appendix therefore presents comparisons with data from the 2016 and 2009 surveys where either the Scotland data and/or the Scotland data for the core industry sectors is available, and where broadly the same questions were asked. Variations in question wording are noted where relevant.

Measures to address environmental issues

Across the sample as a whole, spontaneously 77% reported introducing at least one practical measure to reduce harm to the environment, the equivalent figure in 2016 was 79% and 55% in 2009., Please note that this question was asked slightly differently in 2009; respondents were asked a yes/no question and then asked which activities they had undertaken, whereas in 2020 and 2016 they were simply asked what activities they had introduced and were given a ‘none of these’ option.

The proportion of SMEs reporting that they have introduced practical measures aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment has remained stable since 2016.

Table 8: Whether companies reported introducing practical measures aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment. Proportion taking at least 1 action (spontaneous) (Q13)

	2009	2009 base	2016	2016 base	2020	2020 base
Agriculture	39%	175	68%	82	74%	68
Construction	39%	182	81%	77	71%	58
Healthcare	52%	184	79%	77	81%	53
Hotels & Restaurants	59%	182	87%	79	87%	60
Transport	34%	181	72%	79	71%	58
Sample average (all sectors)	55%	1,160	79%	500	77%	411

The combined data for both spontaneous and prompted responses also indicates an increase in the proportions of businesses reporting all of the individual measures to protect the environment. This table presents options that were included in all surveys; additional options were included in 2020.

The greatest increases since 2009 were seen in the proportion of businesses reporting carrying out a programme of environmental improvements (17% 2009 and 49% in 2020) and making someone in the company responsible for environmental matters (17% 2009 and 45% in 2020).

Table 9: Practical measures aimed at preventing or reducing harm to the environment (spontaneous and prompted) (Q13/Q14)

Practical measures to protect / reduce harm (spont/ prompt)	2009 ²	2016	2020
Cut down business waste	43%	60%	70%
Made any energy efficiency or water reduction improvements	43%	55%	64%
Carried out a programme of environmental improvements	17%	38%	49%
Made someone in the company responsible for environmental matters	17%	39%	45%
Assessed impact business has on the environment	15%	32%	43%
Base	1,160	500	447

Implementation of an EMS or Environmental Policy

As shown here, the proportion of businesses with an Environmental Management System (EMS) has remained broadly stable since 2016. None of the slight increases/decreases observed on the table since 2016 are statistically significant.

Table 10: Whether companies have an Environmental Management System (Q9)

	2009 ³	2009 base	2016	2016 base	2020	2020 base
Agriculture	7%	175	16%	82	18%	76
Construction	3%	182	39%	77	31%	63
Healthcare	2%	184	13%	77	15%	54
Hotels & Restaurants	3%	182	11%	79	16%	65
Transport	3%	181	22%	79	19%	64
Sample average (all sectors)	unknown		22%	500	20%	447

Amongst those businesses who did not have an EMS, the proportion who reported they had an Environmental Policy has increased since 2016 (from 41% to 55%). The proportion of businesses with an environmental policy in both Healthcare and Hotels and Restaurants has also increased significantly.

Table 11: Whether companies have an Environmental Policy (Q11)

	2016	2016 base	2020	2020 base
Agriculture	43%	69	49%	62
Construction	45%	47	50%	46
Healthcare	46%	67	71%	47
Hotels & Restaurants	40%	70	64%	56
Transport	32%	62	32%	53
Sample average (all sectors)	41%	391	55%	365

² Please note there is some ambiguity about what the 2009 percentages are based on: the total sample size for Scotland was 1,160, although the base description is unclear in the 2009 report. It is assumed these percentages relate to all businesses, not all businesses who reported undertaking at least one practical measure.

³ Note as above

When the data for businesses with an EMS is combined with those who have an environmental policy, a total of 64% had either one of these in 2020/21, which is an increase compared to 2016 (54%). Within sectors, there have been increases in the proportions having these systems/policies in Healthcare and Hotels and Restaurants.

Table 12: Whether companies have an EMS or an Environmental Policy (Q9/Q11)

	2016	2016 base	2020/21	2020/21 base
Agriculture	52%	82	58%	76
Construction	66%	77	65%	63
Healthcare	53%	77	76%	54
Hotels & restaurants	47%	79	70%	65
Transport	47%	79	45%	64
Sample average (all sectors)	54%	500	64%	447

There has been an increase in the proportion of respondents reporting all of the benefits of environmental improvements. The increases relating to improved relationships with customers/others (37% in 2016 and 48% in 2020) and a more motivated workforce (32% in 2016 and 43% in 2020) are statistically significant.

Table 13: Benefits to the business of environmental improvements (Q18)

Benefits to the business of environmental improvements	2009 ⁴	2016	2020
Reduced operating costs	44%	50%	54%
Reduced risk of prosecution or fines	30%	46%	49%
Improved relationships with customers/others	29%	37%	48%
A more motivated workforce	30%	32%	43%
Increased sales and profitability	12%	23%	25%
Base	unknown	470	442

There has been a slight increase since 2016 in the proportion of businesses as a whole and across the core industry sectors, who predict that they were very or quite likely to invest in environmental performance in the next 12 months. However, this increase is not statistically significant. Just under half (47%) expected to invest in environmental improvements in in 2020, compared with 42% in 2016 and 27% in 2009.

There was a slight change in the both the question wording, and related context, in 2020. The question preface noted that Governments are encouraging a green recovery in the wake of the Covid~19 pandemic; an issue clearly not facing businesses in either previous surveys.

⁴ Note as above

Table 14: Proportion who are ‘very likely’ or ‘quite likely’ to invest in environmental performance in the next 12 months (Q20)

	2009	2009 base	2016	2016 base	2020	2020 Base
Agriculture	29%	175	43%	82	49%	76
Construction	14%	182	38%	77	44%	63
Healthcare	17%	184	35%	77	45%	54
Hotels & Restaurants	27%	182	51%	79	59%	65
Transport	22%	181	39%	79	43%	64
Sample average (all sectors)	27%	1,160	42%	500	47%	447

Awareness of the environment and legislation

The proportion of businesses spontaneously reporting that their business undertakes at least one activity that is potentially harmful to the environment remains similar to 2016 (49%). The only significant change is the **decline** in Hotels and restaurant businesses that reported undertaking harmful activities (53% in 2016, 32% in 2020).

Table 15: Whether companies reported undertaking harmful activities by business size and core industry sector (spontaneous) (Q7)

Core sector	2009	2009 base	2016	2016 base	2020	2020 base
Agriculture	2%	175	54%	82	56%	68
Construction	8%	182	52%	77	64%	58
Healthcare	5%	184	43%	77	45%	53
Hotels & Restaurants	2%	182	53%	79	32%	60
Transport	14%	181	63%	79	65%	58
Sample average (all sectors)	5%	1,160	52%	500	49%	411

The table below compares awareness of the legislation / regulations that were included in the various surveys: new regulations were also asked about in the 2020 survey to reflect legislative changes. As can be seen here, awareness continues to increase since 2009, both for some of the individual regulations and for regulations overall, with 94% of businesses now aware of at least one piece of environmental legislation. The increases were significant for all of the individual response options.

Table 16: Environmental regulation or legislation respondents had heard of (Q5)

Legislation / regulations	2009	2016	2020
Hazardous Waste or Special Waste Regulations	22%	38%	82%
Duty of Care Regulations	39%	61%	70%
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations (WEEE Regulations)	17%	51%	59%
Could identify at least one piece of legislation	60%	88%	94%
Base	1,160	500	447

Sources of information, advice and support

Comparisons across years for this question is, at best indicative. In 2016 the question was in two parts, the first asked SMEs if they had been in touch with a business support organisation, the second asked those saying ‘yes’ who they had contacted. In 2009 the question used a prompted list, whereas in the 2016 and 2020 surveys the responses were spontaneous.

Bearing this in mind, it appears that there has been an increase in the proportion of businesses approaching their local council and SEPA for support since 2016 (figures in brackets for 2016 indicate percentages based on the full sample for comparison with 2020).

Table 16: Business support organisations contacted (Q21)

Business support organisations contacted	2009	2016	2020
SEPA	27%	37% (11%)	22%
Local Authority / Local Council	67%	23% (7%)	13%
Waste companies	35%	10% (3%)	6%
Trade or professional organisations / Trade Association	9%	2% (1%)	3%
NetRegs ¹	1%	1% (*)	2%
Other	3%	41% (12%)	17%
Base	563	155 (500)	447

Note 1: The 2009/16 surveys asked about NetRegs website, 2020 survey asked about NetRegs email

Awareness and use of NetRegs

The proportion of SMEs who have heard of, and who have used NetRegs, has remained stable since 2016.

Table 17: Awareness and use of NetRegs (Q25, Q27)

	2009	2016	2020
Aware of NetRegs	4%	13%	14%
Used NetRegs	1% ⁵	7%	8%
Base	1,160	500	447

⁵ Calculated from percentages available, this is an estimate due to likely rounding.

Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

**SEPA
NetRegs Survey
Questionnaire – FINAL – REVISED POST C-19**

Revised – 4th November 2020

Code from Sample

- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon, I am _____ from Progressive, an independent market research company who are carrying out a government survey funded by the [ROUTE FROM SAMPLE] Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) / Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), who along with others, are tasked with protecting the environment.

The survey is about the environmental issues and challenges that UK businesses are facing just now, and how aware people are of the sources of help available. This will be used by the Agency to help improve communication and delivery of information and support available to businesses like yours, in meeting environmental legislation and targets.

This is a confidential survey which takes 10 minutes to complete. Everyone who takes part will be entered into a prize draw to win £200 in shopping vouchers of your choice. Would it be OK to ask you a few brief questions to ascertain your views on the subject?

SQ1. We would like to speak to the person in your business who deals with environmental issues and decisions, such as waste management or water and energy use in the business. Are you responsible for this kind of decision making in your business?

CODE	
Yes	1
No	2

IF YES, CONTINUE. IF NO, ASK TO SPEAK TO THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE AND/OR ARRANGE CALL-BACK. IF SPEAKING TO NEW CONTACT, REPEAT INTRODUCTION ABOVE.

Before I start, I just need to give you a few details about the research. No personal data, such as your contact details, or organisational data will be provided to Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) / NIEA. Your details will never be passed to any other third parties. Calls are recorded for quality control and training purposes.

You are free to withdraw at any stage of the research, including withdrawing permission after the survey to use the information you provided. I can give you contact details for Progressive if you would like to withdraw now or at the end of the survey.

REASSURE IF NECESSARY:

The survey is completely confidential, in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

The answers you give in the survey will be combined with answers from other people who have taken part to give overall survey findings. No one will be able to identify you or your business individually from the data.

If you would like to read Progressive’s privacy statement it is on our website at www.progressivepartnership.co.uk.

SQ1: Consent

Are you happy to continue with the survey?

CODE	
Yes	1
No	2

1 Classification

The first few questions are to help us group the responses of all businesses

1. I have your business sector as [seed from sample] – is that correct?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Unsure	3

Ask Q1a if Q1 = (2, 3)

1a. What is your business sector? [READ OUT CODES if necessary]

SINGLE CODE	Code
Agriculture	1
Construction	2
Healthcare	3
Hotels and Restaurants	4
Transport	5
Education	6
Electric equipment and machinery manufacturing	7
Financial services (offices)	8
Food and drink manufacturing	9
Retail and wholesale	10
Other (please specify)	11
Refused [DO NOT READ OUT]	12 - CLOSE

2. How many full time equivalent employees does your business have, including yourself?
[READ OUT CODES if necessary]

SINGLE CODE	Code
1 to 9	1
10 to 49	2
50 to 249	3
250+	4
Unsure / Don't know [DO NOT READ OUT]	5 – CLOSE
Refused [DO NOT READ OUT]	6 – CLOSE

3. What is your position in the company?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Owner/MD/Partner	1
Director/Company secretary	2
Works manager/Production manager/Site manager/Farm manager	3
Environmental manager/ Environmental officer	4
Technical manager/ Technical officer (e.g. Health and safety, quality, contracts)	5
Office manager/Personnel manager/Admin/Secretary/PA etc.	6
Other (specify) _____	7
Refused [DO NOT READ OUT]	8 – CLOSE

SCREEN OUT IF REFUSED AT Q1~3

4. Does your business need any Permit, Licence or Exemption from **[ROUTE FROM SAMPLE: SEPA (in SCOTLAND) / NIEA (in NORTHERN IRELAND)]** to carry out its activities?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

2 Environmental issues

5. Have you heard of any of the following environmental regulations or legislation? [READ OUT]

MULTICODE		CODE
ASK ALL	Food Waste regulations	1
ASK ALL	Duty of Care for Waste regulations	2
ASK ALL	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment regulations (WEEE Regulations)	3
ASK ALL	Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases regulations	4
ASK NI	Hazardous Waste regulations	5

ASK NI	Nutrient Action Programme regulations 2019-2022 (or NAP 2019-2022)	6
ASK NI	Environmental Protection (Microbeads) regulations	7
ASK SCOT	The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) Regulations – also known as CAR Regulations	8
ASK SCOT	Hazardous Waste Regulations or Special Waste regulations	9
ASK SCOT	The Environmental Protection (Cotton Buds) (Scotland) Regulations - or Cotton Buds regulations	10
ASK ALL	Any other environmental legislation that applies to your business (specify) _____	11
ASK ALL	None of these	12

For each mentioned at Q5:

6. You said you had heard of _____. To what extent would you say you understand these regulations: would you say you understand them Completely, Mostly, Partly, or Not at all? [ONLY THOSE MENTIONED AT Q14]

ONLY THOSE AT GIVEN AT Q5, SINGLE CODES		Completely	Mostly	Partly	Not at all	DK
ASK ALL	Food waste regulations	1	2	3	4	5
ASK ALL	Duty of Care for Waste Regulations	1	2	3	4	5
ASK ALL	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations (WEEE Regulations)	1	2	3	4	5
ASK ALL	Fluorinated greenhouse gases regulations	1	2	3	4	5
ASK NI	Hazardous Waste Regulations	1	2	3	4	5
ASK NI	Nutrient Action Programme Regulations 2019-2022 (or NAP 2019-2022)	1	2	3	4	5
ASK NI	Environmental Protection (Microbeads) Regulations (Northern Ireland)	1	2	3	4	5
ASK SCOT	The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) Regulations – also known as CAR Regulations	1	2	3	4	5
ASK SCOT	Hazardous Waste Regulations or Special Waste Regulations	1	2	3	4	5
ASK SCOT	The Environmental Protection (Cotton Buds) (Scotland) Regulations - or Cotton Buds regulations	1	2	3	4	5

3 Harmful activities

7. What activities, if any, does your organisation undertake which you think could be harmful to the environment? [SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE]?
8. Does your organisation undertake any of the following activities? [READ OUT. MASK ANY ALREADY MENTIONED AT Q7. MULTICODE]

MULTICODE Q8: EXCLUDE ANY MENTIONED AT Q7	Q7 Spontaneous	Q8 Prompted
Store waste on site prior to removal	1	1
Use transport (for travel or deliveries)	2	2
Store chemicals, fuel or oils	3	3
Have commercial refrigeration or chillers	4	4
Use water pumped from lochs, rivers or boreholes	5	5
Emit smoke or fumes to air	6	6
Carry out any activity that could create a noise, smell or dust	7	7
Other (specify) _____	8	8
Nothing	9	9

9. Has your business set up an Environmental Management System (EMS) such as an ISO 14001 [PRONOUNCED 'fourteen thousand and one'], BS 8555 [PRONOUNCED '8 triple 5'] or [ROUTE from sample: Green Ticks in Scotland; Green Dragon in NI] standard?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Yes	1	Go to 10
No	2	Go to 11
Don't know	3	Go to 11

ASK if Q9=1

10. How effective is your Environmental Management System?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Very effective	1	Go to 13
Effective	2	Go to 13
Quite effective	3	Go to 13
Not effective	4	Go to 13
Unsure	5	Go to 13

ASK if Q9=2 or 3

11. Does your business have an Environmental Policy in place?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Yes	1	Go to 13
No	2	Go to 12
Don't know	3	Go to 12

ASK if Q11=2, 3

12. How useful do you think an Environmental Management System (EMS) or Environmental Policy would be to your business?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Of no use	1	Go to 13
Of little use	2	Go to 13
Quite useful	3	Go to 13
Very useful	4	Go to 13
Unsure	5	Go to 13

ASK ALL

13. Has your organisation taken any measures, now or in the past, to prevent or reduce harm to the environment? Which? [DO NOT READ OUT, MULTICODE]

14. Has your organisation ever undertaken any of the following actions to prevent or reduce harm to the environment? [READ OUT FROM TABLE. EXCLUDE ANY ALREADY MENTIONED AT Q13]

MULTICODE	Q13	Q14
Q14: EXCLUDE ANY MENTIONED AT Q13	Spontaneous	Prompted
Assessed the impact your business has on the environment	1	1
Carried out a programme of environmental improvements	2	2
Made someone in the company responsible for environmental matters	3	3
Made any improvements in energy efficiency or water reduction	4	4
Cut down your business waste	5	5
Reduced usage of single-use plastic	6	6
Reduced transport emissions	7	7
Reduced transport costs	8	8
Reduced use of raw materials	9	9
Provide training to your staff about their environmental responsibilities	10	10
Encourage staff involvement in initiatives, for example, established a Green Team or a Green Champion	11	11
Put in place measures to adapt to changes in climate - such as floods, droughts and heat waves.	12	12
Other environmental activity (Specify) _____	13	13
None	14	14

15. Have you heard of the Circular Economy?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

16. Has your business already adopted any of the following elements of the Circular Economy?

SINGLE CODES	YES: Have adopted/in process of adopting	NO: Haven't adopted	Don't know
Reuse materials or use pre-used goods instead of brand new ones	1	2	3
Repair items to extend their life	1	2	3
Redesign processes or products to reduce waste	1	2	3
Use waste heat	1	2	3

TAKEN NO ACTION

ASK IF:

Don't have an environ system/policy (Q11= 2,3) AND

No actions to prevent prevent/reduce harms (Q13=14 AND Q14=14) AND

No circular economy action (16a≠1, and 16b≠1, and 16c≠1, and 16d≠1)

17. What would you say has prevented you from undertaking any of these measures to reduce harm to the environment? [Do not read out, MULTICODE]

SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE	Code	Route
It is too expensive / cost issues	1	GO TO Q20
Don't have time to think about it / it is not a priority for the business	2	
Don't know what actions to take	3	
Have never thought about it	4	
Other (specify) _____	5	
Don't know	6	

HAVE TAKEN ACTION:

ASK IF THE FOLLOWING DO NOT APPLY

Don't have an environ system/policy AND

No actions to prevent prevent/reduce harms AND

No circular economy action

18. As a result of taking steps to improve your environmental performance, has your business benefited from any of the following? [READ OUT, MULTICODE]

[PROBE — Anything else? Code under 'other'.]

MULTICODE	Code
Reduced operating costs	1
Increased sales and profitability	2
Improved relationships with customers/others	3
Reduced risk of prosecution or fines	4
A more motivated workforce	5
Other (specify) _____	6
None	7
Don't know	8

19. What prompted your business to take steps to improve your environmental performance? [DO NOT READ OUT, MULTICODE].

[PROBE — Anything else? Code under 'other'.]

SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE	Code
It is mandatory, demanded by the regulations	1
Business support organisations (specify name of organisation)	2
Suggestions from within the business	3
Stakeholder / supply chain requests or pressures	4
Customer or client requests or pressures	5
TV news or programmes	6
Financial pressures	7
To keep ahead of the competition	8
To improve reputation / green credentials	9
In response to lessons learned during the pandemic	10
Other (specify) _____	11
Don't know	12

ASK ALL

20. Governments are encouraging a green recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. How likely are you to invest in improving your environmental performance over the next 12 months?

SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE	Code
Very unlikely	1
Quite unlikely	2
Quite likely	3
Very likely	4
Don't know	5

4 Environmental information

21. Which organisations has your business ever contacted to discuss environmental issues? [DO NOT READ OUT, MULTICODE]

SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE	CODE
ASK ALL None	1
ASK ALL A trade association (specify)	2
ASK ALL Federation of Small Businesses	3
ASK ALL Business in the community	4
ASK ALL Waste companies	5
ASK ALL Local Council	6
ASK ALL Energy saving trust	7
ASK ALL NetRegs - email	8
ASK ALL Carbon Trust	9
FOR NI NIEA (Northern Ireland Environment Agency)	10
FOR NI WRAP Northern Ireland	11
FOR NI Invest NI	12
FOR NI Business in the Community Northern Ireland	13
FOR SCOT Resource Efficient Scotland	14
FOR SCOT Zero Waste Scotland	15
FOR SCOT Scottish Enterprise/ or Highlands and Islands Enterprise	16
FOR SCOT SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)	17
ASK ALL A consultant	18
ASK ALL Any other organisation (specify)	19

22. Which sources of information, if any, are you likely to use to find out about environmental issues related to your business? [READ OUT]

MULTICODE	CODE
Internet searches	1
Social media and blogs	2
Online videos	3
Mobile app	4
Email newsletter	5
Information sent through the post (from SEPA/NIEA or other organisation)	6
Telephone helpline	7

Television programmes	8
Radio and newspapers	9
Trade Magazines, Business Journals or Industry reports	10
Seminars and conferences	11
Internal conversations with colleagues or briefings from expert staff	12
Visit to or from an environmental consultant	13
Other (Specify) _____	14
None	15

For Northern Ireland

23. The UK government has set a target of achieving Net Zero Carbon emissions in the UK by 2050. Have you thought about what steps your business needs to take to achieve this?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

For Scotland

24. Scottish Government has set a target of achieving Net Zero Carbon emissions in Scotland by 2045. Have you thought about what steps your business needs to take to achieve this?

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

5 NetRegs

The last few questions are about a free, anonymous service provided by the environmental regulators in Scotland and Northern Ireland, called NetRegs. NetRegs is a website that provides free environmental guidance tailored for small to medium sized organisations. The guidance covers a large number of industry sectors and is constantly updated to reflect changes in legislation.

25. Have you heard of the NetRegs website?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Yes	1	Go to Q27
No	2	Go to Q26
Don't know	3	Go to Q26

26. NetRegs is a website from the environmental regulators that provides guidance to businesses, about environmental regulations and good practice.

It provides online courses, videos and an interactive anonymous use compliance tool, all free, in easy to understand English. Would you like to write down the website?

It is WWW.NETREGS.ORG.UK"

GO TO Q35

ASK IF Q25=1

27. Have you used the NetRegs website?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Yes	1	Go to Q28
No	2	Go to Q35
Don't know	3	Go to Q35

ASK IF Q27=1

28. How useful do you find the following features of the NetRegs site?

SINGLE CODES	Not at all useful	Not very useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Don't know / not used
The Website guidance pages	1	2	3	4	5
The GPPs and PPGs – that is, the Guidance for Pollution Prevention series	1	2	3	4	5
The Legislation lists	1	2	3	4	5
The E-Learning tools	1	2	3	4	5
The Environmental Self-Assessment Tool (an interactive tool for businesses to check how well they are doing)	1	2	3	4	5
The Good Practice Videos	1	2	3	4	5
The Email Newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
NetRegs Mailbox	1	2	3	4	5

29. How often does your company use the NetRegs website? SPONTANEOUS

SPONTANEOUS, SINGLE CODE	Code
Every week	1
Every month	2
Every two months	3
Four times a year	4
Twice a year	5
Once a year	6
Less than once a year	7
Don't know	8

30. Has the time you spent on the NetRegs website increased since the COVID-19 pandemic?

SINGLE CODE	Code	Route
Yes	1	Go to Q31
No	2	Go to Q33
Don't know	3	Go to Q33

ASK IF Q30=1

31. Which parts of the website site did you spent more time on?

SPONTANEOUS, MULTICODE	Code
The Website guidance pages	1
the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP and PPG) series	2
The Legislation lists	3
The E-Learning tools	4
The Environmental Self-Assessment Tool	5
The Good Practice Videos	6

ASK IF Q30=1

32. Why did you spend more time on the website?

PROMPTED, MULTICODE	Code
Business priorities are changing: essential business support	1
More time available within the business: review/update policy and procedures	2
More time available within the business: opportunity for training	3
On furlough: opportunity for training	4
On furlough: general interest	5
Other: specify	6

ASK IF Q27=1

33. **Overall**, has using the NetRegs website made your company become more resource-efficient? (For example, by conserving water, energy, materials and reducing waste disposal costs.)

SINGLE CODE	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

34. Could you provide an estimate of any savings made by using NetRegs? (For example, by avoiding fines, remediation costs and consultancy fees; efficiency savings; and supporting your environmental management system.)

Could you say roughly what the savings would be per year?

SINGLE CODE	Code
No savings	1
Less than £250 per year	2
£251-£500 per year	3
£501 - £750 per year	4
£751 - £1,000 per year	5
£1,001 - £1,500 per year	6
£1,501 - £2,000 per year	7

£2,001 - £5,000 per year	8
More than £5,000 per year - If so, please provide an estimate _____	9
Don't know	10

ASK ALL

35. NetRegs provides a free monthly email newsletter about changes in environmental regulations, consultations, events and other environmental news.
Would you be interested in signing up to receive the NetRegs newsletter?

	Code	Route
Yes – I would like to sign up	1	Go to Q35a
No – I am already signed up	2	Go to Q36
No – I would not like to sign -up	3	Go to Q36
Don't know	4	Go to Q36

35a Can I take your email address? This email address will be used solely for sending the newsletter and not for any other purpose.

35b Can I take the name for that email address?

35c And the postcode (optional)

ASK ALL

36. Would you like to be entered into the prize draw to receive £200 shopping vouchers of your choice?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2

ASK IF Q35 = 1 and information has been provided at Q35a and Q35b

37. Will we use the same name and email address as you provided to receive the NetRegs newsletter?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2

ASK ELSE (that is, if no name and email address has been collected at Q35, or if Q37 =2)

37a Can I take your email address for the prize draw? This email address will be used solely for administering the prize draw and not for any other purpose.

37b Can I take the name for that email address?



Outro

Thank you for taking part in this research survey.

You have the right to access the information you have provided in this survey, and to withdraw consent to process this information after taking part. We will only hold your details for a limited time, until September 2020. Would you like information about how to do this? [IF YES, PROVIDE CONTACT DETAILS]

Appendix 3: Technical appendix

Method

Quantitative

1. The data was collected by telephone and online survey
2. The target group for this research study SMEs
3. The sampling frame for this study was a purchased sample list of businesses in the key target sectors with less than 250 employees – Purchased from Sample Answers Ltd.
4. The target sample size 500 and the final achieved sample size was 447. The reason for the difference between these two samples was constraints experienced as a consequence the coronavirus pandemic. Many target businesses were closed or only partially open, in some cases staff were working from home and – especially in the early stages, difficult to contact. Some sectors were working beyond capacity and simply did not have time to participate. The fieldwork was initially suspended, and gradually reinstated over a long period of time in response to developing/changing circumstances
5. Fieldwork was undertaken between September and December 2020
6. Respondents were selected using non-probability sampling: potential respondents were drawn from the sampling frame in line with predetermined quotas, based on sector and business size to ensure that the sample represents the target population. To enable strike rates to be interlocking quotas were relaxed at times during the fieldwork, with only sector quotas observed.
7. The achieved sample has been be weighted to reflect the business size of the population, based on previous research.
8. *Online component:* Email addresses for a portion of the sample were available. These were contacted and asked if they wished to participate in the survey online. Every individual on the sampling frame for whom email addresses were available was invited to participate in the study. Respondents to paper and internet self-completion studies are self-selecting and complete the survey without the assistance of a trained interviewer. This means that Progressive cannot strictly control sampling and in some cases, this can lead to findings skewed towards the views of those motivated to respond to the survey
9. In total, 12 interviewers worked on data collection.
10. Interviews lasted 15 minutes.
11. *CATI Validation:* Each interviewer’s work was validated as per the requirements of the international standard ISO 20252. All telephone interviews were recorded and a minimum of 10% listened to in full for validation purposes. All interviewers working on the study were subject to validation of their work. In addition, interviewers are constantly monitored by the Telephone Unit Manager to ensure quality is maintained throughout each interview.
12. The sample provision for this project was sub-contracted to Sample Answers.
13. All research projects undertaken by Progressive comply fully with the requirements of ISO 20252, the GDPR and the MRS Code of Conduct.

Data processing and analysis

1. The final data set was weighted to reflect the size of businesses (in terms of number of employees) and sector. The sample base before weighting is 447, whilst the weighted sample base is 447.
2. Quota controls were to be used to guide sample selection for this study. This means that statistically precise margins of error or significance testing are not appropriate, as the

sampling type is non-probability. The margins of error outlined below should therefore be treated as indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample.

- The overall sample size of 447 provides a dataset with an approximate margin of error of between $\pm 0.92\%$ and $\pm 4.64\%$, calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard).
- 3. The data processing department undertakes a number of quality checks on the data to ensure its validity and integrity.
 - For online (**CAWI**) questionnaires these checks include:
 - Responses are checked for duplicates where unidentified responses have been permitted.
 - All responses are checked for completeness and sense.
 - For telephone (**CATI**) questionnaires these checks include:
 - All responses logged by the interviewers are checked for completeness and sense. Any errors or omissions detected at this stage are referred back to the field department, who are required to re-contact respondents to check and, if necessary, correct the data.
- 4. A computer edit of the data carried out prior to analysis involves both range and inter-field checks. Any further inconsistencies identified at this stage are investigated by reference back to the raw data on the questionnaire.
- 5. Where 'other' type questions are used, the responses to these are checked against the parent question for possible up-coding.
- 6. Responses to open-ended questions will normally be spell and sense checked. Where required these responses may be grouped using a code-frame which can be used in analysis.