

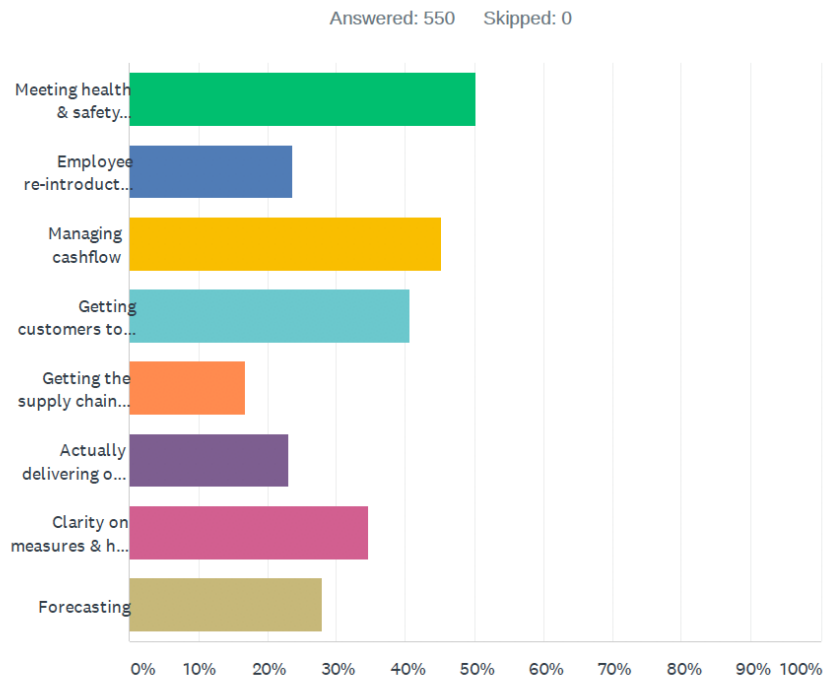
## Poll of SMEs on their Biggest Challenges Following an Easing of the Lockdown Restrictions

Following the announcement by the government of a gradual easing of the lockdown restrictions on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May, we conducted a poll of SMEs. The poll was conducted over 24 hours on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

Below are the results.

EASING OF LOCKDOWN - UK200GROUP SME POLL 11 MAY 2020

Q1 Which of the following are your biggest challenges as a SME business as we see an easing of lockdown restrictions? Pick your top 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Meeting health & safety requirements (social distancing, PPE, safety of customers & staff)	50.18% 276
Employee re-introduction to the workplace	23.64% 130
Managing cashflow	45.27% 249
Getting customers to buy	40.55% 223
Getting the supply chain to deliver	16.73% 92
Actually delivering our products/services	23.09% 127
Clarity on measures & how they apply to my business	34.55% 190
Forecasting	27.82% 153
Total Respondents: 550	

## **Health & Safety Ranked Top concern for businesses emerging from lockdown**

### **Cash Flow comes second, Client Confidence third**

Health and safety is the most pressing concern among businesses emerging from lockdown according to the latest poll we have undertaken together with other members of the UK's leading legal and accounting membership group, the UK200Group.

The survey of 550 SME clients shows 276 are concerned about health and safety, 249 about cash flow and 223 about getting clients to buy.

What this poll shows us is that it's the uncertainty of reopening a business, with all the related complexities that it entails, that businesses are worried about now. They are confident about how to get their basic operations back up and running, but need clarity about how they should be protecting employees and customers, and getting customers to buy from them. It is also important to note that while the extension to furlough funding is plainly welcome, the longer businesses remain closed the higher the chance of them not surviving."

Whilst the government has provided useful guidance, the onus on businesses and employers is significantly increased.

SMEs have indicated through this poll that they need more guidance about how it will impact them and how they will be measured. This ranges from using PPE to managing social distancing in environments that were not designed for pandemics.

The survey also shows that while wrongful trading provisions have been temporarily suspended, the practical aspects of the challenge to manage cashflow remain, as does the imperative to keep customers happy, maintain furloughed and retained staff morale and being fair to suppliers, including agreeing stage payments to them if required.

Businesses are also weighing up the issues involved in seeking legal redress when not being paid for services, and the need to consider protective claims through the Courts, as and when they reopen.

The poll results are helping us to look at the different ways that we can help our clients. We will be developing more content and tools to support you on the issues highlighted in the coming weeks and months.

In the meantime, please do get in touch if we can help in anyway.