

# BUDGET 2025 SURVEY

Prepared for the City of Vancouver

October 24, 2024



# Background, Objectives and Methodology



## Background/Context

Each year, the City of Vancouver must deliver a balanced budget while maintaining services and capital projects. Public input on the budget helps inform Council when deliberating the draft annual budget. **This report presents the findings of the City's 2025 Budget Survey.** The survey was fielded on the City's Talk Vancouver platform. Ipsos' role was to analyze the data and prepare a summary report.



## Engagement Objectives

- Understand priorities for City spending in 2025
- Understand preferences for delivering a balanced budget in 2025



## Methodology

- Online survey with Vancouver residents (15+ years) and business owners/operators
  - Resident survey included targets for age and geographic zone
- Survey promoted across City communication channels, Talk Vancouver panel and via 311
- Fielded Aug. 21 to Sept. 16, 2024
- Final data weighted by age and geographic zone (residents) and business size (businesses)



## Who We Heard From

- n=4319 total responses
  - n=3403 residents
  - n=916 businesses

*See Sample Characteristics at the end of this report for more information*

# RESULTS

# Budget Priorities

- For residents, there are two priorities that stand above all others: *deliver high-quality City services and infrastructure* (57%) and *work with partners to address the local housing crisis* (56%). *Manage public funds, resources and staff responsibly as part of good governance* sits in third (38%).
- There are also two priorities among businesses: *deliver high-quality City services and infrastructure* (45%) and *work with partners to address the local housing crisis* (41%). However, businesses generally have a more diverse set of priorities, with *support the local economy to help businesses thrive* (39%) and *manage public funds, resources and staff responsibly as part of good governance* (36%) placing not far behind.

## Residents (n=3403)



## Businesses (n=916)



Base: All respondents

Q1. Which of the Council priorities listed above do you think are most important for the 2025 Budget? Select up to three.

# Budget Priorities: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- Housing is the top priority among those who are 15-39 years of age, while City services and infrastructure tops the list of those who are 40+ years.
- Those in the Northwest, Southwest and Southeast attach the greatest priority to City services and infrastructure. Those living Downtown/West End and in the Northeast prioritize housing.
- For renters, housing is the number one priority. Homeowners prioritize City services and infrastructure.

	Base: 3403	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC AREA <sup>1</sup>					HOUSING TENURE	
			15-39 1158	40-59 1069	60+ 1086	Downtown/ West End 737	Northeast 625	Northwest 792	Southeast 656	Southwest 593	Rent 1389	Own 1940
Deliver high-quality City services and infrastructure		<b>57%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>63%</b>
Work with partners to address the local housing crisis		<b>56%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Manage public funds, resources and staff responsibly as part of good governance		<b>38%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>49%</b>
Respond to the climate emergency		<b>30%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Invest in emergency planning and services to make Vancouver safe		<b>27%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Enable a healthy, inclusive and equitable city		<b>26%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Support the local economy to help businesses thrive		<b>25%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Support Vancouver as a vibrant and diverse city		<b>12%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Support and advance reconciliation		<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>5%</b>

Base: All respondents

Q1. Which of the Council priorities listed above do you think are most important for the 2025 Budget? Select up to three.

Top priority

# Other Priorities For 2025 Budget

(among those answering)(coded open-ends with example verbatim comments)

- Residents and businesses identify a wide variety of other priorities that they think should be considered for the 2025 Budget.
- Community safety/policing and environment/climate change/climate action are among the top mentions of both residents and businesses.
- Residents also suggest housing, while businesses point to fiscal management and homelessness.

## Residents (n=1458)

1	<b>Community safety/policing (11%)</b>
1	<b>Housing (11%)</b>
3	<b>Environment/climate change/climate action (9%)</b>

-   Make the city safe for residents and families.
-   Address the housing crisis with more affordable options.
-   Contribute to promoting environmental sustainability by reducing waste and recycling.

## Businesses (n=401)

1	<b>Community safety/policing (12%)</b>
2	<b>City finances (control spending, reduce salaries/wages) (8%)</b>
2	<b>Homelessness (8%)</b>
2	<b>Environment/climate change/climate action (8%)</b>

-   Enhance public safety measures in commercial districts.
-   Look for efficiencies within the city operations to cut down costs...
-   Address and provide services for homeless.
-   Support green infrastructure and clean energy solutions through financial investment.

Base: Those answering

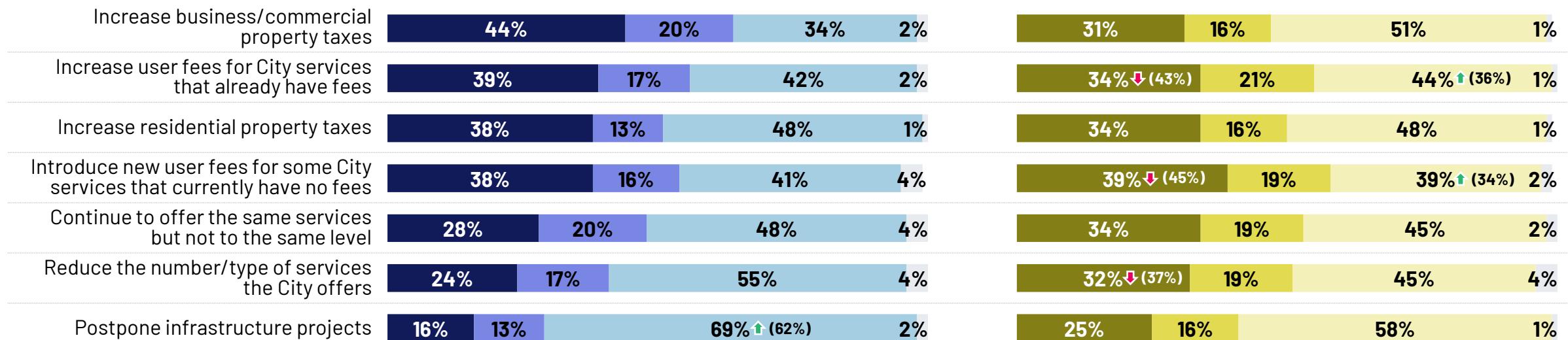
Q2. Do you have any other priorities that should be considered for the 2025 Budget?

# Support for Financial Tools to Balance the Budget

- To balance the budget, residents are most likely to support an *increase in business/commercial property taxes* (44%).
- The leading option among businesses is *introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees* (39%, down from 45% in 2023).
- Residents and businesses alike are the least likely to support *postpone infrastructure projects* (16% and 25%, respectively).

**Residents (n=3403)**

■ Total Support ■ Neither ■ Total Oppose ■ Don't know



Base: All respondents

Q3. The City has a number of financial tools that can be used to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose each of the following options.

↑↓ Changes of 5 points or more vs. 2023

# Support for Financial Tools to Balance the Budget: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- Younger residents (15-39 years) are more likely to support an increase in taxes (both business/commercial and residential). Support for other financial tools tends to be higher among those who are 40+ years of age. The one exception is support for postponing infrastructure projects, which is equally low across all age groups.
- Those in the Northeast and Southeast are more likely to support an increase in business/commercial property taxes. Support for an increase in residential property taxes is higher in the Northeast, Northwest and Downtown/West End.
- Renters prefer tax increases (residential and business/commercial) while homeowners prefer user fees (new and increased) most of all.

TOTAL SUPPORT	Base:	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC AREA					HOUSING TENURE	
			15-39	40-59	60+	Downtown/ West End	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Rent	Own
Increase business/commercial property taxes		<b>44%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>38%</b>
Increase user fees for City services that already have fees		<b>39%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Increase residential property taxes		<b>38%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>27%</b>
Introduce new user fees for some City services that currently have no fees		<b>38%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Continue to offer the same services but not to the same level		<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Reduce the number/type of services the City offers		<b>24%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Postpone infrastructure projects		<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>

Base: All respondents

Q3. The City has a number of financial tools that can be used to balance the budget. Tell us how much you support or oppose each of the following options.

Significantly higher

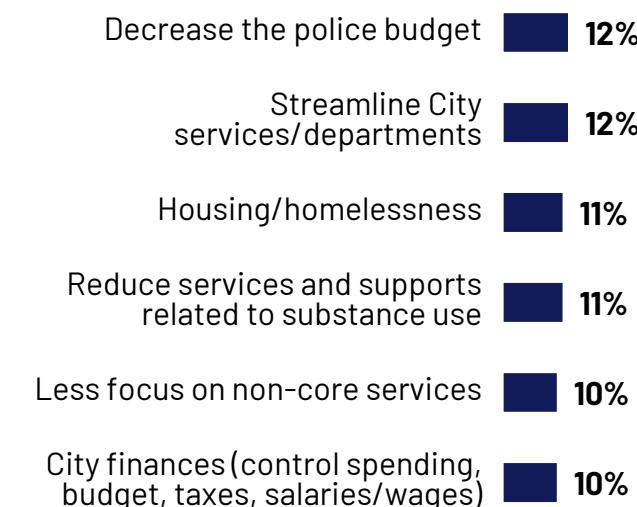
Significantly lower

# Top Suggestions for Programs and Services to Cut or Reduce

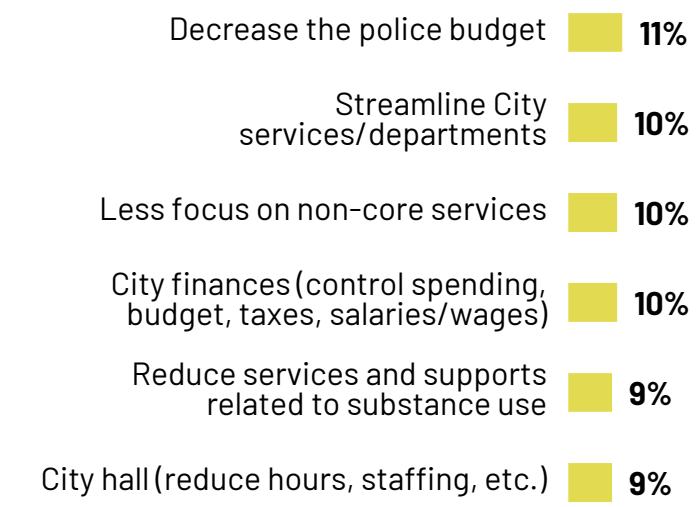
(among those answering)(coded open-ends)

- Respondents who indicated they would support continuing to offer the same services but not at the same level were asked a follow up question to understand which programs or services they thought the City should stop offering or reduce the level of service offered to help balance the budget.
- Residents and businesses identify a variety of programs and services that they think could be eliminated or reduced. Common themes among both are decreasing the police budget, streamlining City services/departments, reducing services and supports related to substance use, less focus on non-core services and improved fiscal management.

## Residents (n=614)



## Businesses (n=184)



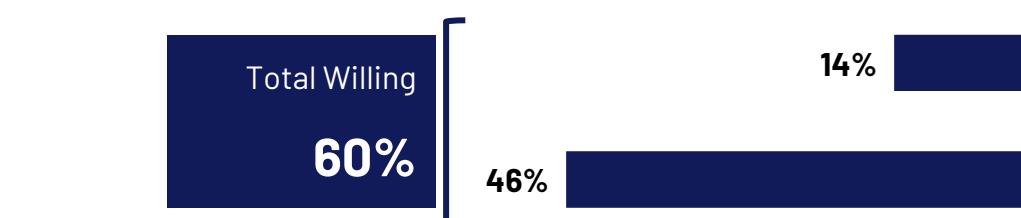
Base: Those answering

Q2a. To help balance the budget, which programs and services should the City stop offering or reduce the level of service offered?

# Willingness to Pay Increased User Fees

- In total, 60% of residents say they would be willing to pay more in user fees for the services they use in order to maintain or improve them.
- Willingness to pay increased user fees is even higher among businesses (71%, up from 63% in 2023).

Residents (n=3403)



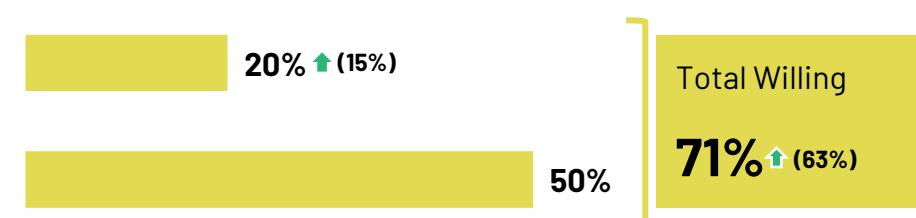
Very willing

20% ↑ (15%)

Somewhat willing

50%

Businesses (n=916)



Total Willing  
71% ↑ (63%)

Total Not Willing  
27% ↓ (34%)

Base: All respondents

Q4. The public pays user fees to access some City services, facilities and utilities. Some examples include business licences, building and development permits, and use of City-owned facilities such as recreation centres. Would you be willing to pay more in user fees to maintain or improve the services you or your business use? Select one.

↑ ↓ Changes of 5 points or more vs. 2023

# Willingness to Pay Increased User Fees: Demographic Differences (Residents)

- Willingness to pay increased user fees is consistent across all age groups.
- Willingness to pay increased user fees is highest in the Northeast and lowest in the Southwest.
- Willingness to pay increased user fees is higher among homeowners than renters.

	Base:	TOTAL	AGE			GEOGRAPHIC AREA					HOUSING TENURE	
			15-39	40-59	60+	Downtown/ West End	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Rent	Own
Total Willing		60%	61%	61%	59%	59%	63%	62%	59%	57%	57%	62%
Total Not Willing		33%	32%	32%	35%	34%	30%	31%	34%	38%	35%	33%

Base: All respondents

Q4. The public pays user fees to access some City services, facilities and utilities. Some examples include business licences, building and development permits, and use of City-owned facilities such as recreation centres. Would you be willing to pay more in user fees to maintain or improve the services you or your business use? Select one.

Significantly higher

Significantly lower

# Other Comments/Suggestions For 2025 Budget

(among those answering)(coded open-ends with example verbatim comments)

- Residents and businesses provide a wide variety of final comments and suggestions regarding the 2025 Budget.
- The top comment among residents is "address housing issues" (20%).
- The top comment among businesses is "City finances (control spending, reduce salaries/wages)" (15%).

## Residents (n=692)

### 1 Address housing issues (20%)

 Affordable housing should be a top priority.

### 2 Decrease the police budget (16%)

 Reduce the police budget and re-allocate to more effective programs.

### 3 City finances (control spending, reduce salaries/wages) (12%)

 Aim for better management of money, not more taxes or fees.

### 4 Increase property taxes/fees (11%)

 We need to substantially increase residential property taxes. We can have nice things if we're willing to pay for them.

### 5 Increase taxes (for the rich/corporations) (10%)

 Increase property taxes on high value homes.

## Businesses (n=158)

### 1 City finances (control spending, reduce salaries/wages) (15%)

 All levels of government need to cut spending, cut programs, services and staff in order to live within our means.

### 2 Decrease the police budget (13%)

 Re-allocate the budget of the Vancouver Police Department.

### 3 Address housing issues (11%)

 Top priority needs to be the housing crisis.

### 4 Support all kinds of business (10%)

 Supporting small businesses with grants or tax breaks can boost the local economy.

### 4 Improve community safety/increase policing (10%)

 Public safety should be focus of this year's budget as it relates to crime and street disorder.

Base: Those answering

Q5. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to add about the 2025 Budget? Please type in your comments in the space provided.

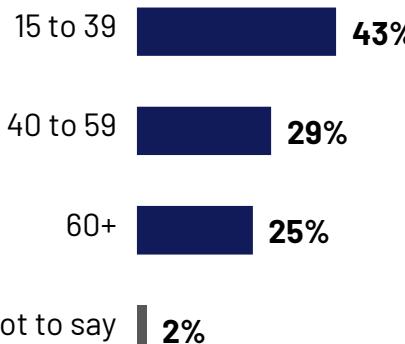
# SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

# Sample Characteristics: Residents

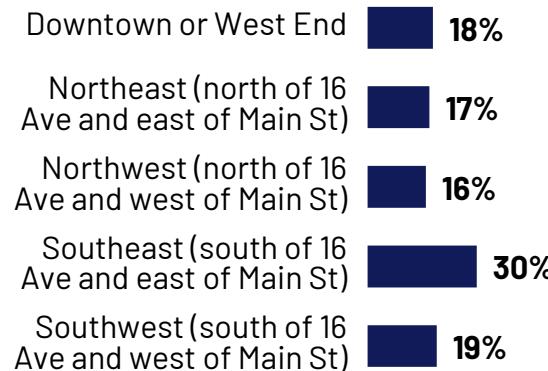
(weighted by age and area of city to align with the Federal Census)



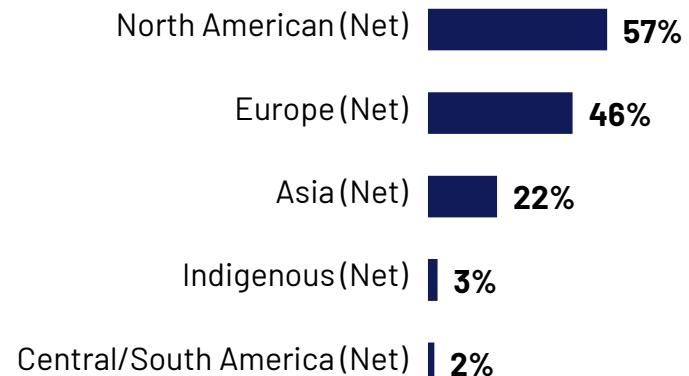
## Age



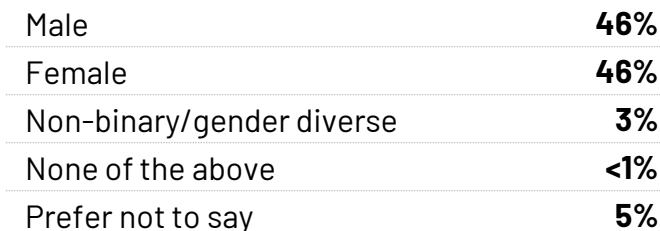
## Area of City Live In



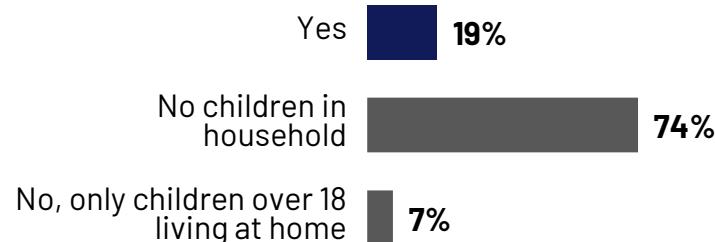
## Ethnic Origin



## Gender Identity



## Children <18 in Household



Base: All residents (n=3403)

Note: Ethnic origin has been collapsed into over-arching categories (Nets) for reporting purposes.

# Sample Characteristics: Businesses

(weighted by business size to align with BC Stats business counts)

## Number of Employees

None - self-employed  34%

1 to 3  16%

4 to 9  14%

10 to 24  23%

25 to 99  9%

100 or more  2%

Prefer not to say  1%

Base: All businesses(n=916)