

Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAFS)

South Lakeland Green Business Survey

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Executive Summary

- Almost a quarter (24%) of responses were from businesses within the accommodation and food services sector (tourism and hospitality). This was followed by 13% from retail businesses and 11% manufacturing.
- Most responding businesses have less than ten employees (62%), but larger businesses were also represented, with 14% (six businesses) having more than 100 employees.
- Businesses were more concerned about the impact of sustainability on the planet (74% think this is very important) and the impact on people (62% think this is very important), than the impact on profitability, although this is still an important issue to some degree for 87%.
- Help to explore and improve energy use was clearly the most significant issue, with 73% of businesses saying they definitely wanted help in that area.
- 45% said they definitely wanted help with using resources – minimising waste, reusing and recycling, and another 32% said they could probably do with help in this area.
- Around 60% of businesses wanted to explore and improve nature and biodiversity, and resilience against the impacts of climate change (38%-39% definitely, 21% probably).
- Over half (54%) of businesses wanted to explore/improve the electric vehicle charging infrastructure (43% definitely, 11% probably).
- 41% were interested to some degree in transport and travel improvements (either deliveries, staff or customers), and 38% were interested to some degree in exploring improvements on bought-in goods and services, as well as plastic pollution.
- Half, or more than half of businesses said they definitely wanted help with getting started to make their business greener – finding opportunities, support and funding, as well as with marketing their ethical credentials without 'greenwashing'.
- Combining results for 'definitely' and 'probably' wanting help, results were:
 - 75% auditing their environmental impacts and developing action plans to tackle them
 - 72% working together with other businesses and their supply chains
 - 70% calculating and understanding their carbon footprints
 - 69% improving customer loyalty and interest in making greener choices
 - 68% marketing their ethical credentials without 'greenwashing'
 - 66% putting sustainability at the heart of their business
 - 63% getting started – finding opportunities, support and funding
 - 60% better understanding the basics of how to reduce their environmental impact
- The most popular support would be usable tools (e.g. calculators/templates) in which over half (58%) of businesses were very interested and another 28% interested. 40% were very interested in written resources on websites, and another 37% interested in receiving information this way. Three quarters (75%) were interested in receiving a regular newsletter or advice bulletin.
- In terms of receiving support, there was some appetite for most of the suggestions listed. There was most interest in 1-2 hour webinars or training sessions, with 70% interested in these, followed by email advice which would be of interest to 66%.
- Between 40%-49% of businesses were interested to some extent in: half/full day workshops with other businesses; bespoke workshops; long term one-to-one coaching; peer-to-peer support; in-person meetings; or online meetings.
- The most significant barrier for businesses when it comes to making changes to improve their sustainability is cost (88%). This is followed by a lack of time and knowledge/skills, cited by around half the businesses consulted.
- 35% say there is a lack of supporting suppliers, products or schemes locally. 19% believe it is not profitable in the long term.

1. Introduction and Methodology

Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAFS) wanted to carry out research to create a baseline of attitudes, awareness, and current approaches to sustainability, climate change, and business environmental impact, as well as to identify forms of support needed, and any barriers to change.

An online survey was developed and shared by the project partners through their social media channels and newsletters.



A printed advert was also enclosed with South Lakeland District Council's business rates mailing in early March.

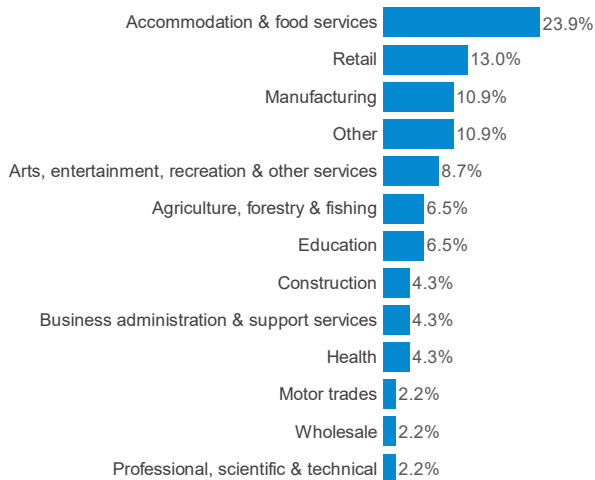
By Monday 21st March 2022 45 surveys had been completed.

2. Results

2.1 Business Profile

Almost a quarter (24%) of responses were from businesses within the accommodation and food services sector (tourism and hospitality). This was followed by 13% from retail businesses and 11% from manufacturing.

In total, more than twelve sectors were represented.

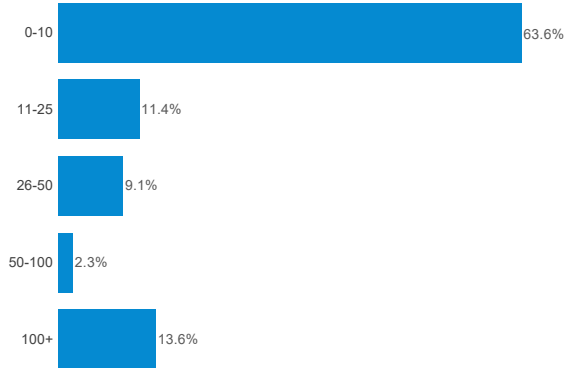


Specific business types included:

- business advice/consultancy
- cafes
- cinema
- civils drainage
- clothing
- confectionery / gift shop
- craft brewery and brewery tap / restaurant
- dairy and sheep farming with a diversification
- dairy sheep tourism
- education
- egg packing and processing
- events
- farm shop and cafe
- food and drink
- gin distillery
- guest house & self-catering apartments
- guest house, pub/restaurant and micro-brewery
- holiday letting cottages
- horticulture
- hostel /bunkbarn
- hotel
- ice cream maker/retailer
- jewellery design and manufacture
- manufacture of engine cooling pumps and small hydro electric schemes
- motor repair
- non-profit charity
- outdoor activities centre

- outdoor clothing
- provision of art craft and heritage skills workshops
- restoration
- slate mason
- village convenience store
- website

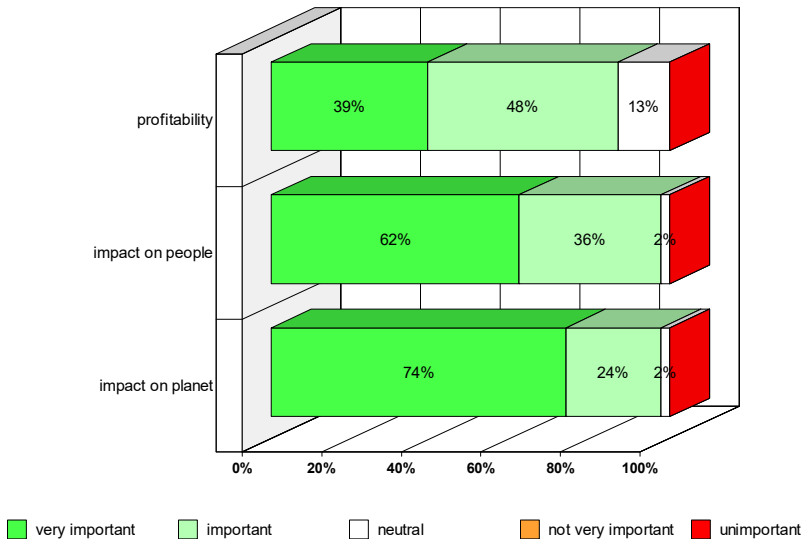
Most responding businesses have less than ten employees (62%), but larger businesses were also represented, with 14% (six businesses) having more than 100 employees.



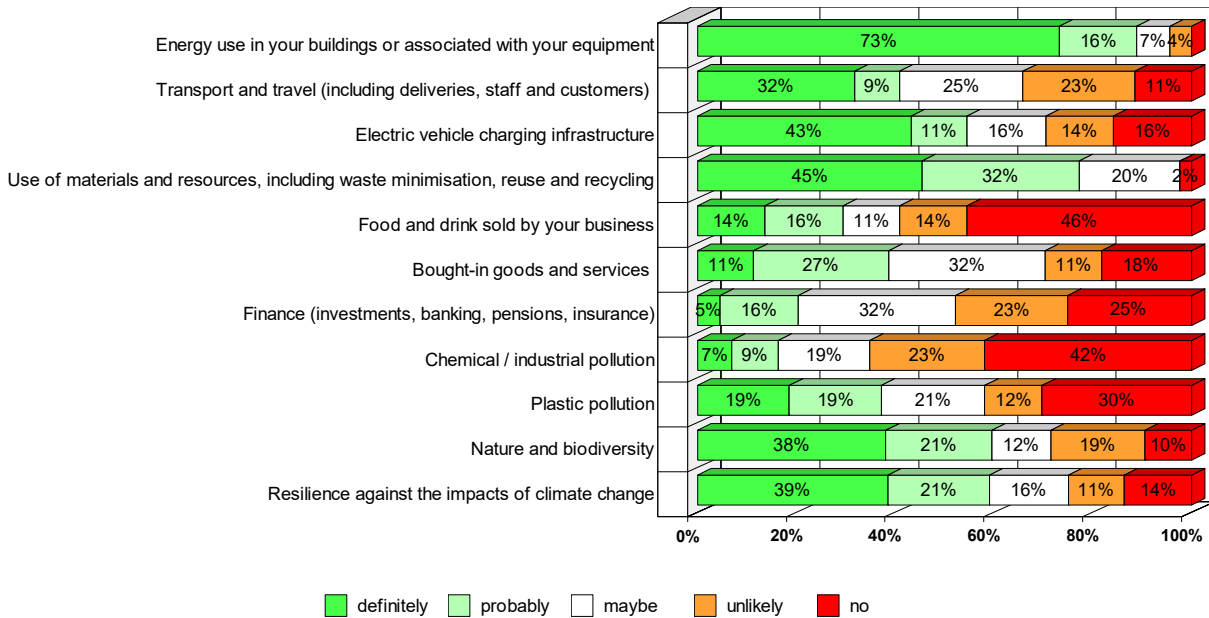
2.2 Sustainability and Green Business Practices

Respondents were asked about the importance of sustainability to their business, in terms of profitability, and the impact on people and the planet.

They were more concerned about the impact of sustainability on the planet (74% think this is very important) and the impact on people (62% think this is very important), than the impact on profitability, although this is still an important issue to some degree for 87% of businesses.



Businesses were asked whether they might want help to explore and improve on a number of issues, with a range from 'definitely' through to 'probably', 'maybe', 'unlikely' and 'no'.



Help to explore and improve energy use was clearly the most significant issue, with 73% of businesses saying they definitely wanted help in that area.

45% said they definitely wanted help with using resources – minimising waste, reusing and recycling, and another 32% said they could probably do with help in this area.

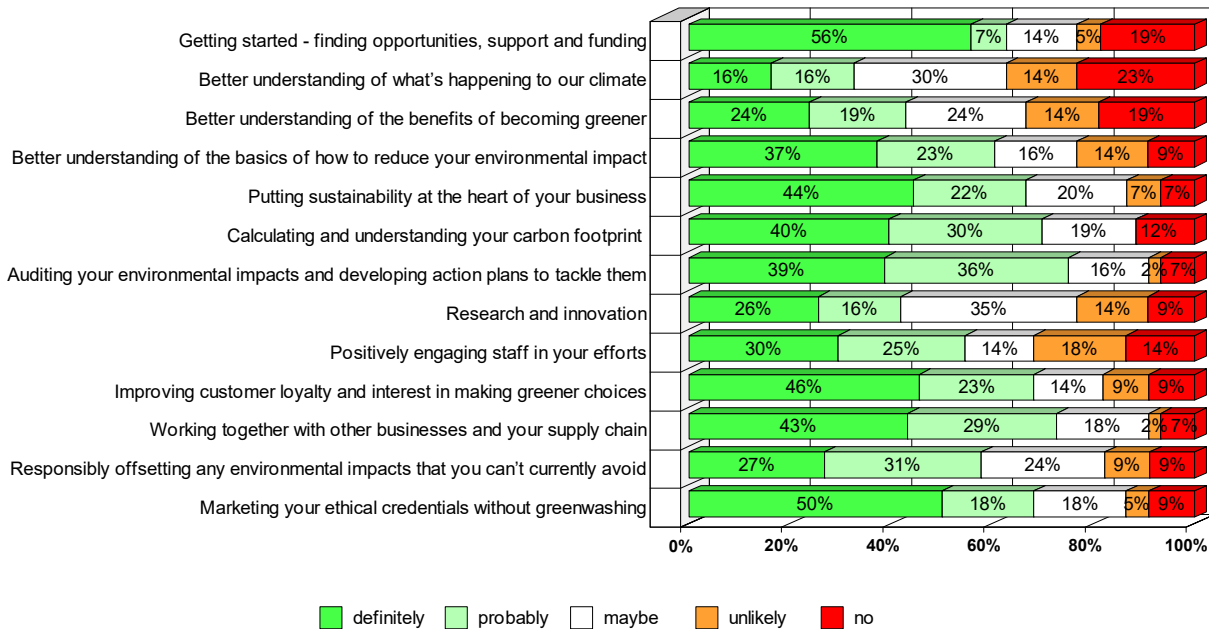
Around 60% of businesses wanted to explore and improve nature and biodiversity, and resilience against the impacts of climate change (38%-39% definitely, 21% probably).

Over half (54%) of businesses wanted to explore/improve the electric vehicle charging infrastructure (43% definitely, 11% probably).

41% were interested to some degree in transport and travel improvements (either deliveries, staff or customers), and 38% were interested to some degree in exploring improvements on bought-in goods and services, as well as plastic pollution.

Other issues suggested were input costs, bought-in/supplied pharmaceuticals and carbon trading.

Businesses were then asked whether they might want help with a variety of ways to create a greener business with a range from 'definitely' through to 'probably', 'maybe', 'unlikely' and 'no'.



Half, or more than half said they definitely wanted help with getting started to make their business greener – finding opportunities, support and funding, as well as with marketing their ethical credentials without 'greenwashing'.

Combining results for 'definitely' and 'probably' wanting help, results were (in order of popularity):

- 75% auditing their environmental impacts and developing action plans to tackle them
- 72% working together with other businesses and their supply chains
- 70% calculating and understanding their carbon footprints
- 69% improving customer loyalty and interest in making greener choices
- 68% marketing their ethical credentials without 'greenwashing'
- 66% putting sustainability at the heart of their business
- 63% getting started – finding opportunities, support and funding
- 60% better understanding the basics of how to reduce their environmental impact
- 58% responsibly offsetting any environmental impacts not currently avoidable
- 55% positively engaging staff in their efforts
- 43% better understanding the benefits of becoming greener
- 42% research and innovation
- 32% better understanding what's happening to the climate

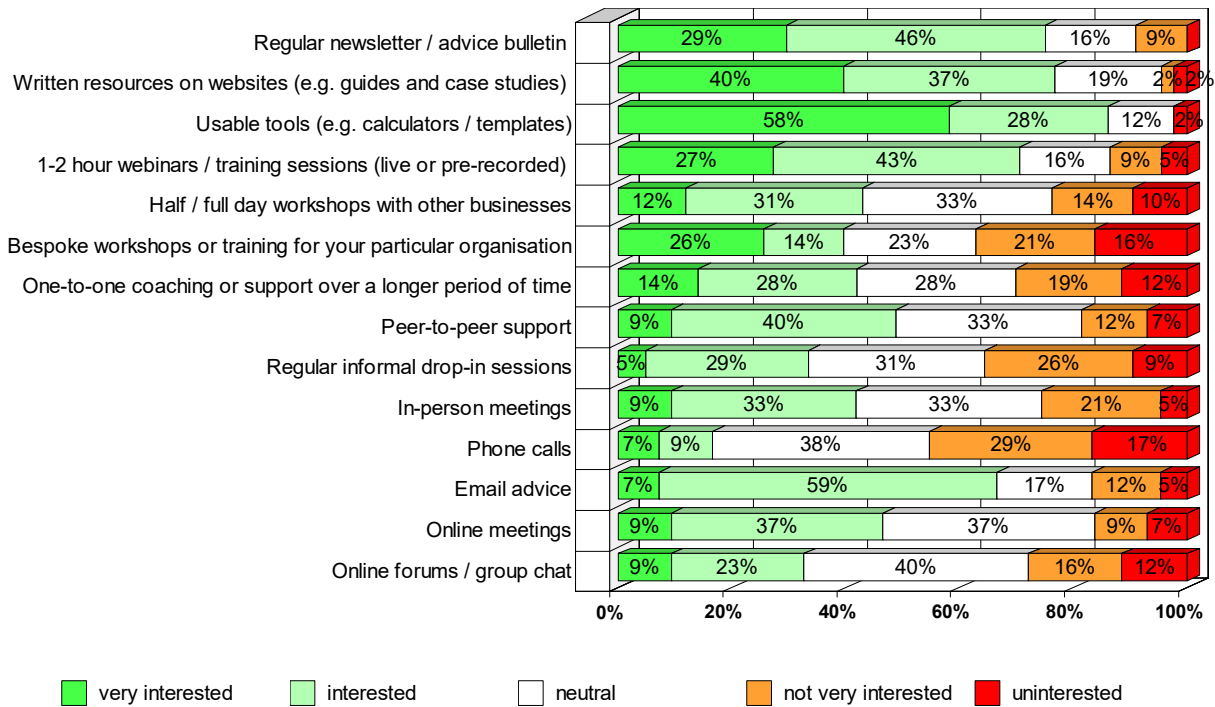
Comments about other forms of help were:

"not many of above relevant as I try to be as green as possible - ideally it would be good to hold more workshops on the same day which would be more efficient with heating the barn. In order to do this a concrete floor would need to be insulated"

"helping to use my credentials in carbon capture to make money for my business"

2.3 Green Business Support

Businesses were asked the extent to which they were interested in a range of support and channels of communication about green issues.



The most popular suggestions were usable tools (e.g. calculators/templates) in which over half (58%) of businesses were very interested and another 28% interested. 40% were very interested in written resources on websites, and another 37% interested in receiving information this way. Three quarters (75%) were interested in receiving a regular newsletter or advice bulletin.

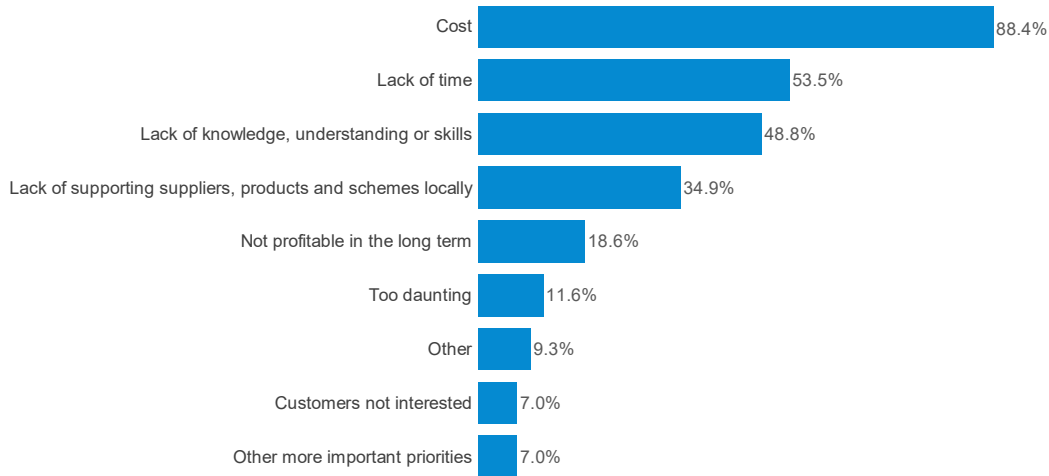
In terms of receiving support, there was some appetite for most of the suggestions listed. There was most interest in 1-2 hour webinars or training sessions, with 70% interested in these, followed by email advice which would be of interest to 66%.

Between 40%-49% of businesses were interested to some extent in: half/full day workshops with other businesses; bespoke workshops; long term one-to-one coaching; peer-to-peer support; in-person meetings; or online meetings. Around a third of businesses were interested to some extent in regular informal drop-in sessions or online forums/group chat, but there was little interest in phone calls.

2.4 Barriers to Sustainable Practices

The most significant barrier for businesses when it comes to making changes to improve their sustainability is cost (88%). This is followed by a lack of time and knowledge/skills, cited by around half the businesses consulted.

35% say there is a lack of supporting suppliers, products or schemes locally. 19% believe it is not profitable in the long term.



Comments about more important priorities included:

- "maintenance"
- "keeping the business afloat"
- "Staying in business profitably"

Other general comments relating to barriers were:

- "Several of the technologies are too immature to contemplate adopting now"
- "more information on measurement needed"
- "can be difficult to make longer-term investments for a partnership - capital is variably available depending on the individuals' attitudes to payback/ ROI"
- "planning permission requirements for external changes"

Businesses were given the opportunity to share any other comments about the subject in general:

- "We operate from a leasehold building, so any changes to the building require quite short term returns"
- "There are plenty of environmental groups like Greenpeace which inform us as to why we should be greener and campaign for companies to be more environmentally friendly but they offer no useful practical advice that is relevant to business. This is the important gap that could be filled."
- "I am already feeling very supported by the University of Cumbria and have gathered a lot of info already hence a lack of interest on this survey. Already feel my knowledge is growing!"
- "Extremely interested in energy creation. Solar PV. Just the cost that's the issue."
- "We run approximately 140 day courses each year - as detailed earlier in this survey, it would be much more energy efficient to bunch our workshops together so that more are held on the same day, thus reducing the heating and catering costs on any particular day. In order to do

this we would need to use the ground floor of the newly converted top floor of *****¹ (May 2020). At the moment the ground floor only has a cold concrete floor and a single glazed doorway. It needs insulation on the floor and possibly walls / possible new entrance doorway. I was obliged to borrow a £15,000 Covid Bounce Back loan to convert the top floor of the ***** to continue as a business (during Covid) in a more spacious room with ample ventilation. I'm now repaying this loan so funds are limited. I'd be interested to know whether there is any way you might be able to help with insulating this barn which currently can only be used as a workshop space in the height of summer? I currently have 4kw solar PV panels on a roof that no one can see. The property is listed. I would like to receive info about being greener as per the below but PLEASE PLEASE don't send me any brochures etc"

"Lots of green washing in my industry, imports play a huge part in this"

"I think a personal advisor who knows your situation would be useful. I am in the middle of completing the carbon grant with you but I only found out about it by accident, but I am sure there are other grants or potential help out there if somebody could point me in the right direction. So instead of the randomness of peer to peer support group meetings and trainings, where you find out about projects by accident, specific and deliberate support via site visits to your property by somebody who knows the grants/support system to provide bespoke/individual support would be the best. At the moment I would be particularly interested in finding out what support is available for use/improving in-bye land. We have heard that there may be grants for tree planting for carbon capture and or hedge laying for diversification but do not know who to approach or how to go about it."

"Our company is determined to change to a greener environmentally impacted company but we need help and funding to do so. We want to invest in Solar Panels so that we can become self-sufficient, we need greener solutions to help in our Brewing Process and we need to recycle more of our waste ingredients."

"A huge thank you to the support *****² has had so far from CAFS, LDF and Charge my Street. It's really encouraging to see the local council and other organisations working together to improve sustainability issues, especially helping smaller charities such as *****."

"Government guidelines are utterly confusing"

"As a farmer there could be a means of helping other businesses as a grassland farm with hedgerows we may be capturing quite a lot of carbon"

"Very interested in supporting development of a local or regional green commitment campaign (see Cornwall's Green Acorn scheme) for holiday lets. So many locally. Would like to contribute to that. Important to avoid greenwashing. Not just greenwashing but something with teeth! Examples of positive change. Recycling opps for holiday lets, garden waste collection if not paying council tax, etc."

"Energy usage is our biggest problem. I have installed Hive heating, energy efficient boilers, insulation in floors, we have windows which are fairly new but not very green. Not sure how much more we can do"

"Generally, lots of interest but people not sure who are good suppliers to approach, preferably locally"

¹ name removed for anonymity

² name removed for anonymity