

COVID-19: The impact of the crisis on student recruitment and development

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ISE Covid-19 hub

To help you adapt to the challenges we are facing, the ISE has produced a significant amount of content which we are constantly adding to.

[Find out more >](#)

<https://ise.org.uk/page/covid19-hub>

AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO COVID-19

The coronavirus outbreak is having a significant impact on the student recruitment sector. On-campus activity, recruitment, internships and development programmes are being curtailed or moved to a virtual format. This guide is designed to help you manage your student programmes through this difficult period. Also visit our [website](#) and [podcast](#) pages for content that showcases many of the employer and supplier solutions highlighted here.

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1. Strategic considerations
 - Evidence from previous economic downturns shows that employers who didn't deal effectively with the interns and graduates in their recruitment pipelines damaged their reputations in the student job market and caused resourcing difficulties that unnecessarily increased their cost base as the economy recovered.
 - Excessively reducing or halting student hiring can have long term resource planning implications. Later in the recovery cycle, at the point when your student base would be promoted off a training programme, you might find yourself short of experienced people. After previous recessions many employers lost business as they were unable to find enough talent, or they paid a significant premium in the labour market.
 - It is a commercial reality that you may no longer need to hire the same number of students in 2020 as originally planned. But it is a much bigger decision to cease student recruitment altogether. It is better to manage changes to your hiring approach in a way that minimises the negative impact on the students in your pipeline and your organisation and ensures that you will be able to grow again if the climate changes.



<https://ise.org.uk/page/ISEPublications>

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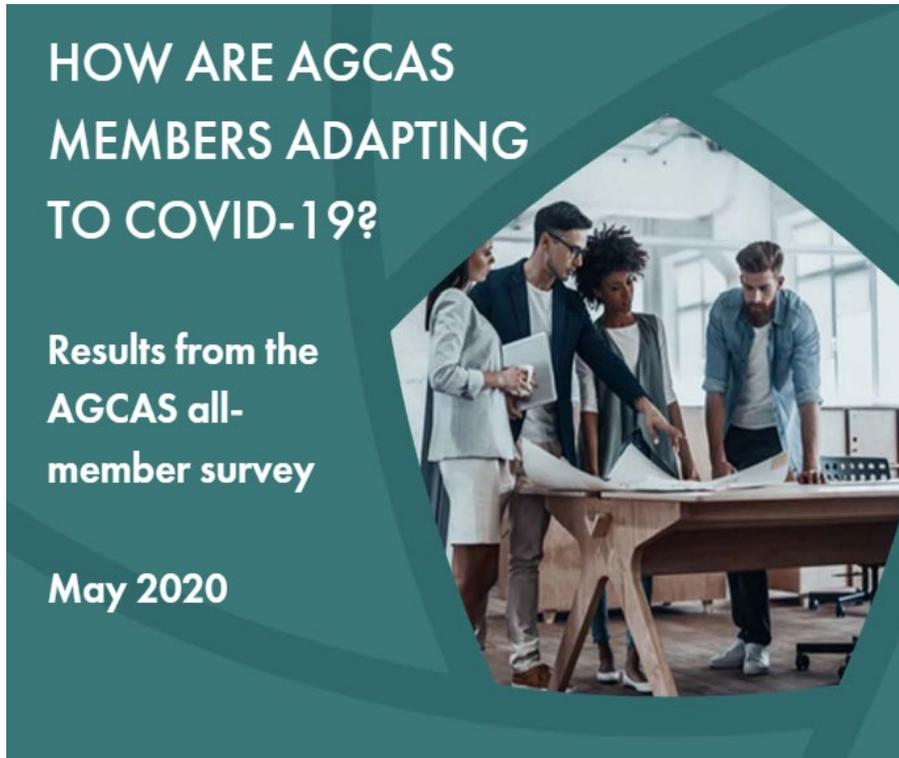
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Employer Engagement Task Group forum:
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AGCAS Alternative Conference

AGCAS webinars

The slides and recordings for the following webinars are available to all AGCAS members.

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 (3 APRIL 2020)

GRADUATE OUTCOMES (17 APRIL 2020)

EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE FOR TURBULENT TIMES AND ADVERSE MARKETS (21 APRIL 2020)

THE GRADUATE LABOUR MARKET UNDER LOCKDOWN (1 MAY 2020)

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<https://www.agcas.org.uk/useful-resources>

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Managing and developing



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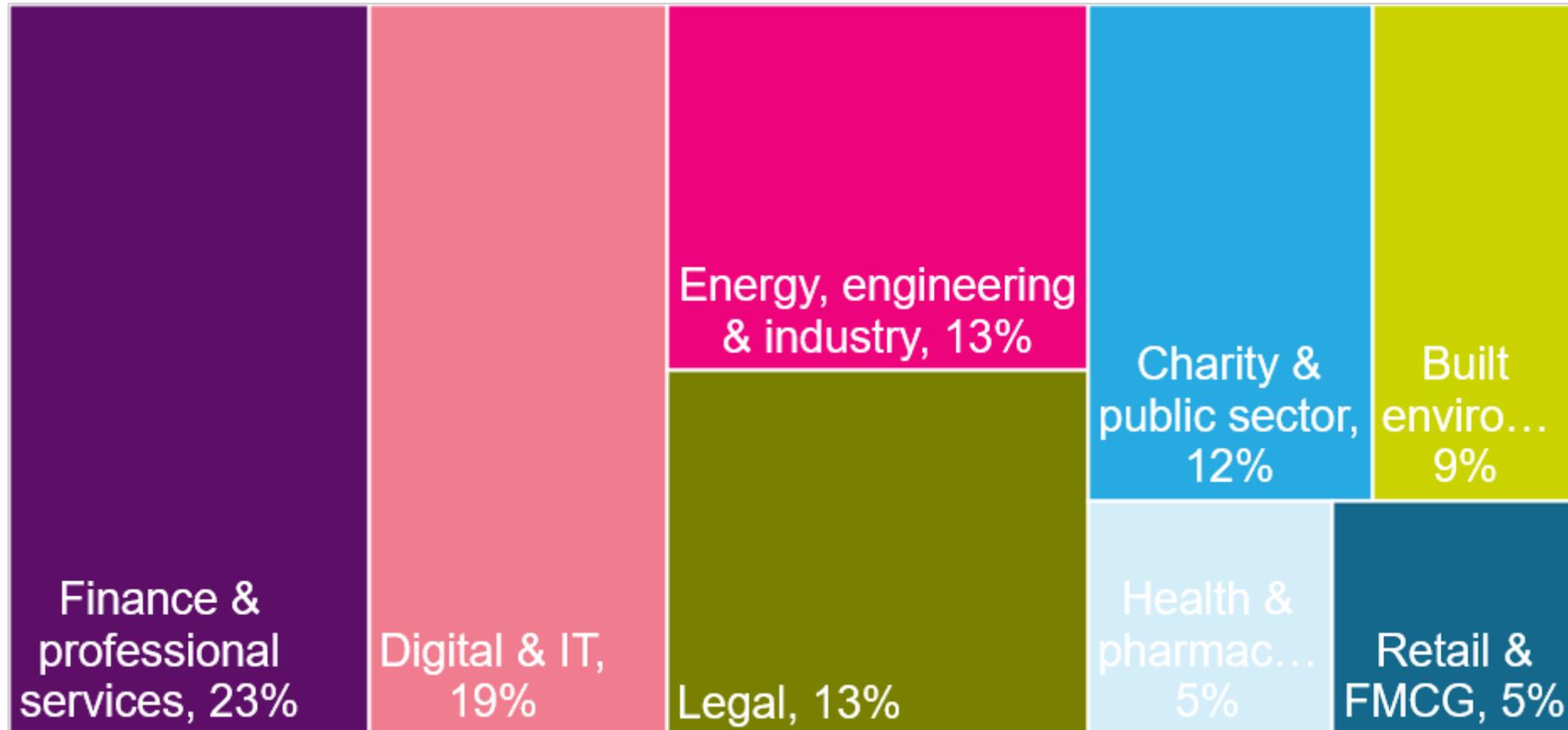
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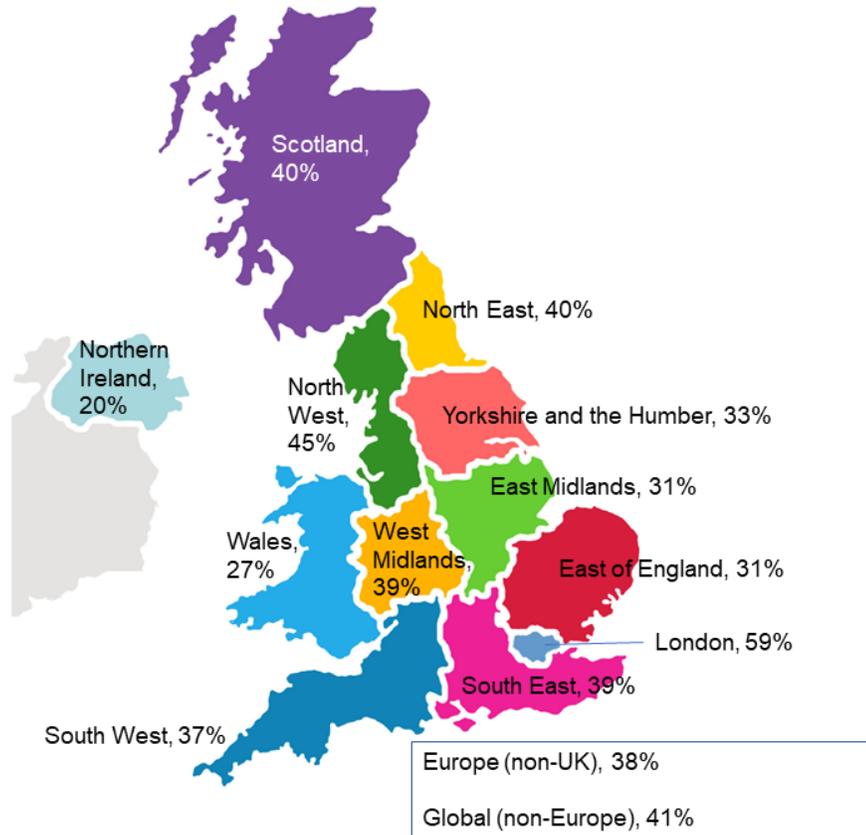
About the study

- It has been produced by the Institute of Student Employers (ISE) supported by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS).
- Survey was open from Monday 20th April to Monday 4th May.
- 179 valid responses.
- Most respondents were ISE members (57%) and large employers (72%).

Sectoral breakdown



Geographical breakdown



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Furloughing

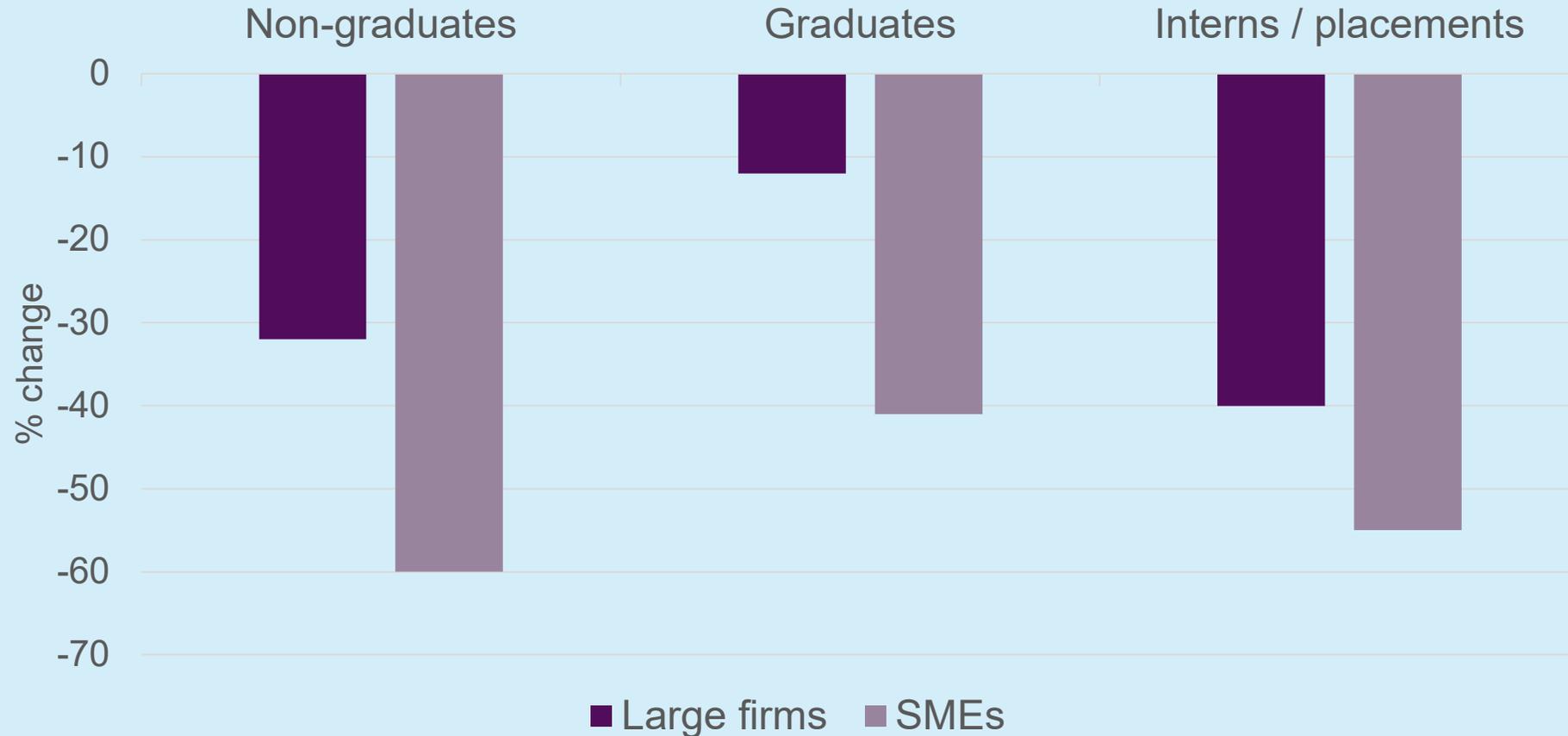
Firms are furloughing an average of 13% of staff.

They are furloughing an average of 14% of early career staff.

There are some big sectoral differences with furloughing a particular issue in the Built environment, Energy, engineering & industry and Retail & FMCG sectors

The furloughing of staff in firms is also indirectly affecting the recruitment of early career staff. Just over 10% changed recruitment plans due to concerns about ability to support new hires.

Changes to hiring by business size



Changes by sector

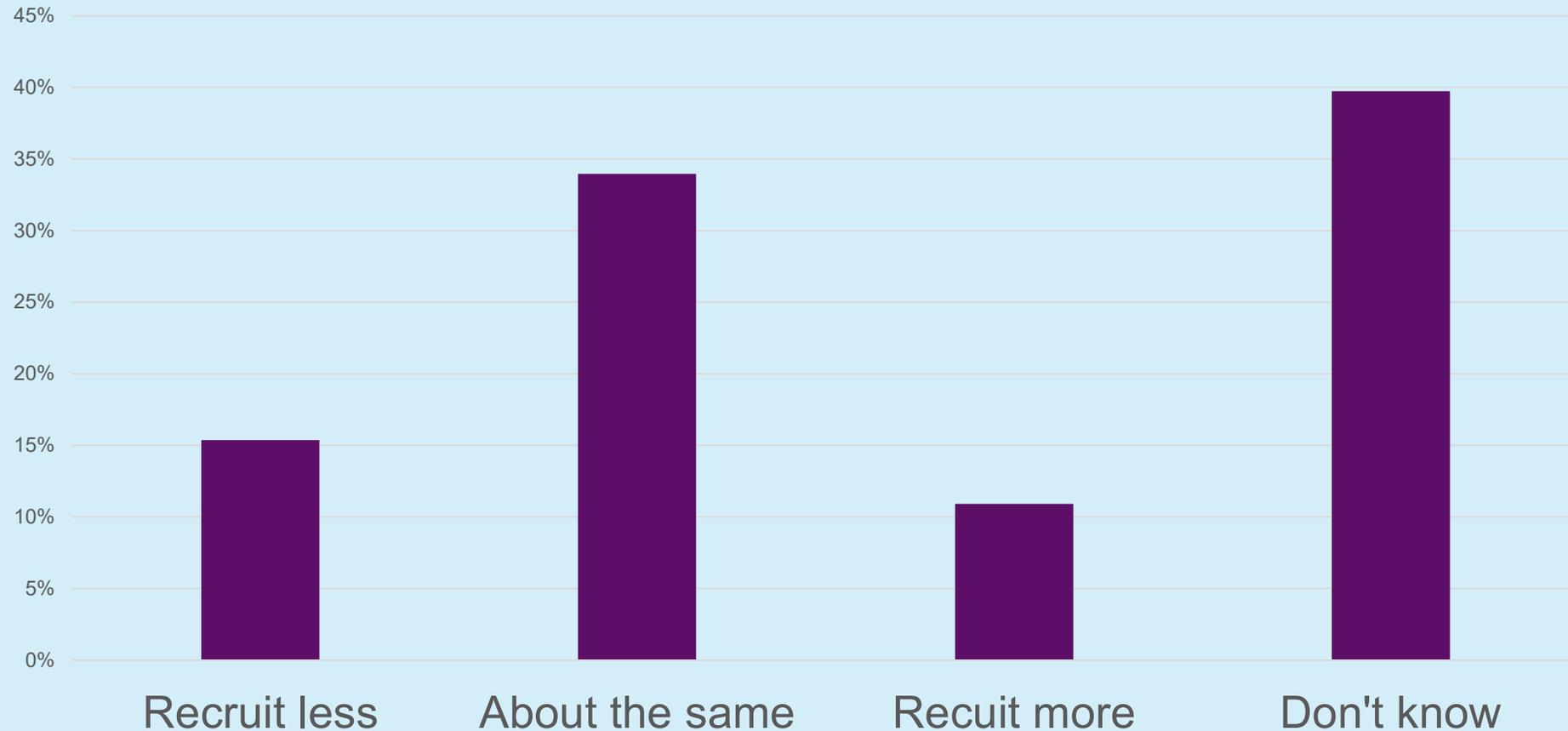
	Non-graduates (% change)	Graduates (% change)	Interns / placements (% change)
Built environment	-75	-45	-65
Charity & public sector	-72	-1	-3
Finance & professional services	-44	-12	-56
Energy, engineering & industry	-37	-15	-50
Retail & FMCG	-30	-18	-32
Legal	-21	-4	-8
Digital & IT	-11	-17	-41
Health & pharmaceuticals	10	-10	-7

Reneging on job offers

14% of respondents reported that they had already reneged on a job offer. Renege rates are particularly high in the *Built environment* sector (36%) and the *Retail & FMCG* sector (38%). Only 10% of SMEs reported having reneged.

14% of firms (12% of SMEs) are considering the possibility of reneging on more offers this year. The *Built environment* (28%) and *Retail & FMCG* (25%) are the most likely to be considering further renegees.

Recruitment plans for next year



Reasons for changing recruitment plans

'Uncertainty' is the most common reason given for firms changing their hiring plans (just under 40%). Protecting current staff is a concern across SMEs and corporates.

SMEs are more likely to be change their recruitment plans due to the financial impact on their business; large employers more concerned about ability to support new hires.

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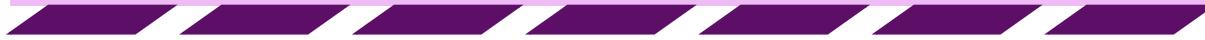
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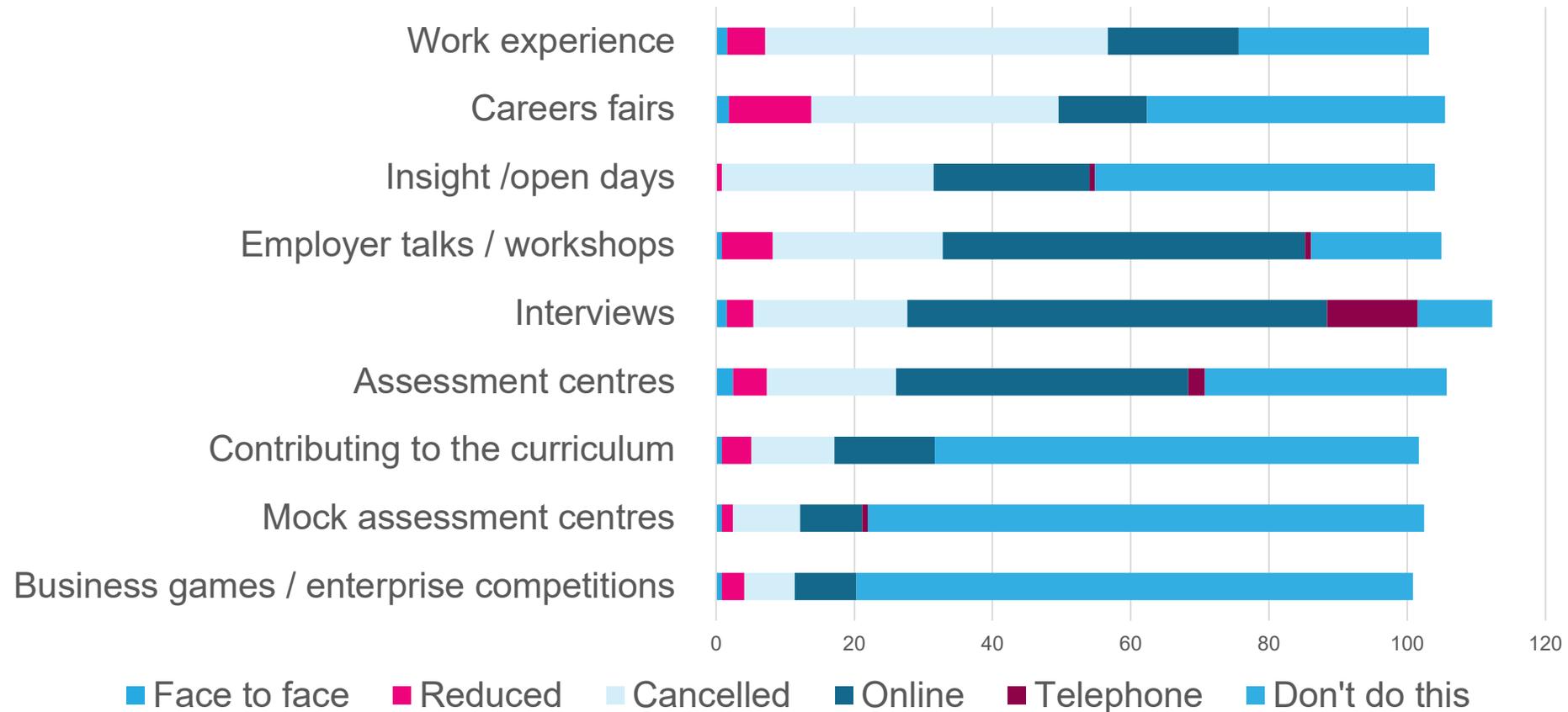
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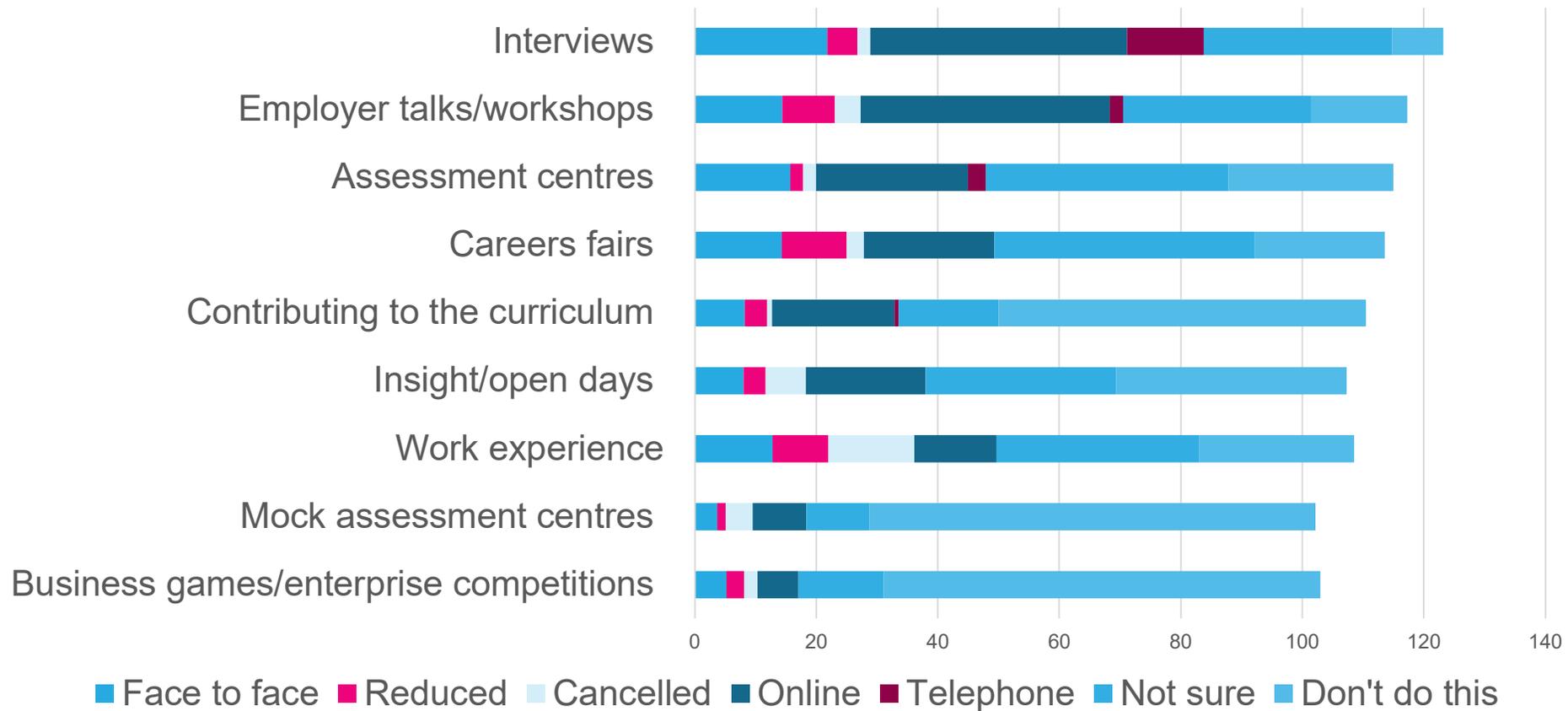
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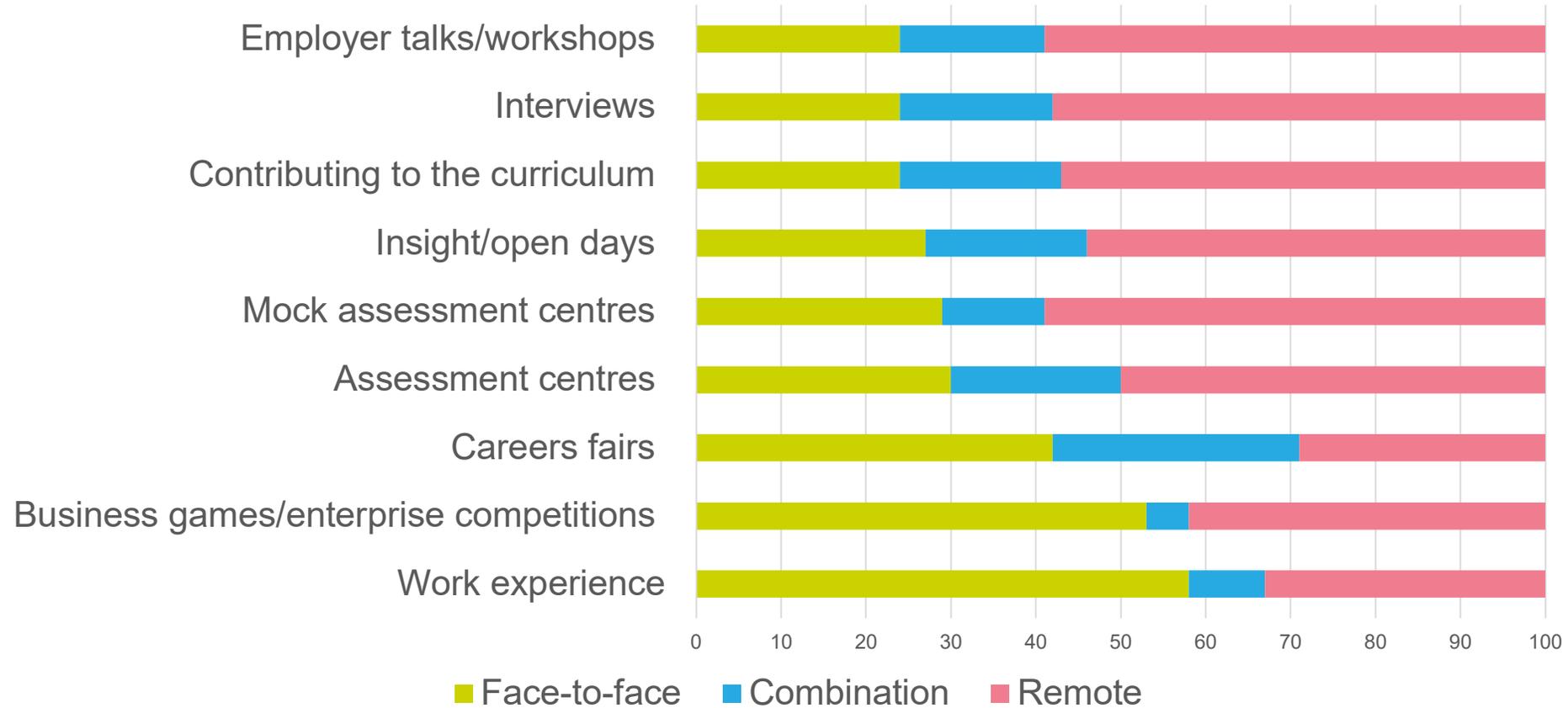
Changes during lockdown



Planned changes for the autumn



Face-to-face or remote in the autumn?



And beyond?

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Engaging with schools and colleges

A third of firms would like schools and colleges to engage with them as usual but 40% would prefer that contact is paused.

Employers want to maintain normal channels of communication. Over a third specifically mentioned communication should be through email or other online channels.

However 10% of employers want to explore digital ways of engaging with students through schools and colleges but need significant notice.

Engaging with universities

71% of firms are keen to maintain engagement with HEIs. Respondents are looking for clarity on campus activities, assessment and qualification plans.

Large employers more likely to want to retain regular contact/be contacted with updates ASAP than SMEs. SMEs slightly more likely to want no contact until later.

Desire for higher education providers to take the lead and create new opportunities for employers to engage with students.

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Inducting new staff

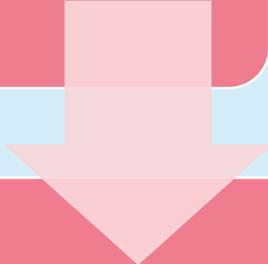
31% of employers anticipate delaying the start date, with a further 31% still undecided.

55% are planning to induct staff remotely.

January
October
September
November
March
February August

Wider employee development

73% of respondents anticipating that they would have to deliver more learning and development provision online



Almost all respondents (94%) also reported that they were providing support to help staff manage their health and wellbeing during lockdown.

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Large employers are more likely to have positive reflections on the crisis (>50% positive). Less than a third of SMEs' reflections are positive (50% negative).

Greatest concern for all employers is the financial impact of COVID-19 on their organisation. Impact on early career recruitment also significant.

Many employers expect long-term changes to how they operate and revised plans for the future.

Reflections

Energy, engineering & industry firms concerned about the return to normal post-lockdown. Worries about backlogs of work and how to capitalise on opportunities for growth.

Financial impact on their business is the greatest concerns for *Retail & FMCG, Legal* and *Finance & professional services* firms.

The third most common reflection for *Charity & public sector* organisations is that the crisis has highlighted the importance of their work.

In summary

- The short-term picture is becoming clear.
 - Student recruitment for this year is down but not out.
 - Business processes have substantially moved online.
- The medium-term picture is still unclear.
 - Recruitment numbers are still being decided, but there are some worrying signs.
 - Many business processes look like they are moving online for good.
- We are still some way from establishing the new normal!

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