



Supporting Partner



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

# Voice of the Industry

## Contact Centres Response to COVID-19

September 2020

A CCMA Research Initiative

# How did the contact centre industry respond?

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This research was conducted for the department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy by the CCMA to help understand the impact of COVID-19 on the contact centre sector and inform policy decisions.

- Fieldwork period: July 2020
- Total number of responses: 42
- Profile: Senior Manager to C-level
- Broad mix of sizes, sectors and regions

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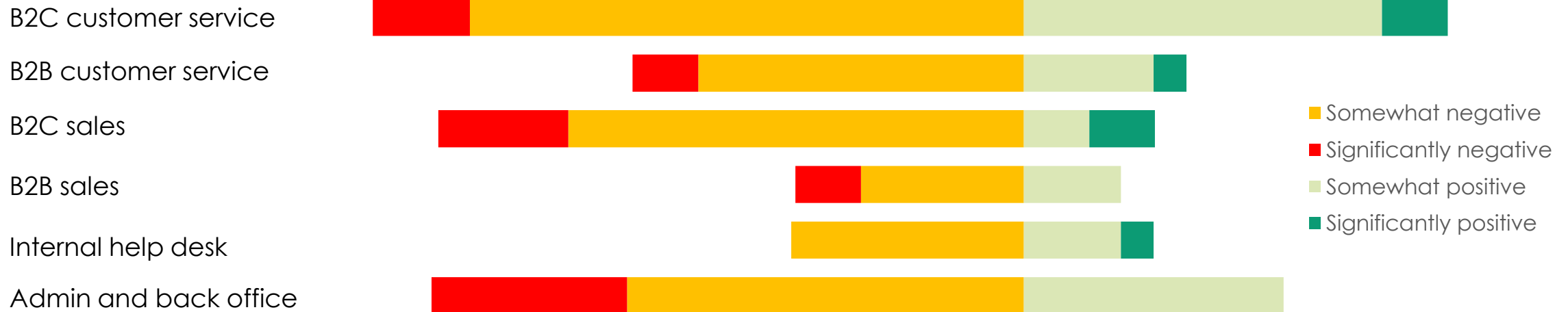
# Most businesses saw a negative impact

72%

of businesses experienced revenue loss in Apr-Jun. A third dropped by 30%+

COVID-19 had a negative impact, but not for everyone

B2C Customer Service experienced a somewhat positive impact



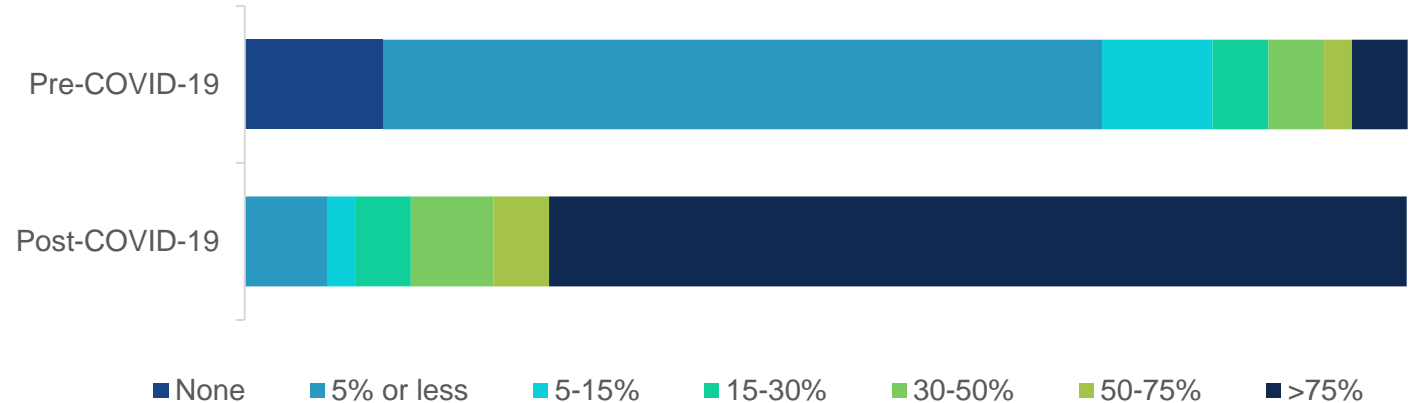
Q: To what extent, if at all, have each of the following activities been impacted by COVID-19?

# A dramatic shift in homeworking

24%

of contact centres had dedicated homeworking prior to lockdown

Q: What proportion of your contact centre advisors were/are working from home at each of the following times?



8 in 10

contact centres currently have a majority of their advisors working remotely

83%

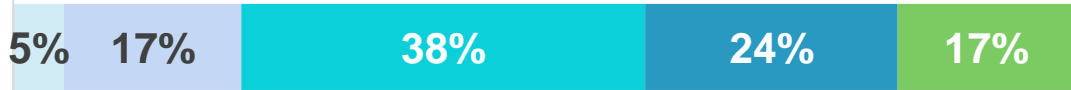
will move towards a business model that includes an increase in the number of staff working from home on a full or part time basis

# The decision to offer remote-working is widely influenced

Potential to increase capacity and/or the quality of service



Capacity to offer a wider range of working option



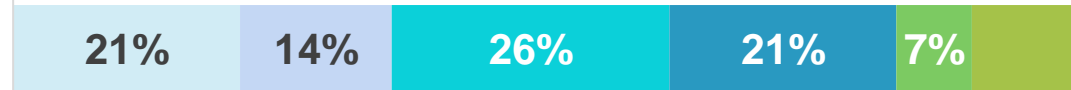
Access a wider talent pool



Potential to reduce long-term cost of premises



Potential future Government policy on flexible working



Ability to expand recruitment locations



■ Not at all ■ To a small extent ■ To some extent ■ To a great extent ■ To a very great extent ■ DK

Q: To what extent, if at all, might any of the factors listed below play a role in informing your business' decision to adopt working from home practices on a full or part-time basis, in the next 6-12 months?

# Contact centre jobs in flux

26%

plan redundancies in 2020

21%

of roles will change

48%

plan to recruit new permanent colleagues

31%

plan to recruit temporary colleagues

33%

plan to offer overtime

# Investment in new operating models

Shift patterns will continue to change

**83%** already have

**73%** plan to change shift patterns before Christmas

**83%** already invested in technology for colleagues

**48%** will continue to do so

**48%**

of contact centres expect half or more of their staff numbers to work remotely in the future

# Comments from contact centre leaders

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Travel is hugely restrictive. Limited space doesn't allow for any growth without significant investment. Training and onboarding in an incredibly technical environment requires face to face training which space doesn't permit with BAU colleagues being in the office.

*We offered free breakfast and lunches as local food establishments closed.*

The peer support is the area most affected by home/remote working. The information osmosis has been really missed. As my agents were not recruited as home workers (which I believe is a different skill set and has different resilience and mental toughness), many have struggled without the peer support, camaraderie and the ability to disassociate home and work. Many want to return to the workplace but with social distancing there is not capacity to do so.



# Comments from contact centre leaders

Organisations are looking to cut cost, which may impact employment. More should be done to help maintain employment levels in the UK CC industry, as this type of work is critical within certain regions including the NE.

*I think a home working agent is a different skill set to a call centre agent with different drivers, behaviours and mental toughness. I plan to recruit specifically for home agents rather than contact centre agents as a result.*

Whilst many organisations have got their people working from home, the reality is that this was done (necessarily) in a very fast way.

Not all the technology has worked, information security, card data security has not always been followed, the people aspects of homeworking not always taken into account. I know of people working (taking customer calls) off a laptop on the floor, iron boards used as tables etc.



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