

SKYE AND LOCHALSH BUSINESS HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

Thank you very much for taking part in this survey.

The survey is seeking input from businesses in Skye and Lochalsh, across all sectors, on any challenges experienced due to a lack of affordable housing and possible solutions.

By taking part you can provide valuable evidence of the scale of the issues which exist and have your say on the actions that should be taken to make things better.

This survey is being undertaken jointly by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association, SkyeConnect and The Highland Council. In addition to this survey the study will also involve a smaller number of one to one, in depth interviews with larger businesses.

Note that participation is anonymous and all of your responses will be treated as confidential.

This survey is being conducted by independent market research company 56 Degree Insight in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete. If you prefer you can complete in part then return to it by clicking save.

Firstly, to help us to understand your current situation please provide a few details about your business/organisation.

In which of the following sectors does your business/organisation operate?

Please select all of those which apply or type in others

- Retail
- Hospitality
- Tourism
- Logistics/Transport
- Digital
- Energy
- Business services / Professional Services
- Agriculture
- Food and drink manufacturing
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Aquaculture
- Marine activities
- Fishing
- Public sector organisation
- Voluntary sector organisation
- Other not for profit organisation
- Other

Please type in details:

Where in Skye and Lochalsh is your business/organisation based?

If multiple places please select all of the locations where you have an office/outlet, etc.

Skye:

- Armadale
- Broadford
- Carbost
- Dunvegan
- Elgol
- Kyleakin
- Portree
- Staffin
- Raasay
- Uig
- Other Skye

Please type in where:

Lochalsh:

- Arnisdale
- Dornie
- Glenelg
- Kyle of Lochalsh
- Plockton
- Other Lochalsh

Please type in where:

- Not based in Skye and Lochalsh but have employee(s) living in area
- Not based in Skye and Lochalsh and no employees living in area

Where is your business based?

What is your businesses' gross annual revenue?

If this has varied between years please select the option which reflects your expected revenue this financial year

- Less than £80,000
- £80,000 - £200,000
- £200,001 - £500,000
- £500,001 - £1m
- £1m - £5m
- Over £5m
- Not relevant
- Don't know

Please type in amount:

Does the number of staff employed by your business tend to vary over the year (e.g. due to changes in demand in different seasons)?

- Yes
- No

How many staff do you currently employ?

Please type in number of people working for your business/organisation, including those employed part time and full time. If none type in zero.

Permanent members of staff _____

Temporary staff (e.g. contractual or freelance staff) _____

How many of your permanent staff are in full time or part time positions?

Full time staff (30 or more hours per week) _____

Part time staff (less than 30 hours per week) _____

How many staff do you typically employ during each month?

*Please type in number of people working for your business/organisation each month on a permanent or temporary basis, including those employed part time and full time. **If none type in zero.***

Permanent members of staff:

January _____

February _____

March _____

April _____

May _____

June _____

July _____

August _____

September _____

October _____

November _____

December _____

Contractual or freelance staff:

January _____

February _____

March _____

April _____

May _____

June _____

July _____

August _____

September _____

October _____

November _____

December _____

Typically how many of the staff working for your business/ organisation each month are in full time or part time positions?

Please type in number of people working for your business/organisation each month on a full time or part time or basis. If none type in zero.

a) Full time staff (30 or more hours per week):

January _____

February _____

March _____

April _____

May _____

June _____

July _____

August _____

September _____

October _____

November _____

December _____

b) Part time staff (less than 30 hours per week):

January _____

February _____

March _____

April _____

May _____

June _____

July _____

August _____

September _____

October _____

November _____

December _____

Approximately, what proportion of your business/ organisation's staff normally live within the following geographic areas?

% - Please type in your response as a percentage totalling 100%

If you aren't sure provide your best estimate. If no staff live in an area type in a zero

The part(s) of Skye and
Lochalsh your business is based
in _____

Elsewhere in Skye and Lochalsh _____

Elsewhere in Highlands and
Islands _____

Elsewhere in Scotland _____

Outside of Scotland _____

Don't know

Does your business/organisation provide any of your staff with accommodation?

- No
- Yes, accommodation provided 'on site'
- Yes, accommodation provided elsewhere

Please provide some further details of the accommodation you provide:

How many staff use the accommodation you provide:

Does your business/organisation do any of the following or take other steps to support your staff in relation to their accommodation?

- Helping new staff/recruits to find somewhere to live
- Offering financial support to help staff to pay for accommodation
- Paying staff annualised salaries (i.e. pay spread equally over year to make budgeting easier)
- Other
- None of the above

Please provide further details:

Approximately, what proportion of your business/ organisation's staff normally live in the following types of accommodation?

% - Please type in your response as a percentage totalling 100%

If you aren't sure provide your best estimate. If you don't know or are unable to respond tick the box.

A property they own (including with a mortgage) _____

A property they are renting _____

Living in parent/ other family member's home _____

Living in friend's home _____

Living in hotel/ B&B/ guesthouse or other temporary accommodation _____

Other _____

- Don't know

The next few questions relate to your business/organisation's experiences recruiting new staff and retaining existing staff

How many posts, if any, has your business/organisation sought to fill during each of the last three years?

This includes both replacing staff who have left and seeking to fill new posts

Include both full time and part time posts and permanent and temporary positions

During 2021 _____

During 2020 _____

During 2019 _____

During the last 3 years have you on any occasion offered a job to an individual who has decided not to take the role?

- Yes
- No

Please estimate the proportion of people who you offer roles to that do not take up this offer?

% - Type in an estimate of the percentage

Does your business record the reasons for people not taking up offers of employment?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

What are the most commonly provided reasons?

To what extent, if any, has/is your business/organisation experienced problems recruiting staff or retaining existing staff during the following time periods?

	Not a problem at all	A minor problem	A moderate problem	A major problem
Currently (i.e. positions seeking to fill now or in immediate future)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During 2021	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During 2019 and 2020	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many posts, if any, do you expect your business/organisation to need to fill during 2022?

This includes both replacing staff who have left and new posts. If none type in Zero.

Your expect to need to fill {Q27} posts during 2022.

Approximately what number of these positions, if any, will be seasonal posts?

If none type in zero

Looking further to the future, do you expect the number of posts you will need to fill each year over the next 3 years or so to increase, remain similar or decrease?

a) Permanent posts

- Increase significantly
- Increase slightly
- No change
- Decrease slightly
- Decrease significantly
- Don't know

b) Seasonal posts

- Increase significantly
- Increase slightly
- No change
- Decrease slightly
- Decrease significantly
- Don't know

Looking to the future, to what extent, do you expect that the recruitment of new staff or retention of existing staff will be a problem for your business/organisation during the following periods?

a) Permanent posts

	Don't expect it to be a problem	Expect it to be a minor problem	Expect it to be a moderate problem	Expect it to be a major problem	Not relevant
During 2022	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The following 2 years (2023 and 2024)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Seasonal posts

During 2022	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The following 2 years (2023 and 2024)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

In your opinion which of the following, if any, have contributed to problems recruiting new staff?

Tick all of those which apply

	Permanent posts	Seasonal posts
Competition from other business sectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff unable to find accommodation or housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient numbers of local people available to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issues relating to the UK leaving the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A lack of suitably skilled/ qualified people living in local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working in your sector does not appeal (e.g. pay, hours or conditions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issues related to Covid 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition from other places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport issues (e.g. staff unable to access to transport to reach workplace)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other factors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nothing/ not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other businesses in Skye and Lochalsh have told us that shortage of housing/accommodation that staff can access to rent or buy is a barrier to recruiting new staff and/or retaining existing staff.

To what extent if any, do you feel that this issue has impacted on your business/organisation's efforts to recruit staff?

	A major impact	A moderate impact	A minor impact	No impact at all	Don't know/ Not relevant
Permanent posts	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Seasonal posts	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Thinking ahead to the future, if no action is taken, do you expect issues caused by staff not being able to find housing/accommodation to worsen, improve or not change for your business/ organisation?

	Expect situation to worsen	Expect situation to improve	Expect no change in situation	Don't expect this to be an issue at all	Don't know/ Not relevant
Permanent posts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seasonal posts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

To help us to understand the scale of staff recruitment and retention issues caused for your business because of difficulties finding housing/ accommodation, please provide an estimate of the number of positions likely to be affected in the next 12 months.

This may include seasonal roles where you anticipate difficulties. If none type in zero.

Permanent full-time positions _____

Permanent part-time positions _____

Temporary positions (e.g. seasonal, contractual or freelance staff) _____

If you can, please type in the following details of the types of job most impacted by these issues (e.g. particular roles, skill requirements, departments, etc.)

Department/ area of your
business

Roles/ levels

Skill requirements

Please tick the appropriate boxes below to indicate the salary levels impacted by staffing issues caused by difficulties finding housing/ accommodation (per annum, pre tax)

Select all of the salary levels affected

- Less than £10,000
- £10,001 to £15,000
- £15,001 to £25,000
- £25,001 to £30,000
- £30,001 to £35,000
- £35,001 to £40,000
- £40,001 to £45,000
- £45,001 to £50,000
- £50,001 to £60,000
- Over £60,000
- Don't know

From your experience, are the types of staff needed for the roles which you are having issues recruiting for and/or retaining staff for because difficulties finding housing/ accommodation likely to be in any of the following groups?

Select all of those which apply

- Younger people with no children
- Families with young children living at home (e.g. up to primary school age)
- Families with older children living at home (e.g. secondary school or older)
- Older people with no children living at home
- Other particular population groups
- No particular age or lifestage groups
- Don't know

Please type in details:

Looking to the future, in your opinion, which types of accommodation/ housing are most needed to help reduce the difficulties your business/organisation is facing recruiting staff?

Please provide your views on the size, type, tenure and location where you feel housing is most needed.

Tick all of the boxes which you feel apply or Don't Know if you can't respond.

Property type:

- Flat
- House
- Bungalow
- Other
- Don't know

Please type in:

Tenure (*see footnote for details):

- Rented accommodation
- Accommodation available to buy/own
- Shared equity*
- Rent to buy*
- Self build plot
- Mid market rent*
- Other
- Don't know

Please type in:

Property size:

- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedroom
- 3 bedroom
- 4+ bedrooms
- Don't know

Location(s) in Skye and Lochalsh:

Prior to completing this questionnaire had you heard of the Highland Housing Register?

- Yes
- No

As far as you are aware, have any of your staff registered themselves on the Highland Housing Register?

- Yes – one or more staff are on the register
- No – none of your staff are on the register
- Don't know

As far as you are aware, do any of your staff require housing but are not registered on the Highland Housing Register?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Apart from any difficulties your own business/organisation has had recruiting or retaining staff, have you encountered any other business or operational issues due to people having difficulties finding housing/ accommodation in Skye and Lochalsh?

- No – no issues experienced
- Yes

Please type in details:

If unresolved, are difficulties recruiting or retaining staff due to a lack of housing/ accommodation likely to impact upon your businesses' plans to invest in the area?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, possibly
- No
- Don't know

Please provide further details:

How do we solve housing issues in Skye and Lochalsh?

We are keen to get your feedback on the actions which need to be taken to address housing issues in Skye and Lochalsh.

Some of these may be 'quick fixes' which can make a difference in the short term while others may be longer term changes which will improve the situation across a period of several years.

First of all, please type in below any suggestions you have on the actions that need be taken to help tackle the issue of a lack of affordable housing:

This may include recommendations for actions to be taken by any of the stakeholders involved e.g. Scottish Government, Highland Council, local businesses, communities, residents, etc.

Next we will provide you with brief details on 6 suggested solutions. For each of these please read the details then answer the questions to indicate whether or not you support the proposal and any additional feedback you have on each.

Proposal A - Increasing the stock of rented housing in Skye and Lochalsh that is really affordable

The challenge:

Currently on Skye and Lochalsh individuals struggle to find 'affordable' housing to rent, because they don't have priority for social housing, there are no suitable private rentals in their area, or if they are on average incomes, a private let is unaffordable.

The proposal:

Highland Council, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association, and their partners need to increase the stock of social housing and other rental options which are genuinely affordable, either through new builds, existing stock, or by bringing empty homes in the private sector back into use.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Why do you say that?

Proposal B - Increasing the stock of housing to buy in Skye and Lochalsh that is really affordable

The challenge:

Currently in Skye and Lochalsh individuals looking to access 'affordable' housing to purchase still need to be able to find a mortgage of between £170,000 and £200,000, and find a substantial deposit. Given average wages, that is unachievable for many people.

The proposal:

Highland Council, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association and their partners need to increase supply shared equity and other low cost home ownership housing options which are genuinely affordable, through new builds, self-builds and serviced plots.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Why do you say that?

Proposal C - Develop and promote creative finance solutions to allow more people to qualify for a mortgage and to make rental affordable

The challenge:

Given average wages and normal mortgage lending practices, borrowing the amounts needed to purchase a home in Skye and Lochalsh is unachievable for many people.

The proposal:

Remote and island flexibility in the rules applying to government schemes, and new creative ways to support house buyers and renters need to be developed and made available. These could include the following:

- Make low cost home ownership more accessible to people in Lochalsh and Skye, with more flexibility, island-proofed rules and conditions
- Crowdfunding to encourage investors (see Staffin Community Housing Project on Skye)
- 95% LTV mortgage scheme and more flexible terms and interest rates for first time buyers
- Increased involvement of community trusts
- Re-introduce Rural Home Ownership Grants (RHOGs)
- Intergenerational mortgages

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Why do you say that?

Proposal D - Land Reform and increased access to finance to make it easier for communities to buy land from private estates

The challenge:

Currently a significant proportion of the land on Skye is owned by private estates. These private land owners have little incentive to release land so that it can be used for community purposes such as housing. Also, the community ownership funds are limited, and the processes currently in place to allow communities to access the funds to purchase land can be onerous and lengthy. Crofting legislation and governance is also a barrier to housing for community needs.

The proposal:

Changes should be made to legislation to encourage private owners to sell land to communities for housing. Some have proposed that these changes could go as far as permitting compulsory purchases.

Alongside these changes, the processes which allow communities to accessed finances from the Scottish Land Fund need to be streamlined, and the fund itself be adequately resourced. Government should reform crofting law and regulations to make the building of community housing assets and affordable housing easier.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Why do you say that?

Proposal E - Adopting innovative building approaches to speed up and reduce the cost of housing construction

The challenge:

The lack of affordable housing in Skye and Lochalsh is a challenge today and new housing is needed as soon as possible. However planning and roads regulations and traditional house construction practices means that the development of new housing can take many years, be poorly constructed and carry high costs.

The proposal:

The use of modern materials, technologies and off-site construction need to be applied to remote rural and island housing construction, to address the challenges of weather, logistics, skills shortages, and inconsistent quality. This needs a cross-sector collaboration between the construction industry, government and social landlords to generate sufficient unit volumes and opportunities.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Why do you say that?

Proposal F - Addressing low pay by taking steps to promote a more diverse, less seasonal economy

The challenge:

With Skye so reliant on the tourism industry (around 1 in 4 jobs are in tourism), seasonal jobs and positions are often insecure and with limited opportunities to progress, the care sector another significant employer is hampered by low wages, many public sectors positions are limited hours. This can make it harder for people to take on a lease or mortgage.

The proposal:

To address this issue steps should be taken to help Skye and Lochalsh to diversify its economy so that young people have more opportunities to live on the island whilst working in sectors which offer more secure, permanent and better paid jobs.

To achieve this ambition will require long term investment in areas such as:

- Renewable energy, storage and networks – for local use and export
- Digital infrastructure
- The Hydrogen economy
- Business incubators and enterprise creation and support
- Housing models with home-working or workshop space

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Why do you say that?

Finally, please provide any further feedback you would like to provide on the areas covered in this survey and the actions you would like to see take to support your business/organisation.

Please provide as much detail as possible to help us to understand your concerns and hopes and fears for the future
