



Meet Safe, Meet Smart Campaign – October 2020

- **Meet Safe** = hold a meeting for up to 30 delegates within a permitted venue that will have Covid-19 procedures in place and follows government guidelines.
- **Meet Smart** = hold a meeting, as outlined within the “Meet Safe” criteria, which delivers flexible Terms and Conditions, including cancellation policies. Costs for the meeting will be negotiated at the time of enquiry and does not form part of this campaign.

What is the objective of the Meet Safe, Meet Smart campaign?

To instil confidence to our customers that meetings can be held safely and smartly in venues in England.

Why do we need this campaign?

HBAA is working with members and the wider industry to aid the kickstart of business events, accommodation, and meetings. This sector represents £32B (total sector spend) and underpins economic growth across all industries; it drives business productivity as well as providing teams with engagement, interaction and support for their mental health and wellbeing.

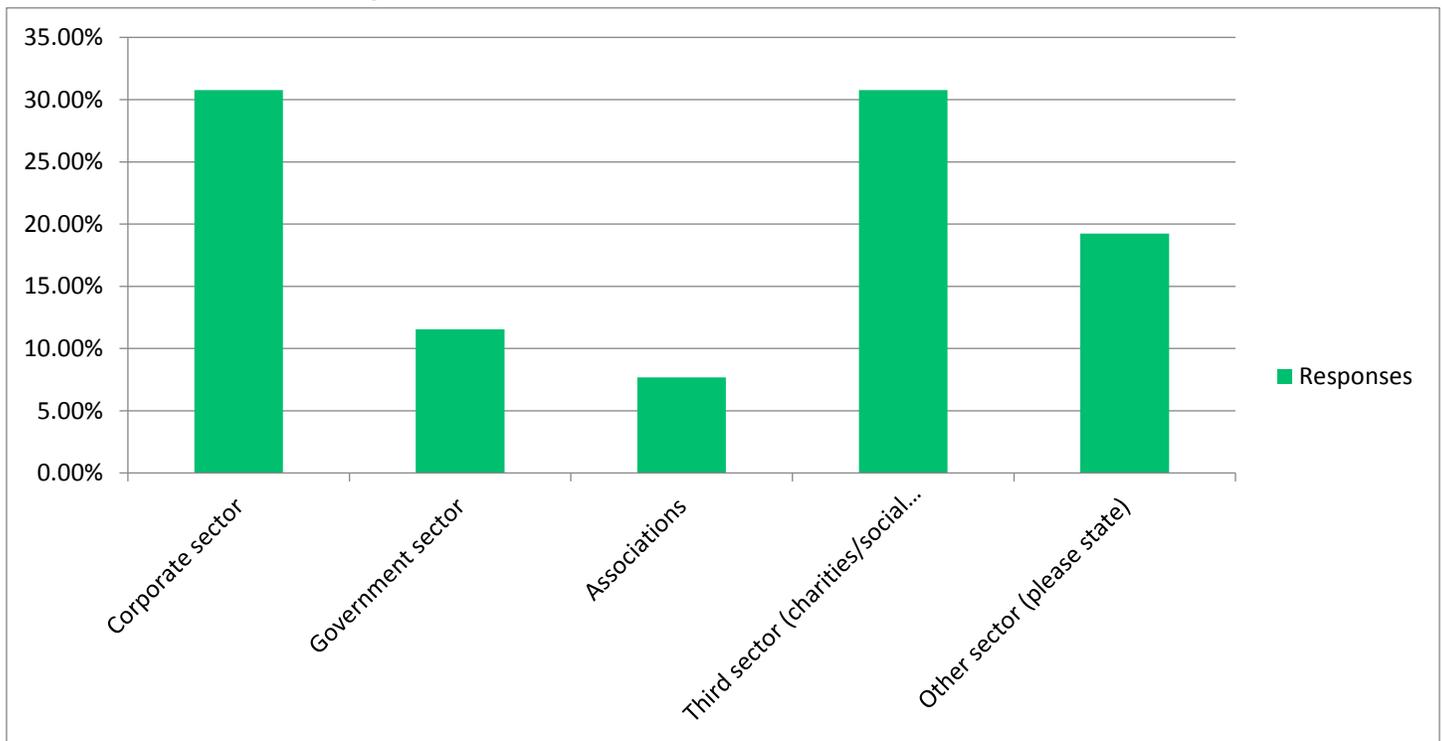
Process:

- Survey issued by venues to direct customers and agents by 29 September 2020, COP
- Venues signed up to the campaign
- Campaign comms plan released, for maximum impact across all channels by members, HBAA, partners, on 02 October 2020
- Survey closed on 6 October 2020, COP
- Survey report issued to support the campaign 20 October 2020 – see below



Survey report

Q1. Which sector do you work in:



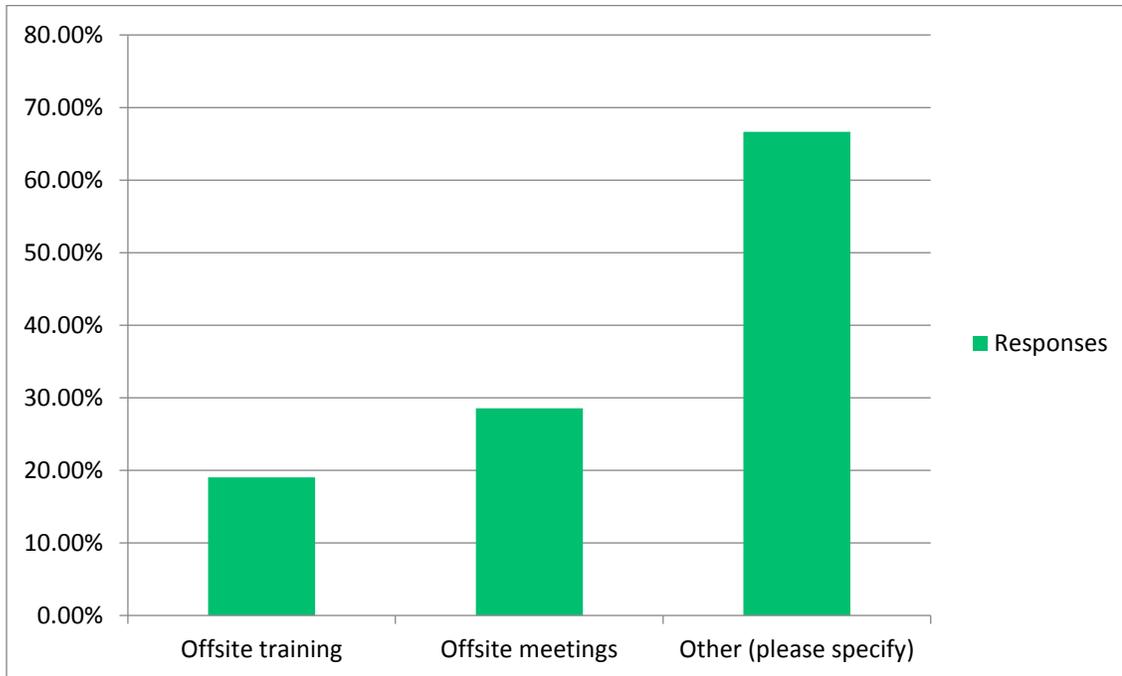
A total of 31 respondents.

The two highest sectors were equally split corporate and third sector at 30.77% each. When the “other” results are analysed this adds 5 more responses, 2 of were corporate sector respondents, two in education with the final respondent being from TMC/HBA/Events sector.

So in total 38% of respondents were representing the corporate sector.



2. Are you currently booking offsite training or meetings?



19% are booking offsite training; 28.5% are booking offsite meetings and 66.6% are booking "other"

NB this is more than 100%!

6 of the 14 "other" responses were conducting virtual meetings/training and presentations. 2 "other" responses were holding "live" lunches, dinners and presentations; 4 were not holding any events, and two of the responses were identified as TMC/HBA/Events which should be discounted.

With hindsight perhaps this question should have been re-worded so that the answers were: offsite training; offsite meetings; other offsite events (please state); online meetings/events only; no meetings/events at all; other. There would appear to be a crossover/confusion as to whether this question was asking about online events or just offsite events so the answers may not be reliable.



3. Why is it important for your company to still hold offsite meetings/training?

As this is an open question there has been a variety of answers. As most respondents were only booking online events the question was not relevant for many of them and they answered accordingly.

Perhaps it should have asked “if you are running offsite events why is it important for you to run these?”, resulting in responses from those who are running offsite events. Despite this there are many valuable answers to support the project.

The main responses that are relevant for those that are holding offsite events are highlighted:

- We think, especially for investors, that one face to face meeting before they invest is still necessary.
- External visitors
- Due to space.
- Those face to face provides personal opportunities to network
- So that we can offer delegates classroom courses as well as online courses
- Board and Exec meetings for Strategy
- Our culture in our business is to bring our staff together to communicate with each other and learn from each other
- Face to Face networking is important to us
- If face-to-face meetings resume, capacity and location would be two reasons for booking offsite
- Meetings required throughout the UK due to locations of staff
- Room size needs to be big enough for social distancing which is difficult to achieve in house for some meetings.
- As our clients are frontline social workers' we have a duty of care to enable the best training in a safe environment.
- Offsite meetings allow our delegates to interact/liaise better with their peers. Dedicated time to address forums etc.

Responses that were based on running only online events were:

- Due to some people feeling anxious or protecting loved ones and being advised to work at home where possible this is why we are currently doing it this way in order to still work effectively.
- Meetings by Zoom
- enable them to continue
- We aren't currently but keen to be able to meet partners and customers face to face in a safe way for relationship purposes.
- We may need to book venues if we have a public scheduled course. At the moment we are running them virtually
- We'd love to but we are currently not booking any
- It isn't - we're finding ways of working effectively online

Four further responses were identified as being from the TMC/HBA/Events sector.

From the responses given, it is clear that the main reason for face to face meetings is the benefit for networking and improved communication as well as a benefit for specific meetings such as strategy and the requirement for more space.



Additionally, holding 'essential training meetings' and using permitted venues when it is not possible to accommodate employees in their usual office environment are two further key reasons to promote Meet Safe, Meet Smart.

4. What additional information/protocols/assurances from venues is vital for you to proceed with organising offsite meetings/training?

Again, an open question but a vital one for the industry. The full answers are available on request, but they can be categorised as follows:

- Risk assessment/staff training/processes/accreditation for C-19 – 16
- Future clarity on requirements/Government guidelines being followed - 5
- After internal consulting/delegates feel safe - 2
- Safe breakout/lunch solutions - 2
- Flexible cancellation terms - 2
- Extra hand sanitisers - 2
- Safe public transport
- Recent delegate behaviour/travel
- PPE
- Air filtration
- Hybrid options
- Quality of IT/AV/WiFi
- On-hand to resolve problems
- Floor plans
- Own offices only

So the overwhelming response is for venues to be able to demonstrate that they are Covid compliant and that they have the required protocols in place to ensure delegates and companies feel safe in booking that venue.

Surprisingly only two responses brought up flexible cancellation terms, although this may be because it was not front of mind, or because it is now expected.

In total 27 out of 38 (71%) responses indicate concerns over safety.

2 out of 38 (5.3%) are concerned about cancellation terms.

No respondents had any comments about costs/price.



5. How are you pre-empting concerns/anxiety within your business/delegates about attending an offsite meetings/training?

Once again this is an open question with many varied answers. Once again, for the benefit of clarity in this report we have categorised the main responses below, which fall into two main categories; the full responses are available on request.

- On-line only for the foreseeable future/awaiting reassurance/guidelines on safe practices and protocols x 13
- Not forcing people to attend – duty of care to employees x 7

The overwhelming response is that they will only run online events for the foreseeable future (or awaiting changes to government guidance) with the next highest answer being that they are leaving it to the delegates themselves to decide whether to attend live or online.

This indicates that there is a need for Meet Safe, Meet Smart to promote the safety aspect of the industry and that government guidance allows and supports booking and attending small events in safe venues.

6. Any other comments

As this was another open question, the responses were again varied. Below are relevant answers that may help to drive the conversation forward:

- We have chosen to do all our training online until April 2021.
- We are unlikely to book meetings for the foreseeable future as the online meetings have been highly successful. It is not just the venue. We meet in Birmingham as it is central, but this involves travel of some sort for most attendees, so we need to be sure that all aspects of the day are safe.
- The majority are using virtual training or postponing till the coast becomes clearer.
- It is a shame if extremely limited menus are being offered during this time as we have made the effort to book and keep our business with venues.

Summary

Looking at the responses overall, these indicate that there is an immediate need to broadcast how compliant the venues are, and to raise awareness that government does allow the offsite meetings for up to 30.

Accreditation is an area that could help to bring clarity to the compliance aspect. This area, though, has an added layer of complexity through hotel and venue brands delivering their own 'covid-secure' messaging, with a variety of different providers and accreditation schemes being signposted, resulting in customer confusion.



It is also apparent that there are a number of corporate companies that are leaving the decision to attend up a live offsite meeting to the delegates themselves, and so the hybrid approach could be a lucrative one for HBAA members to move into, if they have not already done so.

The regional approach taken by the government on 12th October 2020 adds additional complexity into an already hazy area e.g. if a delegate lives in Cheshire (Medium category) and is invited to attend an event in Huddersfield (also Medium category) is it OK for them to travel through Merseyside (which is currently in the Very High category)? If delegates and companies are already confused this will not aid that clarity of message.

On balance most companies are opting for virtual or hybrid options until at least March 2021 and are awaiting certainty on the future before committing to live events. One of the main reasons for this is as a duty of care to their employees/delegates.

As such the “Meet Safe Meet Smart” campaign will continue to focus on the ‘Meet Safe’ part of the slogan.

Only two respondents mentioned flexible commercial terms in their responses which indicates it was less important than the safety aspect, or at this point, an absolute expectation. None of the responses mentioned price.

Overwhelmingly, responses were around the safety of the event (71%) and the duty of care to employees and delegates, indicating that this is the priority area of focus for the campaign.