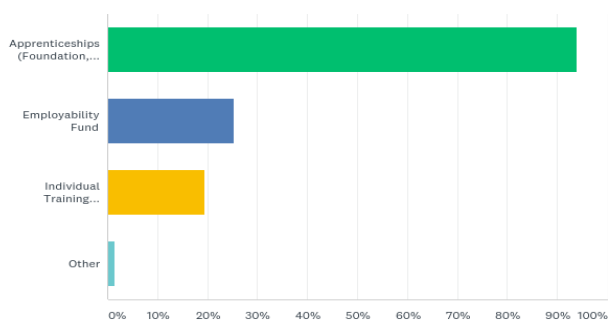


**Overview**

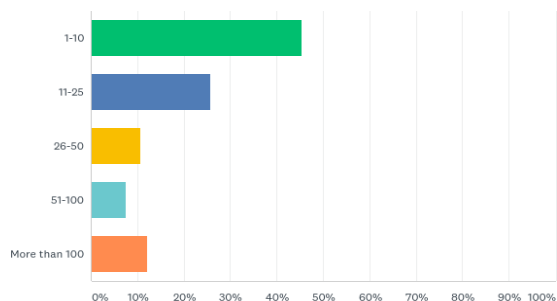
A survey seeking feedback from STF members on the impact of COVID-19 restrictions was conducted between 9 and 15 April 2020. A total of 14 questions were asked. Sixty-seven responses were received. A summary of the key questions and responses is provided below.

**1 Which of the following National Training Programmes do you deliver?**



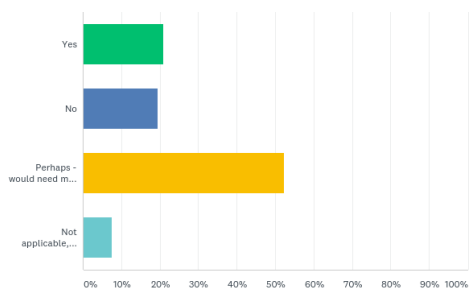
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Apprenticeships (Foundation, Modern, Graduate)	94.03% 63
Employability Fund	25.37% 17
Individual Training Accounts	19.40% 13
Other	1.49% 1
Total Respondents: 67	

**2 Total number of staff in your organisation.**



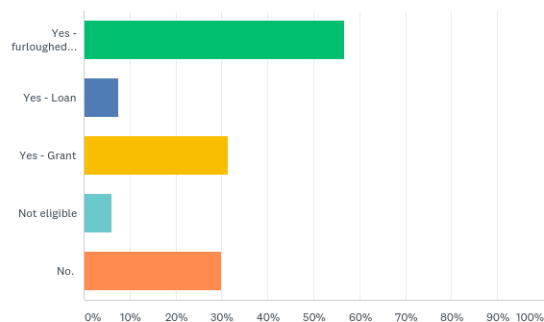
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1-10	45.45% 30
11-25	25.76% 17
26-50	10.61% 7
51-100	7.58% 5
More than 100	12.12% 8
Total Respondents: 66	

3 STF, SDS and Scottish Government are working on proposals to offer training providers monthly advanced payments of their MA contract value in 2020-21 to address immediate cash flow issues. The details are still being discussed, but in principle, would such payments be useful to your business?



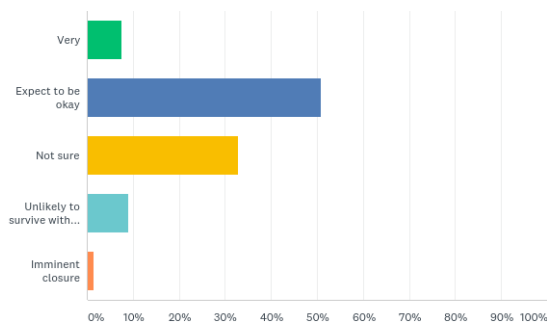
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	20.90% 14
No	19.40% 13
Perhaps - would need more detail	52.24% 35
Not applicable, e.g. don't have an MA contract	7.46% 5
Total Respondents: 67	

#### 4 Have you applied for any COVID-19 Government assistance?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes - furloughed staff	56.72% 38
Yes - Loan	7.46% 5
Yes - Grant	31.34% 21
Not eligible	5.97% 4
No.	29.85% 20
Total Respondents: 67	

#### 5 How resilient is your organisation to surviving the COVID-19 funding uncertainty?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very	7.46% 5
Expect to be okay	50.75% 34
Not sure	32.84% 22
Unlikely to survive without new or additional funding	8.96% 6
Imminent closure	1.49% 1
Total Respondents: 67	

#### General comments

Fifty general comments were received. A sample of these – representing the main themes raised – is given below.

##### Business support

- Although we are a small business, we provide training services within premises that are considered too large to meet Small Business Bonus Scheme requirements. As such, we are not eligible for the SBB rate reduction or grant. Fixed costs remain – and an advanced payment for MA contract would help.
- Monthly payments from SDS would help us if flexible enough to allow some staff to remain on furlough.
- The MA advanced payments being discussed is common sense and very welcome from us. However, the length of time it is now taking is tarnishing the support offered.

##### Delivery

- It is likely that staff will be furloughed from 1 May unless there are any further alternatives put forward by SDS or Scottish Government to allow training providers to continue supporting candidates and draw down income through quarterly reviews with only the training provider and candidate signature (employer signature could be gained at a later date).

- Changes needed to allow candidate progression without employer involvement in reviews. This would mean our assessors could start working again so that we do not have a backlog and are ready for new starts once things are back to normal. I am also very concerned about the impact this will have on next year's contract if we are unable to start enough candidates this year.
- Our EF programme for 20-21 cannot start until the lockdown is over. We are continuing classes with existing candidates through some remote learning. This allows them to receive payment of YPA. But it looks unlikely that we will be resulting them during this time as they need more support.
- I can't see how we can deliver a quality training programme until we can safely access our trainees. Until distancing restrictions are eased, I wouldn't be confident in our trainees progressing.

#### Awarding bodies

- There is an appreciation that there is a lot to consider, but the timescales awarding bodies are taking is a concern. The latest guidance suggests adaptations will come in to play, but SQA are only going to start looking at what these could be from 20 April.

#### Communication

- SDS and Government have been very slow in addressing issues faced by apprenticeship and employability training providers.
- Support and communication related to the Employability Fund provision has been poor.
- Our Skills Investment Advisor has been excellent and a constant source of support. In general, the guidance from SDS has been slow in coming out at a time when employers were moving quickly, and we did not have all the answers.

#### Looking ahead

- Difficult to look more than 2-3 months ahead. Much depends on the length of time that restrictions are in place.

#### Business closure

- Ongoing funding reductions made it very difficult to deliver the contract. COVID-19 led to the final decision to close business. (MA provider).