

'Encouraging' jump in business confidence in the region

Written by editor

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Business confidence in the East of England rose sharply in September and by more than in any other UK region as firms' confidence in their own prospects improved although many companies still expect to make job cuts when the furlough scheme ends.

Overall confidence improved by 17 points in September but still stood at -5 per cent, according to a business barometer from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking.

Covid is still taking its toll on firms with 60 per cent seeing a fall in demand for their products and services although this was an eight point improvement on the previous month. Some 11 per cent of firms saw an increase in demand, significantly more than in August. But when asked about job retention among firms with furloughed staff, little more than a third expect to bring back more than 90 per cent of their employees.

David Atkinson, regional director for the East of England at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, said: "Firms in the East of England have been hit hard by the coronavirus crisis but it's encouraging that business confidence saw such a jump in September. The data indicates that more firms have started to see an uplift in demand, and most businesses are confident they can successfully operate while remaining Covid-secure."