

The Beauty Industry: Lessons from COVID-19

A summary of survey responses

Executive Summary

This report analyses the data gathered from the 'LESSONS FROM CORONAVIRUS SURVEY'. It will be presented across 9 sections:

- Beauty practitioners and services
- Education in the beauty sector
- Office based roles in beauty
- Beauty media and PR
- Bricks and mortar beauty retail
- Government support
- Feedback on navigating the "new normal"
- Key learnings from survey respondents
- Future actions for the British Beauty Council

The impact of Covid-19 on our lives has been tremendous and as we navigate these uncertain times we are reflecting on what our businesses and work life will look like in the future. Following a British Beauty Council Advisory Board meeting and a subsequent Think Tank with our members, we asked the beauty industry for their help in completing a survey so that we can further determine the needs of our industry.

The 'LESSONS FROM CORONAVIRUS SURVEY' was compiled to allow our community and members of the public to provide their personal feedback on how we can help rebuild the beauty industry following COVID-19 and beyond.

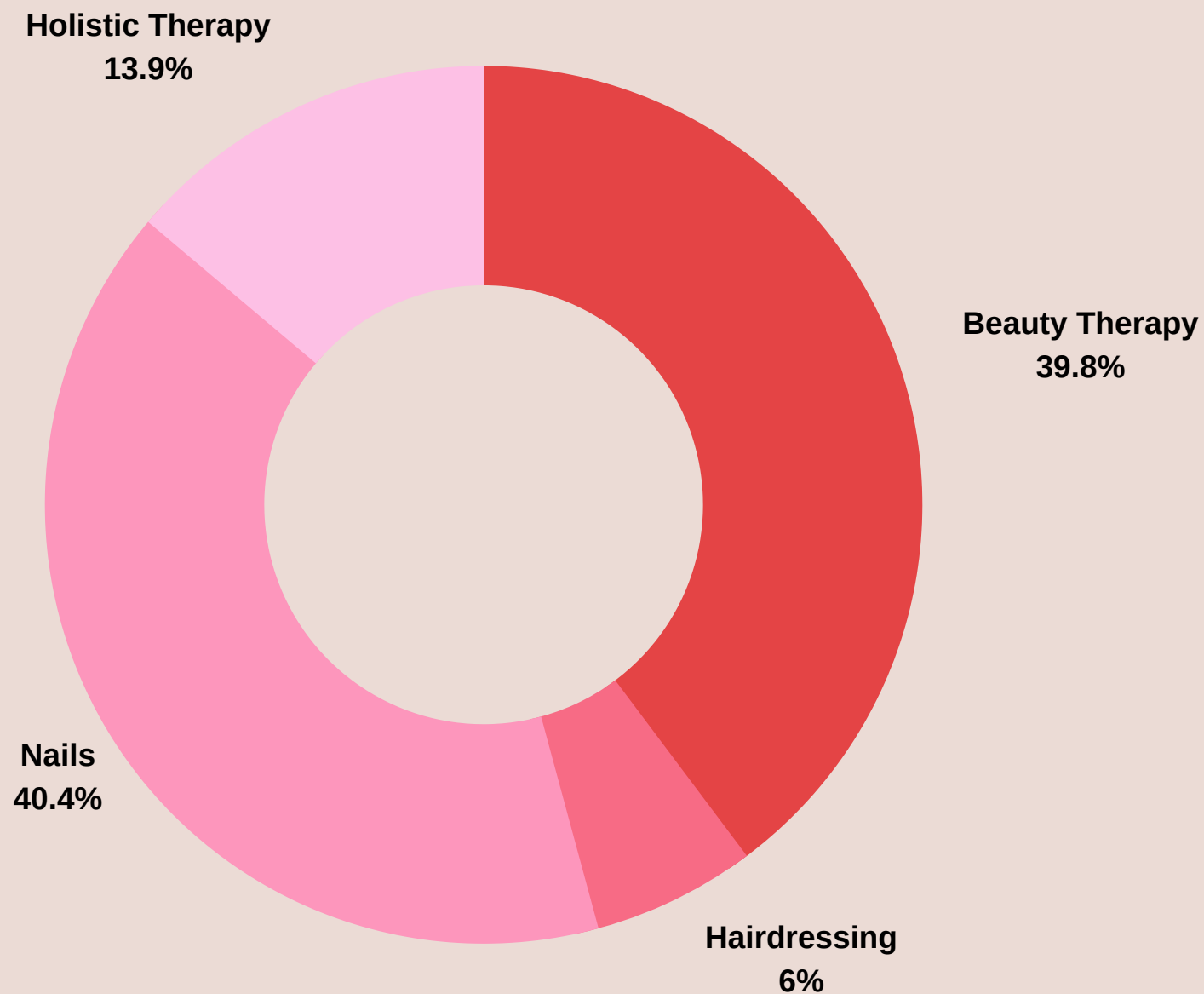
The comprehensive survey, comprised of 64 questions, aims to help provide detailed feedback on the below key areas:

1. Sector & Operation Analysis
2. Government Guidance & Support
3. Business Confidence & Resources

From this, we aim to work with the British Beauty Council Advisory Board to commence a plan of action on how best to support the government on rebuilding our hair and beauty industry.

Introduction

Survey Respondents



Our beauty industry survey, “lessons from coronavirus”, captured over 1000 responses with the majority submitted in the second half of June 2020.

As government guidelines on beauty continue to shift, please note that many responses would have been submitted before the business re-openings were announced for the 4th July. Since then, this has only added further confusion, stress and frustration to beauty practitioners outside of Hairdressing.

Responses to this survey is demonstrative of the incredibly broad categories the beauty sector encompasses. It is also worth considering the sectors that were listed under the category ‘other’. These survey respondents identified themselves in some of the following industry roles: Aesthetics, Sports Massage, Pilates, HR, Recruitment, Acupuncture and Chinese Medical Massage.

The industry continues to blur traditional beauty and wellness categories in both product and practice. It offers a holistic approach to beauty and wellness, as discussed in British Beauty Council Webinars, with treatments mirroring medical procedures and environments.

Beauty Practitioners and Services

57%

Assessed consumer requests so they were able to tailor services ready to re-open safely in the coming weeks.

35%

Nearly ready to open – finalising safety precautions and changes to procedures.

**50% of practitioners would
restrict facials.**

**40% would also restrict
lash treatments to ensure
customer and staff safety.**

**7% considering adapting
their businesses to be
mobile.**

The agility of the beauty sector is evident throughout the survey responses. The data indicates the beauty industry's early response to adapt to changes in practice and the quick implementation of guidelines. 66% of those surveyed planned to open their business as soon as the restrictions were lifted. This highlights an industry that has always put health and hygiene at the forefront of their businesses.

Ahead of government guidelines, many beauty businesses and practitioners had already made the decision to reduce the services they offered despite the financial implications. Choosing to restrict services that would be harder to ensure safety alongside social distancing and those that could not be performed with PPE.

**Customer safety remains at the forefront of
practitioners' minds alongside adapting for
business survival.**

New measures in place from beauty businesses alongside the introduction of PPE include the following:

- Consultation procedures to include specific questions on Covid-19
- Spacing appointments to reduce/prevent client contact
- Social distancing on premises
- Request handwashing/use of hand sanitiser by clients
- Increased and specialised cleaning throughout the day
- Amendments to booking T&Cs
- Staff training on all Covid-19 measures



93%

of health and beauty businesses state that they feel “confident to extremely confident” in the return to business and for coping with new measures in place.

Survey respondents are investing in huge amounts of PPE to proceed with re-opening with <1% not intending to proceed with any PPE. However, many respondents flagged issues with the PPE required. This ranged from the cost and amount of PPE required to the environmental impact of PPE on their businesses and wider society.

Education in the Beauty Sector

With confusion spreading across all educational facilities for September, what will this mean for education within the Beauty sector?

Those surveyed working within beauty education anticipated closures due to lack of funding and cited a real challenge in teaching practical sessions. Whilst theory can continue to be taught online they had yet to receive clarity on how practical sessions could proceed in the future.

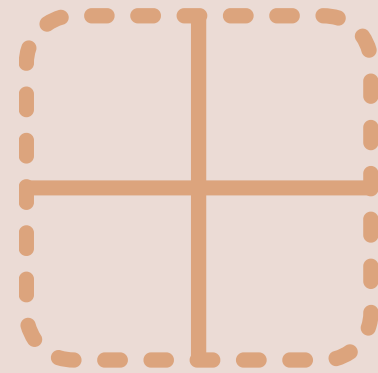
Office Based Roles in the Industry

For those surveyed working in office environments it seems working from home is here to stay – cited to be in place at least until the autumn. Many companies are supplying updates on changes being made to working environments to ensure safety.

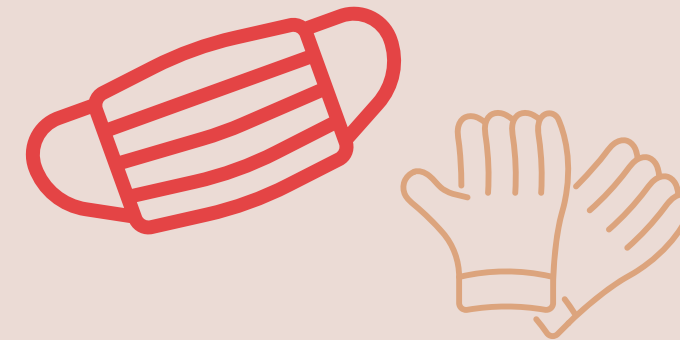


of respondents stated they felt “quite confident to very confident” about returning to the office.

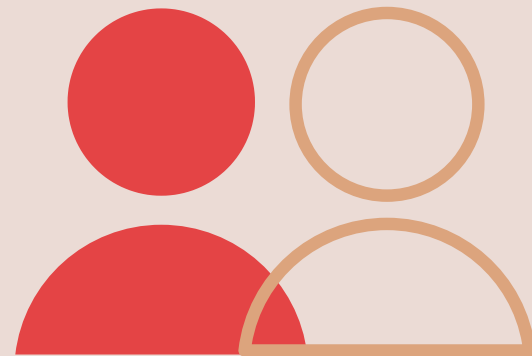
The top changes to office environments are:



**Adaptations to layout to
allow for social distancing**



**Use of PPE where
appropriate**



**Amendments to shifts to meet
social distancing measures**



Increased cleaning shifts

**At the time of this survey no respondents have been told of track and trace
procedures in place in office environments.**

Beauty Media and PR


Beauty Media & PR has also been affected by Covid-19 and required to adapt within the current climate. During lockdown, events have been impossible and even sampling problematic for some.

Agencies are having to focus on different approaches for their clients. 20% of PR agencies surveyed stated they would require additional time and would likely experience delays in processing samples with 15% stating new systems were being implemented for the safe handling of samples.



of agencies cited a decline in revenue of over 50% due to Covid-19.

50% of media agencies tailored their content to be more focused on wellness and current trends.



53% of DTC brands surveyed have seen an uplift since lockdown and have seen growth in skincare and wellness categories



Agencies are not only investigating and proposing alternative brand experiences such as pop ups, they are seeking and gaining business with DTC brands who continue to retain traction with their clients online.

Of those surveyed, PR businesses had definitely lost work as the pandemic hit, with specific impact on new business. 42% cited a decline in revenue of over 50% due to Covid-19.

50% of media agencies surveyed have tailored their content to be more focused on wellness and have focused on highlighting trends and behavioural adaptations resulting from the pandemic.

The impact of Covid-19 has been disastrous for many beauty businesses with a lack of clarity in regulations, re-opening, looming recession and little knowledge of what the future holds. However, some companies are seeing an upturn in profits and categories that have previously underperformed. 53% of DTC brands surveyed have seen an uplift since lockdown and have seen growth in skincare and wellness categories, with consumers focusing on these categories with no access to practitioners in lockdown.

Bricks and Mortar Beauty Retail

With the reopening of stores, focus will initially be on recovery of the bricks and mortar retail sector, with trading halted for the most part since March.

The key changes to bricks and mortar beauty retail for the foreseeable future will be the removal of testers and touch free consultations only.



Bricks and Mortar Retailers have already put in place a number of solutions to ensure safety for both staff and customers:

- Removal of testers
- Touch free consultations
- PPE and screens
- Increased cleaning and staggered staff shifts
- Thorough Covid-19 health and safety training to maximise safety

What will be the solutions to engage customers in the long term?

Product trialing has always been key. Retailers will be forced to look at how testers can be more hygienic, with single use testers cited as a potential solution, though with their own environmental impact.

Government Support

20%

not eligible for any
form of government
financial support

80%

feel unsupported by the
government

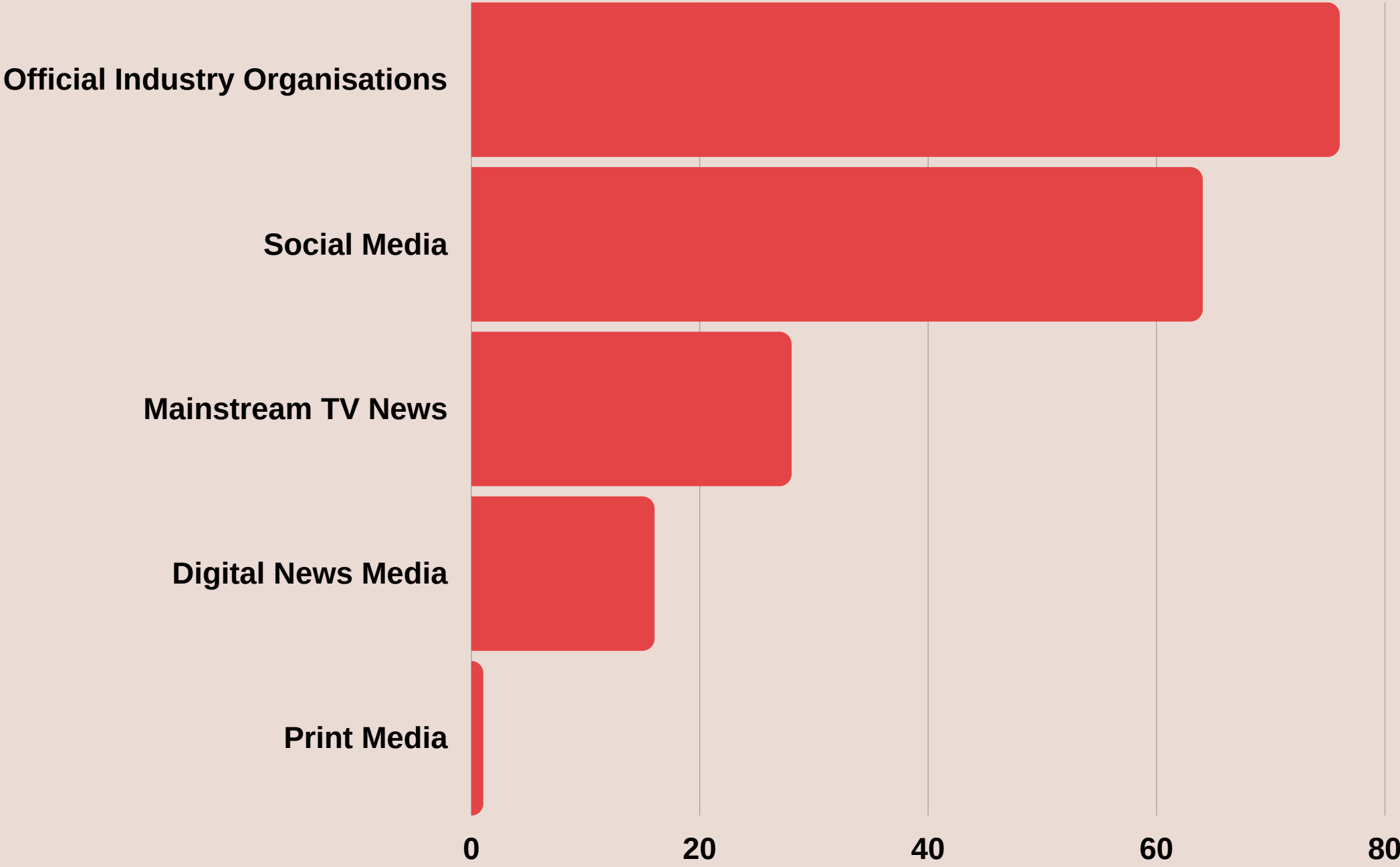
70%

feel the government has
lacked clarity in advice
and guidelines for the
beauty sector

90%


believe they would benefit
if the Hair and Beauty
services sector was
regulated

Due to a lack of government clarity those surveyed found the most useful sources of industry information and guideline updates to be industry bodies and social media.



How Boris made a mockery of an entire industry in a one minute exchange during PMQs

While the beauty industry is still seen as frivolous and unnecessary, there is no hope for the sector to reopen quickly



SONIA HARIA
BEAUTY DIRECTOR

2 July 2020 • 6:30am

Let me set the scene. Yesterday afternoon during Prime Minister's Questions, William Wragg, MP for Hazel Grove, stood up and asked the Prime Minister about the reopening of beauty salons. Within a few hours, he had managed to not only upset and infuriate thousands of beauty business owners up and down the country, but many thousands of others, too....

Navigating the “New Normal”


25%

do not expect the industry to bounce back until Q1 2021.

25%

fear the industry will never bounce back to pre-pandemic levels.

32% of survey respondents believe that new behaviours that have emerged due to Covid-19 will become the new normal moving forward.




No one can say when or if the changes made due to Covid-19 will ever revert back to what they were before. What is undeniable is that every category and type of business in the beauty sector has been affected by this pandemic and it will continue to shape the beauty industry moving forward.


The concerns moving forward from the industry are focused around economic stability and the impact on the sector, job and financial security, the future of beauty businesses, the safety of staff and customers alongside the detrimental effect this pandemic has had on the mental health of those in the industry.

It is clear that a lack of government support and clarity on guidelines has thrown the service side of the industry into turmoil and has further fueled fear in the sector of a second wave.


50% of those who rent premises are considering downsizing their premises as current locations may become difficult to afford.



63% of employees surveyed are concerned about being made redundant in the near future.



50% of employers surveyed are concerned about having to make potential future redundancies.



Whilst the industry is keen to bounce back, many also have significant worries and concerns moving forward across all areas within beauty.

Many are concerned with the public perception of the beauty services industry where they feel consumer and client trust may have been impacted by the delays in guidance from the government and inaccuracies portrayed in the media.

Many businesses and individuals focus on more practical concerns such as financial security, cash flow , maintaining PPE supplies, the cost implications of PPE, operating with extended opening hours and concerns regarding track and trace and isolation if clients report Covid -19 symptoms.

Survey Respondents:

Key Learnings

The most important learnings survey participants will take from the Covid -19 pandemic:

- The importance of holding financial reserves and having a contingency fund for future planning and unforeseen circumstances.
- The importance of future government support and regulation for hair and beauty services alongside a government recognition of the industry.
- Witnessing the incredible agile and adaptable nature of the beauty industry.
- To prioritise individual and staff mental health and wellness.



British Beauty Council: Future Actions

Following on from the key takeaways of this survey, the British Beauty Council will research and investigate the following:

- What could future mentoring schemes look like?
- Scope for advice structures for different categories in the industry with a priority in business and fiscal advice.
- The path to a regulation of hair and beauty services which is incredibly broad. How would new regulatory measures encompass the breadth of the service side of this industry?
- Schemes that focus on mental wellbeing for members.
- Scope to broaden research to manufacturers and producers.
- Further research to obtain feedback from brands, retailers, education and students as the majority of survey responses were from practitioners.

