



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

Summary quarterly progress report #1 (April-
June 2022)

BEIS Research Paper Number 2023/013

April 2023



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Introduction

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has commissioned Ipsos, working in partnership with Institute for Employment Studies (IES), to undertake an independent evaluation of the Help to Grow: Management (HtGM) programme. The programme is targeted at SME leaders and aims to improve leadership and management skills and address firm-level productivity challenges.

This report is the first in a series of quarterly updates to BEIS, presenting evidence collected in Ipsos’ ongoing programme of surveys with SME leaders completing the programme and SME leaders who dropped out. It draws on evidence collected between September 2021 to June 2022 and was submitted alongside an accompanying slide deck.¹ The post completion survey includes responses from participants completing the programme between April – June 2022 and the six month follow up survey includes responses from participants completing HtGM up to January 2022. The data are mostly presented at the aggregate level but there are instances where the analysis shows quarterly breakdowns.

Programme overview and survey update

Overview of surveys

An overview of the three HtGM evaluation surveys that are presented in this quarterly report is provided in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Overview of HtGM evaluation surveys.

| Post completion | | 6 month follow-up | | Non completion | |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Issued to all participants four to six weeks after completing module 12 of the Help to Grow: Management programme. It gathers feedback on the processes associated with delivery of the programme and emerging evidence on the short-term outcomes in the Theory of Change. | Launch date: September 2021 Mode: Online Frequency Monthly No. of waves: 10 Next wave: 18/07/2022 | All participants are contacted six months after completion of the programme to participate in a telephone interview designed to capture data on the outcomes / impact of the programme on them and their business. Some respondents will have completed the post-completion survey but not all. | Launch date: June 2022 Mode: Telephone Frequency Quarterly No. of waves: 1 Next wave: w/c 8th of August | Participants who start the programme but dropped out (completing <75% of the programme) are contacted by telephone and asked to provide feedback on their experiences and reasons why they dropped out of the programme. | Launch date: June 2022 Mode: Telephone Frequency Quarterly No. of waves: 1 Next wave: w/c 8th of August |

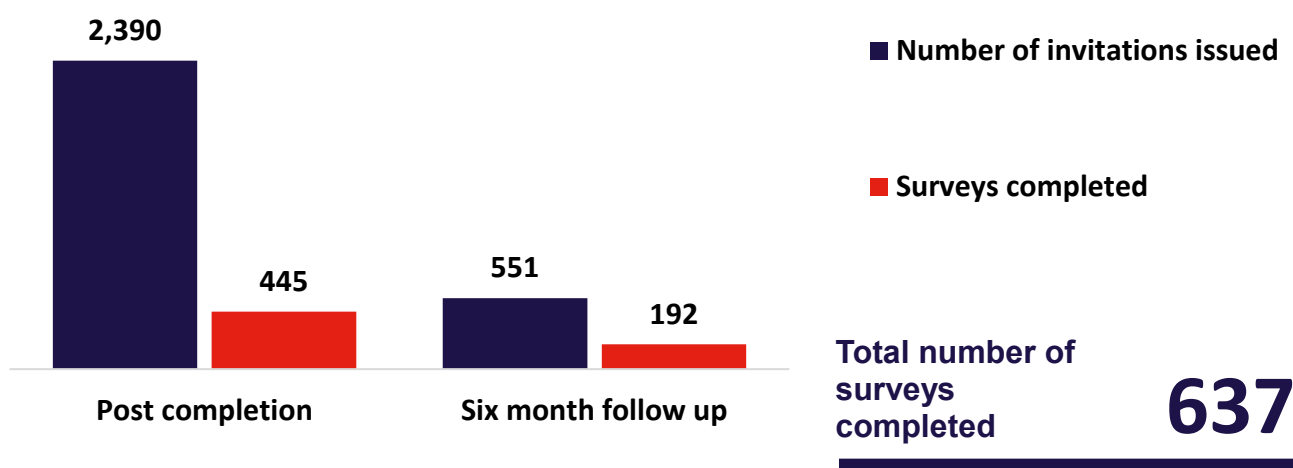
¹ This report presents all of the evidence collected to date on the programme of surveys, including the post-completion survey that launched in September 2021. Future quarterly updates will be based solely on three-month data collections.

As of 1st July 2022, Ipsos had received a total of 637 responses to its post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 7):

- The post-completion online survey has been issued to 2,390 SME leaders who completed HtGM before June 2022. As of 1st July 2022, 445 responses had been received, representing a **19% response rate**.
- 551 SME leaders who completed HtGM before January 2022 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey. As of 1st July 2022, 192 responses had been received, representing a **35% response rate**.²

Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n=9).

Figure 7: Total invitations sent for post completion and six month survey (1st July 2022).



Profile of demand (businesses)

To date, the HtGM programme has attracted interest from a breadth of businesses:

- **Location:** the programme stimulated interest from firms across all regions of the UK. One third of registrants and enrolments to the programme were made by businesses based in London and the South East (Figure 1). These figures broadly align to the wider UK SME population (with 5-249 employees), for which London and the South East account for the largest shares (18% and 14%, respectively).³
- **Sector:** businesses that registered and enrolled for HtGM operate across a broad range of industry sectors (Figure 2). The most common was 'Other service activities' (15% registered and enrolled), which includes member organisations, trade unions, businesses involved in the repair of computers and household goods and personal

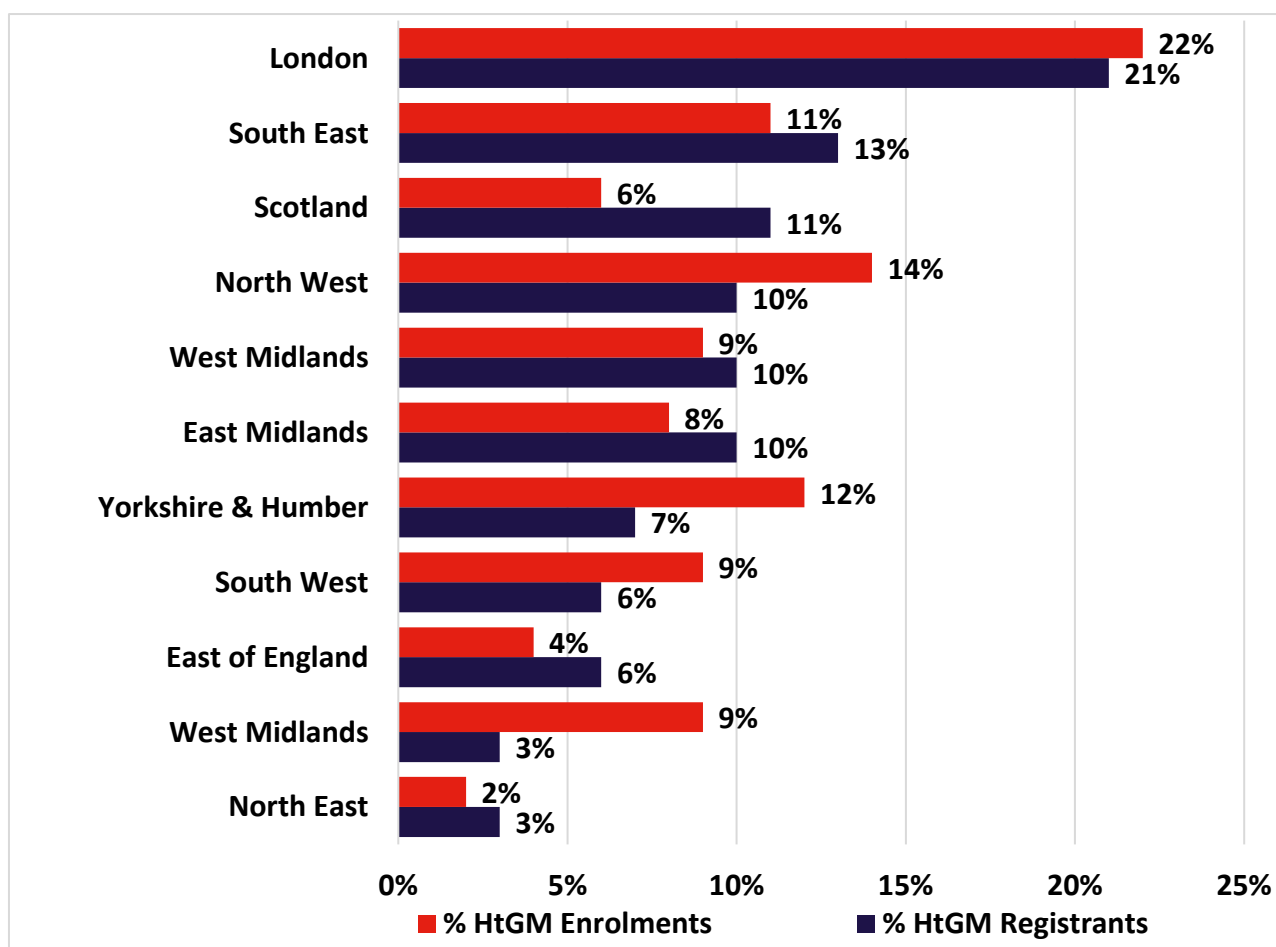
² Ipsos is having ongoing discussions with BEIS and CABS around measures that can be taken to improve the survey response rates. Figures are based on monitoring data at time of reporting and may differ from data release.

³ ONS SME Business Characteristics (2021)

service activities, such as hairdressing, beauty and physical wellbeing. Other sectors represented by SME leaders that registered and enrolled on the programme include manufacturing (12% registrants, 15% enrolments), construction (11% registered and enrolled), professional, scientific and technical industries (11% registrants, 12% enrolments) and information and communication (9% registrations, 11% enrolments).

- **Age:** over half of firms enrolling and registering to HtGM had been in operation for 10 years or less (53% and 55%, respectively)⁴ (Figure 3). Most commonly, applicant businesses had been operating for longer, between 11 and 49 years (43% enrolments, 40% registrants).
- **Size:** firms enrolling and registering for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (median 11 and 13 FTE respectively) (Figure 4). The median annual turnover in 2021/22 financial year was £710k for registrants and £800k for enrolments.⁵

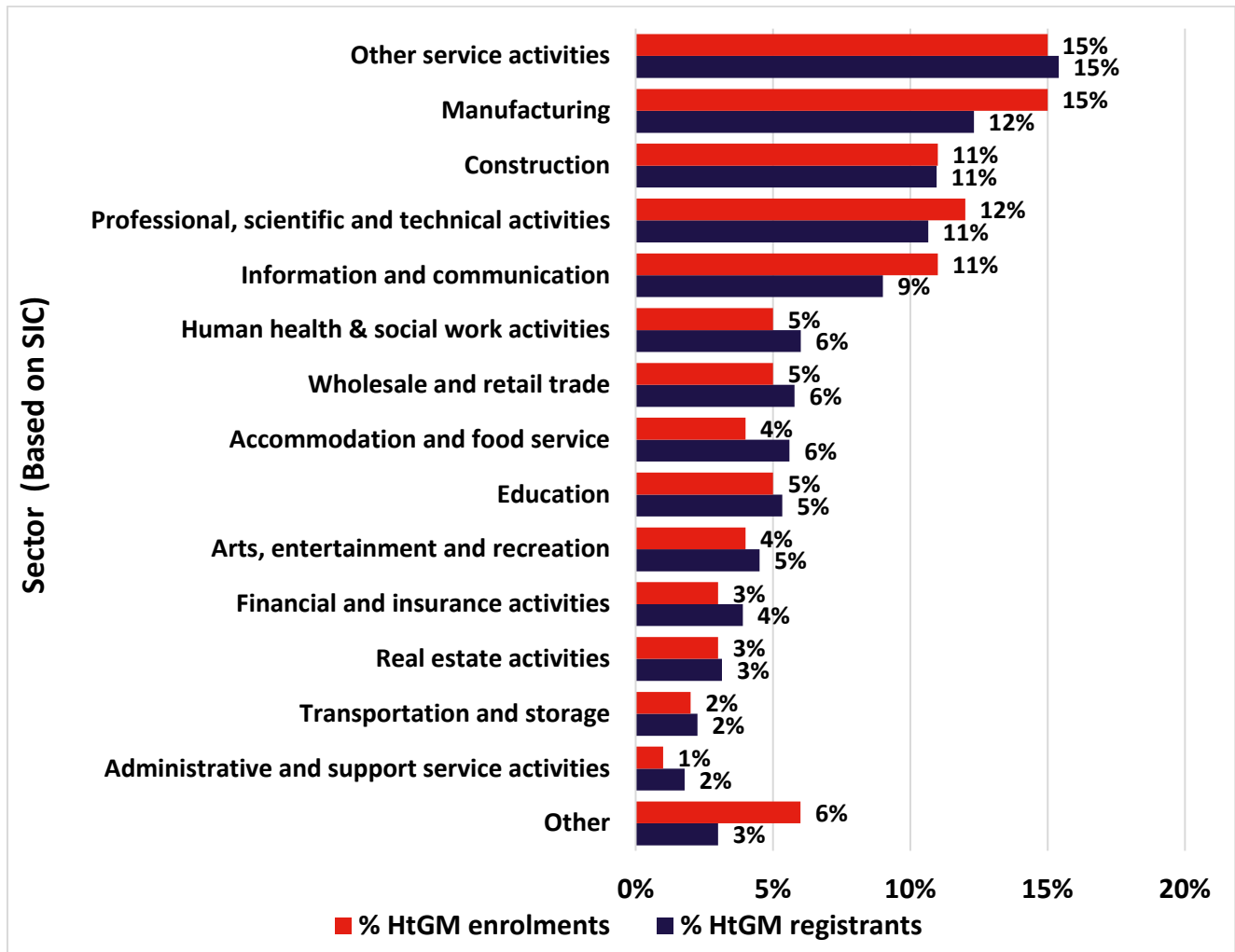
Figure 1: Location of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM up until 1st July 2022



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=4,087 for registrants and n=1,178 for enrolments)

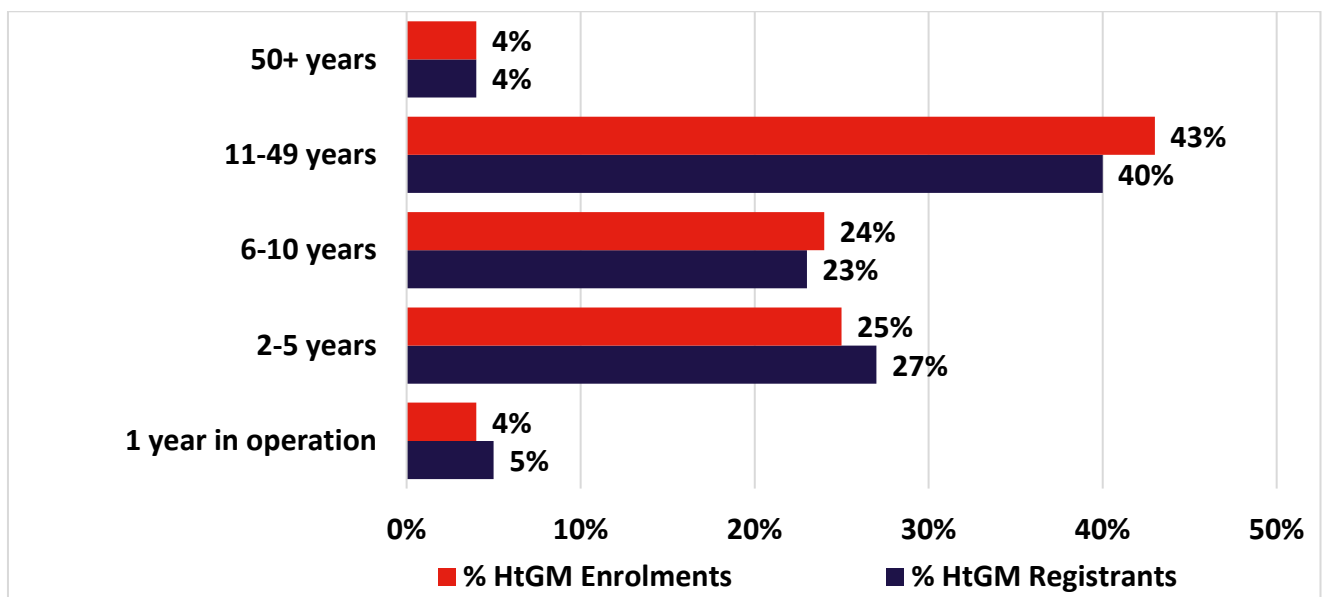
⁴ N.B. A participant is considered to have enrolled onto HtGM once they have registered and paid for their place.
⁵ Median results are reported here over mean because of large outliers. Both results are also presented in Figure 4.

Figure 2: Sector of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM up until 1st July 2022



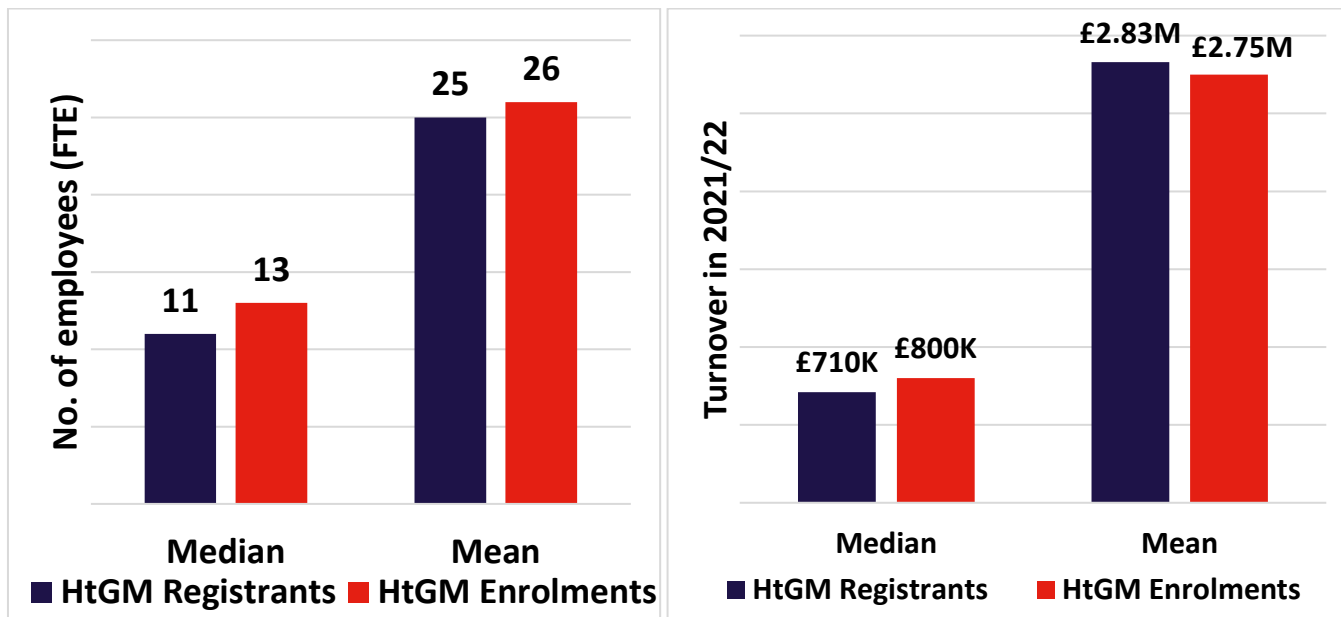
Source: HtGM Registration form (n=4,087 for registrants and n=1,178 for enrolments)

Figure 3: Age of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM up until 1st July 2022



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=4,087 for registrants and n=1,178 for enrolments)

Figure 4: Size of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM up until 1st July 2022 (FTE and turnover)



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=4,087 for registrants and n=1,178 for enrolments)

Profile of demand (SME leaders)

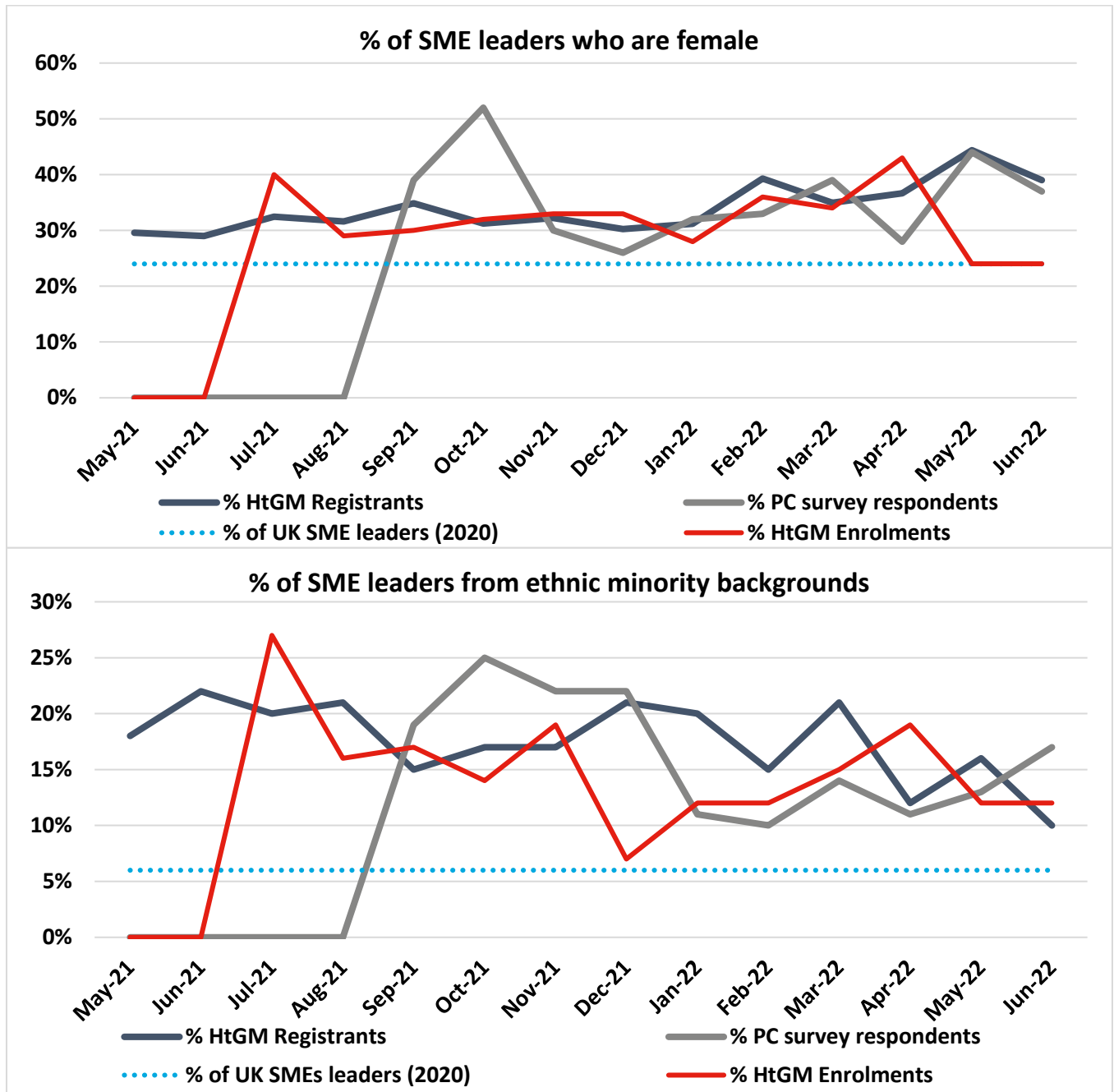
To date, the HtGM programme has attracted interest from a diverse range of SME leaders when compared to the gender and ethnic profile of SME leaders in the wider business population. On average, the number of female SME leaders registering to the programme (34%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses.⁶ The average number of ethnic minority SME leaders (18%) is also 12 percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses (see Figure 5).⁷

The evaluation post completion (PC) survey sample is well aligned to the SME leaders involved in HtGM: the gender and ethnicity of respondents to the evaluation survey is similar to those that registered and enrolled in HtGM.

⁶ Women owned and women led businesses provide a total of 24% private sector employment – Federation for Small Businesses - <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/supporting-women-s-enterprise-in-the-uk.html>

⁷ Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises - <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf>

Figure 5: Proportion of SME leaders who are female / proportion of SME leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,570 for registrants and 1,615 for enrolments) Post completion survey (n=445); Government Workforce and Business Statistics (2020); FSB (2020);
 Note: Blue dashed line represents a singular point in time. It should be used to contextualise and not be interpreted as time series

Applying to HtGM

This section presents the evidence to date on programme completers' expectations of the programme, understanding of the programme's aims and objectives and experiences of the application process.

Expectations and understanding of HtGM

At the time of applying, SME leaders most commonly expected to improve their **management and leadership skills** (75%), be more **confident** to lead their business (75%) and improve their understanding of **operational efficiency** (66%) as a result of participating in HtGM (Figure 8). Fewer survey respondents expected to improve their understanding of how to improve **employee wellbeing** (28%), the value **data analytics** (23%) or how to embed **equality, diversity and inclusivity** practices (16%) as a result of participating in HtGM.

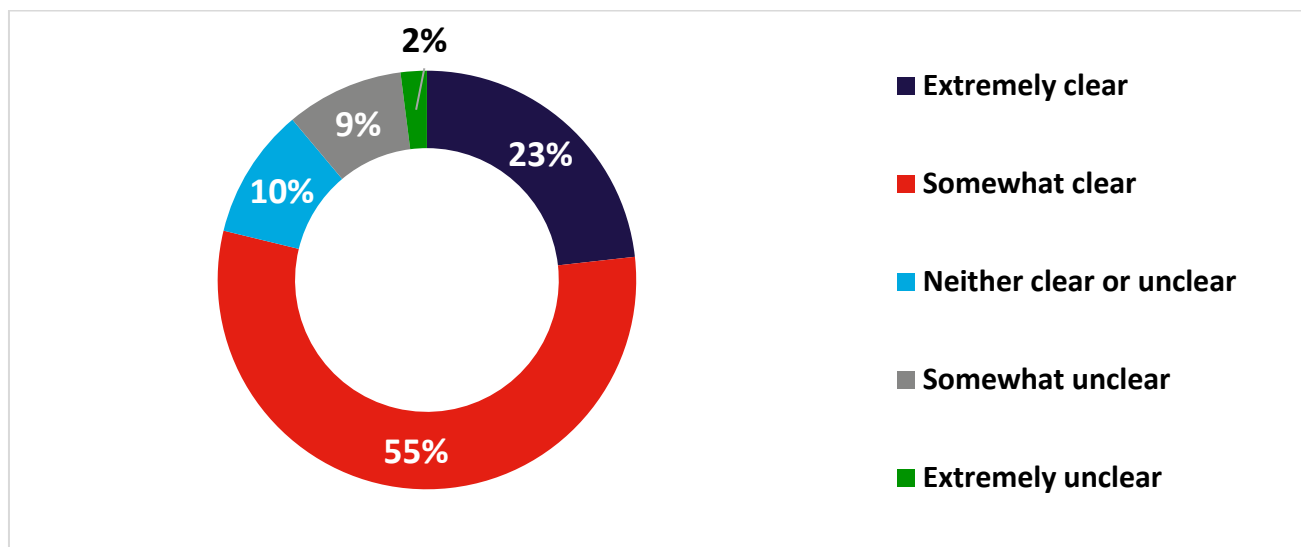
Figure 8: What were your expectations of the HtGM programme? What were you hoping to get out of it?



Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: Multiple choice

The majority (78%) of survey respondents were **clear on the programme's aims and objectives** at the time of application, with only 11% being unclear (Figure 9).

Figure 9: When you applied, how clear were you on the aims and objectives of the programme?



Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: Single choice

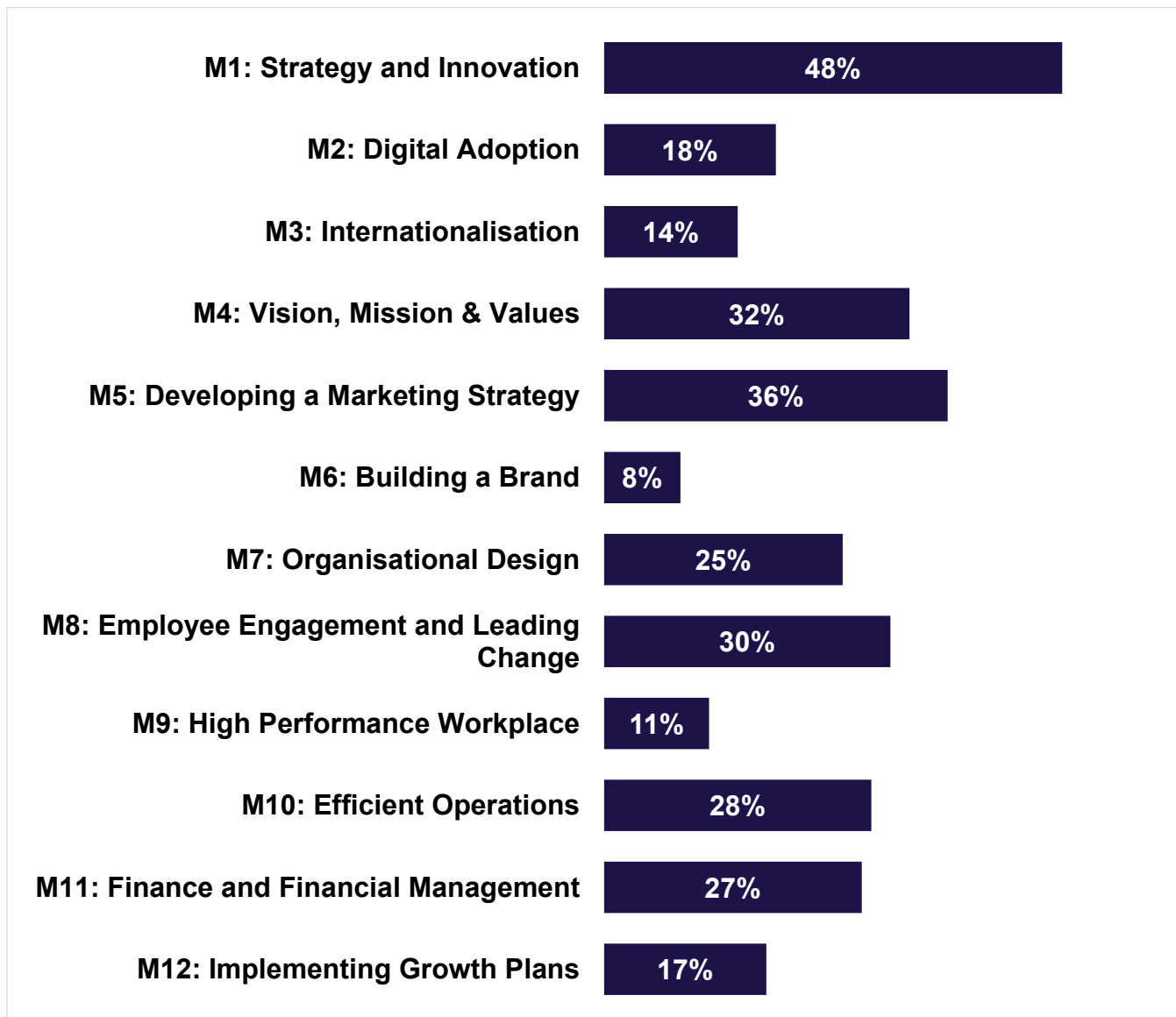
Motivations and experience of applying

At application, SME leaders were most interested in modules relating to **strategy and innovation** (48%); developing a **marketing strategy** (36%) and **vision, missions and values** (32%). Interest levels were lowest for the **case study modules** (M3, M6, M9 and M12) (Figure 10).

To date, overall feedback on the application and onboarding process has been positive – almost all respondents thought the programme started in a **timely manner** (92%) and that the **application requirements** were clear (92%) (Figure 11).

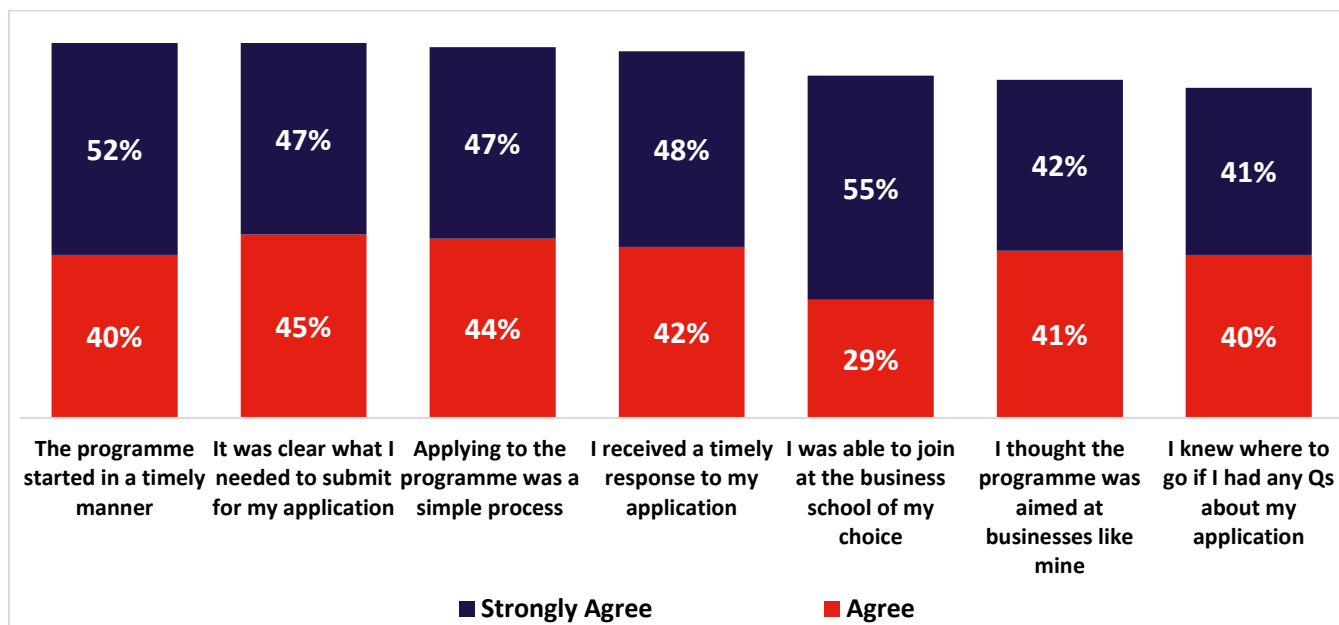
Looking at the underpinning quarterly data, there have been some small positive changes to satisfaction (% agree + strongly agree) in regard to the **time taken to receive a response to applications** (83% up to 90%) and **business school preference** (82% to 84%). The feedback suggests some scope for improvement in ensuring participants know where to go **if they have questions** about their application, although this had improved since the last quarter (78% to 81% agree + strongly agree).

Figure 10: Which three modules were you most interested in when you signed up to the programme?



Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: Respondents could select three options

Figure 11: Thinking about your experience of applying to HtGM, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: One choice per statement

Experience of HtGM

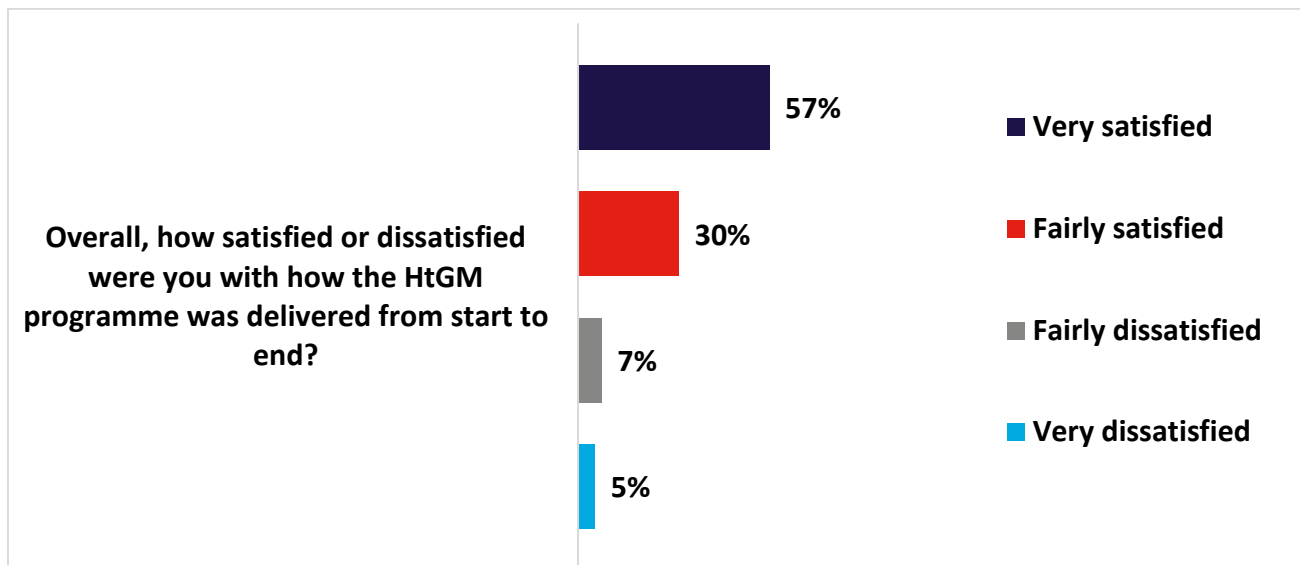
This section presents findings on overall satisfaction levels over time, the relevance of individual programme modules and experiences of mentoring.

Delivery

SME leaders are reporting **high levels of satisfaction with programme delivery**, with 87% saying they were fairly or very satisfied with this and 12% saying they were fairly or very dissatisfied (Figure 12). This has decreased slightly from the previous quarter (91% satisfied), although more respondents reported that they were very satisfied with the programme (57% up from 48%).

In addition, programme participants are reporting **high levels of satisfaction with the overall design and content of the modules**. After completing the twelve HtGM modules, SME leaders deemed the modules on **strategy and innovation** (86%); **vision, mission and values** (85%); and **marketing** (82%) to be most relevant to their business (see Figure 13). These three modules were also of most interest to SME leaders at the time of applying (Figure 10). HtGM programme completers were **divided on the relevance of the internationalisation case study module**, with around half (46%) reporting that it was relevant to their business.

Figure 12: Overall satisfaction



Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: Single choice

Figure 13: How relevant were each of the HtGM modules to your business?



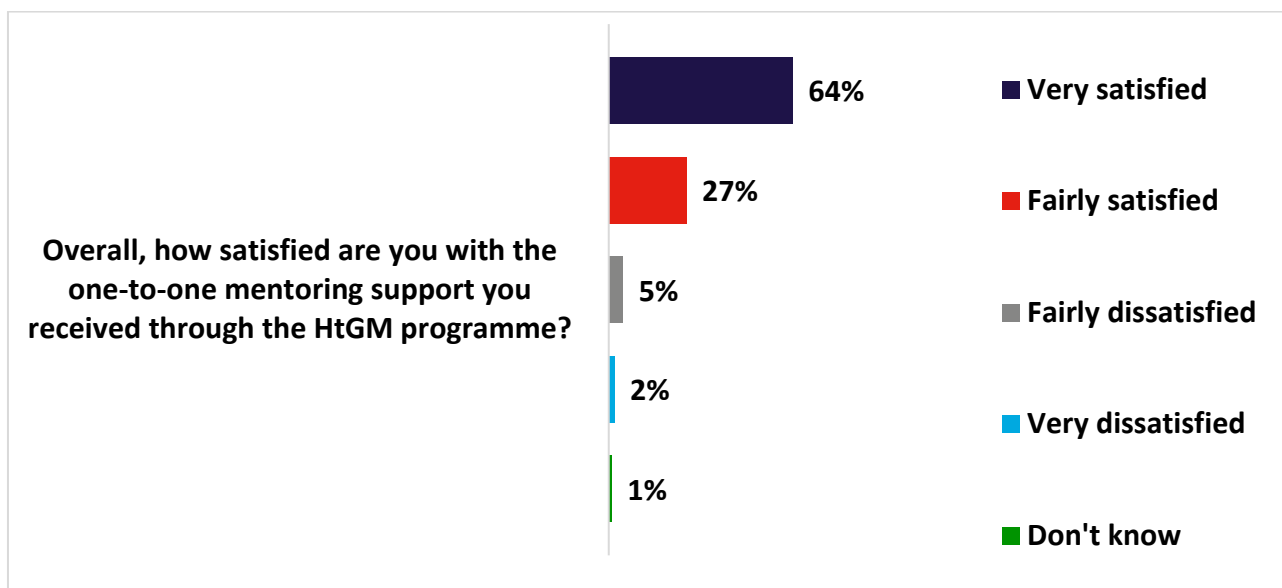
Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: One choice per statement

Mentoring

The mentoring element of the programme is highly regarded by programme participants. Almost all (91%) survey respondents were satisfied with mentoring support received and two thirds (64%) were very satisfied (Figure 14).

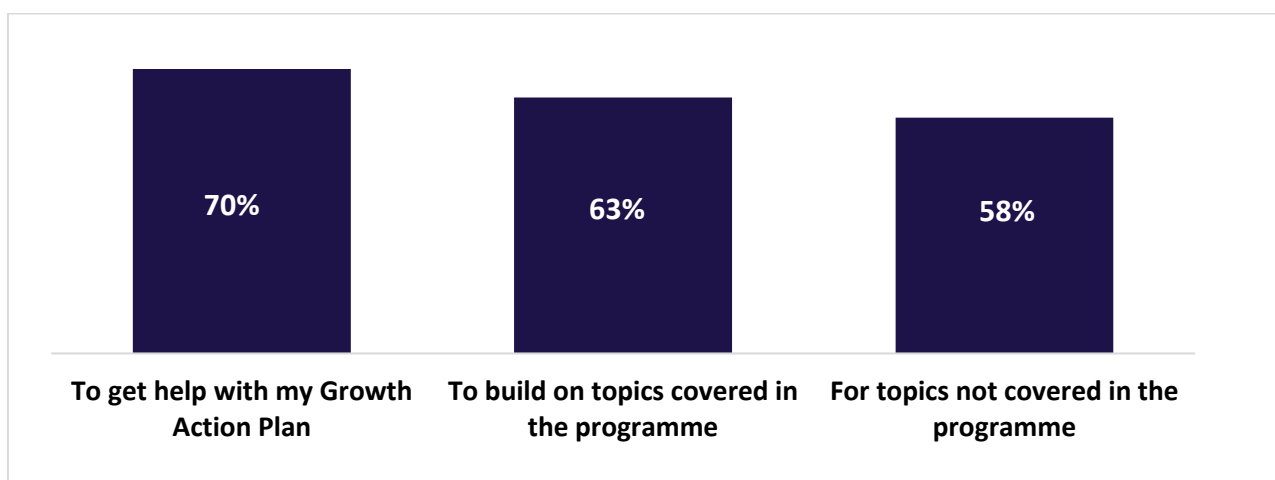
The mentoring support was most commonly (70%) used by programme participants to help with their **Growth Action Plan** (Figure 15). Around two thirds (63%) used the support to **build on topics** covered in the programme, whilst over half (58%) used it for **topics outside of the HtGM curriculum**.

Figure 14: Satisfaction with mentoring



Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: Single choice

Figure 15: Which of the following describes how you used the one to one mentoring support?

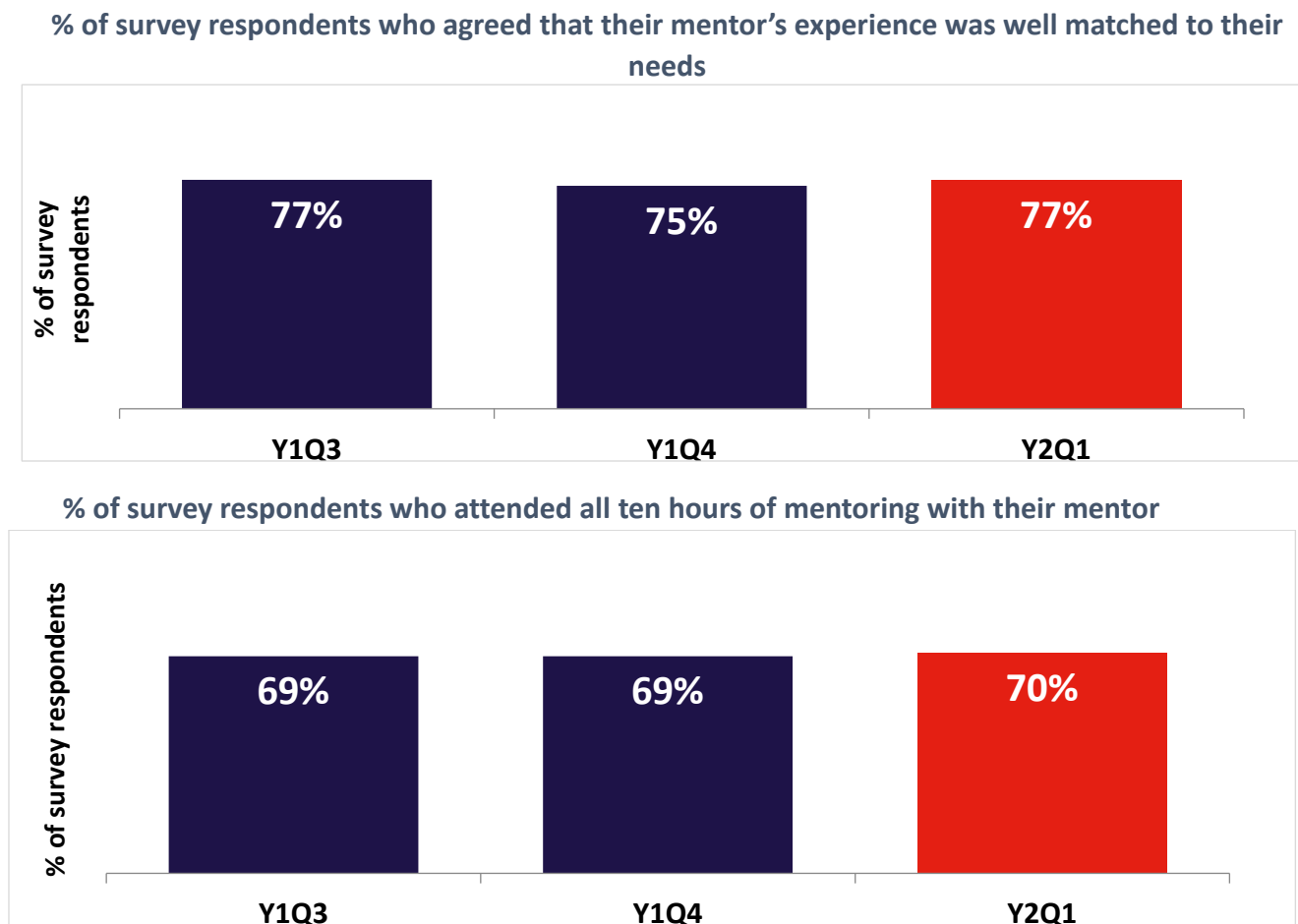


Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses); Question type: Multiple choice

To date, most (77%) agreed that they were well matched with their mentor, reporting that their mentor’s experience was well matched to their needs; and **around seven in ten (70%) of**

programme completers had attended all ten hours of mentoring at the time of the post completion survey.⁸ In both cases, this data has been fairly consistent from quarter to quarter (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Engagement with mentors



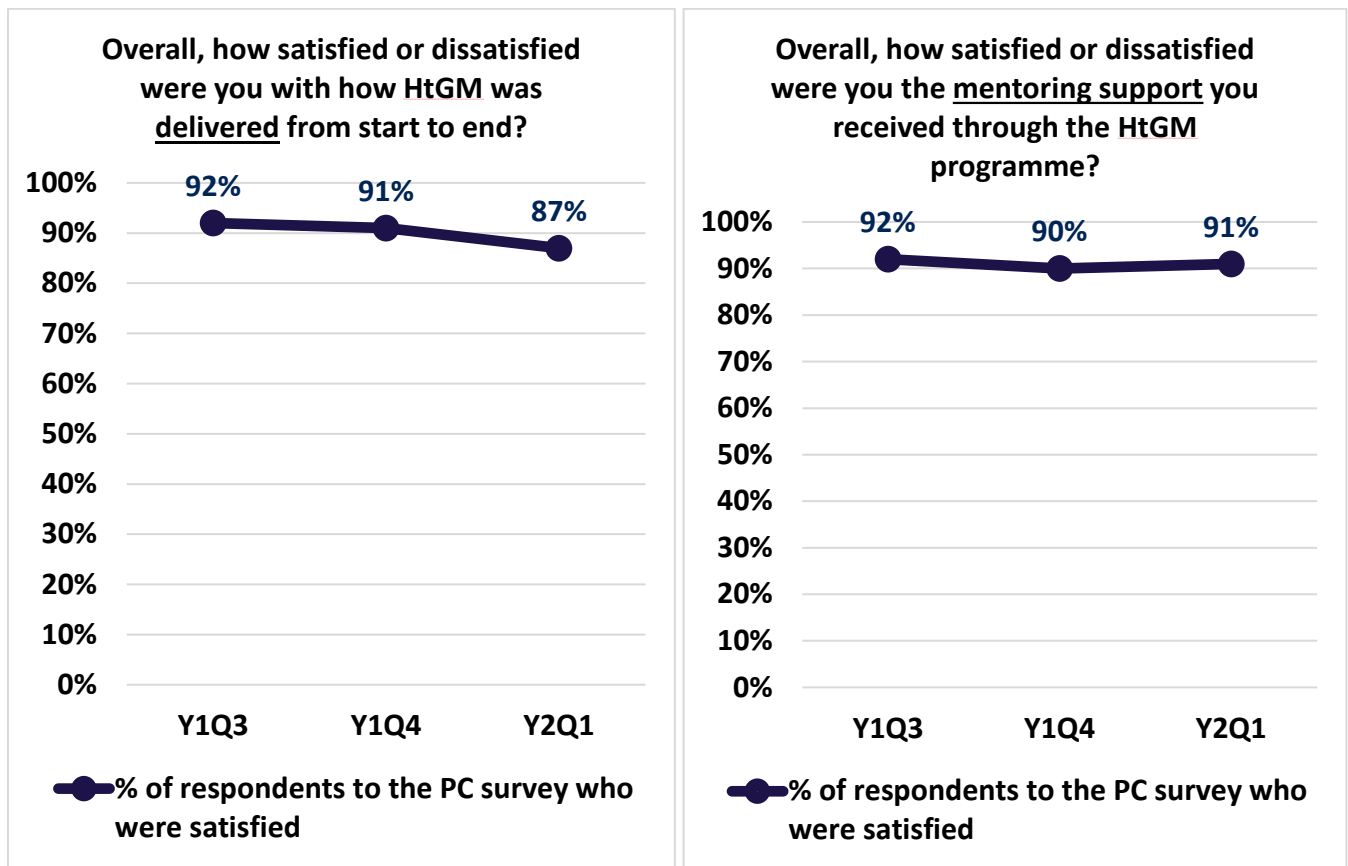
Source: Post completion survey (n=425, All responses); Question type: single choice per statement; Note: Only asked to those who were matched with a mentor

Satisfaction scores over time

Satisfaction with programme delivery and mentoring has been consistently high since the programme of surveys began (Figure 17). On average, 91% of survey respondents were satisfied with the mentoring support, and 90% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered.

⁸ Note: the post completion survey is administered between two and six weeks after Module 12. It is therefore possible that some survey respondents may not have completed ten hours because their mentoring relationship is ongoing and can be completed up to 4 weeks after Module 12.

Figure 17: Satisfaction with HtGM delivery and mentoring over time



Source: Post completion survey (n=445 for delivery satisfaction, n=422 for mentoring satisfaction); Question type: Single choice per statement; Note: the mentoring satisfaction question was only asked of those who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours

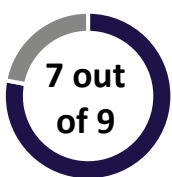
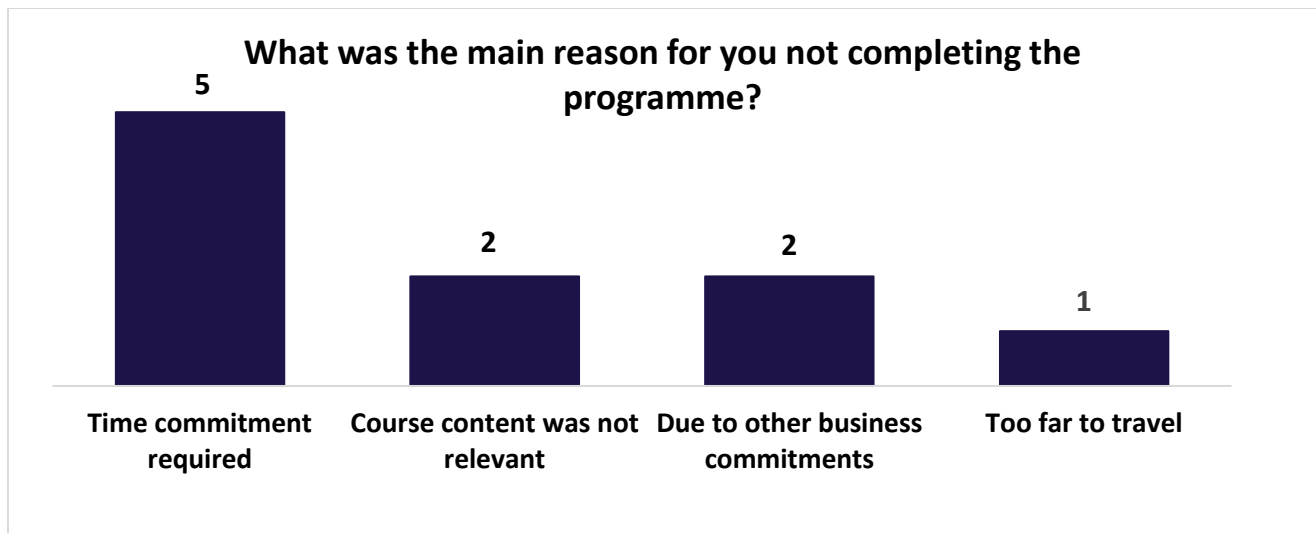
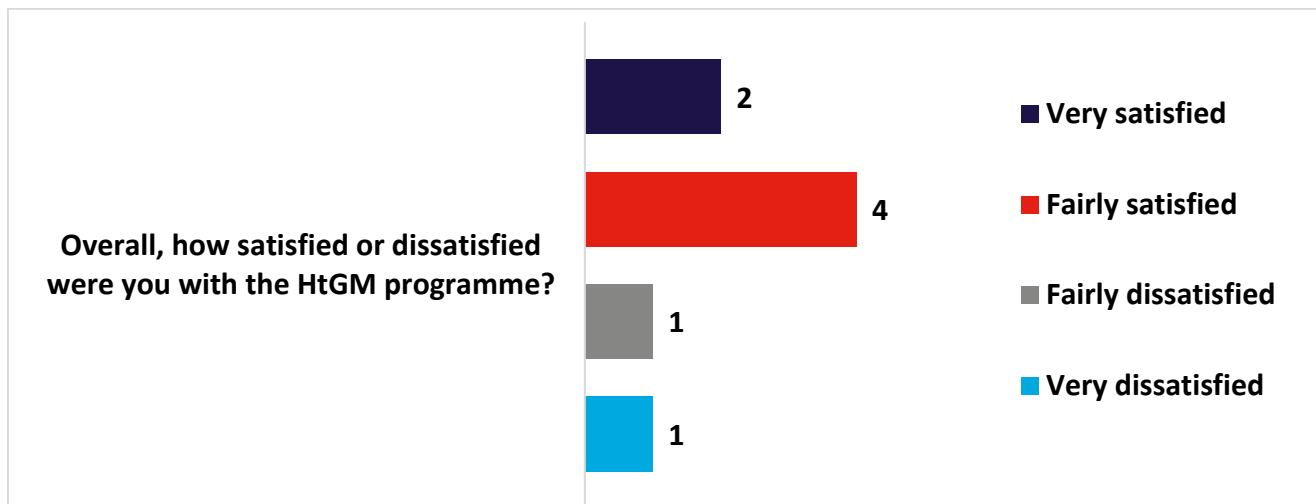
Drop out survey⁹

This section sets out the early evidence on the experiences of programme dropouts, including overall satisfaction, reasons for not completing and whether anything could have supported dropouts to attend more of the programme.

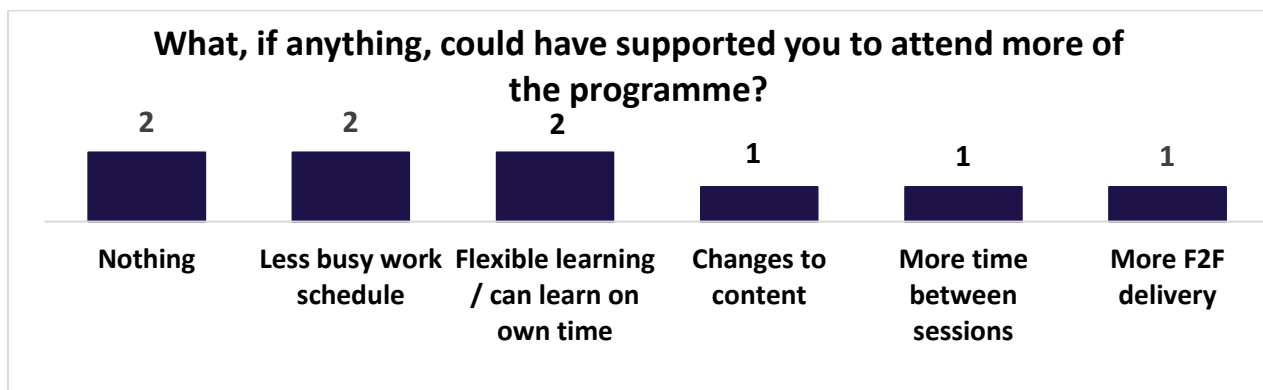
These findings are based on very small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution.

⁹ Commentary will be added to future reports once the sample size has increased.

Figure 18: Feedback from SME leaders who dropped out of HtGM



SME leaders who had dropped out of HtGM would be interested in completing the programme at a later point in time



Source: Drop out survey (n=9)

Self-reported individual outcomes

This section focuses on individual level outcomes. All findings presented are self-reported and should therefore be treated as indicative rather than conclusive.

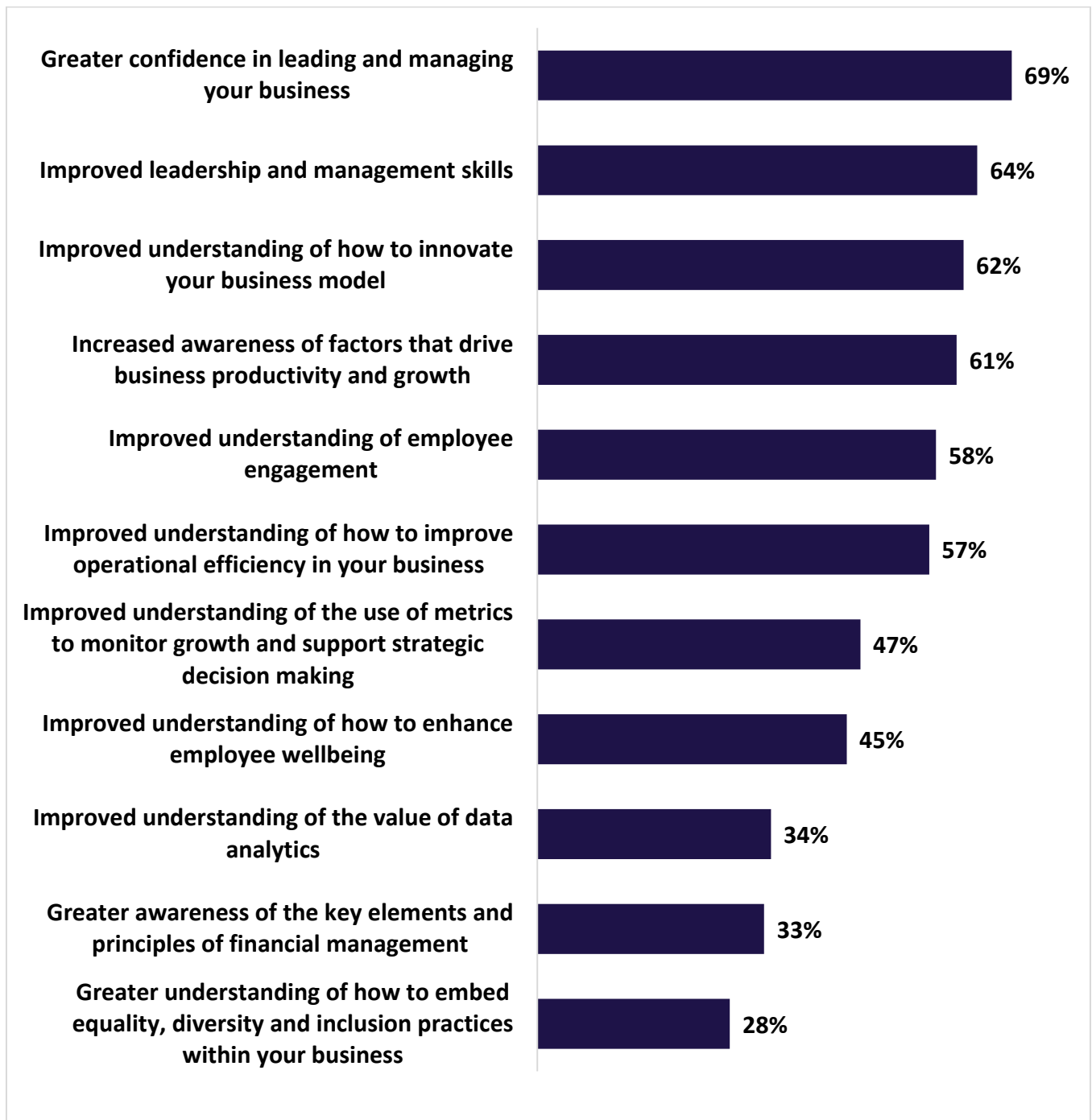
Individual outcomes

Within six weeks, participants most frequently reported **greater confidence in leading and managing** their business (69%), **improved leadership and management skills** (64%), improved understanding of **how to innovate their business model** (62%) and increased awareness of factors that drive **business productivity and growth** (61%) as a result of participating in HtGM (Figure 19). Improvements to understanding **employee engagement** (58%) and how to improve **operational efficiency** in their business (57%) was also reported by over half of participants.

Within six months, SME leaders completing the programme often felt **better supported to make decisions in their business** (84%), **had an improved understanding of available business support** (77%) and **felt less isolated in their role** (73%) (Figure 20).

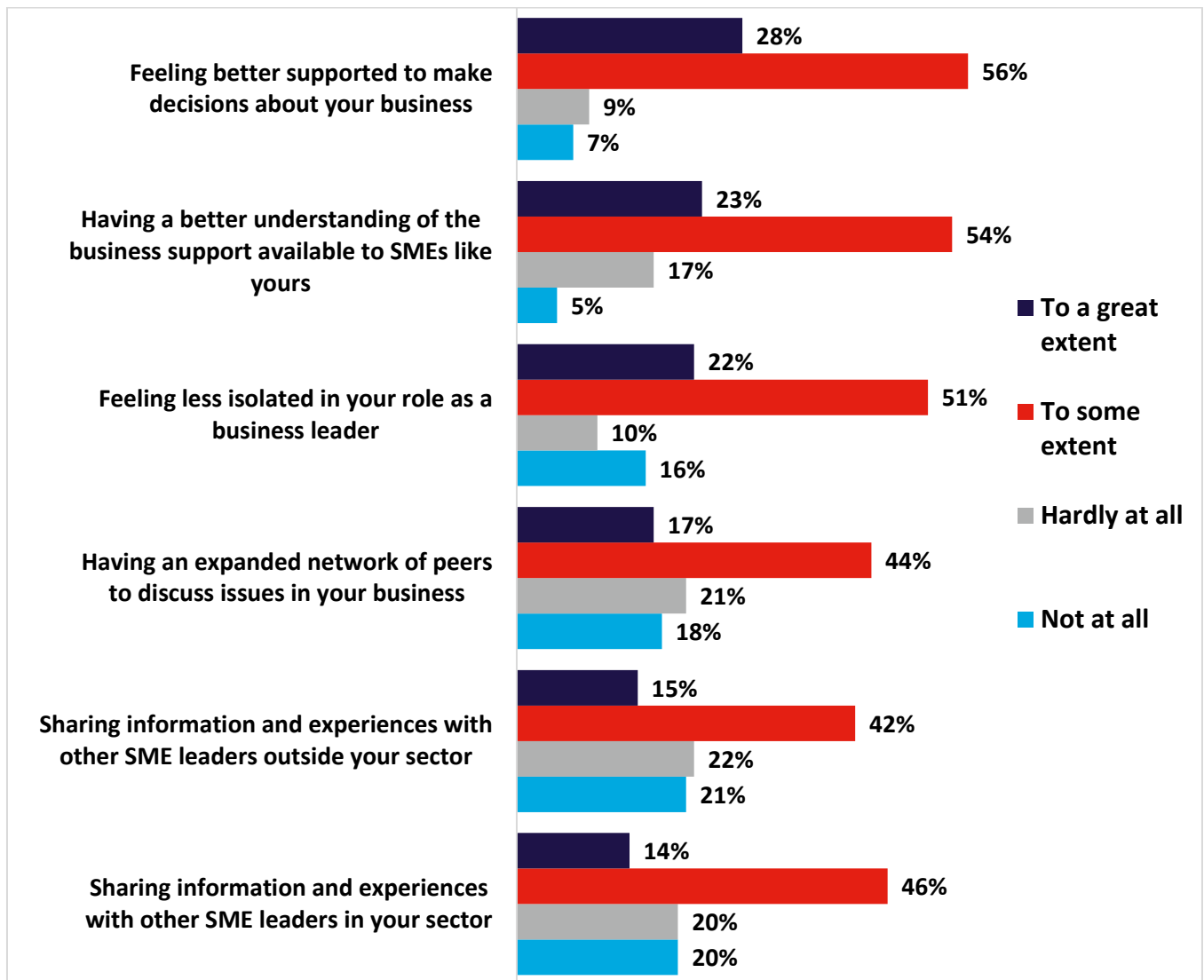
Since completing the programme, **the majority of SME leaders (88%) had continued to interact with SME leaders outside of their firm**, typically through informal discussions (71%) or networking events (52%). Only 12% reported having no interactions with anyone outside of their business (Figure 21).

Figure 19: Which (if any) of the following have you learned or gained from participation in the Help to Grow: Management programme?



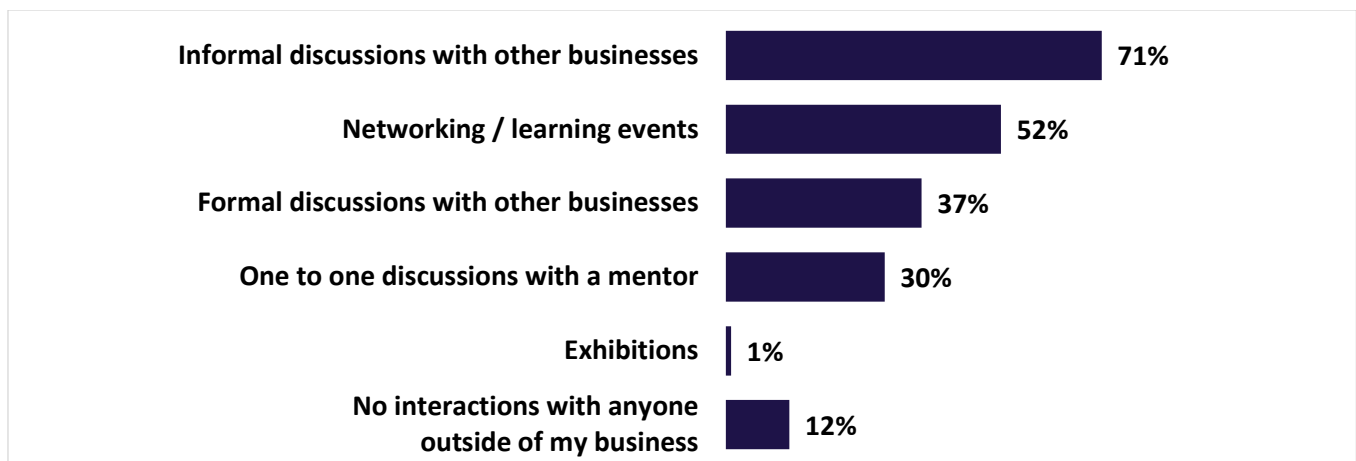
Source: Post completion survey (n=445, All responses) Question type: Single choice per question

Figure 20: To what extent has participation in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to you...



Source: Six month survey (n=192, All responses) Question type: One choice per statement

Figure 21: Since completing the programme, what activities do you engage in at least quarterly?

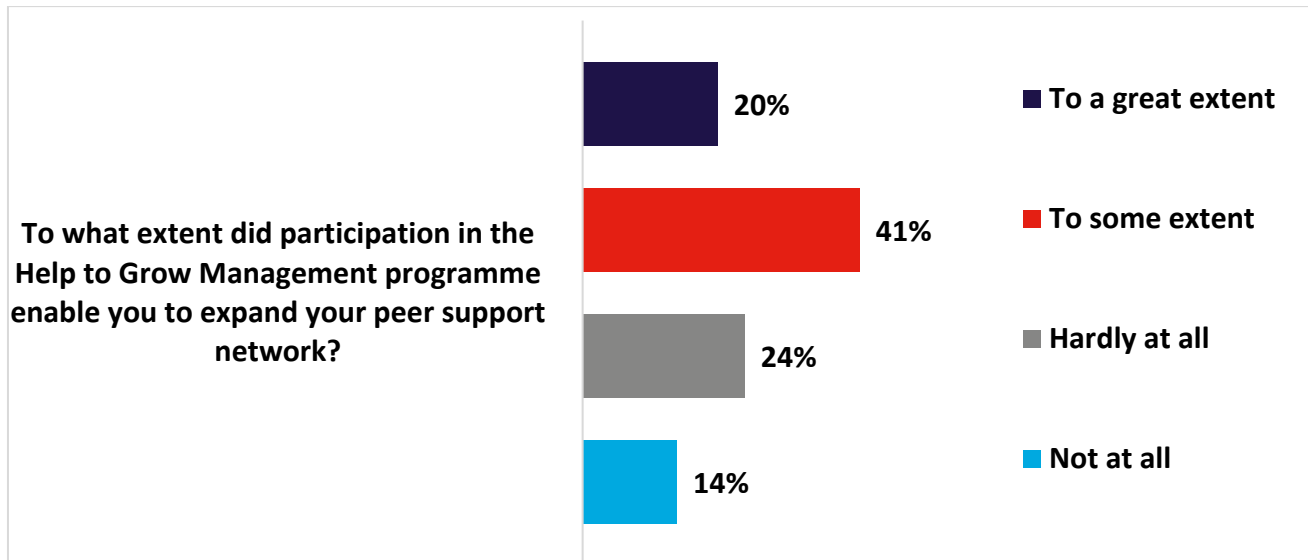


Source: Six month survey (n=192, All responses); Question type: Multiple choice

Network benefits

The programme enabled around two thirds (61%) of participants to expand their peer support network (Figure 22).

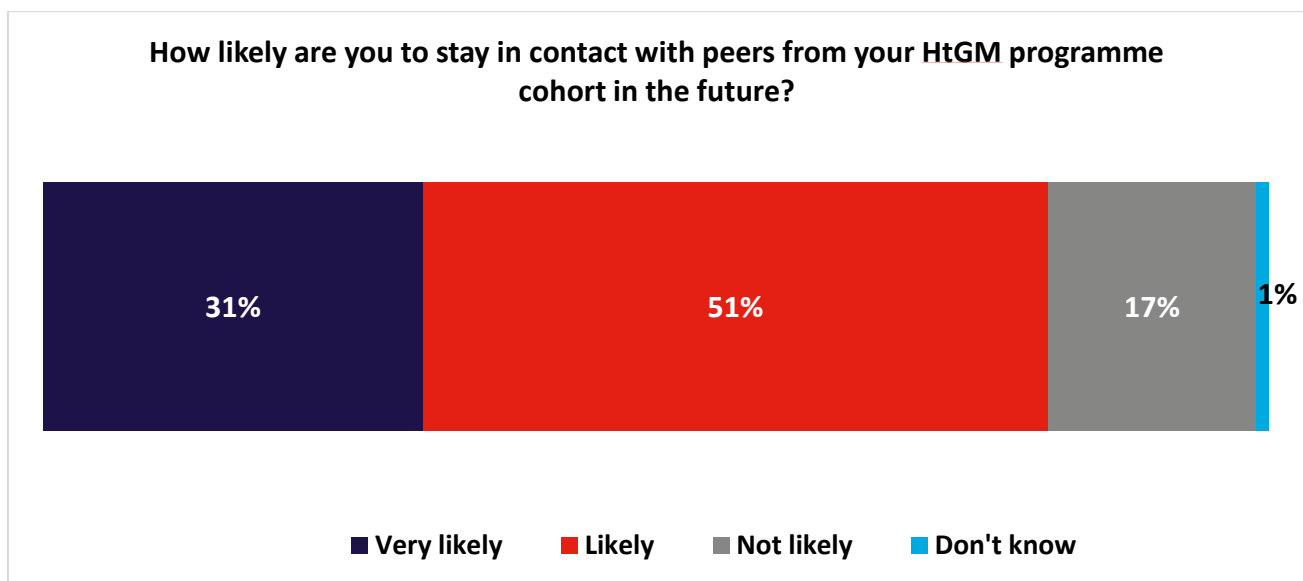
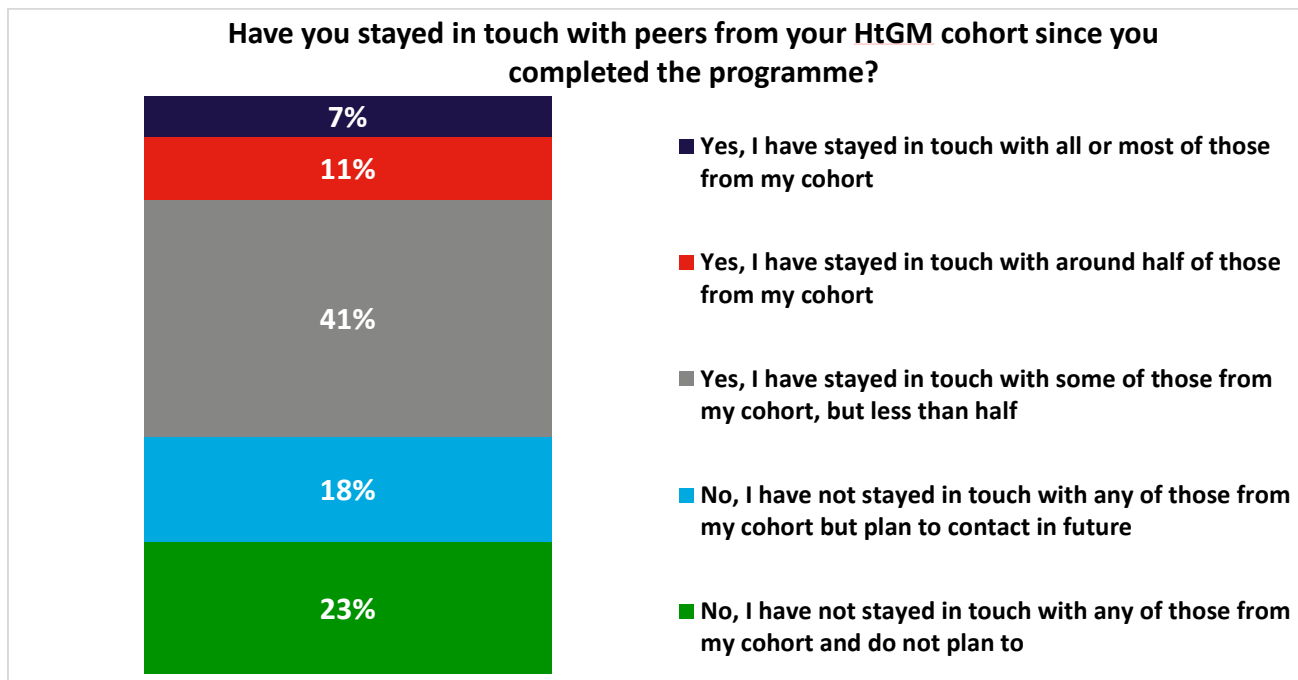
Figure 22: Network benefits



Source: Six month survey (n=192, All responses) Question type: Single choice

Over half of programme completers (59%) reported **staying in touch with peers six months after completing the programme**, indicating that HtGM is successfully facilitating networking amongst SME leaders. An additional fifth (18%) said they **plan to contact SME leaders** from their cohort in the future. The majority of participants (82%) reported that they **are very likely / likely to remain in contact** with SME leaders they met through the programme (Figure 23).

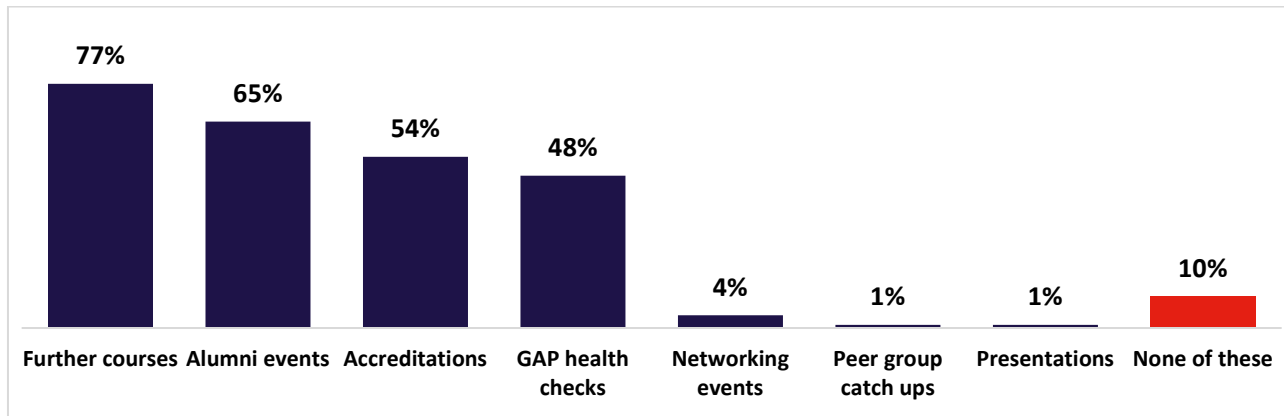
Figure 23: Ongoing contact with peers



Source: Six month follow up survey (n=192, All responses); Question type: Single choice

Programme completers expressed an interest in a range of alumni activities, most commonly **further courses** (77%) followed by **alumni events** (65%), **accreditations** (54%) and **GAP health checks** (48%) (Figure 24). A much smaller proportion of participants were interested in networking events (4%), peer group catch ups (1%) and presentations (1%).

Figure 24: What type of HtGM alumni activities or offers would you be interested in taking part in?



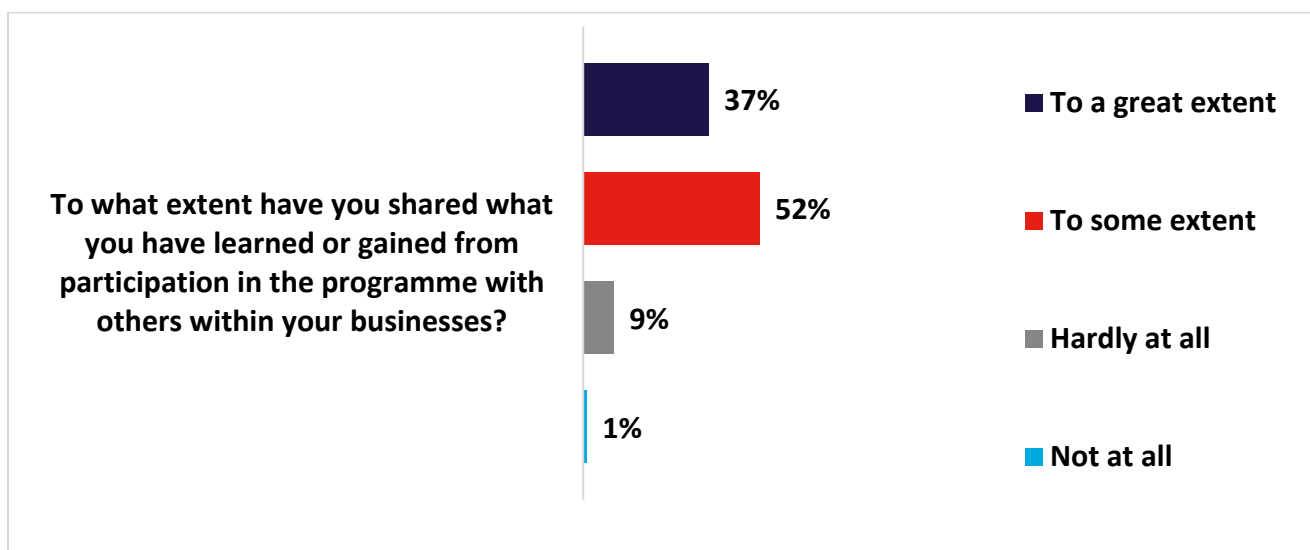
Source: Six month follow up survey (n=192, All responses) Question type: Multiple choice

Self-reported business outcomes

This section provides an overview of the emerging evidence on business-level outcomes achieved as a result of HtGM. As with the individual outcomes, these are self-reported and should be interpreted as indicative findings. Business level outcomes will also be explored through a programme of data linking with secondary data sources at a later stage in the evaluation.

Most respondents to the post-completion survey (89%) had gone on to share what they had learned or gained from participating in the programme with others in their business (to a great/some extent) (Figure 25). Only 1% reported not sharing what they learned with others. This diffusion of learning is one of the key mechanisms for generating outcomes and impacts set out in the programme’s Theory of Change.

Figure 25: Knowledge sharing

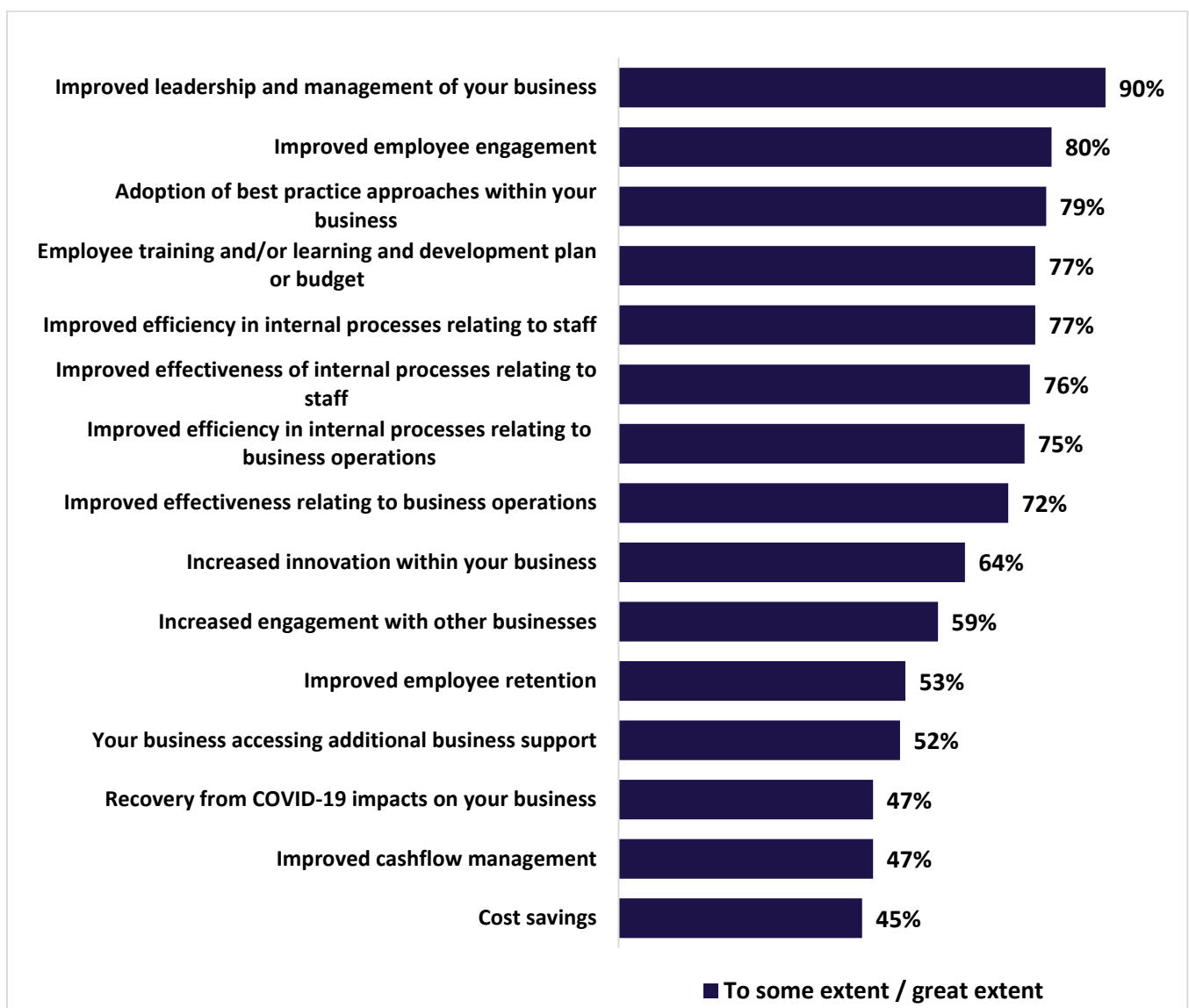


Source: Six month follow up survey (n=192, All responses); Question type: Single choice

Of all those who completed the six month follow up survey, **three quarters (77%) had produced a Growth Action Plan for their business** as a result of their participation in the programme. The quarterly data suggests that the proportion of SME leaders producing a GAP has increased between the most recent quarters (from 74% to 76%), although the target of 90% completion set by BEIS has not yet been reached in any given quarter.

Within six months, participation in HtGM appears to generate a range of business improvements, most commonly **improved leadership and management of businesses (90%)**, **improved employee engagement (80%)**, and **adoption of best practice approaches (79%)** (Figure 26).

Figure 26: To what extent has participating in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to...



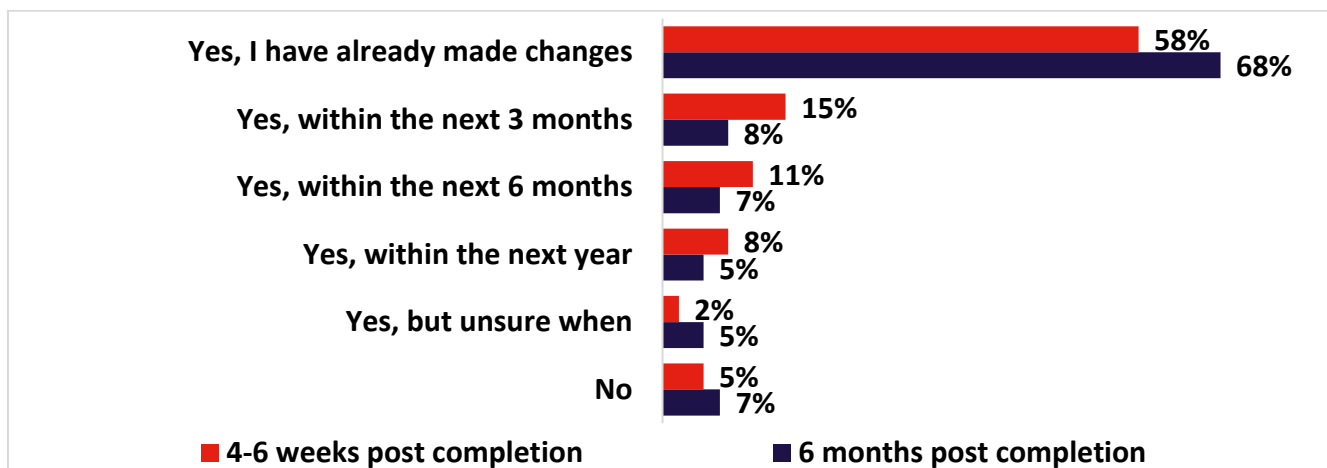
Source: Six month follow up survey (n=192, All responses); Question type: Multiple choice

Business outcomes immediately following completion vs 6 months later

The two surveys have different samples so should not be directly compared. However, they can be used to provide early insights into the nature and timescales of outcomes attributed to HtGM by SME leaders completing the programme.

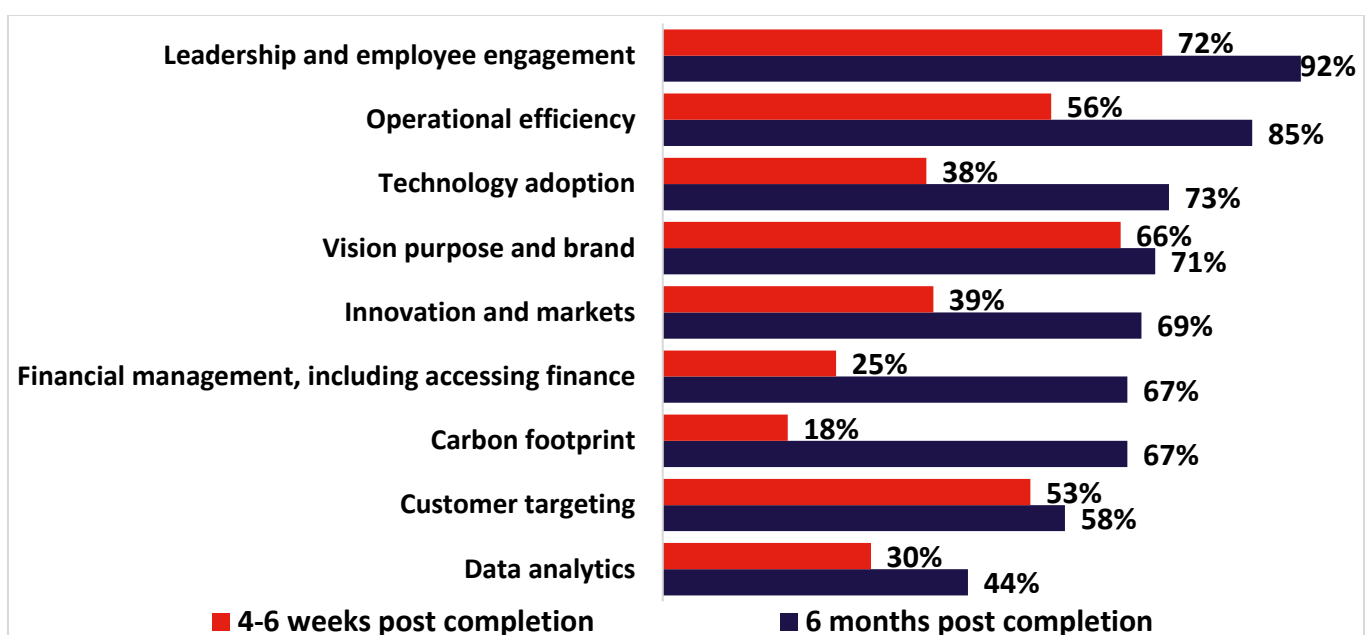
Early evidence suggests that business-level benefits continue to accrue up to six months after completing HtGM: respondents reported more outcomes in the six month follow up survey than the short-term completion survey (Figure 27). After six months, most business leaders (68%) had already made changes to their business, typically to their leadership and employee engagement (92%) and operational efficiency (85%) (Figure 28).

Figure 27: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you or do you plan to make any changes to the way you manage, organise, or operate your business?



Source: Post completion survey (n=445) & Six month follow up survey (n=192); Question type: Single choice

Figure 28: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you made changes in any of the following ways in which you manage, organise or operate your business?



Source: Post completion survey (n=445) & Six month follow up survey (n=192); Question type: Multiple choice

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