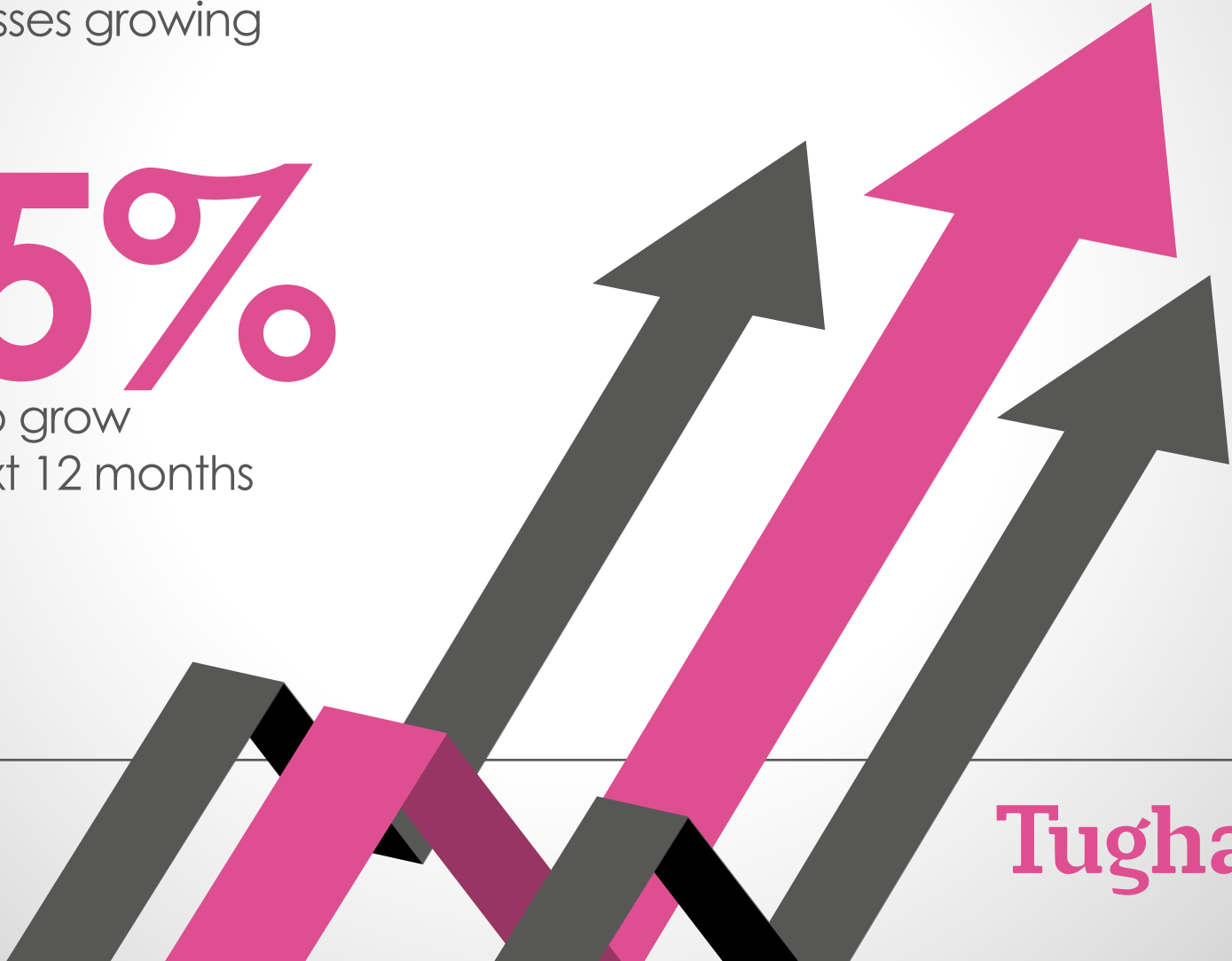


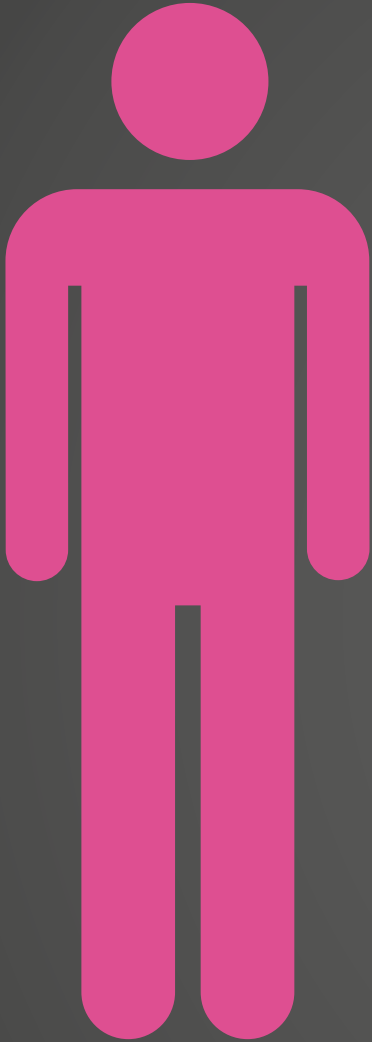
# 72%

of businesses growing

# 55%

expect to grow  
in the next 12 months





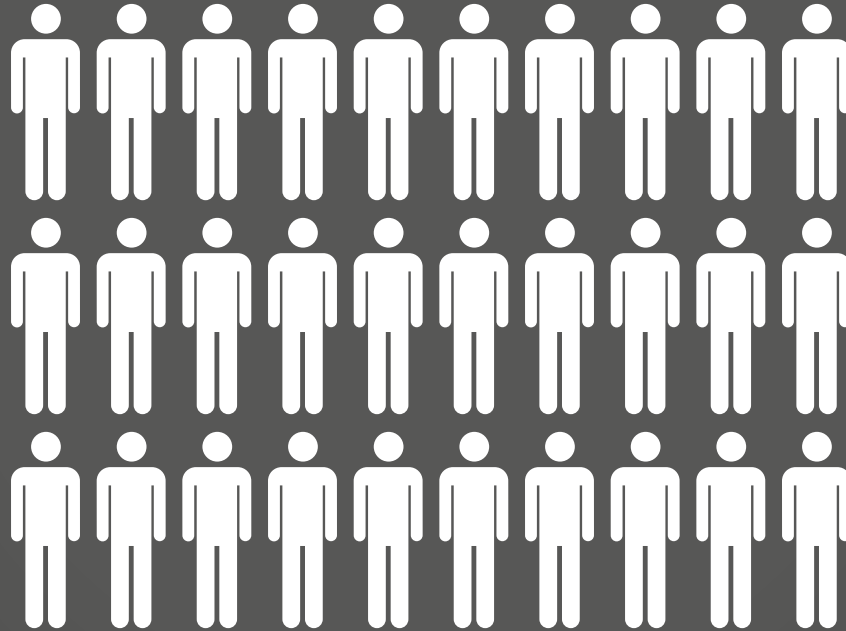
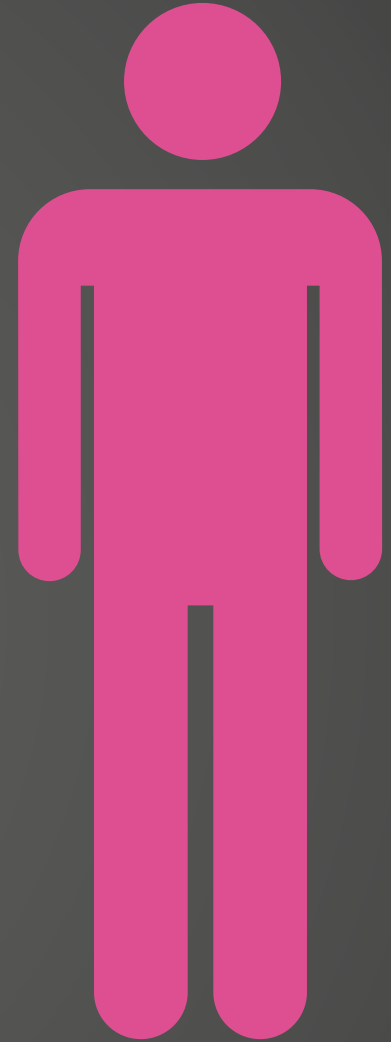
# 45%

of businesses increase  
in staffing



# 55%

expecting to hire  
in 12 months



# BREXIT

to **negatively** impact

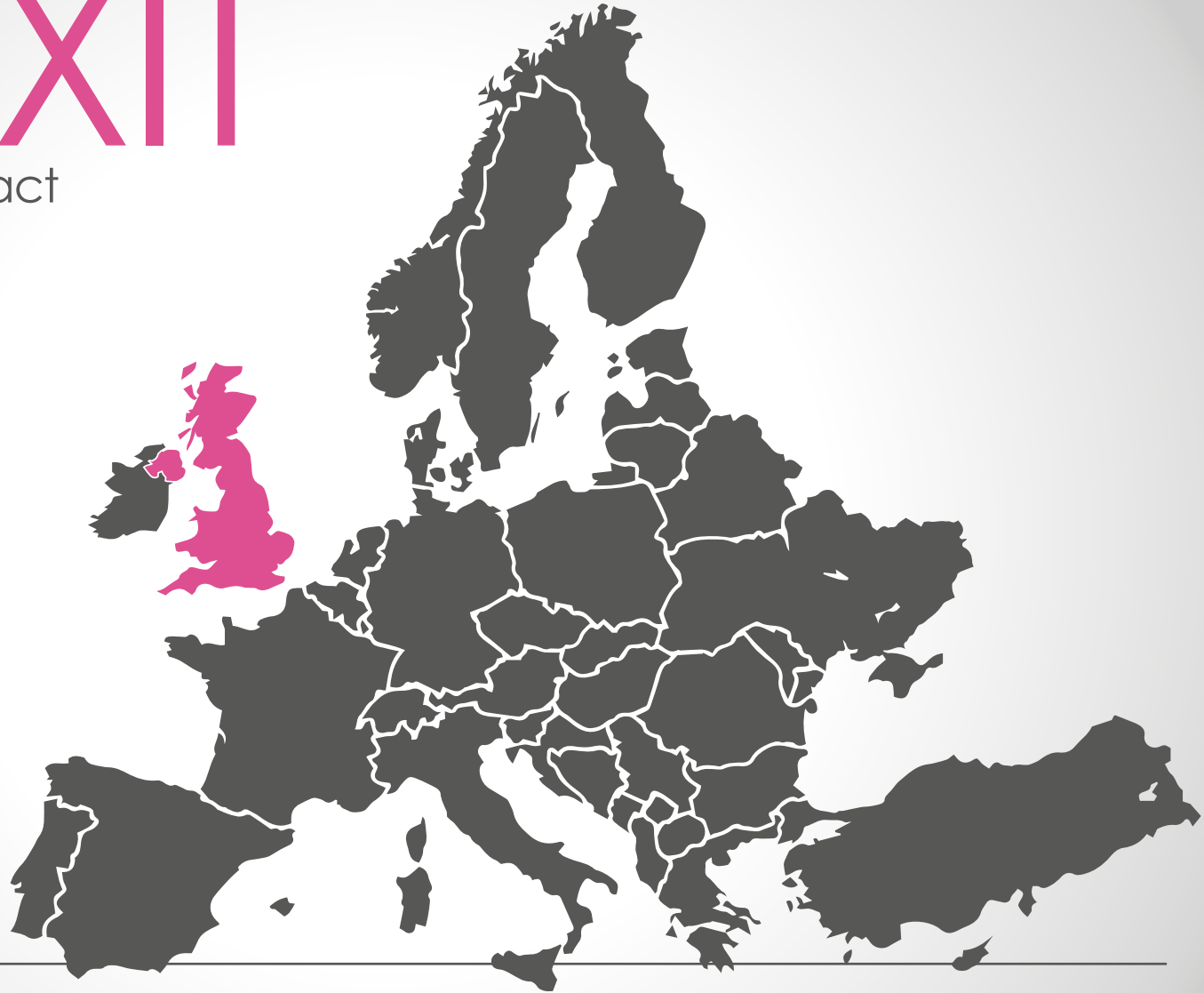
**41%**

of businesses

with only

**11%**

of them seeing a **positive** increase for their business



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A large red speech bubble is positioned on the left side of the image. Inside the bubble, the text '57%' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the text 'of companies recording' is in a smaller white font, followed by 'increased sales' in a larger white font, and 'in the past year' in a smaller white font. To the right of the speech bubble, a bar chart is partially visible, showing four bars of increasing height from left to right. The bars are colored teal, orange, and red. The background of the entire image is a dark purple gradient.

**57%**

of companies recording  
**increased sales**  
in the past year

# Barriers to growth:

## Impact of uncertainty of Brexit (56%)



# Investment Support

90%

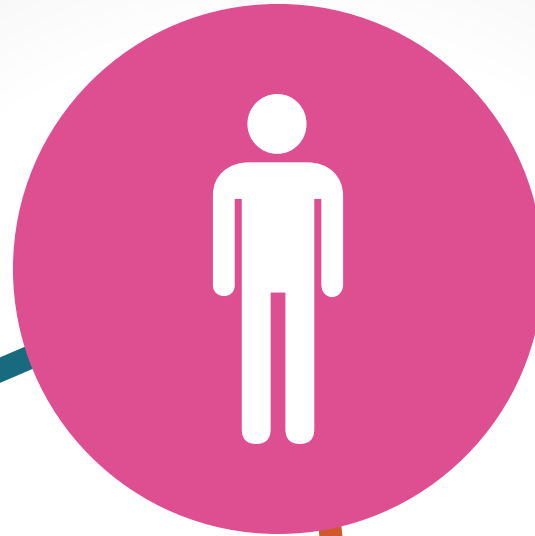
of respondents plan to invest in their businesses over the next year. Upgrading or introducing new facilities or machinery; increasing sales and marketing; increasing staff training; and R&D top the shopping list.

43%

said that innovation support would be of value to their business.

# People

In the last year  
**83%**  
have recruited  
new staff



**74%**  
experienced  
difficulty in recruiting  
appropriately  
skilled staff



**68%**  
delivered wage  
increases between  
2-5% with  
**40%**  
planning to do so  
in next 12 months

# Top 4 Issues for Concern:



**a. 1.**

**The rising costs of doing business – 60% businesses rated this 4 or 5.**

- Inflation -
- Heavy taxation & VAT -
- Pension contributions -
- Apprenticeship Levy -

**b. 2.**

**Impact or uncertainty of Brexit**

**56% businesses rated this 4 or 5.**

41% don't know what the impact of Brexit will have on their business.  
41% of businesses expect Brexit to have a negative impact on their business.- Businesses who export to ROI are particularly concerned regarding the impact of Brexit and status of the border.



**c. 3.**

**Political uncertainty/ climate**

**51% businesses rated this 4 or 5.**

Main legislative/policy areas of concern include:  
planning & infrastructure;  
green energy;  
RHI and  
GDPR compliance.

**d. 4.**

**Recruiting skills required to meet orders**

**47% businesses rated this 4 or 5.**

Migrant workers are proving particularly difficult to recruit.-In terms of skills, businesses are struggling to recruit: fabrication engineers (e.g. welders); specialist machine / equipment operators (e.g. CNC machinists); engineering skills (civil, mechanical, electrical and technical);



# Local Governance

37%

of businesses said that the absence of the NI Assembly was having no current impact on their business. However,

47%

said that this was having a negative impact.



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