Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

Year 2 Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction and background

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) has commissioned Ipsos, in partnership with the Institute for Employment Studies (IES), to undertake an independent evaluation of the Help to Grow: Management (HtGM) programme. This summary presents headline messages from a process evaluation of HtGM and early emerging evidence of the impact of the programme based on evidence gathered between November 2021 and March 2023.

HtGM was announced in the March 2021 Spring Budget and delivery started in June 2021. It is a 12-week training programme targeted at SME leaders and delivered by business schools across the UK. It comprises twelve modules on different business topics and wraparound support in the form of 1:1 business mentoring, peer-learning and access to an alumni network. The programme aims to upskill SME leaders across a range of leadership and management practices. Participants are expected to use the learning gained to develop and implement a plan to drive change within their business aimed at improving firm-level productivity.

The findings presented in this summary are based on evidence collected through analysis of programme monitoring data and surveys of programme completers, non-completers, mentors and eligible SMEs who have not participated in the programme. It also draws on evidence from depth interviews with programme completers, mentors, business schools and wider stakeholders involved in programme design and implementation.

Recruitment and retention

Evaluation Question 1: How effective is the programme in recruiting businesses and ensuring they complete the programme?

Overall, HtGM has been effective in recruiting eligible businesses and supporting them to complete the programme, although the evidence to date suggests some scope for improvement on both of these measures. Since HtGM launched in May 2021, **52 business schools** have been recruited to deliver the programme and they have collectively recruited **5,648 SME leaders**.

Demand for the programme has been lower than originally anticipated. Recruitment was found to be challenging in the first year of delivery, with 122 scheduled programme cohorts having to be cancelled due to insufficient take up. However, there was a **notable improvement in recruitment in Year 2**, with far fewer cohorts cancelled. Business schools attributed the improved take up to changes to the eligibility criteria (particularly allowing applications from

former Small Business Leadership Programme[1] (SBLP) participants and multiple participants per business) and budget being allocated to business schools to do their own marketing.

A total of **3,643 SME leaders** had completed the programme by the end of March 2023, with a further 150 either still in delivery or scheduled for the next financial year. More than four in every five (84%) SME leaders who enrolled on HtGM during the first two years of delivery **went on to complete the programme**. Reasons for non-completion were wide ranging, but mainly focussed on the time commitment required in the context of other business commitments.

Quality of programme delivery

Evaluation Question 2: To what extent is the programme successfully delivering high quality business support?

The evidence to date suggests that the programme is successfully delivering high quality business support. SME leaders who have completed HtGM report **very high levels of satisfaction** with their experience of the programme overall, with nine in ten reporting being fairly or very satisfied. There was a ten-percentage point increase between Year 1 and Year 2 in the proportion who said they were very satisfied. A similarly high proportion (90%) said they would be likely to recommend HtGM to another business leader.

Programme content was seen as comprehensive and largely relevant, covering topics related to current leadership and business challenges. However, programme completers did identify some potential areas for improvement to the curriculum including embedding case studies within each module and more content on environmental sustainability.

Most SME leaders who started but did not complete HtGM said that **nothing could have been done to change their decision not to complete the programme**. Around half (18 out of 34) said they would be **interested in completing the programme at a later date**, whilst the remainder were either not interested or not sure.

Mentoring

A new mentoring model was launched on 1st August 2022. Participants on cohorts that started after this date could access a mentor involved in HtGM on a voluntary basis. Under the previous model, mentors received payment for the ten sessions delivered under HtGM.

A key difference in the new mentoring model is that programme participants can choose a mentor whereas previously business schools formed the mentoring

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[1] The Small Business Leadership Programme was a business support programme delivered by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) prior to Help to Grow: Management - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/small-business-support-schemes-small-business-leadership-programme-and-peer-networks.

relationships on their behalf, often based on their existing relationship with the mentors and interviews with programme participants.

SME leaders reported consistently high levels of satisfaction with the paid-for mentoring offer, often exceeding overall programme satisfaction. However, early evidence suggests that levels of satisfaction with the mentoring element of the programme have dropped since the voluntary model was introduced in August 2022. There has also been a decline in levels of satisfaction amongst mentors involved in the voluntary model compared to the paid model.

The matching process for the voluntary model was found to be **more onerous on both programme participants and mentors**. In Year 1, business schools formed the mentoring relationships. However, the new model requires mentees to select mentors from profiles on an online mentoring platform.[2] Despite this, programme participants have consistently agreed that their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs ,with only a slight (10 percentage point) drop off since the introduction of the voluntary model.

Since programme launch, there has been a downward trend in both the proportion of programme completers reporting that they have **produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP)** and the proportion reporting that they used mentoring support to help with development and implementation of their GAP. This is of some concern given that the GAP is a key mechanism through which business-level benefits from the programme are expected to be realised.

Programme effectiveness

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent is the programme effective at teaching new skills and encouraging business leaders to adopt new practices?

Feedback from HtGM programme completers shows statistically significant improvements across a range of **self-reported management and leadership skills and individual confidence**. The most marked improvements relate to having the skills required to lead their business and manage employees over the next three years.

Following completion of the programme, SME leaders reported statistically significant improvements across a range of **firm-level strategic capabilities and experiences**. The most commonly reported improvements related to understanding customer types and needs, leading through change and operational effectiveness. The most improved firm-level capability related to implementing a business plan and strategy.

Compared to eligible SME leaders who did not participate in HtGM, **programme completers report comparable or better business outcomes**. SME leaders who had completed the programme reported higher levels of confidence in their firm's ability and experience in relation

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[2] In December 2022, HtGM participants were offered the option of a brokered match, which has led to an increase in the proportion of participants being matched with a mentor by module 3.

to leading through change and uncertainty, operational processes, digital technology and digitalising systems and processes.

Two thirds of programme completers (68%) had **already made changes to the way they manage, organise or operate their business** within six months of completing HtGM, most often focussed on processes and infrastructure. The types of changes reported by SME leaders related to data analytics, technology adoption, operation efficiency, financial management and innovation and markets. Programme completers gave examples of the business benefits that have occurred as a result of these firm-level changes, including employees working more effectively, improved brand awareness and improvements to efficiency and effectiveness of key business processes.

1 Introduction

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), now the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), has commissioned Ipsos, in partnership with the 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 incorporates an intensive training programme aimed at improving leadership and management skills and addressing firm-level productivity challenges. This report presents findings from the process evaluation of HtGM and early emerging evidence of impact based on evidence collected from November 2021 until March 2023. Where they are notable, the report highlights differences between Year 1 (FY 2021/22) and Year 2 (FY 2022/23) evaluation findings and between different sub-groups of programme participants.

Overview of Help to Grow: Management

The Government announced the Help to Grow: Management programme in March 2021. It is a 12-week training programme delivered by a network of business schools across the UK. It comprises four parts of three modules each and wraparound support for SME leaders in the form of 1:1 business mentoring, peer-learning and access to an alumni network. The programme aims to upskill SME leaders across a range of leadership and management practices. Participants are supported to use this learning to develop and implement a Growth Action Plan (GAP) to drive change within their business aimed at improving firm-level productivity. A detailed overview of the HtGM curriculum is set out in Annex E and an overview of the Alumni Network is presented in Annex F.

The HtGM programme was launched by Government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as a key mechanism to support the UK's economic recovery. It continues to be delivered in challenging economic conditions (rising energy costs, inflation and associated cost of living crisis). It is important to acknowledge the unprecedented challenges the pandemic and ongoing economic uncertainty have posed for delivery and continue to pose for SME decision making. The findings set out in this annual report of the evaluation of the HtGM programme should be interpreted within this context.

Programme changes

A number of changes were made to the HtGM programme in the second year of delivery, and these are summarised in Table 1. Where possible, the findings presented in this report explore the effect of these changes on programme demand, participant satisfaction, and self-reported benefits to SME leaders and their firms. In addition to these programme changes, DBT began tracking programme sponsorship of participants by business schools (full and partial cover of

the £750 programme fee) in October 2022, though it is understood that some business schools began sponsorship earlier in the programme.

Table 1: Summary of HtGM programme changes in FY 2022/23

Programme element	Changes introduced in 2022/23	Date of introduction
Eligibility criteria	SMEs with 10 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) or more employees could put two senior leaders onto HtGM, where previously only one leader could attend per business. Businesses that had previously participated in Small Business Leadership Programme (SBLP) could participate in the programme.	June 2022
Delivery trials (delivery mode and payments)	Oxford Brookes Business School trialled delivery of five programme cohorts with full and partial (90%) subsidies to cover participant payments and full online delivery, starting in June 2022. The final of these five cohorts finished the programme modular content in December 2022.	June 2022
Marketing and communications	Business schools were allocated funding to market the programme. This funding was approved for 48 schools. Previously all marketing was delivered centrally by Government.	August 2022
Mentoring	All programme participants that started after 1st August 2022 were supported by mentors who were engaged in the programme on a voluntary basis, rather than mentors paid and provided through business schools as in Year 1. In December 2022, the duration of the HtGM mentoring relationship was extended from four weeks after completing the final module to eight weeks.	August 2022
Alumni network	The alumni offer comprises a blend of networking (e.g. LinkedIn community), events, webinars and online content (e.g. newsletters). The first national event was held in November 2022 and the first	September 2022

	regional event was held in January 2023. Prior to this, schools were expected to organise informal local alumni events.	
Refer-a-friend scheme	Small business leaders can receive £50, or an alternative charity donation, for each peer that enrols onto the programme because of their referral. Referees also receive the same reward.	October 2022

Source: DBT March 2023

Evaluation aims and objectives

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the **effectiveness** of the approaches taken to the design, development and delivery of Help to Grow: Management and its **impact** on SME leaders, their businesses and the wider economy. Key objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Understand how to improve **delivery** (process evaluation)
- Measure the **early impacts** of the programme (e.g., adoption of new practices)
- Generate evidence to inform **future** programme design and funding (strategic question)
- Embed effective data collection practices to enable **longer-term** impact evaluation
- Evaluate the programme's impacts on **productivity and recovery** using administrative data
- Understand the **impacts of COVID-19** on delivery and businesses over time (strategic question).

These aims and objectives are incorporated within five high-level questions to be addressed through the evaluation (Table 2). This report is structured around questions 1-3 but presents early emerging evidence in relation to questions 4 and 5.

Table 2: Help to Grow: Management high-level evaluation questions

#	High Level Evaluation Questions
1	How effective is the programme in recruiting businesses and ensuring they complete the programme?
2	To what extent is the programme successfully delivering high quality business support?
3	To what extent is the programme effective at teaching new skills and encouraging business leaders to adopt new practices?

4	What early changes are businesses making as a result of participating in the programme?
5	What other factors influence how and what changes businesses are making after they complete the programme?

Source: Help to Grow: Management ITT documents

Methodology

Overall evaluation approach

The evaluation has been designed to assess delivery of the HtGM programme and capture early evidence of outcomes and impacts for individual SME leaders, their businesses and the wider economy. It incorporates quantitative and qualitative primary data collection through surveys, interviews and case studies with programme participants, business schools and wider stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of the programme. It also incorporates analysis of programme monitoring data and over time this will be linked to national administrative datasets to enable assessment of the longer-term impact of the programme on SME performance, including Gross Value Added (GVA) and productivity.

Approach to the Year 2 evaluation

This report presents emerging evidence in relation to the evaluation questions presented in Table 2, with particular emphasis on questions 1-3. The report also summarises evidence collected to date on outcomes and the relative contribution of the programme to these. All evidence on outcomes set out in this report is based on self-reported data and, unless otherwise stated, should be treated as indicative, without any causal inference.

The findings in this interim evaluation report are based on evidence collected through:

- **Analysis of programme monitoring data** - including data collected on programme participants and their firms at initial registration to the programme including through administration of a diagnostic survey. The evaluation is also informed by a review of available data on participating business schools from the DBT progress tracker, or 'PB tracker', including numbers of enrolments and delivery to date.

- **A programme of online surveys (**full details of all surveys and associated response rates are provided in Annex A):

    o administered to all **programme completers** up to six weeks after finishing the final module of the curriculum to gather feedback on the programme design and delivery.

    o a quarterly survey of **mentors** involved in the voluntary model and a one-off survey of mentors involved in the original paid mentor model to capture feedback on their experience of mentoring for HtGM.

- **A programme of telephone surveys:**
  - one administered to all **programme completers** after six months to gather insights into individual and business level outcomes.
  - a second administered to **non-completers** (i.e., those who completed <75% of the HtGM modules) to understand why they did not complete the programme and what, if anything, could have encouraged them to complete this; and
  - an SME survey of **eligible SMEs who have not been involved** in HtGM to form a point of comparison on key outcomes of interest.

- **40 depth interviews with SME leaders** who completed HtGM, comprising 30 interviews with participants who had not previously been interviewed and 10 follow-up interviews with programme completers who were interviewed in Y1 of the evaluation. The interviews built on the data collected through the surveys to explore in more detail participants' experiences of the programme and perceived current and potential future benefits to them and their business from this.

- **10 depth interviews with mentors** who had supported SME leaders on the HtGM programmes on a voluntary basis. These discussions explored the mentor recruitment and onboarding processes, how the mentoring support was being used in practice, what was working well and any aspects of the mentoring offer that could be further developed or improved.

- **10 depth interviews with Business Schools** involved in delivering the HtGM programme. The discussions gathered evidence on their experience of delivering the programme, identifying key enablers / barriers to effective delivery and elements of the programme they thought could be improved.

- **8 depth interviews with key stakeholders** involved in the delivery of HtGM and the design and implementation of the key changes to the programme.

Strengths and limitations

The report draws on a breadth and depth of perspectives: **2,695 survey responses** to six separate surveys and **68 depth interviews** with programme participants, mentors, business schools, delivery partners and other stakeholders. Where sample sizes allow, distinctions have been made between responses over time, geography, business size, participant type (e.g., those with a voluntary mentor, those who participated in the Oxford Brookes trial) and other self-reported measures.

At the time of writing, respondents to the six month and non-completion survey will have received support from a paid mentor. Programme completers with a voluntary mentor will not be eligible for the six month survey until Year 3 of the evaluation. Therefore, evidence on the new delivery model is limited to the post-completion survey and in-depth interviews.

It is important to note that the findings are **not based on representative samples.** Participation in the evaluation is voluntary and therefore likely to be subject to a degree of self-selection bias, where those who have participated are likely to be those who were more engaged with the programme and / or viewed it favourably.

June 2023

All survey findings have been significance tested to the 5% level between years, quarters and by business size, location and sector. Where findings are statistically significant it has been clearly stated in the main body of the report or in footnotes. If a finding is statistically significant it means that there is a true difference between two groups (or time periods). It does not mean the difference can be attributed to the programme at this stage.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252.

Reporting definitions

This report presents overarching findings from evaluation evidence collected to date but also draws comparisons between different sub-groups, definitions of which are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Reporting definitions

Term	Definition
Year 1	Evidence collected during the **first year** of HtGM delivery, from launch in Summer 2021 until March 2022.
Year 2	Evidence collected during the **second year** of HtGM delivery, from 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023
Programme completers	SME leaders who completed 75% or more of the HtGM modules.
Non-completers	SME leaders who completed less than 75% of the HtGM
Cohort	Group of c. 15-20 SME leaders who participate in the programme together, attending the module content and forming smaller peer-learning groups
Voluntary mentors	Individuals who provide mentoring support to HtGM programme participants and do not receive payment (relevant to all mentoring relationships formed from 1st August 2022 onwards)
Paid-for mentors	Individuals who provide mentoring support to HtGM programme participants and received a payment (relevant to all mentoring relationships formed before 1st August 2022)

Report structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** presents evidence to date on the effectiveness of HtGM in recruiting SME leaders and ensuring they complete the programme.
- **Section 3** summarises feedback on the quality of HtGM delivery to date.
- **Section 4** sets out all findings to date in relations to the mentoring element of HtGM.
- **Section 5** provides evidence on the effectiveness of the programme at teaching new skills and encouraging business leaders to adopt new practices.
- **Section 6** presents summary conclusions, reflecting on what has worked well, and less well, in HtGM to date.

The main body of the report is supported by the following annexes:

- **Annex A** – Response rates of the survey programme
- **Annex B** – List of Business Schools involved in programme delivery.
- **Annex C** – SME survey methodology
- **Annex D** – Theory of Change and logic model
- **Annex E** – Overview of HtGM curriculum
- **Annex F** – Overview of HtGM Alumni Network

2 Recruitment and retention

This chapter presents evidence collected to date on the effectiveness of processes for recruiting and retaining SME leaders on the HtGM programme. It draws on evidence from monitoring data, survey feedback from programme participants and non-completers and depth interviews with SME leaders, business schools and stakeholders. Where relevant, it draws a distinction between the first year of delivery 'Year 1', which ran from programme launch until 31st March 2022 and the second year of delivery 'Year 2', which ran from 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023.

2.1 Programme overview

Business school engagement

As of 4th April 2023, a total of **52 business schools**[3] had been recruited to deliver the HtGM programme across the UK. In Year 2, five new business schools started delivering the programme.[4] Participating schools had formed a total of 394 cohorts of programme participants by early April 2023 (Table 4). Of these, **246 cohorts** had been delivered, comprising **3,643 programme completers**. The remainder were either still in delivery or scheduled to start in the following year. Demand for the programme has been lower than originally hoped for. Recruitment was found to be challenging in the first year of delivery. Whilst there was a notable improvement for recruitment in Year 2, this remains considerably lower than original expectations.

As of 12th April 2023, there were 147 cohorts scheduled for Year 3. **There was a marked increase in the number of cohorts that were successfully delivered (or in delivery) between Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme.** There was also a substantial decrease in the proportion of cohorts that were cancelled (see Table 4). In the first year of delivery, business schools reported difficulties in recruiting and filling their scheduled cohorts. In Year 2, business schools who participated in interviews reflected that recruitment to the programme had become easier. They largely attributed this to the changes in the programme eligibility criteria (particularly allowing applications from former SBLP participants and multiple participants per firms) and budget being allocated for business schools to do their own marketing (enabling more tailored, targeted promotion).

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[3] See Annex B for full list of registered Business Schools.
[4] University of Bath School of Management, University of East Anglia, University of Exeter Business School, University of Greenwich Business School, Lincoln International Business School and Queen's University Belfast Business School.

Table 4: Status of HtGM cohorts

Status	No. of cohorts		Overall
	Year 1	Year 2	
Completed	70	176[5]	246
In delivery	64	12	76
Scheduled	66	147[6]	72
Total	200	193	394
Cancelled	122	66	188

Source: DBT monitoring data – Year 1 data shows status of cohorts as of 31st March 2022, Year 2 data shows status of cohorts delivered between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023 using data from 6th June 2023. Data for Year 2 was extracted later than 31st March 2023 due to delays with business schools reporting cohort completion, with the exception of scheduled cohorts, which was extracted on 12th April 2023 from DBT mapping data.

Registrations

Since HtGM launched in May 2021, **14,032 SME leaders** have registered an interest in the programme, averaging around 600 per month.[7] The number of registrations had fluctuated over time, with peaks at the beginning of each calendar year and drops towards the end of calendar and financial years, which are often busy periods for SMEs due to holidays and business commitments (Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows that the flow of registrations to the programme stabilised in the second half of 2022, which was also when changes to the programme eligibility and marketing were introduced. Interview evidence suggests that:

- The **broadened eligibility criteria** (launched in June 2022) enabled business schools to tap into the latent demand amongst SBLP participants and firms who wanted to send multiple leaders on the programme (e.g., Heads of Operations, Heads of HR). It also enabled programme completers to recommend the programme to other senior colleagues, which was reflected in the depth interviews with SME leaders.

- The **delegated marketing budget** (launched in August 2022) broadened the avenues by which programme completers first heard about the programme, with SME leaders

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[5] Note: 12 scheduled cohorts were merged in Y2.
[6] Data reflects the number of scheduled cohorts as of 12th April 2023.
[7] Between May 2021 and February 2023, the average no. of registrations was 627. March 2023 was not included because Ipsos only had access to part of March data at the time of writing.

more commonly referencing local marketing from their business school, regional industry newsletters (e.g., Manufacturing Northern Ireland) or personal recommendations from colleagues or others in their business network. This contrasts with evidence from the first year of delivery, whereby SMEs most commonly heard about the programme via national marketing (e.g., The Chancellor's announcement in the Spring Budget, National TV, DBT promotions).

Figure 1: Registrations for HtGM over time
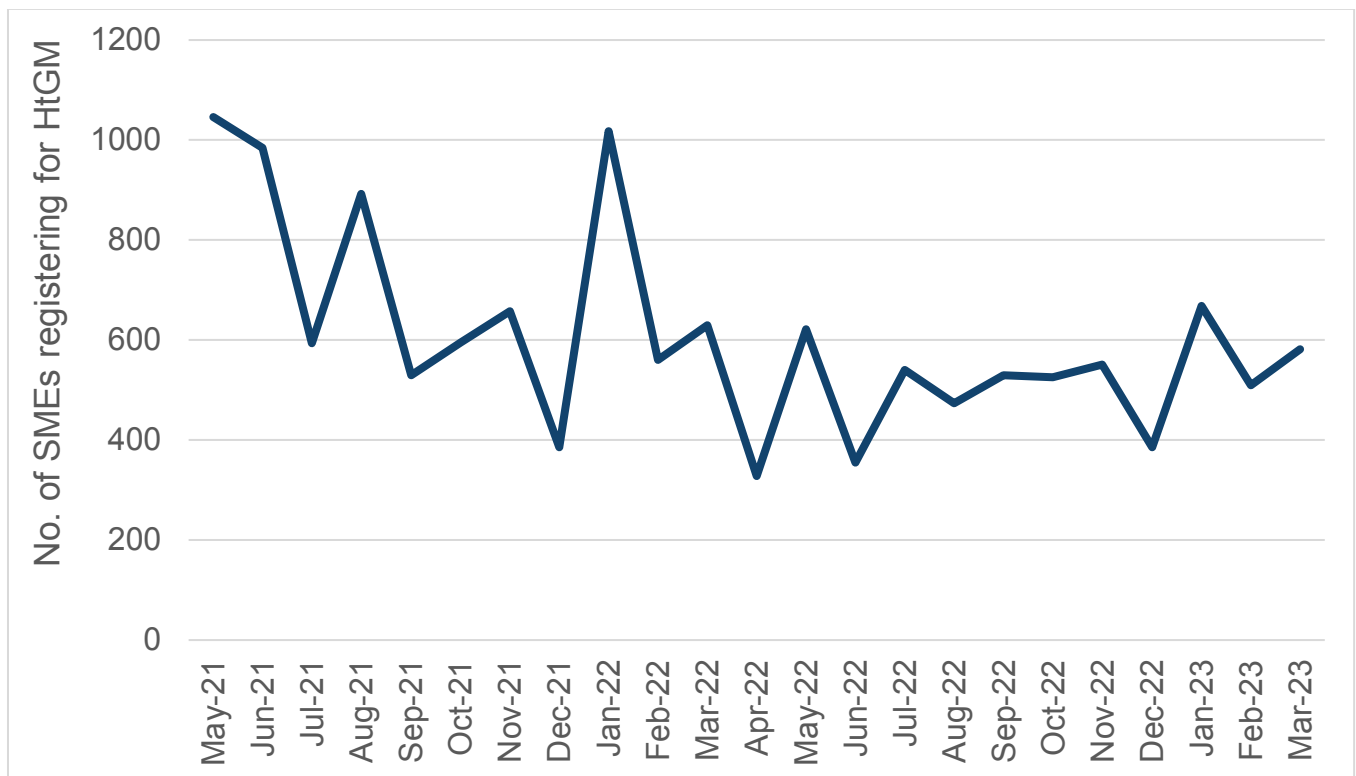
Source: HtGM Registration data (March 2023)

The flow of registrations reported in Figure 1 is largely driven by the pattern of registrations from SME leaders in London and the South East, which account for around one third of registrations (see Section 2.2). An overview of registrations by UK region is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Registrations by location, by Year 1 and Year 2 of HtGM

Y1: 7%, Y2:9%
SCOTLAND

Y1: 4%, Y2:3%
NORTH EAST

Y1: 3%, Y2:5%
N. IRELAND

Y1: 9%, Y2:9%
HUMBER

NORTH WEST
Y1: 11%, Y2:9%

Y1: 8%, Y2:7%
EAST MIDLANDS

Y1: 8%, Y2:7%
WEST MIDLANDS

Y1: 6%, Y2:6%
EAST

Y1: 3%, Y2:3%
WALES

Y1: 20%, Y2:16%
LONDON

Y1: 9%, Y2:10%
SOUTH WEST

Y1: 12%, Y2:16%
SOUTH EAST
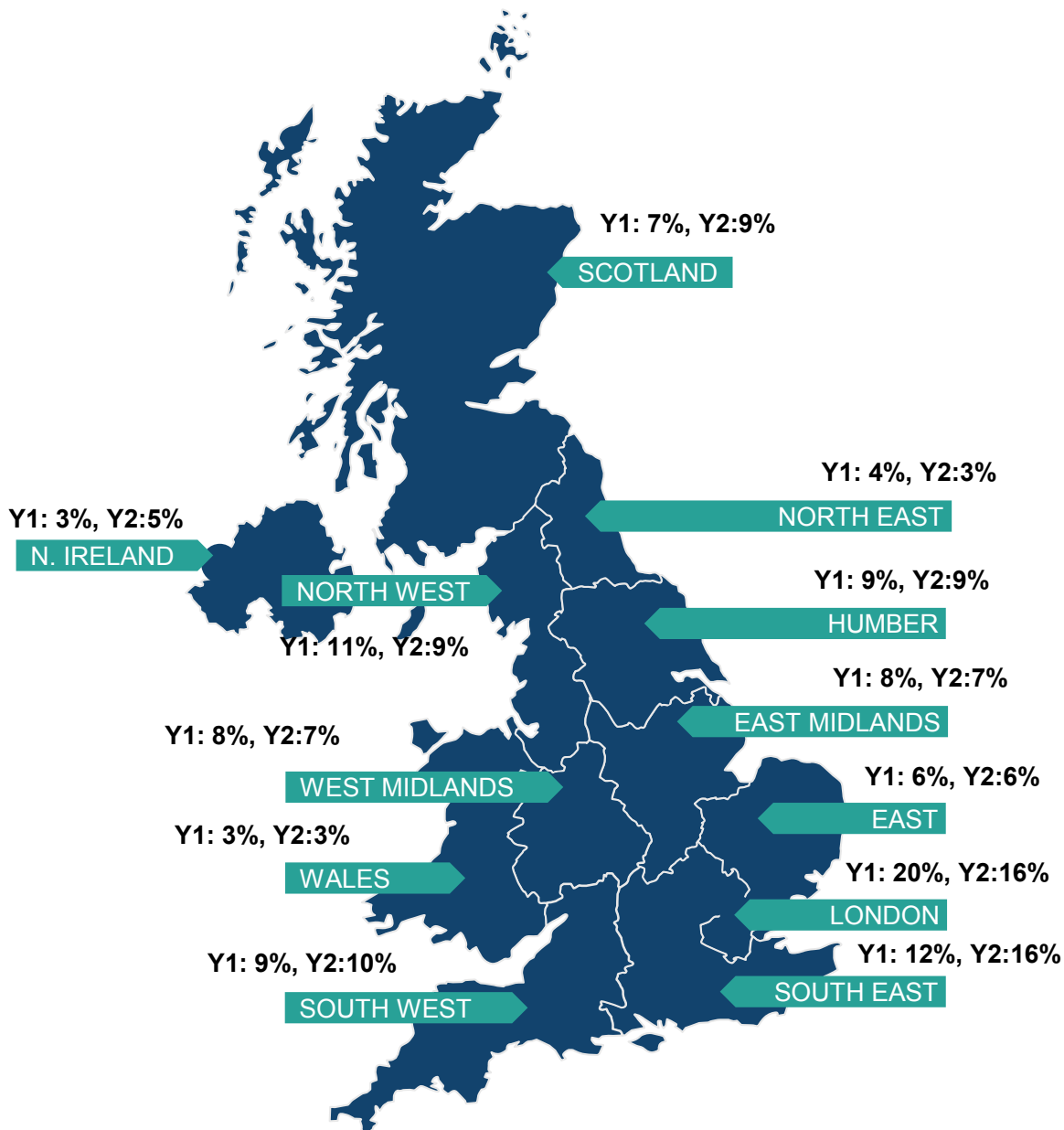
Source: HtGM Registration data (31st March 2023)

Enrolments in HtGM

As of 4th April 2023, a total of **5,648 SME leaders** had enrolled onto an HtGM cohort, representing a conversion rate of 86% of the **6,540** who had registered to a specific cohort (Table 5). There has been a slight improvement in the conversion rate between Year 1 and Year 2, in part driven by a slight decrease in the number of registrations from ineligible SME leaders (3% of all registrations in Y1 and 2% in Year 2).

Table 5: Number and percentage of registrants enrolling on HtGM

	No. / % of SME leaders		Overall
	Year 1	Year 2	
Registrations	2,840	3,700	6,540
Enrolments	2,402	3,246	5,648
% Conversion[8]	85%	88%	86%

Source: DBT monitoring data (4th July 2023) Note: this table combines registrations and enrolments for cohort which were delivered or in delivery at the time of writing

2.2 Profile of demand

Business characteristics

The majority (84%) of SME leaders who registered for HtGM worked in private limited companies. There was representation amongst firms registering and enrolling on HtGM across all regions of the UK (Figure 3), with just under one third being based in London or the South East (28% for both registrants and for enrolments). These figures broadly align to the wider UK SME population,[9] of which London and the South East account for 31%. Relative to the size of the local SME population, demand for HtGM was lowest in the South West and highest in Scotland and Yorkshire and the Humber.

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[8] This calculation is based on cross section data in April 2023. At the time of writing, Ipsos did not have access to individualised longitudinal data. It does not include data from cancelled cohorts.
[9] This figure relates to SMEs that have between 5 and 249 FTE in the wider business population to align to the HtGM eligibility criteria.

Figure 3: Regional distribution of businesses submitting registrations and enrolling on HtGM compared to the UK SME population[10]
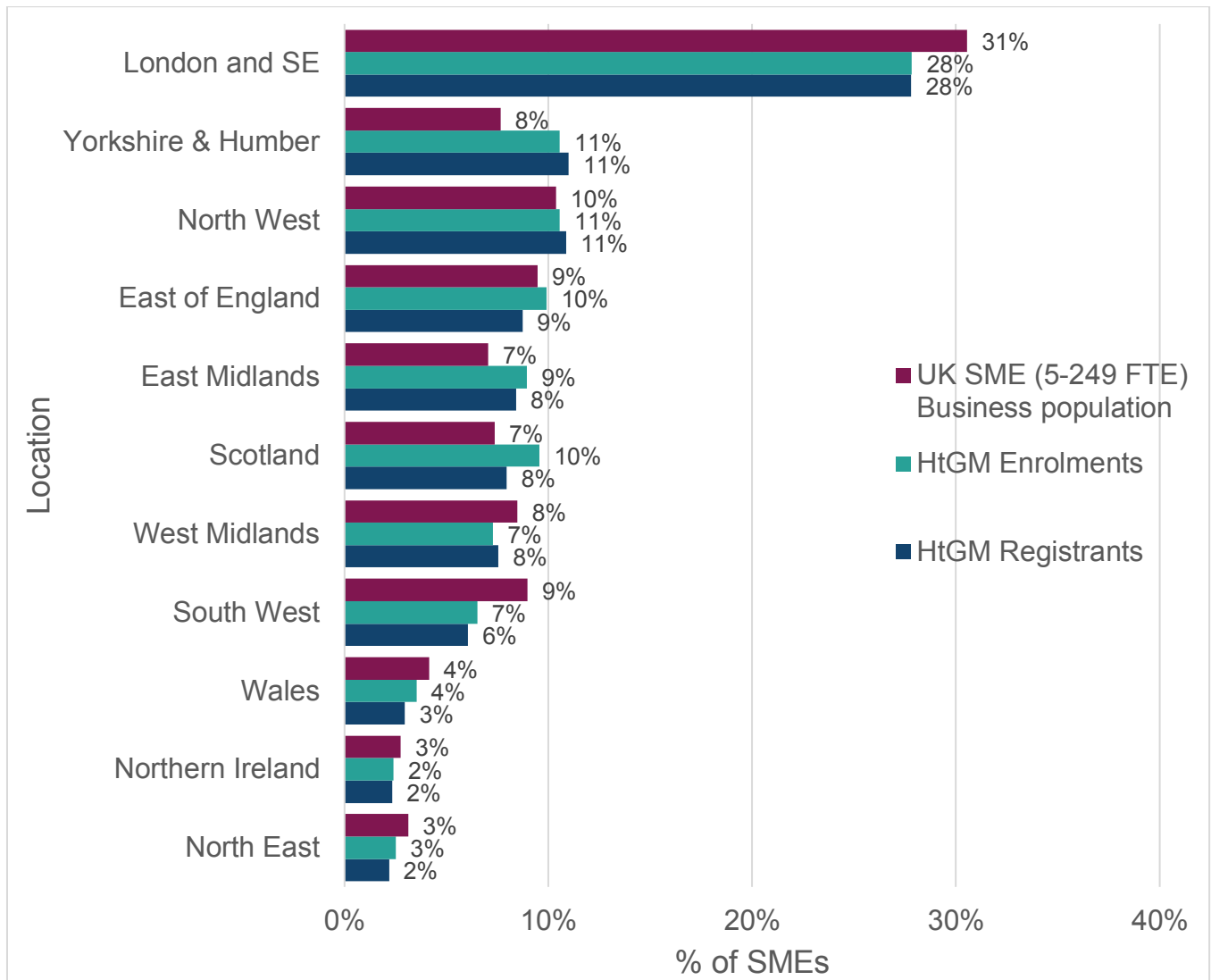
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n= 7,916), enrolments (n= 6,182) and UK Business Counts (2022); Note: 'OxCamArc' data constitutes East of England for DBT data; This figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3

The programme is predominantly reaching firms that are reasonably well established rather than start-ups. This is in line with the eligibility criteria, which requires businesses to have been operating for at least one year to qualify for the programme. Half of SMEs enrolling on HtGM had been in operation for between **one and ten years** and more than a third (36%) had been in operation for **between 11 and 30 years** (Figure 4).[11]

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[10] SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align with HtGM eligibility.
[11] Note: businesses that have been operating for less than one year are not eligible for the programme.

Figure 4: Years in operation (Age) of businesses that registered and enrolled onto HtGM (% of firms)
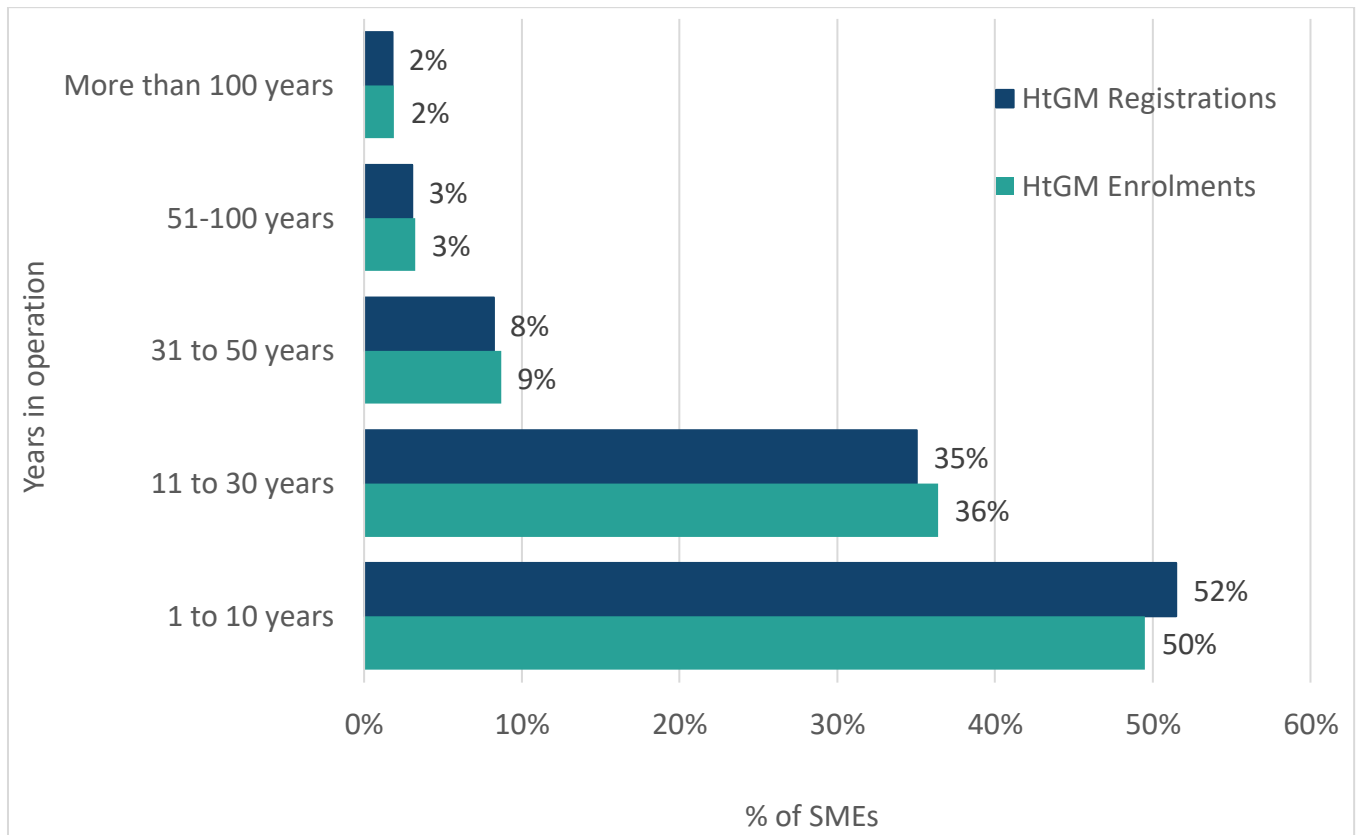
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n= 7,242) and enrolments (n= 6,039); Note: this figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3

The majority (65%) of businesses registering on HtGM had fewer than 20 employees and two fifths (42%) had fewer than then ten employees (Figure 5).[12] Overall, those registering for the programme had a median of 10 employees. Compared to the wider SME population,[13] a higher proportion of those registering on HtGM had 20 or more employees (35% relative to 21%).

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[12] Note: SMEs with less than five employees were not eligible for HtGM.
[13] SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

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Figure 5: Number of employees in businesses that registered for HtGM
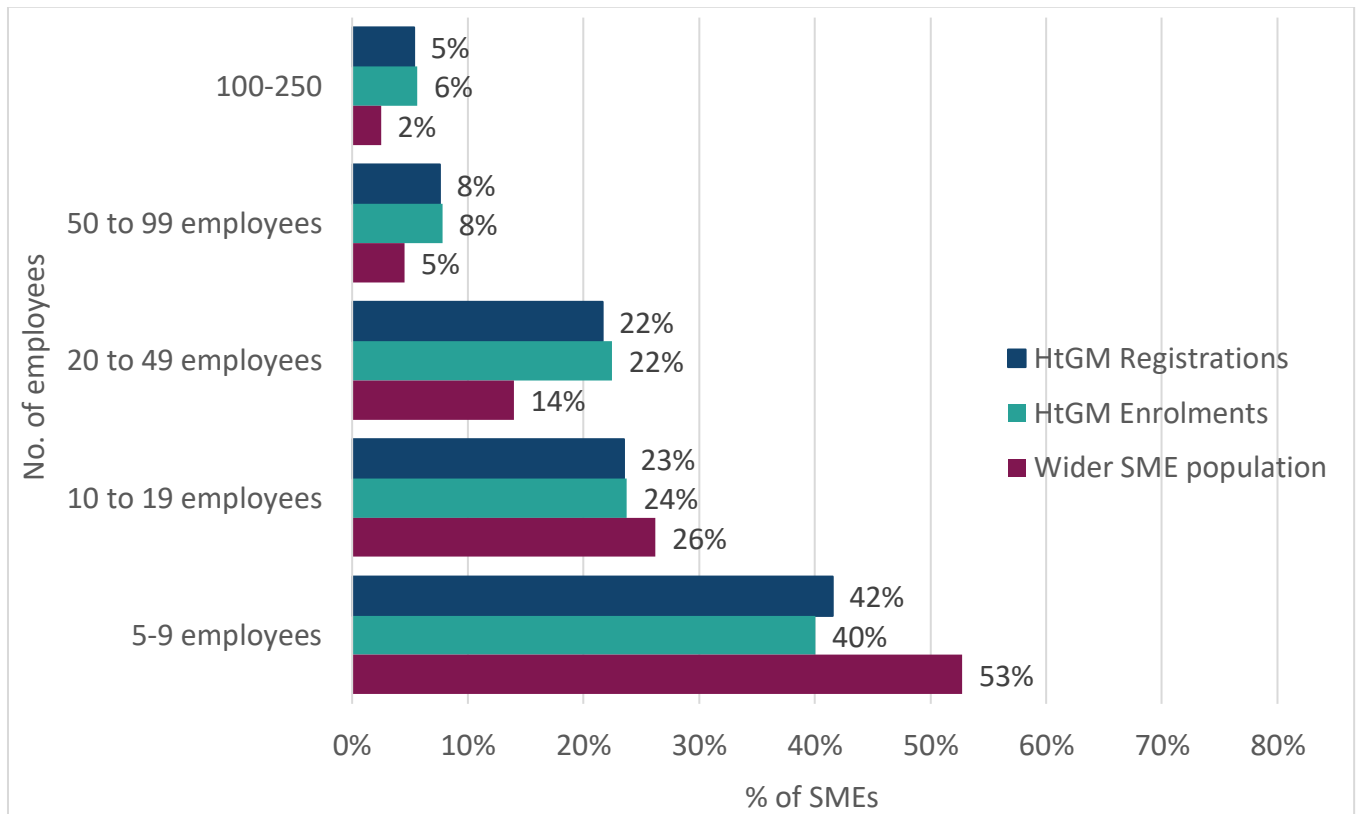
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n= 7,242), enrolments (n= 6,039) and UK Business Counts (2022); Note: this figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3. SMEs with fewer than five FTEs are excluded from the base of the SME population.

There was demand for HtGM amongst SMEs operating across a broad range of industry sectors. Figure 6 shows that there was limited difference between the industry of SMEs registering an interest in the programme and those that went on to enrol. The largest proportion of SMEs who registered / enrolled on the programme operate in 'Other service activities' (both 16%). This includes activities of member organisations, repair of computers and other personal / household goods and personal services, such as hairdressers, beauty salons and gyms. This is closely followed by the manufacturing sector (13% of registrations, 14% enrolments) and construction sector (both 11%). The remainder operate across a range of different industries. A more granular analysis of industry sector will be possible in later stages of the evaluation through linking details of participating business to national administrative datasets.

Figure 6 also presents the profile of SMEs by sector in the wider UK population. It shows that the programme has attracted particularly high demand amongst SMEs operating in other service activities and manufacturing sectors. However, some sectors (most notably wholesale and retail trade; professional, scientific and technical activities and administrative and support services) are comparatively underrepresented on the programme.

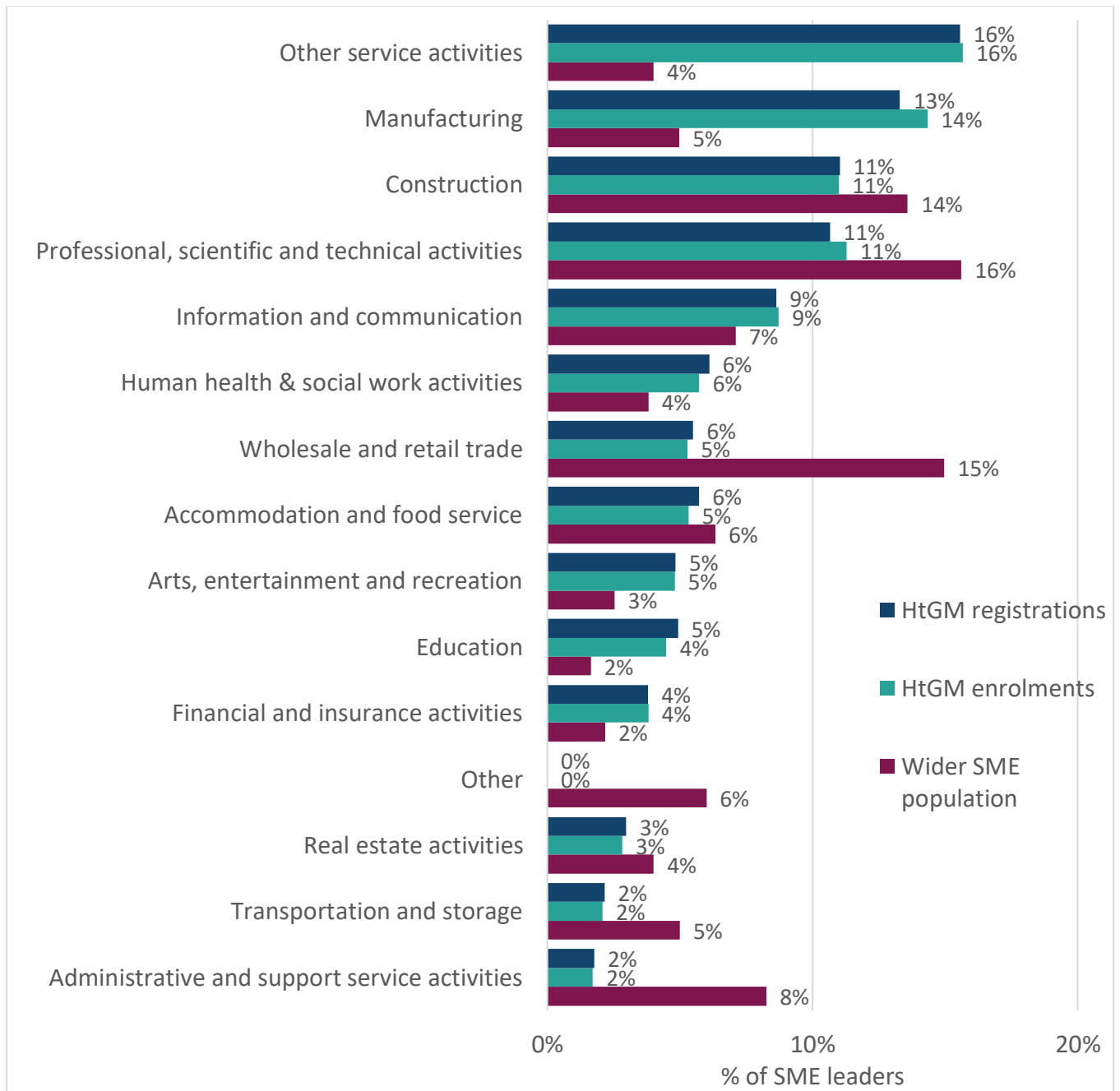**Figure 6: Sector of businesses registered for HtGM[14]**

Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n= 7,797), enrolments (n= 6,060) and UK Business Counts (2022); Note: this figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3.

Demographics of wider business leaders

The evidence to date suggests that the programme has been **successful in stimulating demand amongst a diverse group of SME leaders** in terms of registrants and enrolments to the programme:

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[14] SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

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- **Age**: the majority of SME leaders registering or enrolling to the programme were younger than 50 and were most commonly aged 35-49 (Figure 7). Around one in five (19%) of registrants and enrollers were aged 50-65.

Gender**: around one third of SME leaders registering (36%) and enrolling (39%) to the programme were female (**

- Figure 8). Comparatively, female-owned and led businesses account for 24% of private sector employment in the wider UK business population.[15]
- **Ethnicity**: Almost one fifth (17%) of SME leaders registering and 14% of those enrolling on the programme were from an ethnic minority background. Across the wider business population, 6% of SMEs are led by people from an ethnic minority background suggesting that there is good representation of this group of businesses on the programme (Figure 9).[16]

Figure 7: Age of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM
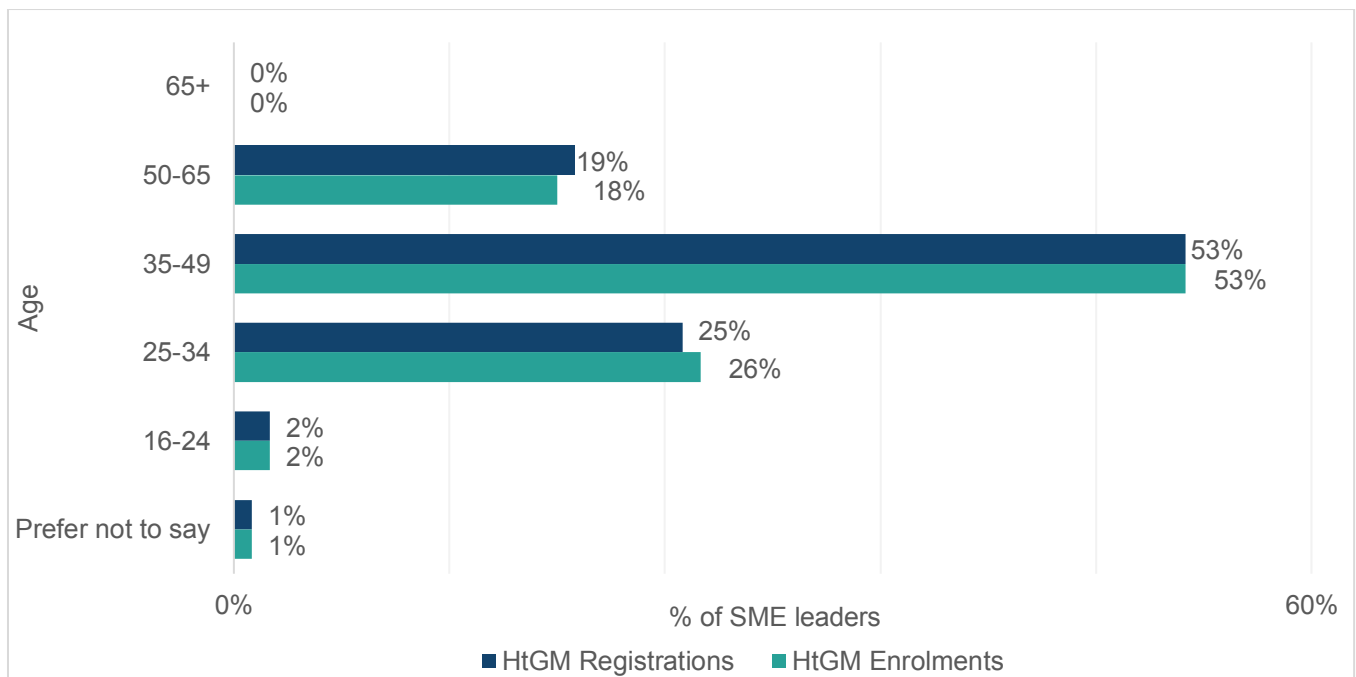
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n= 7,875), enrolments (n= 6,185); Note: this figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3.

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[15] Women owned and women led business 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
[16] Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises - https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf

Figure 8: Gender of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM

Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=7,875), enrolments (n=6,165); Note: this figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3.

Figure 9: Ethnicity of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM
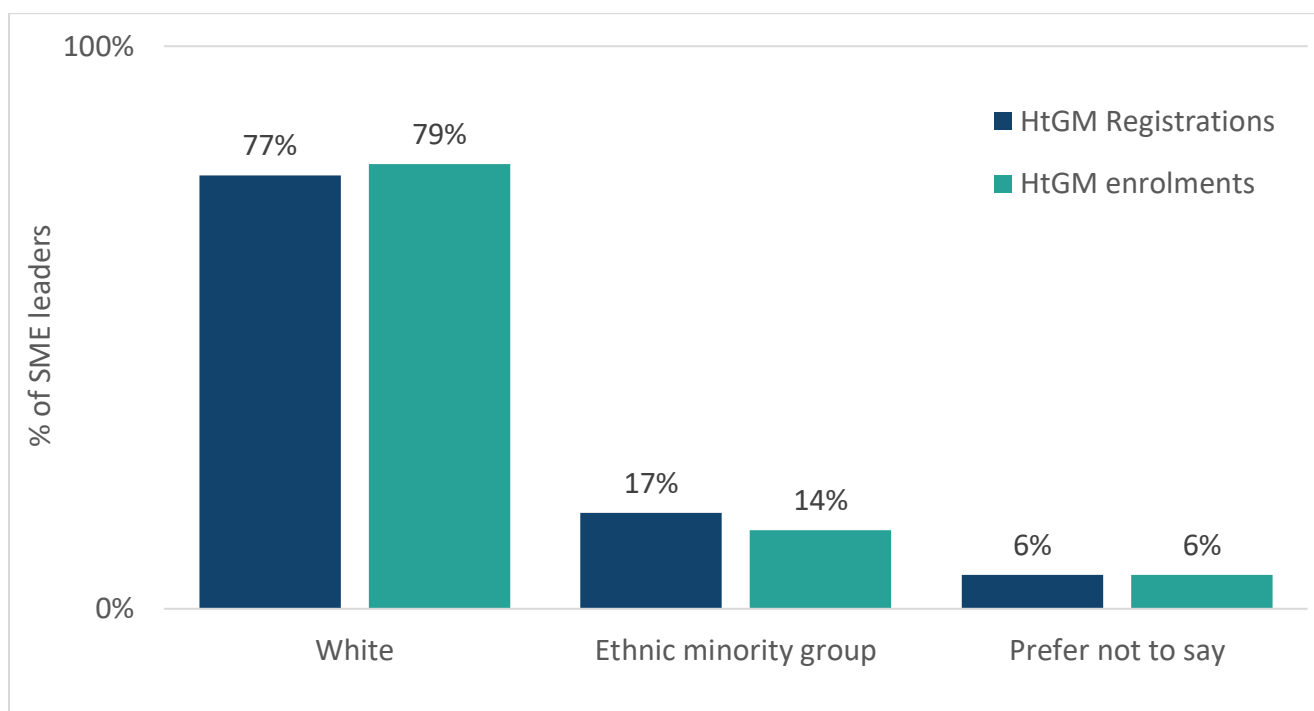
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n= 7,875), enrolments (n= 6,185); Note: this figure combines all registrations and enrolments as of May 2023, meaning some registrations / enrolments will be for cohorts in Year 3.
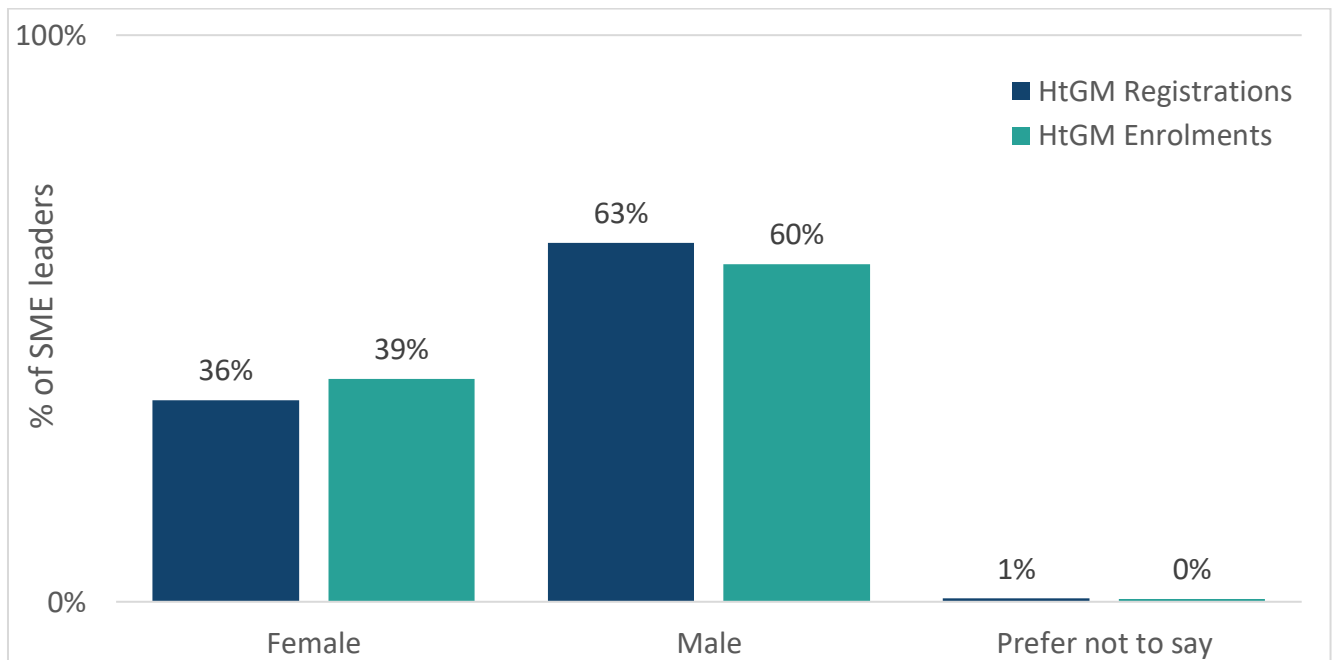
2.3 SME leader expectations of the programme

HtGM completers applied to the programme to address a range of barriers to growth their businesses were facing at the time of application. The majority (80%) of SME leaders who responded to the post-completion survey thought the programme aims and objectives were clear to them at the outset. This is reflected in their expectations of the programme, which align to the primary focus of HtGM: to improve SME's management and leadership in order to drive improvements in firm-level productivity.

SME leaders' expectations of HtGM have been fairly consistent since launch, typically focusing on the potential benefits to them as leaders within their firms. Participants most commonly expected to become more confident in leading and managing their business (80% in Y1, 72% in Y2)[17] and more skilled in leadership and management (79% in Y1, 73% in Y2) as a result of completing HtGM (Figure 10).

Second to personal benefits, SME leaders were also applying to the programme to **improve their knowledge and awareness of strategies for driving business growth,** most commonly on the factors that drive productivity and growth (78% in Y1, 72% in Y2) and how to innovate their business model (69% in Y1, 62% in Y2). In Year 2 of HtGM, SME leaders were more likely to be looking to improve their knowledge of financial management (six percentage point increase) and how to improve employee engagement (four percentage point increase).

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[17] The difference between Y1 and Y2 is statistically significant.

Evidence from depth interviews suggests that this could be driven by businesses having a renewed focus on business performance following the pandemic and the UK's ongoing economic challenges.

Figure 10: What were your expectations of the HtGM programme? What were you hoping to get out of it?

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

Outcome	Year 1	Year 2
Greater confidence in leading and managing your business	80%	72%
Improved leadership and management skills	79%	73%
Increased awareness of factors that drive business productivity and growth	78%	72%
Improved understanding of how to innovate your business model	69%	62%
Improved understanding of how to improve operational efficiency in your business	65%	64%
Improved understanding of the use of metrics to monitor growth and support strategic decision making	52%	51%
Improved understanding of how to improve employee engagement	43%	47%
Greater awareness of the key elements and principles of financial management	34%	40%
Improved understanding of how to enhance employee wellbeing	30%	27%
Improved understanding of the value of data analytics	23%	22%
Greater understanding of how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices within your business	16%	16%

% of post completion survey respondents

Source: Post completion survey (n=738) (Y1=176, Y2=562)

Motivations

Evidence from interviews with programme completers suggest that SME leaders were motivated to enrol on HtGM because of the **relevant** and **comprehensive course curriculum**, **affordability** and **the 'rubber stamp' of Government backing and business school involvement**. In cases where they were considering other programmes, HtGM was favoured because it was deemed to offer more well-rounded training (e.g., upskilling individual leaders and supporting business-level strategic thinking), included mentoring and offered face-to-face delivery for some elements.

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Overall, SME leaders were most interested in the modules relating to **strategy and innovation** (46%), **marketing** (35%) and **vision, mission and values** (32%) at the time of applying to HtGM. Figure 11 shows how SME leaders' interests have changed over time. In Year 2, modules relating to marketing, organisational design, financial management and implementing Growth Plans were of more interest than in Year 1.

There was some variation by SME size in which modules were of most interest at the outset:

- Programme completers from firms with between 5 and 9 employees were more likely to have expressed an initial interest in 'internationalisation and entering new markets', and 'developing a marketing strategy' than larger SMEs. These differences were statistically significant.[18]

- Programme completers from larger SMEs (51-199 employees) were more likely to have expressed an initial interest in the employee engagement and high-performance workplace case studies than smaller SMEs (with 5-9 employees). These differences were also statistically significant.[19]

In the most recent quarter, **the module relating to financial management** emerged as being of most interest (40% in Y2Q4) to those registering for the programme, surpassing strategy and innovation (36% in Y2Q4) for the first time since the survey was launched in November 2021. There were also statistically significant increases in interest in both the **efficient operations** (from 20% in Y2Q3 to 36% in Y2Q4) and **organisational design** (11% in Y2Q3 to 30% in Y2Q4) modules in the most recent quarter.

This aligns with depth interview evidence, which indicated that SME leaders were becoming more mindful of efficiency and productivity as a result of high inflation and resulting cost increases. Comparatively, in the early stages of delivery, the unprecedented challenges associated with the pandemic seemed to focus SME interest on more strategic priorities like business mission and values. Although the follow up interviews with Y1 completers suggest that this cohort is also now utilising learning from HtGM to help them with financial considerations.

Figure 11: Which three modules were you most interested in when you signed up to the programme?

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[18] 16% (5-9FTE) compared to 13% (11-50 FTE) for Internationalisation and entering new markets; and 43% (5-9FTE) compared to 30% (11-50FTE) and 24% (51-199 FTE) for 'Developing a marketing strategy'.
[19] 45% (51-199 FTE) compared to 23% (5-9FTE) for 'Employee Engagement and Leading Change' and 16% (51-199 FTE) compared to 8% (5-9FTE) for "High Performance Workplace".

A bar chart showing the percentage of post-completion survey respondents for Year 1 and Year 2 across modules:

Module	Year 1	Year 2
M12: Implementing Growth Plans	11%	16%
M11: Finance and Financial Management	27%	31%
M10: Efficient Operations	30%	28%
M9: High Performance Workplace	13%	12%
M8: Employee Engagement and Leading Change	32%	31%
M7: Organisational Design	19%	23%
M6: Building a Brand	5%	11%
M5: Developing a Marketing Strategy	34%	36%
M4: Vision, Mission & Values	36%	30%
M3: Internationalisation	14%	13%
M2: Digital Adoption	18%	18%
M1: Strategy and Innovation	52%	45%

% of post-completion survey respondents

Source: Post completion survey (n=738) (Y1=176, Y2=562)

2.4 Enrolment and onboarding

SME leaders who had completed HtGM reflected positively on their experiences of applying, enrolling and onboarding to the programme: most survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each of the statements presented in Figure 12. Almost all thought the application requirements were clear (93%), the application process was simple (92%) and that responses to applications and programme start dates were timely (91% respectively).[20] Looking at the underpinning quarterly data, there appears to have been a **notable improvement in feedback on the application process** in the recent two quarters for which data is available, with a higher proportion of programme completers agreeing that the process was simple, clear, timely and they knew where to go with questions.[21] Feedback from depth interviews confirmed that SME leaders generally found this process straightforward.

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[20] Note: These figures may not align to the percentages reported in Figure 12 because of rounding.
[21] This finding should be interpreted with caution because the difference between the two quarters is not statistically significant.

Figure 12: Thinking about your experience of applying to HtGM programme, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Overall)
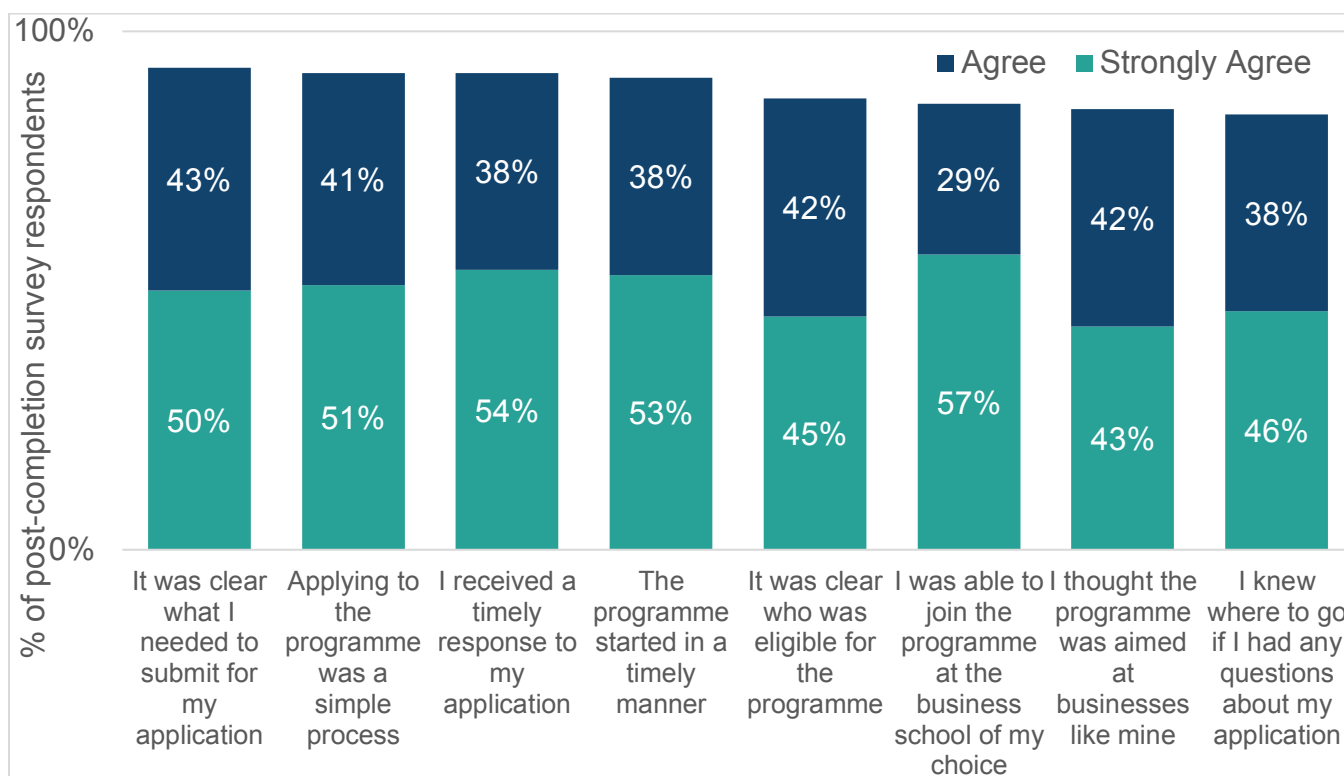
Source: Post completion survey (n=738) (Y1=176, Y2=562)

2.5 Programme engagement

Attendance and completion

More than four in every five (84%) SME leaders who enrolled on HtGM over the first two years of delivery went on to complete the programme, defined as completing at least nine out of the twelve modules. However, there was a slight drop in the completion rate between the first and second year of delivery, from 85% to 83% (see Table 6). Feedback on SME leaders who completed less than 75% of the programme is presented in Chapter 3.

Table 6: Attendance rates for completed HtGM cohorts

	Year 1	Year 2	Overall
No. of SME leaders enrolled on completed cohorts	1,329	3,001	4,330

No. of SME leaders that attended > 75% of the modules	1,151	2,492	3,643
Programme completion rate[22]	87%	83%	84%

Source: DBT monitoring data (4th April 2023)' Note: A participant is considered to have completed the programme if they completed >75% of the module content

Engagement with individual programme elements

Programme participants are reporting highest levels of engagement with the mentoring element of the programme, with three quarters (72%) attending all ten sessions (Figure 13: Overall programme attendance across HtGM programme elements).[23] This is reflected in the satisfaction levels with this element of the programme (reported in Chapter 4). Attendance was also high for the twelve modules and peer learning groups, although around half of respondents had missed at least some of these sessions. Evidence from depth interviews with programme completers suggest that the high levels of engagement with mentoring was due to the flexibility of this element of the programme: SME leaders could arrange, and rearrange, their mentoring sessions to their preference whereas they were sometimes unable to attend scheduled module and peer learning session due to unavoidable business commitments.

The HtGM alumni offer had the most variable levels of engagement from programme participants. This could be partly explained by regional and national Alumni Network events not beginning until Autumn and December 2022, although the alumni newsletters and LinkedIn community were available before then. Prior to this, any alumni events were organised and delivered by schools and were therefore not consistently available to all programme participants. Feedback from follow up depth interviews with Y1 completers suggested that, while many were interested in the alumni offer, they sometimes found it difficult to prioritise attendance.

Figure 13: Overall programme attendance across HtGM programme elements

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[22] This is calculated by taking a percentage of those that were 'live enrolled' on completed cohorts in the PB tracker that completed >75% of the module content. This was 2,033 out of 2,381 in Y1 and 1,111 out of 1,623 for Y2.

[23] Note: respondents to the six month survey will only have received a mentor under the paid-for model at the time of reporting. Programme completers with a voluntary mentor will not be eligible for the six month survey until Year 3.
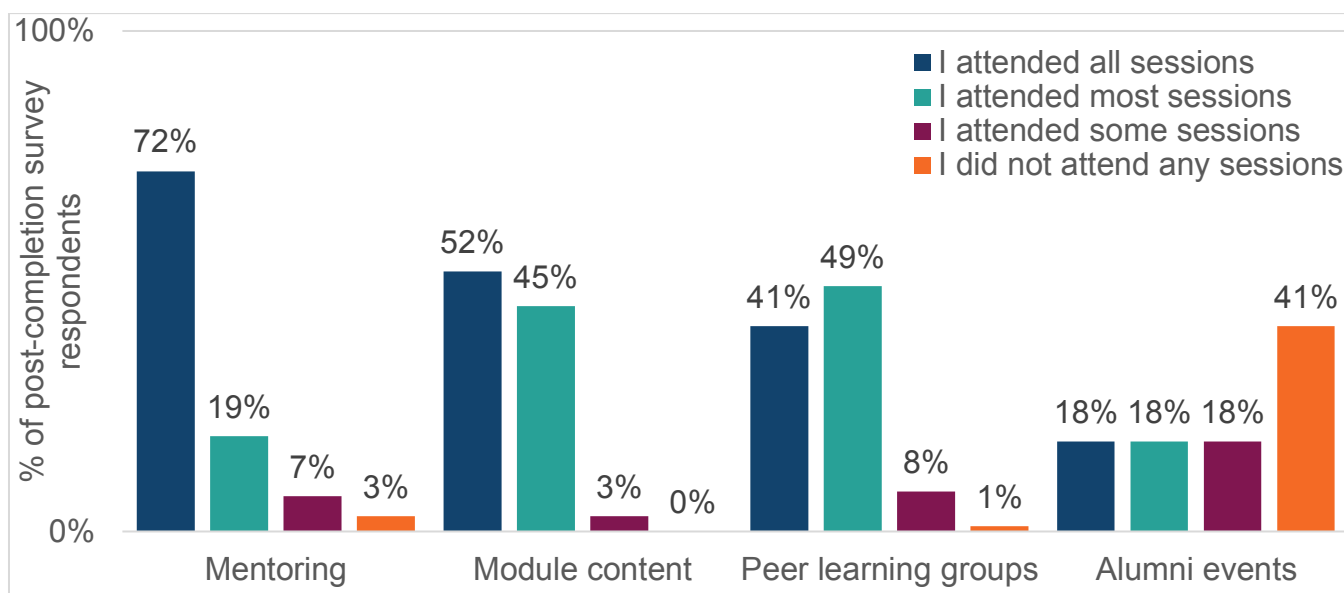
Source: Six month follow-up survey (n=607); Note: responses for 'don't' know' are not included in the chart but are included in the base.

Non-attendance[24]

Overall, **around one in six (16%) SME leaders enrolling on to HtGM did not complete the programme** (i.e., defined as completing 75% or more of the module sessions), either partially completing (6%), dropping out (5%) or withdrawing (5%) from the programme. All three categories of non-attendance increased between Year 1 and Year 2 (Table 7) and should be monitored closely in Year 3 of delivery. Chapter 3 provides some insights that might be useful in informing approaches to reducing levels of non-completion.

Around 6% of SME leaders who enrolled to a HtGM cohort were transferred to a different cohort.

Table 7: Non-attendance rates for HtGM cohorts[25]

Break	Year 1	Year 2	Overall	% of enrolments (n=4,330)

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[24] This analysis is based on SME leaders who were enrolled on cohorts that were completed within the first and second year of programme delivery.

No. of participants who withdrew from HtGM	54	170	224	5%
No. of participants who dropped out of HtGM	69	162	231	5%
No. of participants who completed < 75% of the modules	83	193	276	6%
No. of participants who transferred to a different cohort	49	199	248	6%

Source: DBT monitoring data (4th April 2023)

3 Quality of programme delivery

This chapter presents evidence collected to date on the quality of the business support delivered to SME leaders through HtGM. It provides insights into participants' satisfaction across key areas of programme delivery, reflections on the relevance of the curriculum and appropriateness of the delivery model. It also provides insights into the reasons why some SME leaders did not complete the programme. The findings are

informed by post-completion survey evidence and depth interviews with programme completers, business schools and mentors.

3.1 Overall satisfaction

SME leaders are reporting high levels of satisfaction with HtGM delivery: nine in ten were either fairly or very satisfied with their experience of the programme from the first module through to the end of their mentoring relationship. Looking at the annual breakdown of the data, there was an **improvement in HtGM participant satisfaction between the first and second year of delivery**. Figure 14 shows a statistically significant ten percentage point increase in the proportion of HtGM participants reporting that they were 'very satisfied' with programme delivery. The equivalent decrease for 'fairly satisfied' is also statistically significant.

SME leaders from business employing between 10 and 50 employees reported the **highest level of satisfaction** with the programme (93%). By contrast, those from microbusinesses (with between five and ten employees) reported the **lowest levels of satisfaction** (88%). This difference is statistically significant.

Whilst overall levels of satisfaction with the programme are high, there is some potential scope to improve these as just under half of programme completers (46% of respondents to the post-completion survey did not report the highest level of satisfaction, 'very satisfied').[26] One in ten programme completers (10%) were **fairly or very dissatisfied** with programme delivery in year two, in line with the equivalent figure for year one (9%).

Figure 14: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how the HtGM programme was delivered from start to end?

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[26] This figure shows the percentage across all respondents to the survey, covering Y1 and Y2.
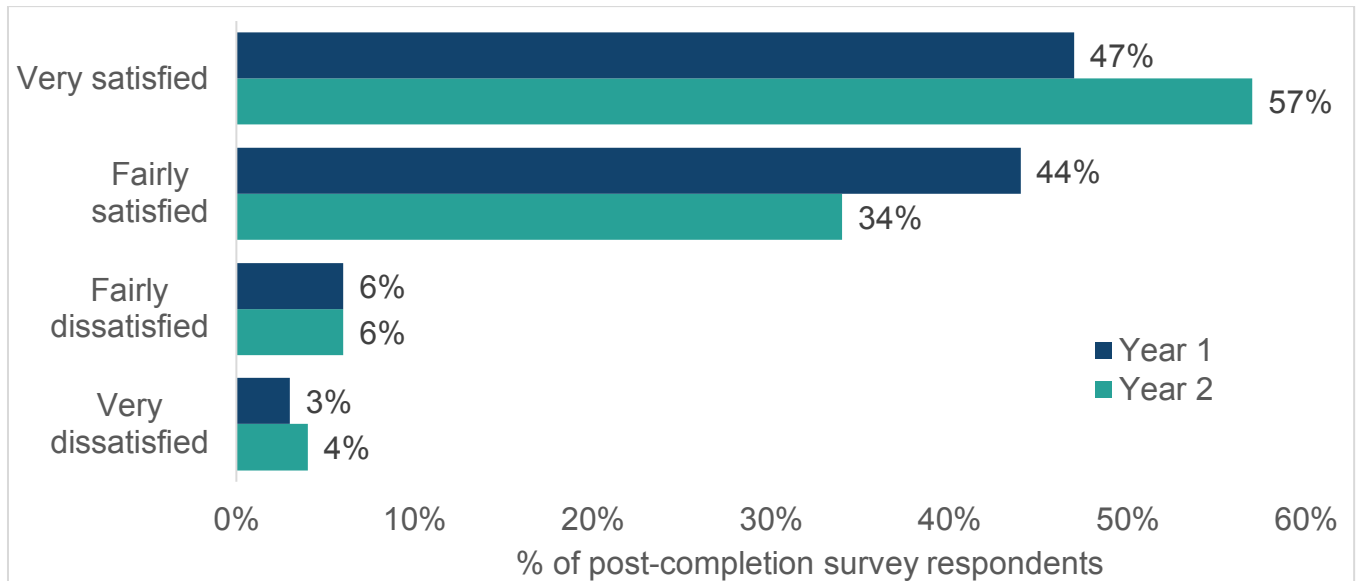
Source: Post completion survey (n=738) (Y1=176, Y2=562)

The majority (90%) of SME leaders completing the programme said they would be likely to recommend HtGM to another business leader. This measure has remained consistently high since the post-completion survey was launched (see quarterly data in Figure 15). This corroborates the satisfaction reported in Figure 14 and supports the earlier finding that word of mouth recommendations from HtGM alumni are stimulating demand for the programme, bolstered through the refer-a-friend scheme and expansion of the eligibility criteria to allow more than one leader per business.

Figure 15: How likely would you be to recommend HtGM to another business leader? ("Very" and "fairly" likely combined)
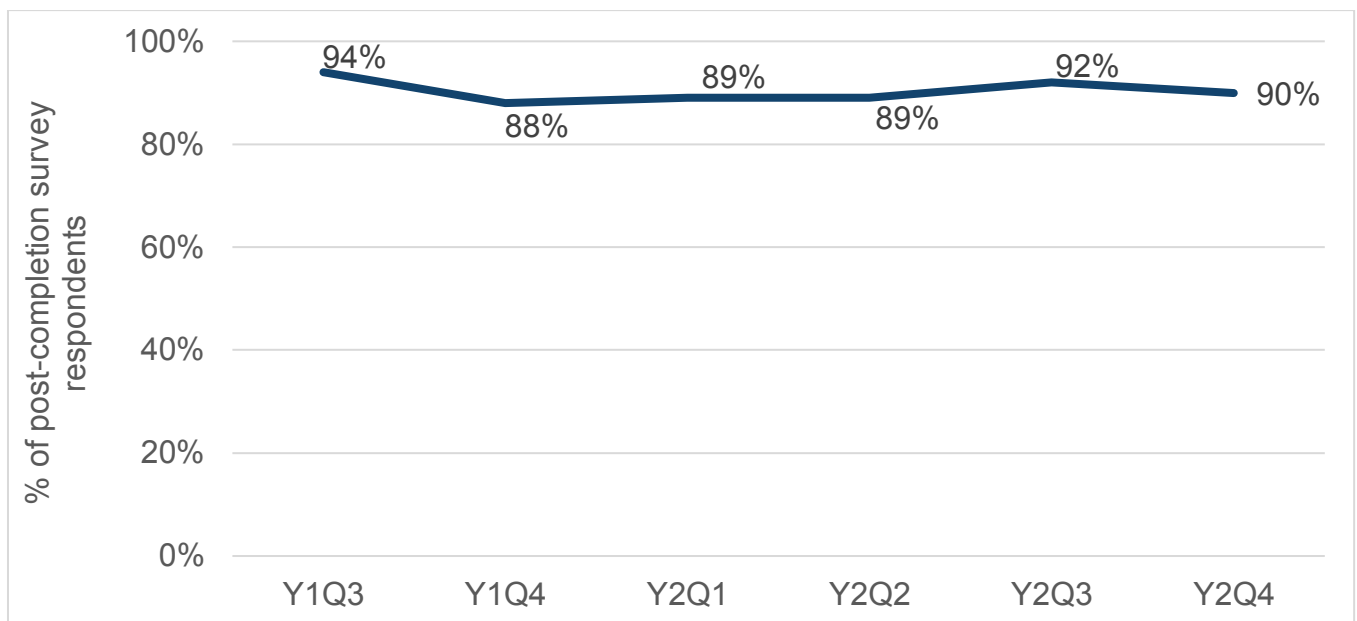
Source: Post completion survey (n=738)

3.2 Delivery

Number, duration and frequency of sessions

At least half of programme participants thought that the number of sessions involved in HtGM was about right across all elements (Figure 16). However, around one third of programme completers expressed an interest in:

- **More case study workshops** – 38% would have liked more of these, suggesting that this element of the programme has exceeded initial expectations (see Figure 161 showing the relatively low interest levels in the case study modules at the outset).

- **More mentoring sessions** – 32% would have liked more of these. This has been fairly consistent throughout the survey fieldwork with the exception of the latest quarter where fewer programme completers (18%) said they would have liked more sessions with their mentor.

Around one in five programme participants said they would have liked **fewer webinars** (19%) and **fewer peer group sessions** (22%).

There remains broad consensus amongst HtGM completers **that the duration and frequency of sessions was about right** across all elements of the programme.[27] Although, over a quarter of participants would have valued more time between the webinars (27%) and peer group calls (29%) which, according to interview feedback, tended to be scheduled within one week of each another. This resulted in some SME leaders feeling they were not able to make best use of their peer learning sessions because they had not had enough time to reflect on module content.

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[27] Percentage of respondents reporting that the duration was 'about right': Webinars (68%), case study workshops (70%), peer group calls (72%) and mentoring (77%). There was no clear preference for longer or shorter sessions amongst those who did not think the duration of the programme elements was 'about right'. Percentage of respondents reporting that the frequency was 'about right': webinars (67%), case study workshops (72%), peer group calls (63%) and mentoring (68%).

Figure 16: What are your thoughts on the number of sessions involved in the HtGM programme?
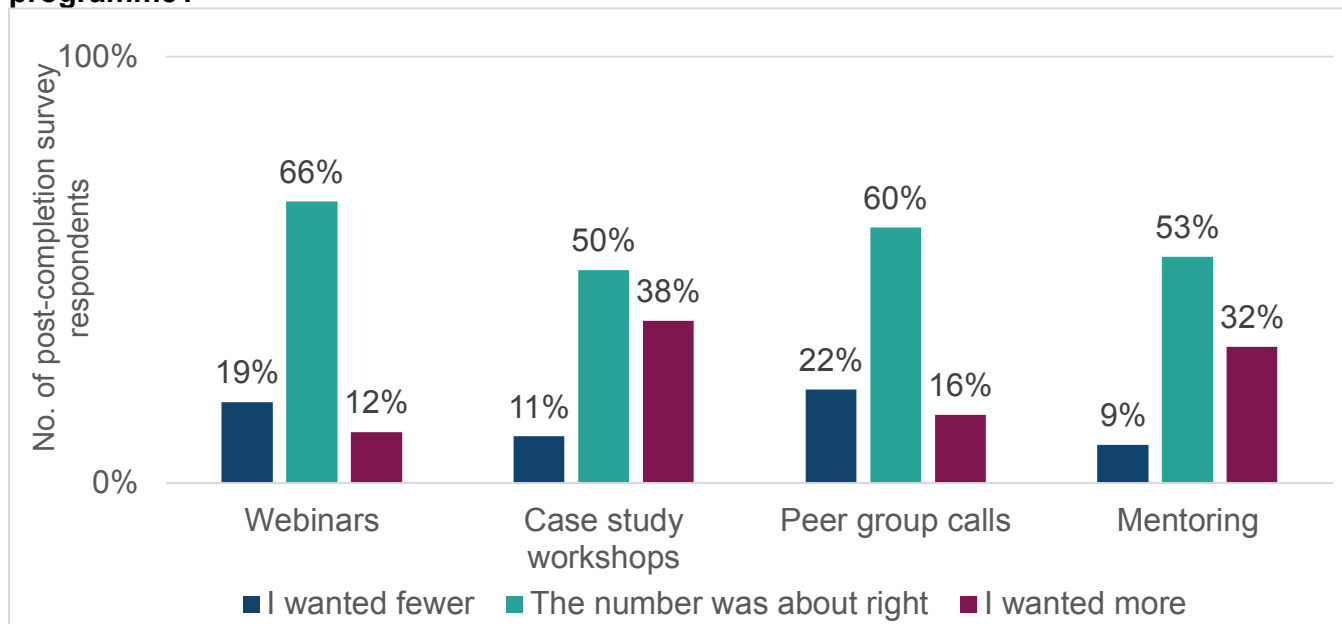
Source: Post completion survey (n=738)

Balance between online and face-to-face delivery

Almost all HtGM cohorts were delivered via a combination of online and face-to-face sessions, though this varied by business school (e.g., Oxford Brookes has trialled online-only cohorts). Survey evidence indicates that most business schools chose to deliver the four case study modules in person covering: winning new markets (74%)[28], building a brand (73%), high performance workplace (71%) and implementing Growth Action Plans (78%).[29] It is interesting to note that this (often face-to-face) part of HtGM was the element that programme completers were most likely to say they would have liked more of (see Figure 16).

Most programme participants (79%) were satisfied with the amount of in-person delivery.[30] SME leaders reflected positively on the face-to-face elements of the programme but felt the mix with online delivery was appropriate given the time commitment required for the programme and demands of running a business. Figure 17 shows an increase between Y1 and Y2 in the proportion who were very satisfied with the amount of face-to-face delivery in the programme (from 27% to 32%). This could reflect changes in the wider context, with restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic having been rolled back in Year 2 providing business schools more flexibility to deliver elements face-to-face.

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[28] This module was previously called internationalisation but was modified and renamed in early 2023.
[29] Percentages refer to the number of post-completion survey respondents who reported that the module involved at least some face-to-face delivery. The next highest levels of in-person delivery were form the induction workshop (12%) and module 1 (11%).
[30] Percentage is based on aggregate survey responses to date.

Figure 17: Overall, how satisfied were you with the amount of face-to-face delivery in the HtGM programme? (Y1 vs Y2)
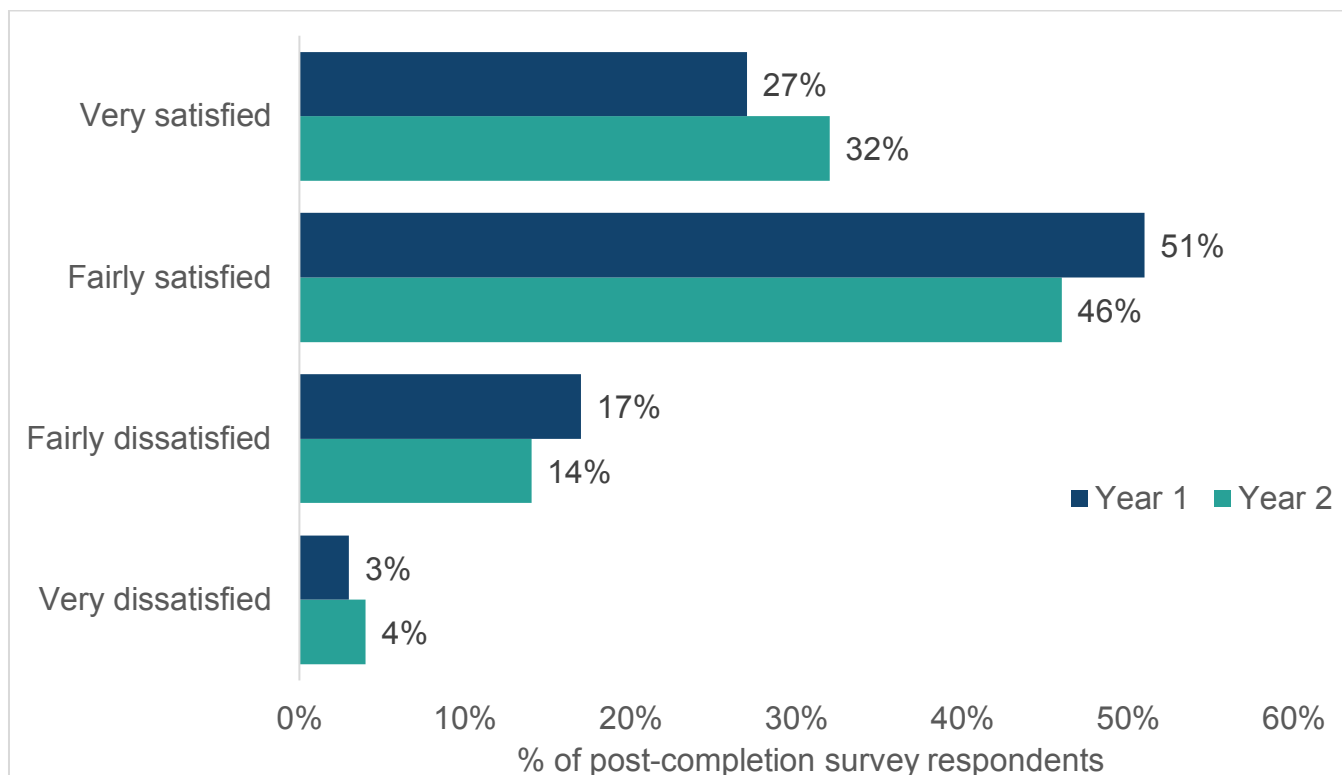
Source: Post completion survey (n=738) (Y1=176, Y2=562)

Delivery mode by programme element

Programme participants valued in-person delivery because it enabled them to focus on the programme content, feel more comfortable to ask questions and network and problem solve with their peers. Depth interviews with SME leaders revealed that, while they recognised the benefits of having some online delivery (for greater flexibility and reduced travel), most found the face-to-face elements to be valuable.

Respondents to the post-completion survey expressed a **clear preference for the module content to be delivered in person,** both the standard modules (webinars) (68%) and case study workshops (69%) (Figure 18). These were the elements of the programme deemed the most intellectually demanding by those SME leaders who participated in an interview. Survey and interview evidence suggests that in-person delivery was predominantly limited to the four case study modules, this preference could be a contributing factor to one fifth of SME leaders being dissatisfied with the level of in-person delivery (reported in Figure 17).

Programme completers were most commonly indifferent as to how their mentoring sessions and peer group calls were delivered (46% and 40% respectively said the format for these did not make a difference). Though SME leaders placed value on in-person delivery of these elements, they also acknowledged and enjoyed the convenience and savings (in money and time) of the online elements. In some cases, it was the added flexibility of online delivery that meant SME leaders were able to complete the programme whilst meeting the demands of their job. In this context, the more flexible, informal and less intellectually

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demanding elements of the programme are considered by participants to be more suitable to online delivery.

Figure 18: Do you think the sessions in the HtGM programme would be better if they were delivered face-to-face or online?
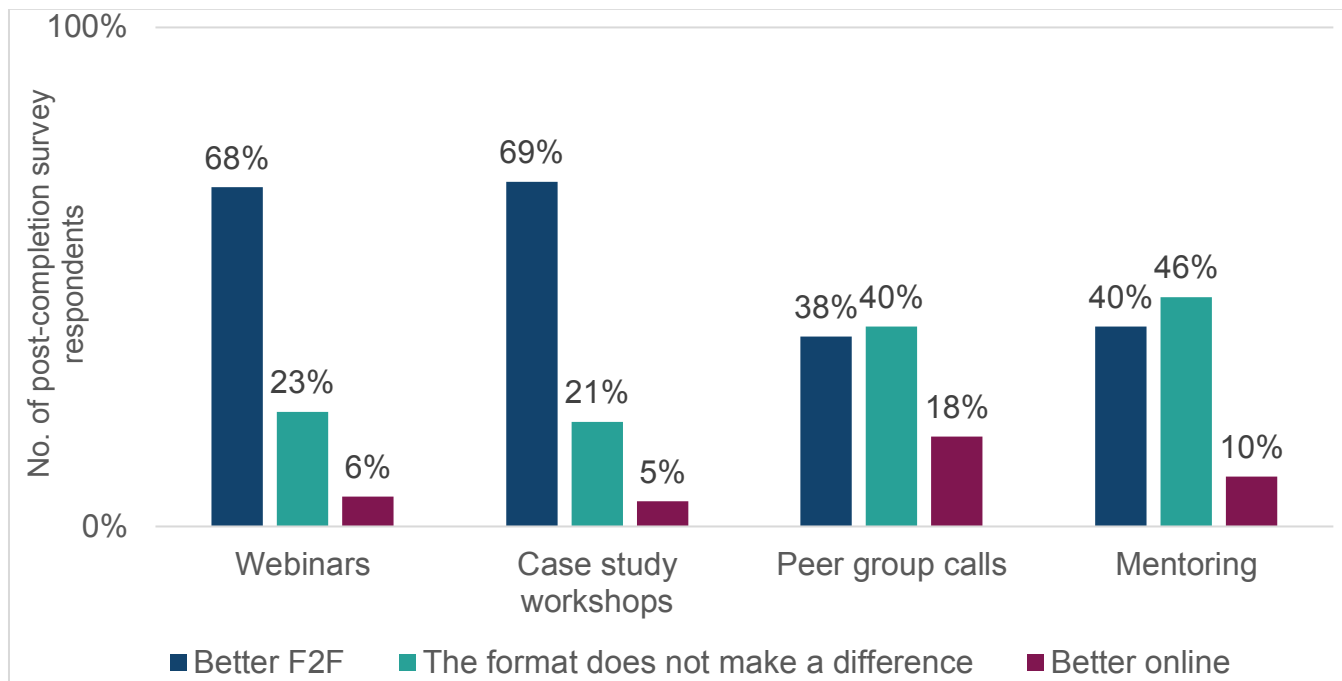
Source: Post-completion survey (n=738)

3.3 Course content

The programme content was seen as comprehensive and largely relevant, covering topics related to current leadership and business challenges. Most programme completers considered almost all modules to be relevant to their business (see Figure 19), a strong endorsement of the content of the HtGM curriculum. There has been very little variation in the perceived relevance of the HtGM modules between Year 1 and Year 2 survey responses.

When compared with initial interest levels, also shown in the chart, the data suggest that the modular content exceeded initial expectations of the programme, particularly for three of the case study modules (Module 6, 9 and 12). Programme completers remained divided on the relevance of the winning new markets module, previously named as the internationalisation module.[31]

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[31] Module three 'internationalisation' was modified and renamed in early 2023 following year one evaluation feedback to increase emphasis beyond international markets.

Figure 19: Relevance of HtGM modules upon completion compared with interest levels at application
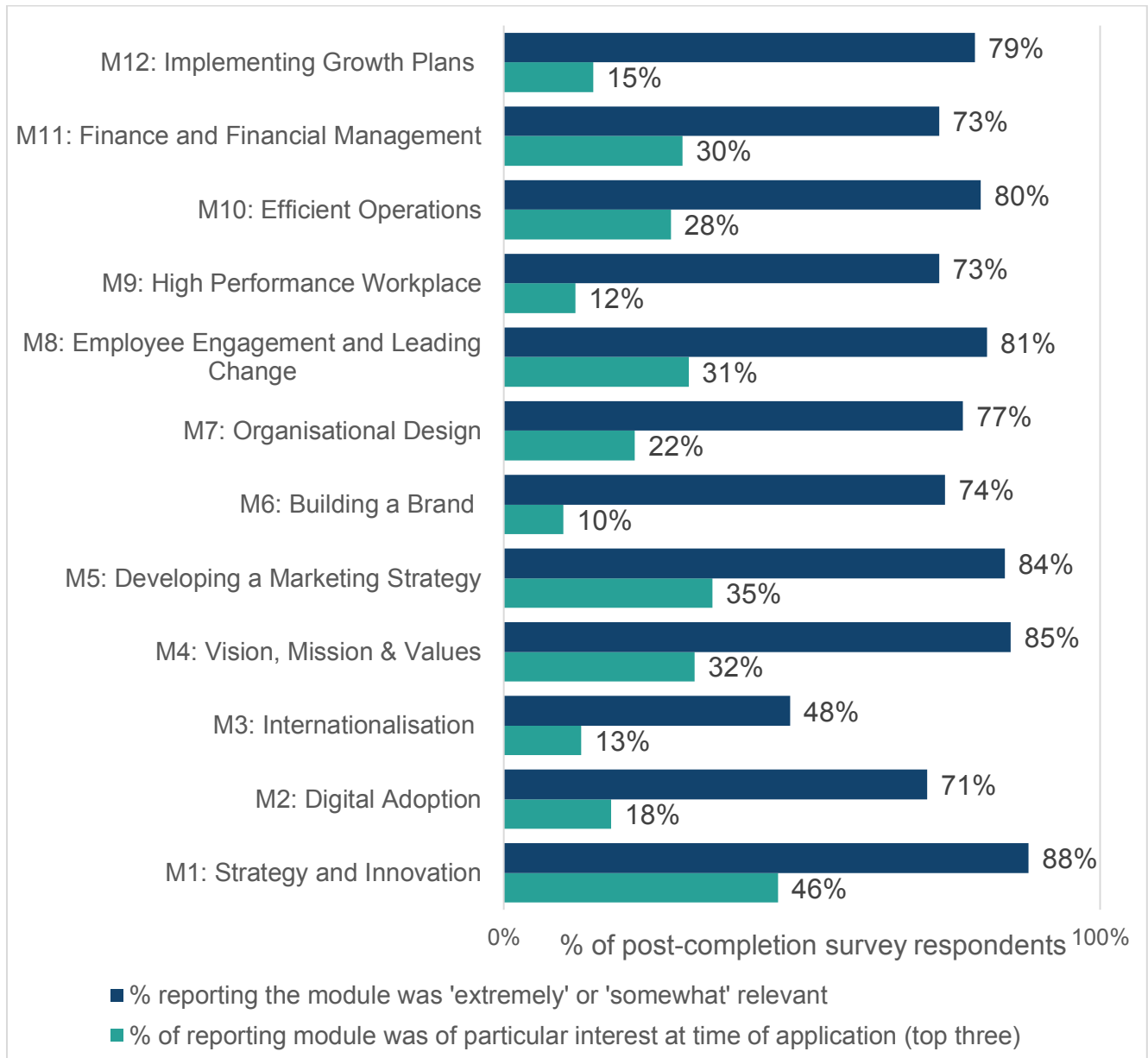
Source: Post completion survey (n= 738)

Feedback from interviews with HtGM completers highlighted some potential areas for improvement to the HtGM curriculum:

- **Greater consideration of service-based SMEs in the module content**: although the content was tailored well to the variety of SMEs in the cohort, some of the modules (e.g., Effective Operations) were predominantly focussed on products rather than services.

- **More content on environmental sustainability**: this was referenced as a gap in the modular content as it was seen by SME leaders as an important ethical consideration with regards to business growth, especially given the UK Government's Net Zero agenda.

- **Embedding case study examples within each module**: programme completers thought that the programme could be improved by having more case studies as these helped them understand how the content could be applied in practice (in line with earlier findings presented in Section 3.3 that case study modules exceeded initial expectations). These 'real world' examples could be embedded in module sessions rather than adding additional sessions.

- **Additional guidance on securing business support**: the programme armed completers with an understanding of what changes they needed to make to grow their business, but they did not always know how to find appropriate follow-on support, particularly private finance.

- **Streamlined module content**: to ensure it could be fully covered in the time allocated. Programme completers expressed a preference for less content and more time to ask questions and discuss topics – only one in ten (13%) respondents to the survey would have preferred longer module sessions.[32]

A selection of quotes from the interviews with programme participants relating to the HtGM curriculum are provided below.

HtGM programme completer -

"I think they're [the modules] all relevant, and especially if you're trying to cater for a wide audience."

HtGM programme completer -

"[The curriculum] touched on enough not to confuse people and gave everybody enough to give them an introduction."

HtGM programme completer -

"What I felt was lacking was…the future of business and the role of business in wider society… beyond very traditional views of business for profit-only… And even talk about ESG, B Corp, different frameworks and practices to support sustainability beyond just being a sustainable business with longevity, but also a sustainable business with green sustainable practices. That is going to be what future leaders of business are going to be prioritising. So yes, without that, it just felt a bit old-fashioned."

HtGM programme completer -

"Gives you a toolbox of things you can fix bits of your business with."

HtGM programme completer -

"They tried to do too much in one course I think and really the focus all along should be on growth. For example, a unit on funding would have been really appropriate: different types of funding, where you can find funding. Looking at some case studies of how businesses have used funding, whether it's asset finance, or whether it's a loan from the bank."

Source: Depth interviews with programme completers (2023)

3.4 Alumni network

Some programme completers were engaged in local alumni activities prior to the introduction of the regional and national Alumni Network activities in September 2022

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[32] 13% of respondents to "What are your thoughts on the duration of sessions involved in the Help to Grow: Management programme? Webinars" respondent "too short".

(Figure 20). This was typically via ad hoc cohort events organised by business schools or smaller, participant-organised meetings with a few participants. Interviews with business schools and participants indicated that cohorts often form group chats via WhatsApp to keep in touch and ask for advice and support after programme completion.

Figure 20: % of programme completers that attended HtGM alumni network activities
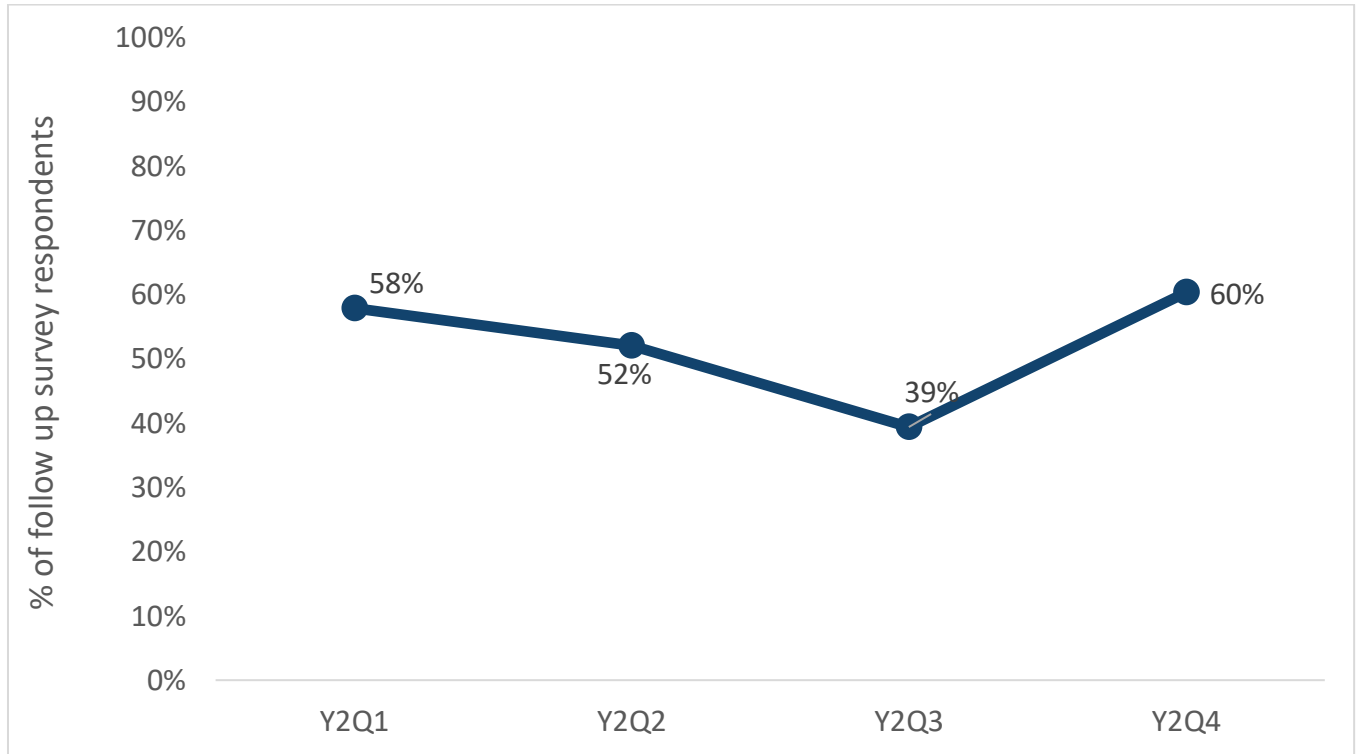
Source: Follow up survey (n= 607); Note: data is collected six months after SMEs completed HtGM

Prior to the launch of the Alumni Network, **respondents to the post-completion survey expressed an interest in a wide range of alumni activities** including local alumni events personal development opportunities (70%), local alumni events (69%), webinars from experts from industry and within government (58%) and further courses (56%). Other alumni activities of interest included accreditations and national and regional events (Figure 21). Many of these suggestions have been incorporated into the Alumni Network offer (summarised in Annex F) and the first national and regional events were delivered in December 2022 and January 2023.

Figure 21: What type of HtGM alumni activities or offers would you be interested in taking part in?
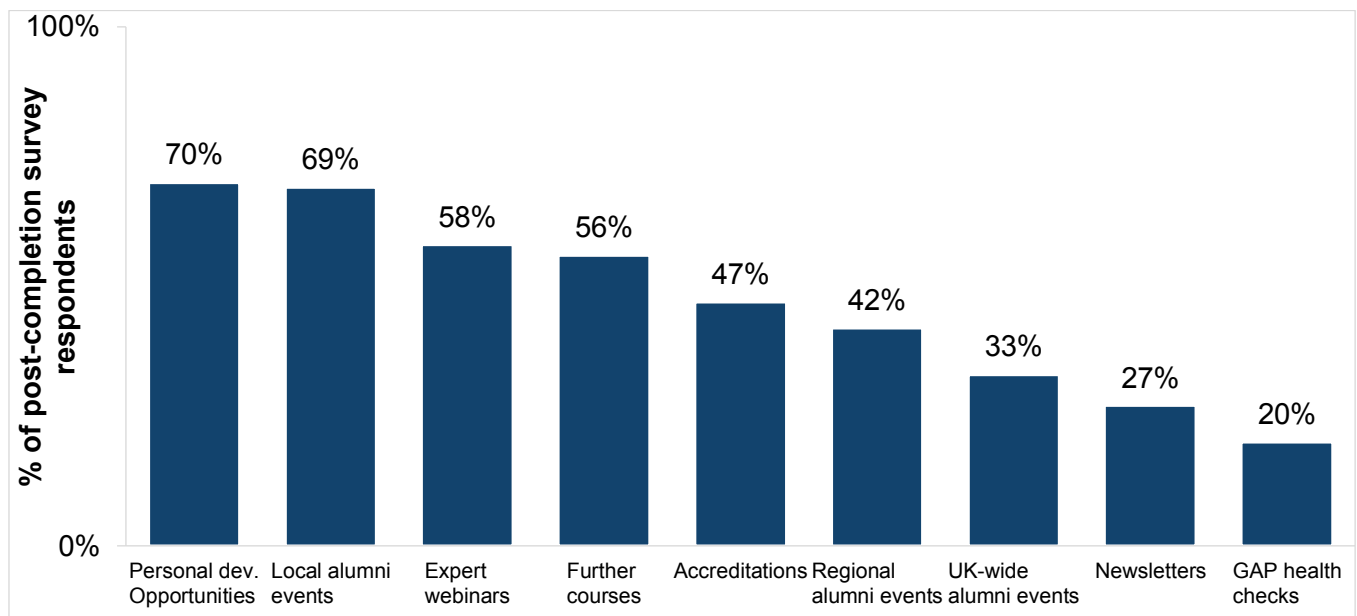
Source: Post completion survey (n=113- those who chose to answer the questions) Note: question was added in Y2Q3)

Awareness of the Alumni Network has increased in the two quarters since it was launched. The proportion of post-completion survey respondents that were aware the programme had an alumni offer at the time of applying increasing by 35 percentage points between Y2Q3 and Y2Q4 (from 28% to 63%) – this is a statistically significant difference. Similarly, around two thirds of programme completers reported having attended at least one alumni event in Y2Q4.

Interest in the alumni network was high amongst SME leaders who completed a depth interview. Interviewees' expectations were aligned to the network's aims: they considered it a useful opportunity to build their personal networks and maintain their ongoing peer support. Despite good awareness of the first alumni events, only a few interviewees had been able to attend. Although many were non-committal about attendance, most interviewees (both those who had and had not attended an alumni event) were interested to engage in the network in future. However, interviews with Y1 completers found that around half were not inclined to engage with an alumni offer.

3.5 Non-completers

The following findings are based on very small sample sizes and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Evidence from a small number (34) of respondents to the non-completion survey suggest that there appear to be two 'types' of HtGM participants who chose to withdraw from the programme before completing, with different rationales:

- **SME leaders who were satisfied but could not complete the programme for reasons external to HtGM** – in 19 out of 34 cases, non-completers were satisfied with their experience of the programme but did not complete because they could not dedicate sufficient time outside of their role as an SME leader due to competing business priorities or commitments.

- **SME leaders who were dissatisfied and chose not to complete the programme for reasons internal to HtGM** – in 13 out of 34 cases, non-completers reporting being dissatisfied with their experience of the programme and chose to withdraw from this because they did not think the course content was relevant to them or their business; they wanted more face to face delivery; would have preferred a longer delivery period or would have preferred a different teaching style.

The same sample of 34 non-completers reported **a number of factors relating to programme design that could have supported them to attend more of HtGM**, ranging from changes to the content of the curriculum to a longer delivery period. One in four (8) indicated that nothing could have changed their decision to not complete the programme.

Figure 22: What, if anything, could have supported you to attend more of the programme?

Category	No. of non-completion survey respondents
Nothing could have supported	8
Changes to the programme curriculum	6
Less busy at work	4
More face-to-face delivery	4
Longer delivery period	3
More engaging course delivery	3
More flexibility to learn in own time	3
Different teaching style	3
More time between sessions	2
Financial support	2
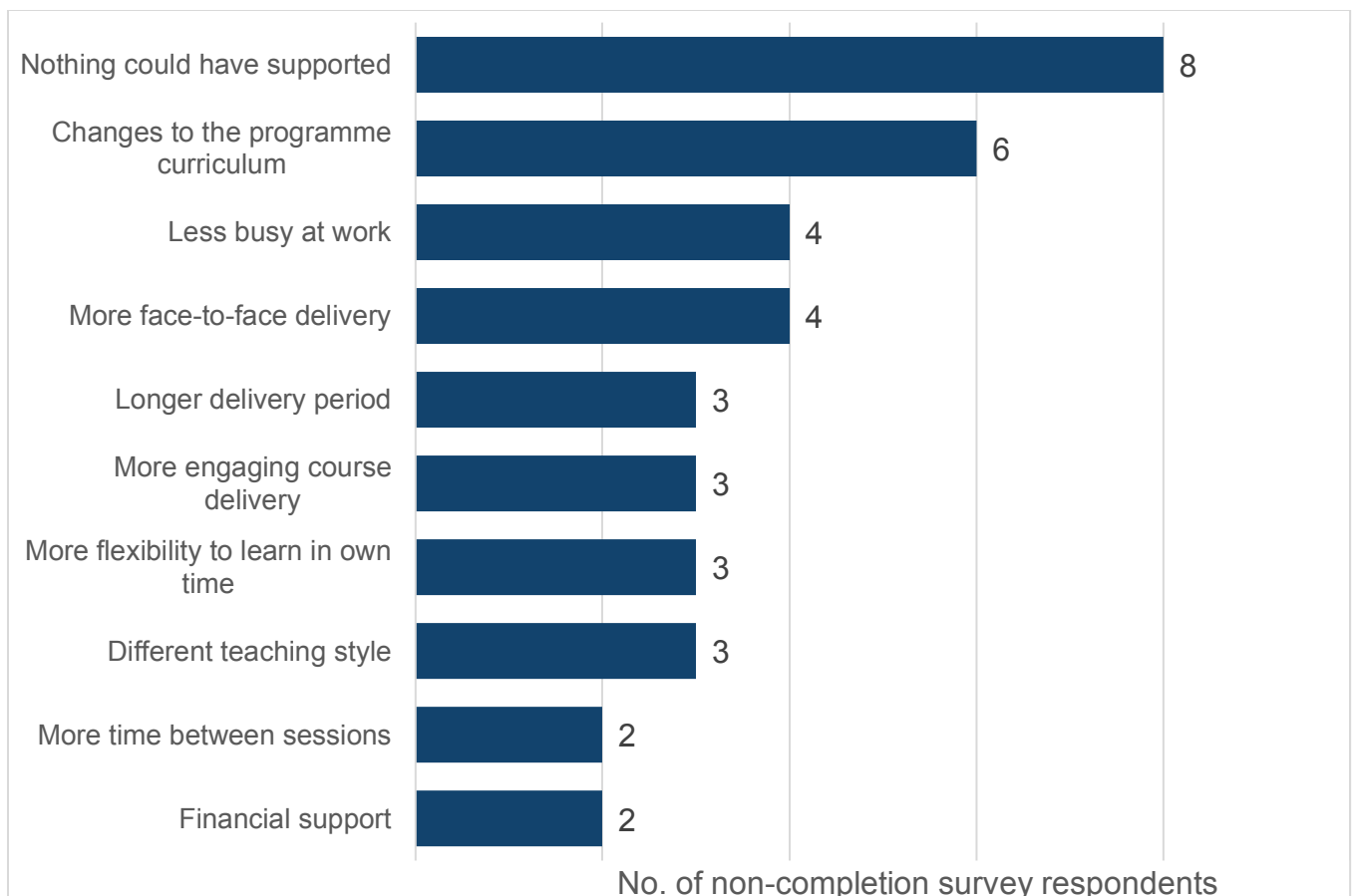
Source: Non-completion survey (n=34); Question type: open text

Around half (18 out of 34) of the SME leaders who dropped out of HtGM would be interested in completing the programme at a later point in time, the remaining either were not interested or were not sure.

4. Mentoring

This chapter presents the evidence to date on the mentoring element of HtGM. It draws on evidence collected from mentors involved in both delivery models (paid-for and voluntary) as well as feedback from programme participants to inform an assessment of the effectiveness of HtGM processes involved in delivering mentoring. Where relevant, it also references feedback from stakeholders and business schools. It highlights the key changes to the mentoring offer and, where possible, comments on the difference this has made to the programme. To inform this comparison, the data in this chapter are sometimes presented by the subgroups set out in Table 8.

Table 8: Sources of evidence on HtGM mentoring

	Sources of evidence
Paid mentors	One-off online survey of mentors involved in the programme before 1st August 2022.
Voluntary mentors	Two waves of a quarterly online survey with mentors involved in the programme from 1st August 2022.
Mentees with a paid mentor	Post completion survey data available up to Y2Q3 and all six month survey data.[33]
Mentees with a voluntary mentor[34]	Feedback from post completion survey administered in Y2Q4.

Source: Ipsos

4.1 The mentoring model

All HtGM programme participants are matched with a mentor based on the compatibility of their business needs and the mentor's skills, experience, and expertise. The relationship is expected to support the SME leader in implementing learning from the programme, culminating in a Growth Action Plan. The content of the mentoring sessions is tailored to the individual and their firm. In the first year of HtGM delivery, the mentoring offer was coordinated by business

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[33] The first programme completers who had a voluntary mentor will be eligible for the six month survey in Y3Q1.
[34] It is possible that a small number of mentees with a voluntary mentor responded to the December wave (Y2Q3) of the post completion survey but this is expected to be negligible.

schools and mentors were paid per hour for a total of up to ten hours per participant (delivered from module 3 onwards).[35]

A new mentoring model was launched on 1st August 2022, whereby participants on cohorts that started after this date can choose their own voluntary mentor based on their business needs and preferences. This is done via an online mentoring platform where participants can search for a mentor using filters such as region, sector, and expertise. This model is delivered in partnership by a consortium comprising Enterprise Nation, Association of Business Mentors (ABM) and Newable who are responsible for:

- **recruiting, training** and **onboarding** mentors to the HtGM programme and managing the **mentor platform**
- facilitating **the matching process** and monitoring mentor and mentee satisfaction, and
- **providing support** to mentors and mentees on any issues of concerns with the mentoring process and answering questions from business schools.

A key difference in the new mentoring model is that programme participants can choose a mentor whereas previously business schools formed the mentoring relationships on their behalf, often based on their existing relationship with the mentors and interviews with programme participants.

4.2 Overall satisfaction

SME leaders reported consistently high levels of satisfaction with the paid-for mentoring offer, often exceeded overall programme satisfaction. However, early insights from the post-completion survey indicate that **satisfaction has dropped since the voluntary model was introduced in August 2022.** There was an 11 percentage point decrease in satisfaction with this element of the programme between Y2Q3 and Y2Q4. This finding is largely driven by a decline in the proportion of participants reporting that they were "very satisfied" with their mentoring experience which fell from 71% to 39% (Figure 23).

There was also a decline in levels of satisfaction amongst mentors in the voluntary model compared to the paid model, with 67% of paid mentors saying they were very satisfied compared to 44% of voluntary mentors (Figure 24). Moreover, one in seven (14%) voluntary mentors were fairly dissatisfied compared to 3% of paid mentors.

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[35] Mentees can follow up with mentors for up to 8 weeks after the end of module 12. This was extended up from 4 weeks from February 2023. Any continuing relationship after this is not under the HtGM branding.

Figure 23: Overall, how satisfied are you with the one to one mentoring support you received through the HtGM programme? (Participant feedback)
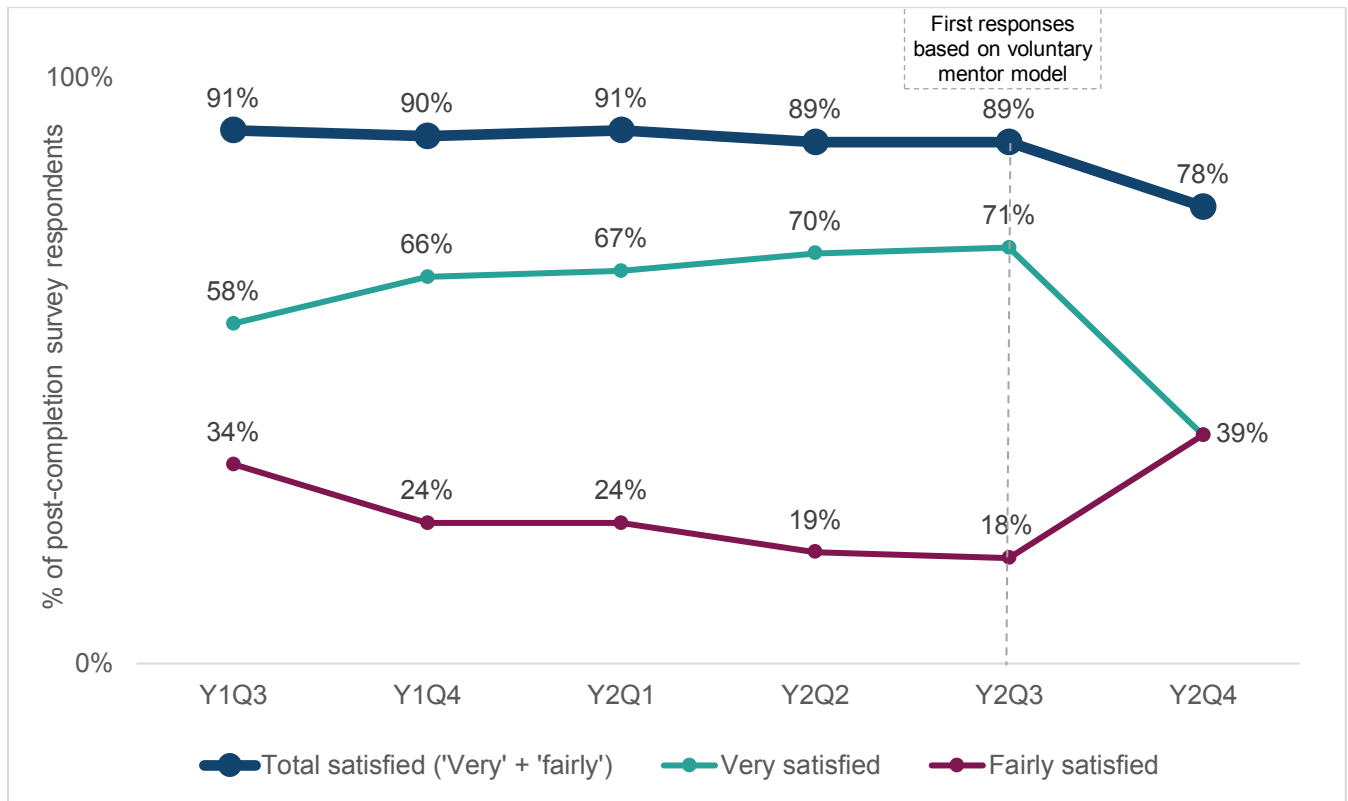
Source: Post completion survey, all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours (n=674); Dashed line indicates the first quarter including respondents on the voluntary mentor model (Y2Q3). The majority of responses based on the voluntary model were received in Y2Q4.Note: base for Y2Q4 (36) is small and should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 24: Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience of mentoring on the HtGM programme? (Mentor feedback)
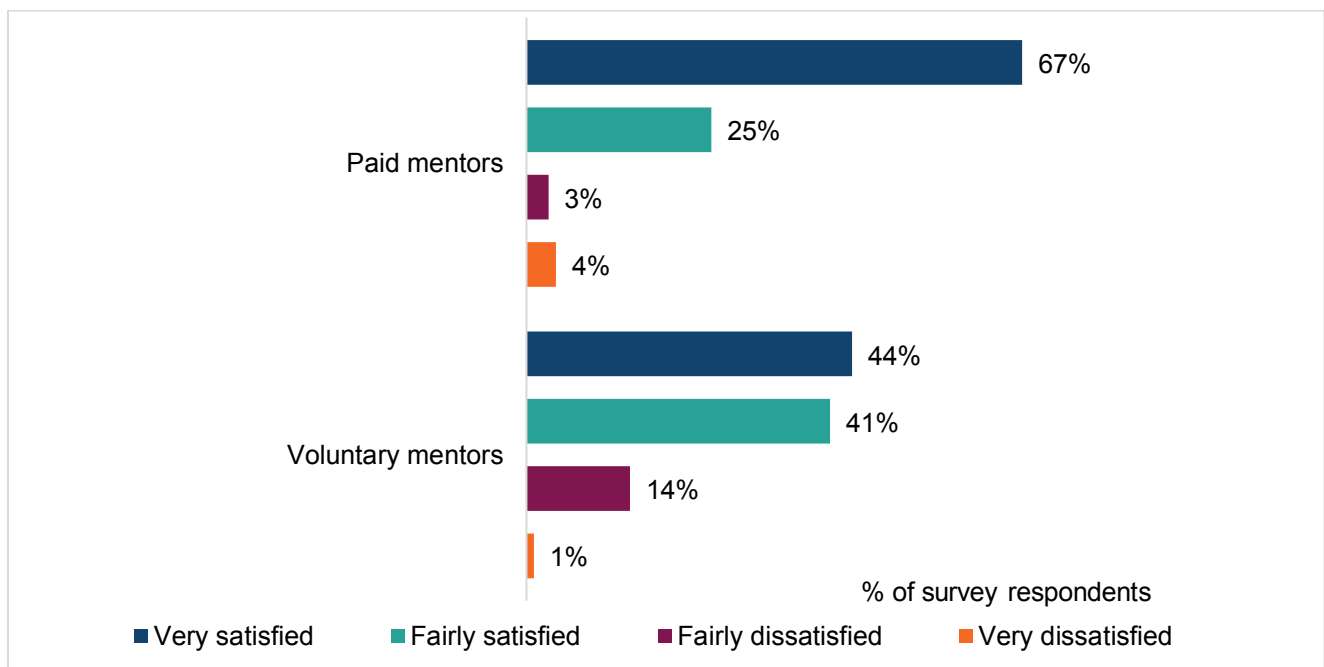
Source: Year 1 mentor survey (n=122), Quarterly mentor survey (n=145)

The quotes below from volunteer mentors highlight the diversity of their experiences of mentoring through the programme.

> **HtGM voluntary mentor -**
> *"Great match with my mentee. I am able to provide as much mentoring support as necessary for my mentee."*

> **HtGM voluntary mentor -**
> *"Overall, I enjoyed mentoring through Help To Grow. Doing so for the first time through this particular programme was a little confusing at the start but once I found my way, I ran with it and focused on meeting the learning needs of my mentee. I would certainly be keen on joining again."*

> **HtGM voluntary mentor -**
> *"Lack of engagement from mentees - feels like the mentoring was not explained correctly and not valued by participants."*

> **HtGM voluntary mentor -**
> *"Despite interesting subjects of discussion, I was running out of suggestions and subjects to talk about. I had the feeling that I did not bring anything to him."*

Source: Depth interviews with mentors (March 2023)

4.3 Mentor recruitment

In the first year of HtGM delivery, **mentors were recruited by business schools through their own networks** (alumni or existing business contacts). Most mentors had existing relationships with the business school and were recruited directly to the programme. Depth interview evidence from mentors and the new mentoring consortium suggest **that most mentors involved in the voluntary model are new to HtGM**, although a small number had delivered mentoring through the paid model and decided to continue with the programme without payment. Voluntary mentors reported being recruited to HtGM through a range of channels: adverts on social media and LinkedIn, via existing relationships with Enterprise Nation, Newable and membership to ABM, promotions through Local Enterprise Partnerships and through referrals from mentors in their professional network.

Mentors have been fairly consistent in their motivations for participating in HtGM, referencing an interest in supporting SMEs, valuing the opportunity to share their knowledge and 'give back', and perceptions that the HtGM offer is high quality. Secondary to this, mentors considered the programme to be an **opportunity for personal development**, refining their existing mentoring skills and broadening their exposure and awareness of different industries and business growth stages, and **expanding their professional network**. Some new mentors also referenced the voluntary offer as a primary motivation, wanting to support SMEs who often have limited resources or finance, particularly in the UK's challenging economic context. A small number saw the programme as a mechanism to recruit new (paid) mentoring clients.

4.4 Profile of mentors

By the end of March 2023, **1,355 mentors** had registered to provide mentoring support to HtGM participants through the voluntary model. The mentoring delivery consortium collects

high level data on the profile of mentors involved in the programme. To date, voluntary mentors registered for HtGM:

- Typically have **previous experience** of mentoring (71% had been a mentor prior to engaging with HtGM)[36]

- Are based across **all regions of the UK**, with around two in five (42%) based in London and the South East.

- Report a **range of expertise** including skills and experience relating to digital, finance, leadership and management, marketing, people, sustainability, wellbeing, international trade, sales and planning.

Comparable data is not available for mentors involved in the paid-for model.

4.5 Mentor induction

Overall, mentors reflected positively on their experiences of onboarding to the programme and the training they received to become a HtGM mentor. However, early evidence indicates that there has been a drop in satisfaction with these elements since the introduction of the voluntary mentor model in August 2022.

HtGM voluntary mentor - *"I feel I am making a solid contribution to the businesses of the people I am mentoring, and especially to their personal confidence in their abilities."*	**HtGM voluntary mentor -** *"I learned a lot, I felt a sense of satisfaction helping people, I met some brilliant people, I developed my skills, networked, I felt supported by the mentoring group."*
HtGM voluntary mentor - *"Neither of my participants had any clue what mentoring was about. They had not been prepared for it by the programme in any way."*	**HtGM voluntary mentor** *"I think that, in spite of the training, volunteer mentors are pretty much left to their own devices and I think that lack of knowledge of the course content can be a hindrance."*

Source: Quarterly mentor survey. Question asked, "Can you say why you were satisfied/not satisfied with your experience of mentoring on the programme?"

Onboarding

Mentors involved in HtGM reported high levels of satisfaction with the onboarding process, although there was some variation between the two delivery models. Figure 25 shows that paid mentors involved in the first year of programme delivery reported similar levels of satisfaction with the onboarding process as mentors involved in the voluntary model (88% among voluntary mentors versus 91% among paid mentors). However, a higher proportion of

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[36] 879 mentors provided details on their prior experience.

voluntary mentors reported being dissatisfied with the onboarding process than paid mentors (12% versus 6%).

The materials provided as part of the onboarding process for the programme were generally deemed to be comprehensive amongst both groups of mentors:

- Paid mentors were onboarded via an induction session from business schools where they met the course organisers, other mentors and were given an overview of the programme aims and objectives, and the role of the mentoring relationship.
- Voluntary mentors received a one-to-one induction, digital handbook and were invited to attend an online onboarding workshop.

Voluntary mentors were divided on the quality of their onboarding experience, with some reporting that it was clear and straightforward, whereas others reported it was stilted and delayed. Some voluntary mentors would have valued more support around the materials (e.g., guidance on the role, admin requirements), this was particularly common amongst those who identified as being relatively inexperienced at mentoring.

Figure 25: Generally, how satisfied were you with the onboarding process?
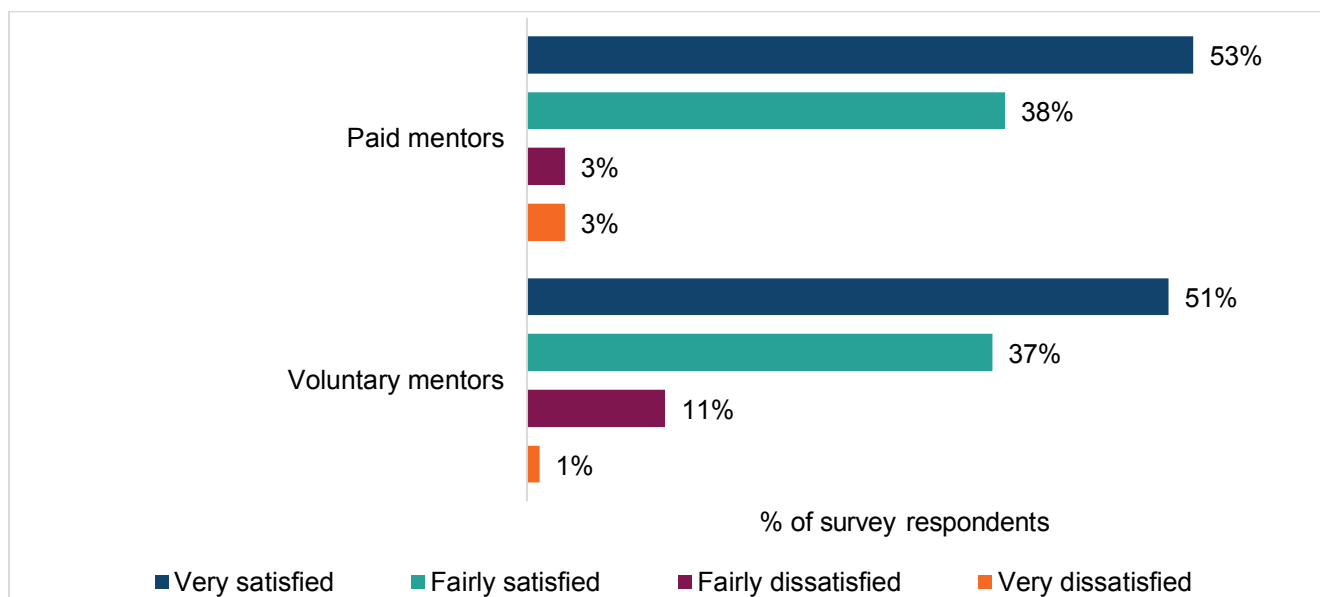
Source: Year 1 mentor survey (122), quarterly mentor survey (145); Note: the two surveys asked slightly different questions to reflect changes to the model 37

Training

Mentors across the board reported that the aims, objectives and role of the mentor, as well as HtGM overall, were clear. The role was often described by mentors as being straightforward and similar to previous mentoring experiences. However, evidence from interviews indicate that voluntary mentors had sometimes misunderstood the aims and objectives of HtGM, mistaking it as a mentoring programme and not being aware of the other

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[37] Year 1 mentor survey: ""Generally, how satisfied were you with the onboarding process (e.g. induction session you attended once hired by the business school)?"; Quarterly mentor survey: "How satisfied were you with your experience of the onboarding process (e.g. induction sessions after signing up)?"

modules, case studies, peer learning and alumni elements. In these cases, mentors were not aware of their role in supporting development of Growth Action Plans.

Levels of satisfaction amongst mentors with the HtGM training have been broadly consistent (87% for voluntary mentors and 86% for paid mentors) (Figure 26). However, survey and interview evidence from mentors provides some suggested areas for improvement:

- **Optional streamlining for experienced mentors**: Across both models, more experienced mentors reported that formal training was not necessary and they would have preferred if some elements of the training were optional for those who had mentored before and were confident in their abilities.

- **Additional training for less experienced mentors**: Interviews indicated that those involved with the voluntary model were typically less confident and less experienced at mentoring than those delivering through the paid model. These mentors reported feeling as though the training content was pitched at more experienced mentors rather than experienced business leaders with some coaching and management experience looking to progress into formal mentoring.

- **Improved communication**: both mentor groups reported that the communications associated with their training, particularly with regards to scheduling, clarity of training content and sharing best practice could be made more consistent and accessible. Some interviewees from the voluntary model cited disjointed communication with their mentees as a factor in them not completing a mentoring relationship.

Figure 26: Generally, how satisfied were you with the training you received?
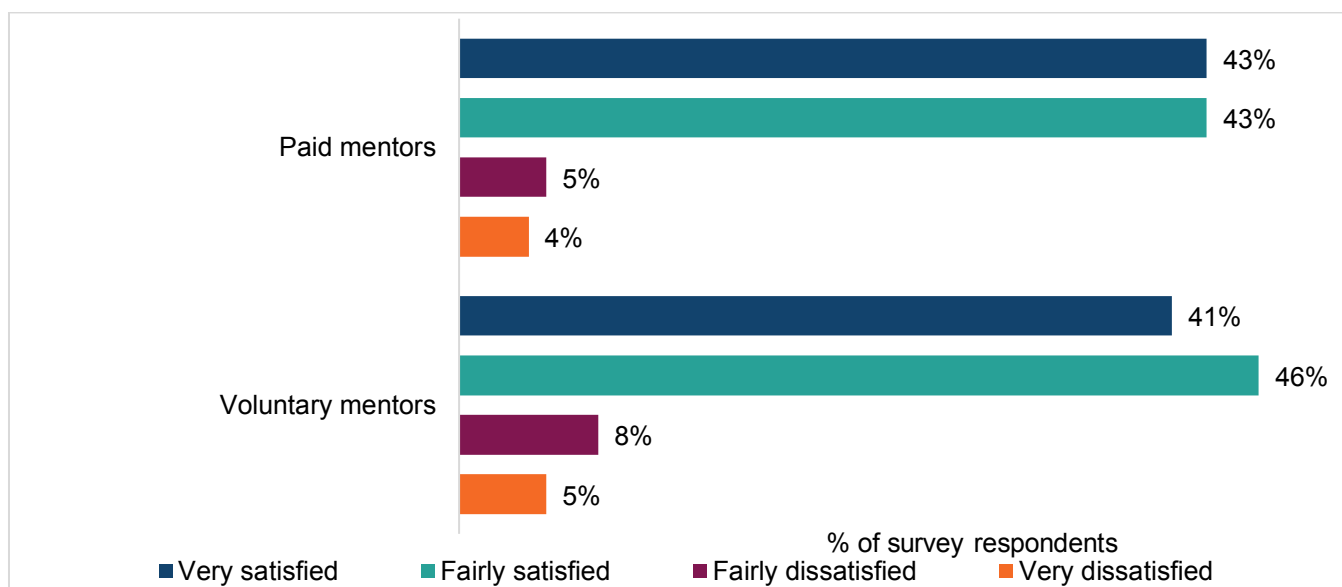
Source: Year 1 mentor survey (122), quarterly mentor survey (145); Note: the two surveys asked slightly different questions to reflect changes to the model 38

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[38] Year 1 survey: ""Generally, how satisfied were you with the HtGM mentor training provided by schools (e.g. mentor training materials and videos)?" and quarterly mentor survey: ""How satisfied were you with the training content?"

Mentor platform (Voluntary model only)

The new mentoring model uses an online platform for to facilitate the matching process between mentors and mentees. Mentors were divided in their feedback on the online platform:

- **more than half thought it was straightforward to use** (58%) – most mentors who participated in a depth interview felt the platform was straightforward and a quick, easy process to follow. Additionally, it had a good system for matching mentees with a suitable mentor, which was generally accessible.

- **two fifths did not think it was straightforward to use** (41%) – some mentors who participated in interviews highlighted challenges with the platform including finding its interface challenging, low engagement of mentees in the platform and burdensome verification processes.

A selection of recommendations to improve the mentoring platform are provided below.

HtGM voluntary mentor -

"The terminology was ambiguous, with no definitions available. There is also some annoying functionality, scheduling your meetings then rating them out of 5. Very unlikely you're going to give your mentee a low score and vice versa."

HtGM voluntary mentor -

"I would like something to be put in place to stimulate mentees to book in more regularly and to add their feedback to the site."

HtGM voluntary mentor -

"It would be helpful to see the material from the Help to grow training programme so we can further support our mentees. It would be good to show that on the platform."

Source: Depth interviews with mentors and programme completers (March 2023)

4.6 The matching process

As of 31st March 2023, 2,742 mentoring relationships had been formed as part of HtGM.

The matching process for voluntary mentors was reported to be more onerous on both programme participants and mentors than the previous model. In the Year 1 paid delivery model, business schools formed the mentoring relationships in the early stage of the programme. However, the new model requires mentees to choose their mentors from profiles on the online mentoring platform. This additional requirement for programme participants appears to have led to lower than expected engagement with the platform and, in some cases, programme participants not being matched with a mentor (more detail in section 4.8. In December 2022, HtGM participants were offered the option of a brokered match, which has led to an increase in the proportion of participants being matched with a mentor by module 3.

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

For the reasons outlined above **the time taken for voluntary mentors to be matched with a mentee varied considerably**, from seven days to up to two months, although mentors were most commonly matched within one month of enrolling on the programme (for 74% of participants). Some mentors who had participated in both models agreed that the new process was much slower – for example, one recalled matching with his mentee at week seven of the programme but had previously been matched at week two with support of the business school.

Quality of the match

Since the launch of HtGM**, programme participants have been consistently satisfied with the quality of their mentoring match**, although there has been a statistically significant decline on this measure since the introduction of the voluntary model (Figure 27).[39] In line with the previously reported measures, this dip appears to be driven by a decline in the proportion of participants strongly agreeing that their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs.

Figure 27: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your mentor's experience was well matched to your needs?
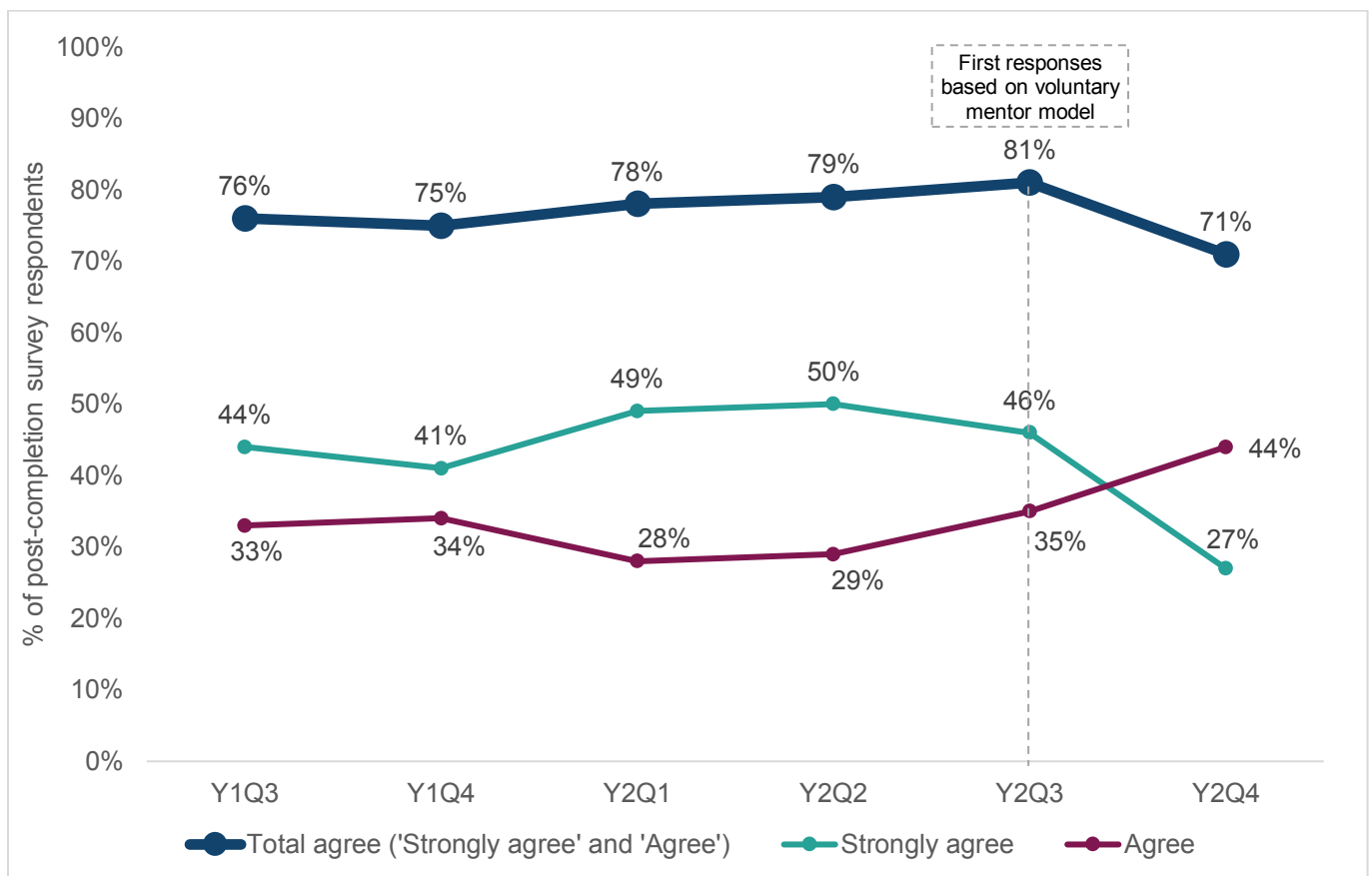
[39] The 27% of respondents in Y2Q4 who 'strongly agree(d)' that their mentor was well matched to their needs is a statistically significant drop on the previous three quarters.

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Looking at the aggregate survey data to date, smaller SMEs with between 10 and 49 employees reported the highest levels of satisfaction with their mentor match (81%). Microbusinesses (with 4-9 employees) reported the lowest levels of satisfaction (73%). This difference is statistically significant, suggesting that smaller firms find it harder to find a mentor whose experience aligns to their business needs.

Evidence from interviews with participants, stakeholders and business schools suggest that the drop in overall satisfaction is linked to the changes to the mentor delivery model. Programme participants reported often feeling unsure of what they should look for in a mentor, were overwhelmed by the choice of possible mentors on the platform and sometimes found it difficult to judge the quality of mentors from their profiles. Comparatively, in the first year of the evaluation, mentors and mentees appreciated the close attention business schools had paid to matching programme participants with mentors.

4.7 The mentoring relationship

SME leader engagement

The majority of programme participants reported being matched with a mentor at the time of the post-completion survey (92%).[40] Figure 28 shows that this has declined in the two most recent quarters of the survey, coinciding with the introduction of the voluntary mentor model. This decline is statistically significant. The decline could reflect the additional input required from participants to form the relationship with a mentor in the new model, including signing up to the platform and selecting from a suite of mentors. Interviews with programme participants indicated that these additional tasks put time pressure on their already busy schedule and sometimes meant they chose not to engage with the mentoring element.

In December 2022, the duration of the HtGM mentoring relationship was extended from four weeks after completing the final module to eight weeks. This change only applies to some respondents to the survey in Y2Q4.

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[40] Note: the survey is administered between two and six weeks after programme participants completed module 12, meaning some mentoring relationships will not be complete.

Figure 28: Participant engagement with HtGM mentoring[41]

Source: Post-completion survey (n= 738 for 'matched with a mentor' and n= 679 for 'matched completing 10 hours of mentoring')); the mentoring relationship can continue up to 8 weeks after completion of the modular content, whereas survey is administered between two and six weeks after completion module
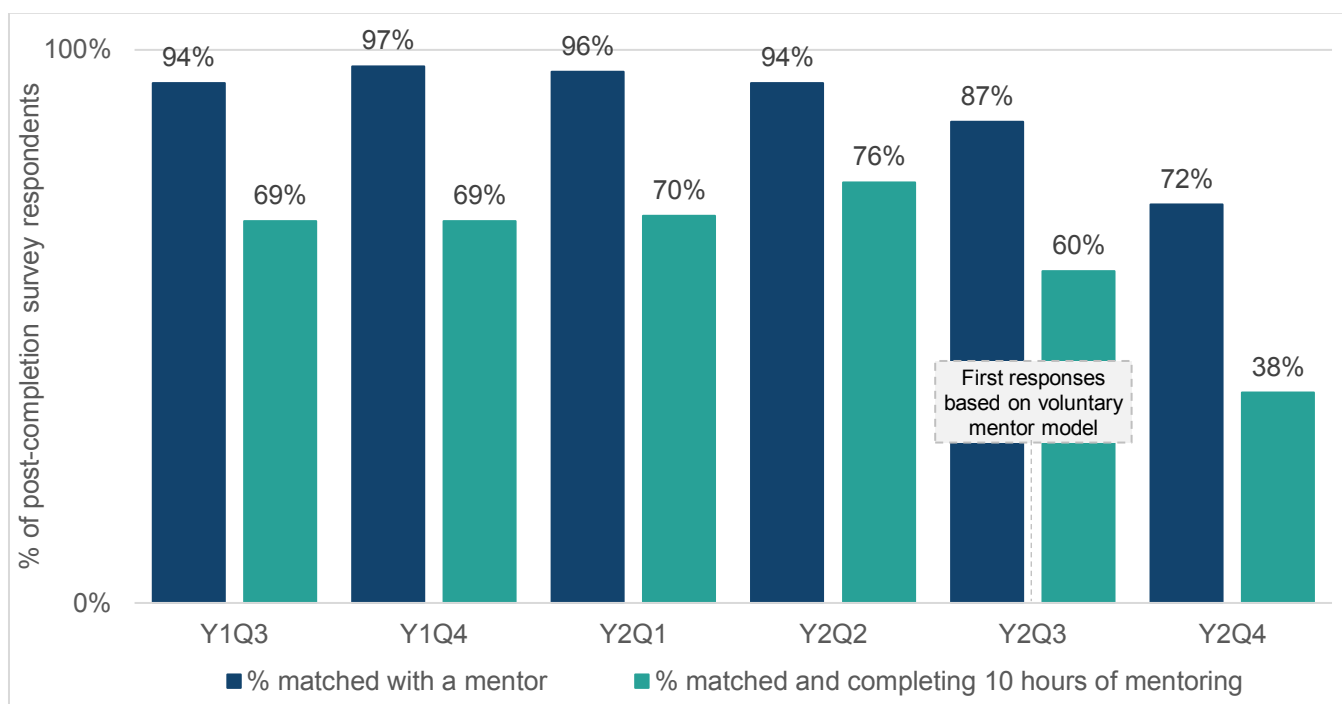
Figure 28 also provides an indication of how engaged programme participants have been with their mentor. It shows that, at the time of the post completion survey, more recent programme participants were **less likely to have completed all ten hours of mentoring** compared to those who were assigned a paid mentor (38% in Y2Q4 compared to at least 60% across previous quarters).[42] The decline in Y2Q4 is statistically different to the preceding quarters. This could be linked to the slower matching process reported in Section 4.8 but interview evidence indicates that it could also be a result of difficulties finding a suitable mentor. For example, there were instances where mentors were too busy to meet with their mentees or did not attend arranged meetings. In these cases, participants were either supported towards another mentor or chose to forgo the mentoring element completely. Participants were also permitted to complete their 10 hours for mentoring within 8 weeks from Y2Q4, as opposed to 4 weeks previously.

Mentoring activities

Programme participants used their mentoring relationships to both build on the **topics covered in the HtGM programme curriculum** and to seek advice, guidance and support on **ad hoc issues** they or their businesses were facing (Figure 29). This has been consistent since the programme launched and is reflected in interviews with programme participants and mentors:

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[41] Blue bars represent responses to "Were you matched with a mentor as part of the Help to Grow: Management programme?" and red bars represent responses to "Did you complete / attend all ten hours of mentoring with your mentor?
[42] Note: the mentoring relationship can continue up to 8 weeks after completion of the modular content, whereas survey is administered between two and six weeks after completion module 12.

- The mentoring sessions were particularly valued because they offer an opportunity to **tailor the programme to their individual and business needs**, using the sessions to answer their questions about the curriculum and seek real-world examples of some of the theory presented in the modules.

- In cases where mentoring support was used to support programme participants with **topics covered in the programme**, mentors reported providing advice and guidance across the curriculum, most commonly on implementing a business plan (89% of paid mentors, 71% voluntary mentors) and vision, mission and values (84% of paid mentors, 77% of voluntary mentors).[43]

However, interviews with volunteer mentors and recent programme participants highlighted a few changes:

- Mentors appear to be **more commonly offering general guidance** to their mentees, acting as a sounding board and accountability check, and putting mentees in touch with service providers.

- Several SME leaders reported instances of mentors using the programme **to promote their own commercial services**, in two cases this led to mentees terminating their relationship with the mentor.

- In other cases, mentees indicated that their **mentors were less familiar with the programme curriculum** and were therefore less able to support programme participants with specific queries.

  - Mentors attributed this to (i) a gap to their training materials, commenting that they did not have access to a detailed overview of the curriculum, or (ii) the delays with the match, meaning the mentoring sessions were out of sync with the module content.

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[43] Note: this analysis is based on a small sample size (35) and should be interpreted with caution. It has been reported in percentages for consistency.

Figure 29: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support?
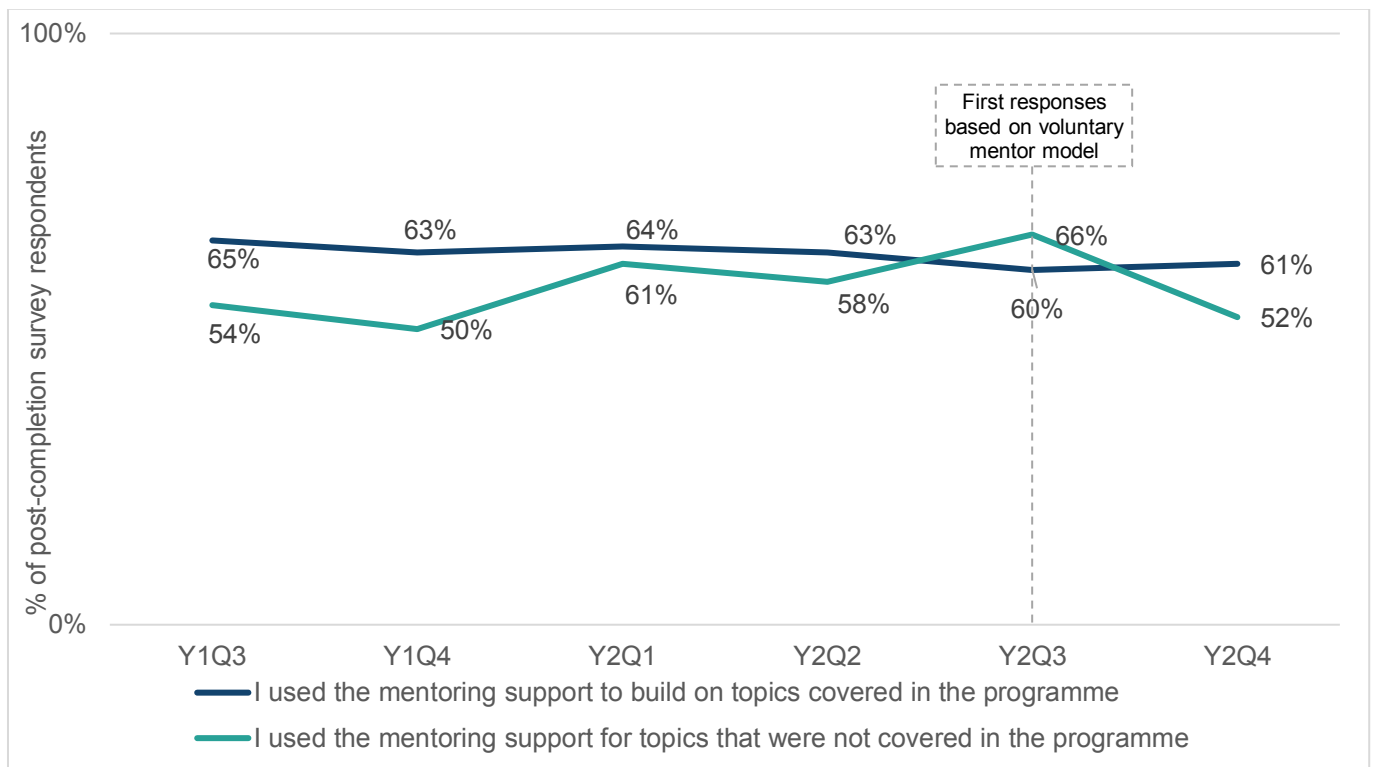
Source: Post-completion survey (n=647 – those who were matched with a mentor, had completed some mentoring hours and responded to the questions); Dashed line indicates the first quarter including respondents on the voluntary mentor model (Y2Q3). The majority of responses based on the voluntary model were received in Y2Q4. Note: 'not stated' responses have been removed from the base in Y2Q3 and Y2Q4

4.8 Growth Action Plans (GAPs)

To date, **three quarters (74%) of programme completers reported that they had produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP)** through participation in the HtGM programme and around half (49%) said they had used their mentoring relationship to develop this. Amongst those that used their mentor for support with their GAP, satisfaction with the quality of the support was very high – with 95% saying their mentor supported them well or very well on this. This finding should be interpreted as an endorsement of the programme design, indicating that the tailored mentoring support is a useful mechanism for supporting development of a Growth Action Plan designed to facilitate business-level changes.

Figure 30 shows change over time in GAP completion rates, with a noticeable drop in the most recent quarterly data. Most of those interviewed had completed a GAP but there were mixed views about its usefulness among both recent and Y1 completers. The data presented in Figure 30 suggest that the drop in GAP completion could be associated with the drop in participants seeking support from mentors on their GAP.

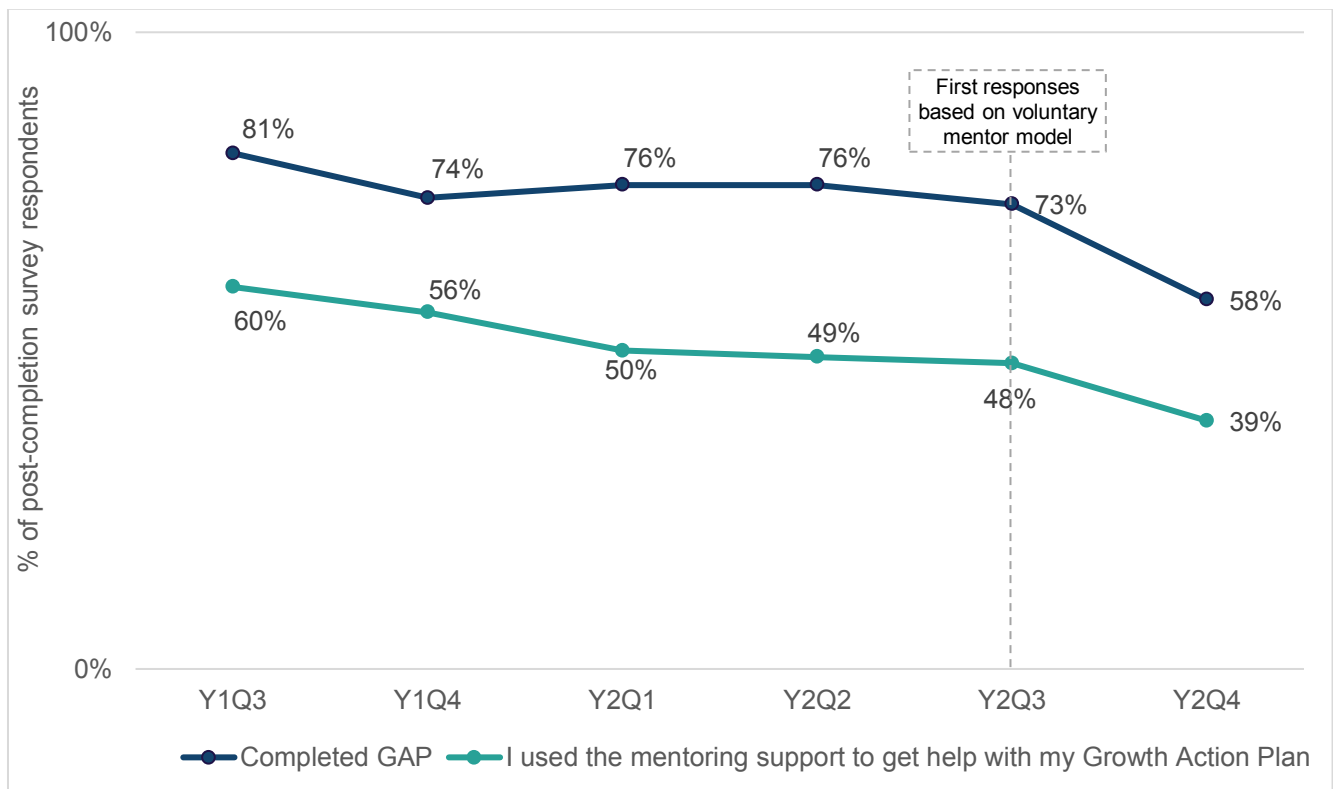**Figure 30: Growth Action Plan engagement and support**

Source: Post-completion survey; Light blue line (n=647 – those who were matched with a mentor, had completed some mentoring hours and responded to the questions); and Dark blue line (n=738); Dashed line indicates the first quarter including respondents on the voluntary mentor model (Y2Q3). The majority of responses based on the voluntary model were received in Y2Q4.

A selection of quotes from on programme completers view of the mentoring support received under the new voluntary model are provided below.

HtGM programme completer -

"My first impression was that the mentor would not be so useful, but I was mistaken. Even though the mentor was not in the same sector, she still had a good understanding."

HtGM programme completer -

We'd finished and I got the notification through saying pretty much that she didn't have enough time to keep going through the rest of it. I think, once they'd made it clear that I just wasn't going to be keeping her on as a consultant, that she didn't have any reason to do it."

HtGM programme completer -

When I [selected my mentor], I was really specific and selected [name of mentor]. Quite a lot of the criteria, so I only ended up with about 10 options, whereas some people were saying they had 100 potentials and things. So, I think the only thing with it is that you've got to be really really specific about what you want to make sure you're not inundated."

HtGM programme completer -

"I followed through with a mentorship and I actually got a really good mentor and we did all of the 10 hours. And we said we'd continue our relationship as well, which was really nice.."

Source: Depth interviews with SME leaders (2023)

4.9 Mentoring after HtGM

One third of programme completers (35%) continued mentoring after completing HtGM.
Of these, most (60%) continued their relationship with their HtGM mentor and the remainder
had formed a new relationship with a different mentor. Programme completers who took part in
an interview indicated that those SME leaders who continued to engage with their HtGM
mentors often did so on an informal basis, having ad hoc check-ins to sense check ideas or
ask for advice (e.g., signposting to business support). This was confirmed in follow up
conversations with Y1 completers, some of whom continued to engage with their mentors.
Where participants had sought additional business support, this was most commonly in the
form of tailored personalised advice through mentoring or coaching.

Looking at the underlying quarterly data, **the proportion of programme participants
choosing to engage in some sort of mentoring support after HtGM has remained
relatively consistent**. However, the proportion of completers continuing to work with their
HtGM mentor has slightly declined, whereas the proportion continuing to work with another
mentor had slightly increased. In the most recent quarter, for the first time since the survey
began, programme completers were equally likely to continue mentoring with their HtGM than
with another mentor. This aligns with depth interview feedback from completers who typically
saw the value in mentoring to their business, even if they were dissatisfied with their HtGM
mentoring experience.

Figure 31: Have you continued mentoring since completing the programme?
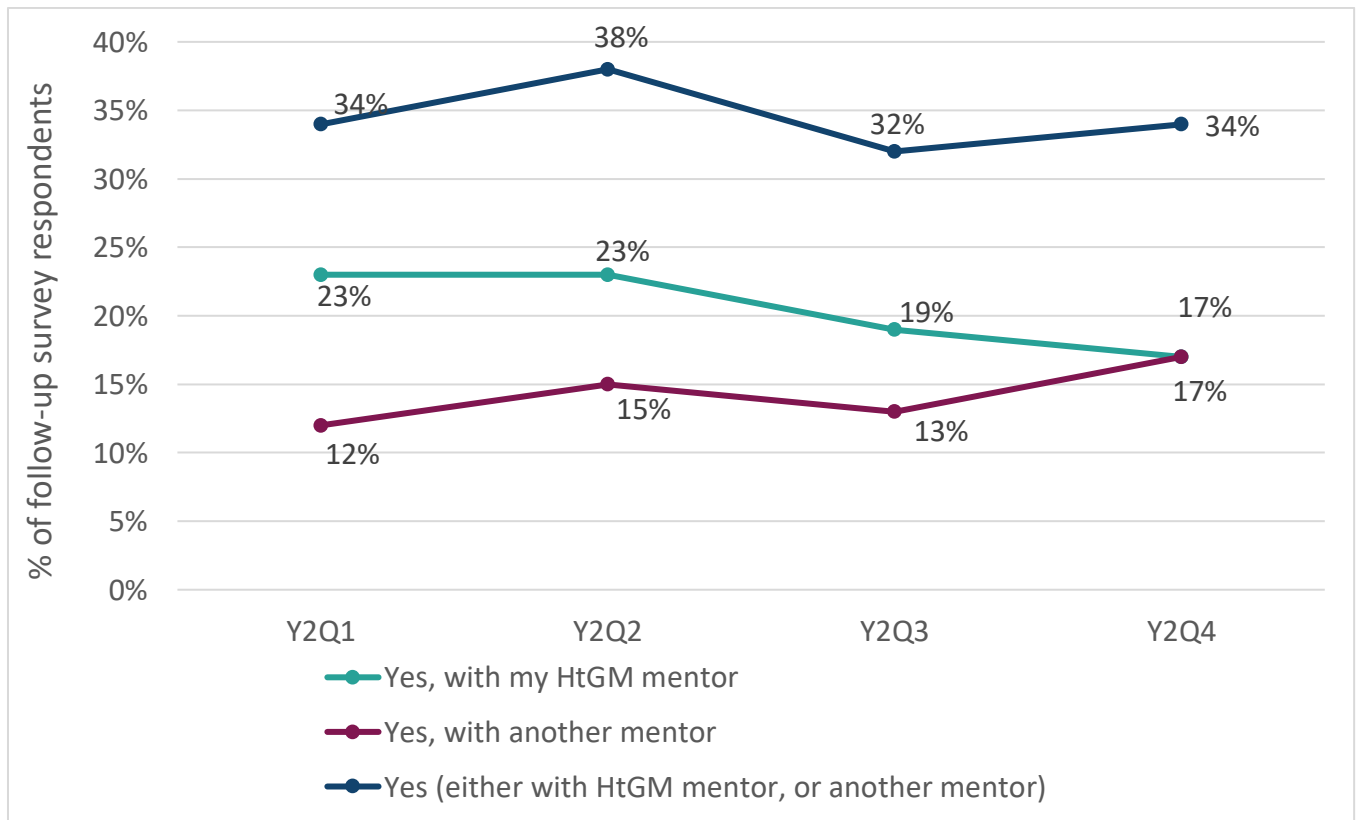
Source: Six month survey (n= 652)

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5. Programme effectiveness[44]

This chapter presents evidence on individual and business level outcomes reported by SME leaders who have completed the HtGM programme. It provides insights into the nature and scale of outcomes achieved as well as an indication of the timescale to the realisation of outcomes by comparing survey evidence collected within six weeks and six months of completing the programme. The analysis draws on evidence collected before SME leaders completed HtGM via a diagnostic survey and through a programme of depth interviews with SME leaders who completed the programme in Year 2 and follow up interviews with some Year 1 programme completers who were interviewed for the previous evaluation report.

This chapter also draws some indicative comparisons between SME leaders who completed HtGM and a survey of eligible, UK-based SME leaders who have not engaged with HtGM. The sample for the wider SME survey was selected at random and therefore cannot be treated as a control group to inform counterfactual analysis. As such, comparisons between the two groups do not make inferences about causation and should be treated as descriptive context. Comparisons between findings from the six-month post completion survey and general SME population who have not participated in HtGM have been significance tested at the 95% confidence level. When a result is presented as statistically significant, it means that the difference it is not due to chance. However, at this stage it is still not possible to attribute any observed differences to the programme.

A formal counterfactual impact assessment using a pipeline approach will be delivered in the later stages of the evaluation.

5.1 Self-reported individual outcomes

Management and leadership skills, capabilities and confidence

Within six weeks of completing the Help to Grow Management programme, SME leaders report high levels of confidence in moving their businesses forwards (Error! Reference source not found.**).** Most felt able to adapt when changes occur (93%) and achieve their business goals in the face of obstacles (87%). However, a lower proportion felt they had the skills needed to manage their employees (67%) or lead their business (65%) over the next three years. As with the Year 1 evaluation findings, there is a perceived skills gap reported by business leaders which may impact on their long-term business performance. This gap was found to be most prominent among smaller business, especially with regards to having the skills to manage their employees (62% 'agreed' with 10 or less employees versus 73% for 51-199 employees).

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[44] Subgroup analysis was performed on the results in this chapter by size, region and sector. There was no noteworthy or statistically significant variations between groups and sometimes sample sizes were too small to draw meaningful comparisons.

Figure 32: Thinking about how you feel today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Up to six weeks post completion)
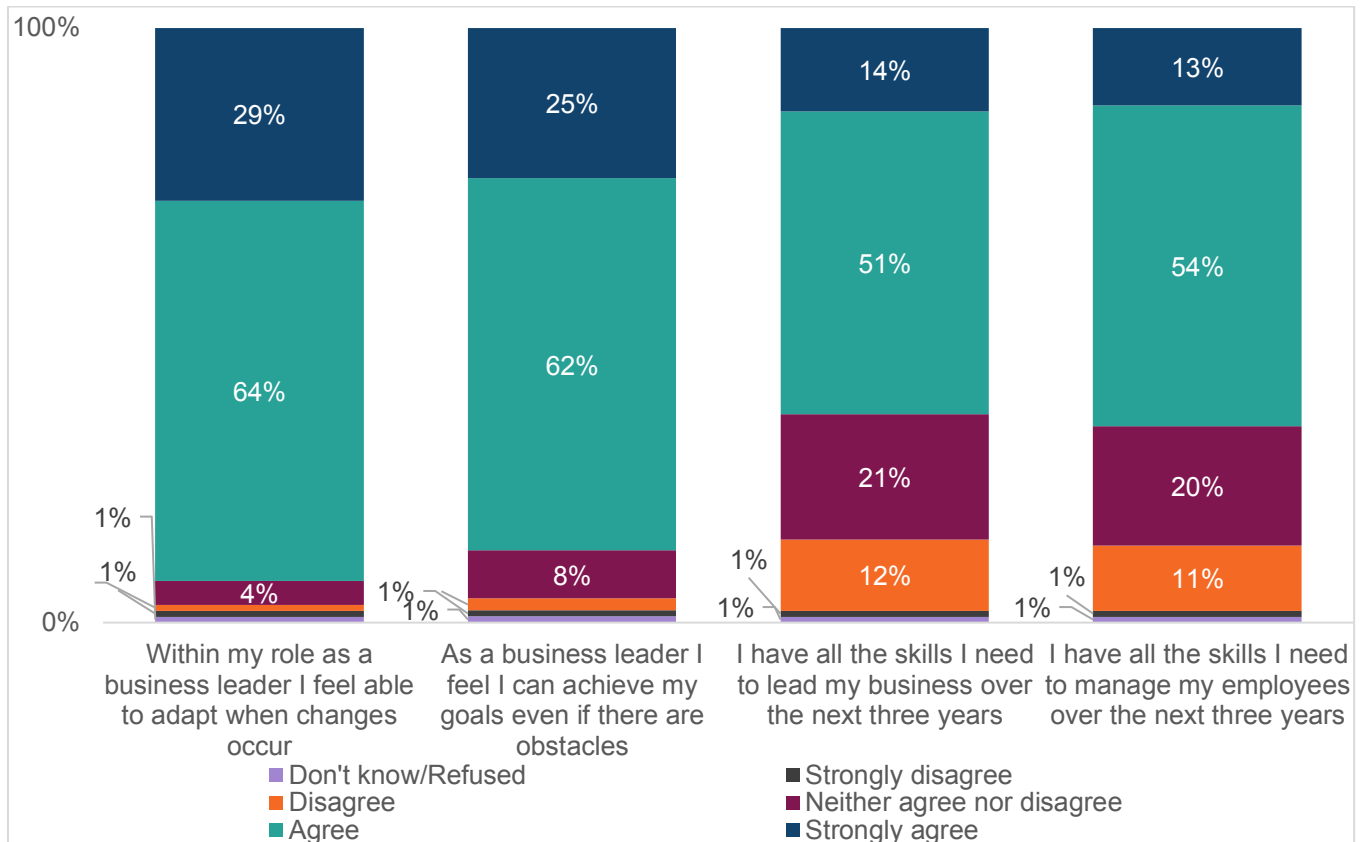
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Post-completion survey (n=738)

There is emerging evidence that the HtGM programme is helping to address this skills gap. Figure 33 shows that after six months, programme completers report statistically significant improvements in their management and leadership skills, capabilities and confidence since enrolling on the programme. The biggest increases were in the proportion who thought they had the skills needed to manage their employees over the next three years (28% before starting HtGM, 75% after completing the programme) and the skills to lead their business over the next three years (39% before, increasing to 75% after) – two areas that SME leaders reported the lowest confidence in at the time of applying.

Figure 33: Thinking about how you feel today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Before HtGM vs. 6 month post HtGM)
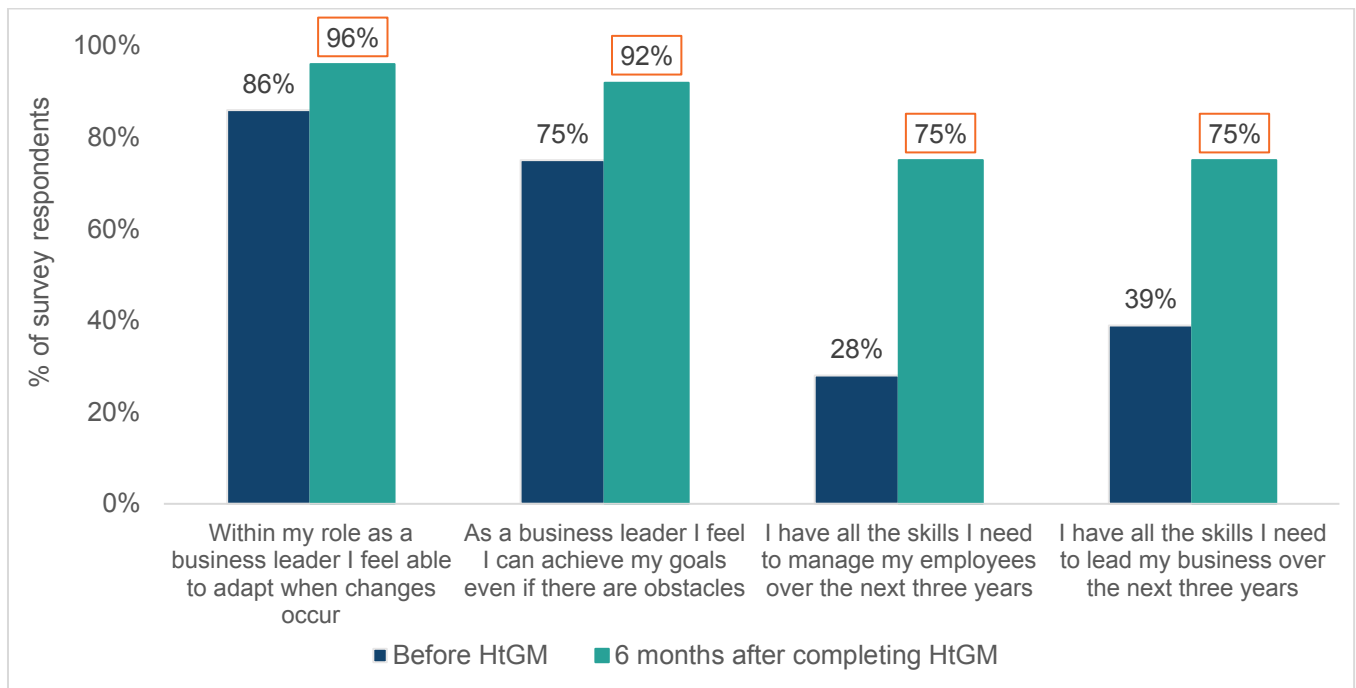
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) (n=579 – respondents to both the HtGM diagnostic and the six month follow up survey) The orange boxes indicate statistically significant differences at 95% confidence level.

SME leaders completing the HtGM programme were slightly more likely to report confidence in their leadership skills and abilities than those who had not (Figure 34). The difference between programme completers and eligible SME leaders who did not complete HtGM was most notable in relation to their ability to achieve their goals even in the face of obstacles (92% relatively to 85% - a statistically significant difference). They were also more likely to agree that they had the relevant skills to lead their business and manage their employees over the next three years, and that they were able to adapt when changes occur, although the percentage differences on these measures were lower.

**Figure 34: Thinking about how you feel today, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (HtGM programme completers vs SME leaders not completing HtGM)**
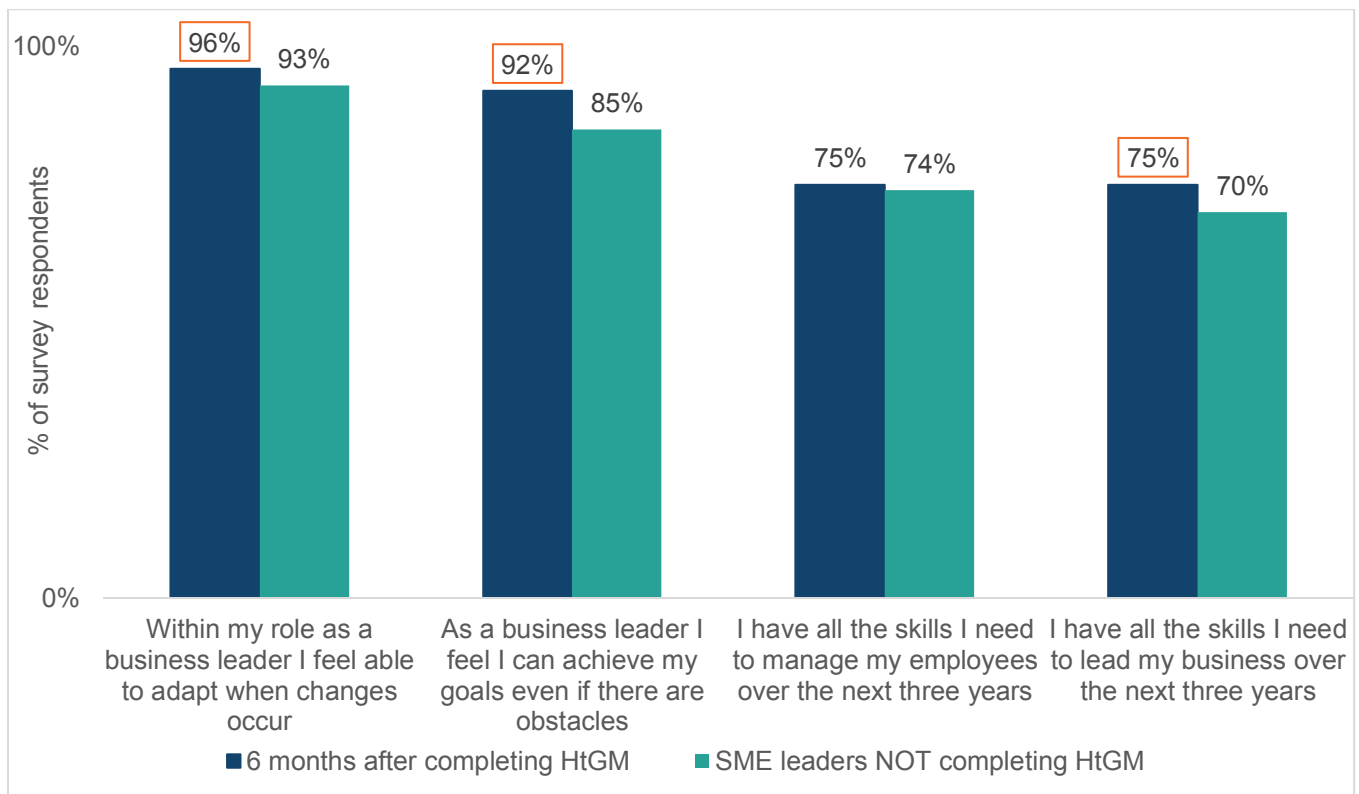
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Six month follow-up survey (n=652), SME survey (n=1004); The orange boxes indicate statistically significant differences at 95% confidence level.

Individual level outcomes

SME leaders were found to have got more from HtGM than they expected at the outset. Figure 35 shows that programme participants' primary expectations of the programme were met, with nine in ten SME leaders reporting greater confidence in managing their business (91%), increased awareness of factors that drive productivity (90%) and improved leadership and management skills (89%) as a result of participation in the programme. **Programme completers also reported a wide range of other individual outcomes that were less commonly expected at the outset**, most notably improved understanding of how to enhance employee wellbeing (82% self-reported vs 27% expected at the outset); embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices (70% vs 16%) and the value of data analytics (73% vs 22%).

The breadth of self-reported outcomes accrued to programme participants within six weeks appear to be increasing. Compared to the findings reported in the Year 1 evaluation report, programme completers in Year 2 were not only reporting benefits that enhance them as individual leaders (e.g., improved confidence, awareness and management and leadership skills) but were more commonly reporting improvements to skills and knowledge associated with **enhancing business performance and strategy** (e.g., technical know-how that might lead to changes in business structures to improve efficiency, use of data and financial systems).

Figure 35: Individual level outcomes (expectations vs self-reported outcomes)
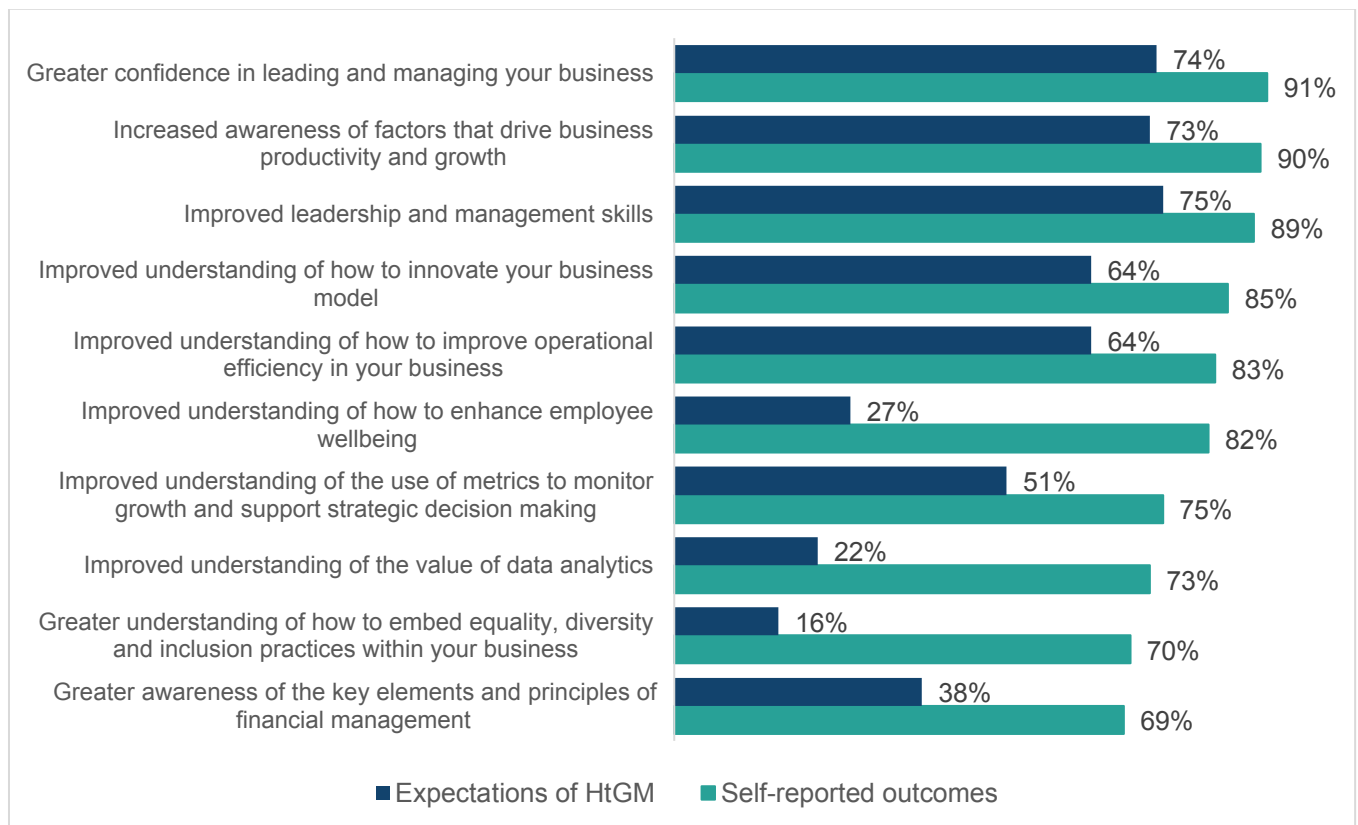
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Post-completion survey (n=738), Six month follow-up survey (n=652)

Insights from interviews with programme completers corroborate the breadth of individual outcomes reported by survey respondents. Interview evidence also highlighted some noticeable differences in the benefits to business owners and to senior staff who were not the business owner:

- **Business owners tended to report outcomes that made them better leaders**, commonly citing the benefit of effective time management and the value of taking time out of day-to-day running of the business to focus on strategy and growth – sometimes taking on extra staff to ensure they continued to reduce time spent on delivery. They also reported improved confidence in engaging team members in decision making rather than feeling that it was their responsibility as the owner to make decisions alone, and better self-awareness after conducting leadership style assessments and personality tests with their mentor.

- **Senior leaders were more likely to report outcomes that made them more rounded strategic decision makers**, typically through gaining skills and knowledge relevant to elements of business that were outside of their remit (e.g., marketing strategies, how to increase employee engagement). One interviewee explained how, by gaining knowledge in areas of the business that they did not work in, the programme had given them the confidence to present and respond to board-level conversations. Senior leaders also indicated a greater appreciation of the importance of business planning, making decisions with the next six months, one year, two years in mind rather than acting responsively to short-term factors.

These findings are an endorsement of the programme Theory of Change[45]: programme participants are experiencing individual-level benefits that improve their understanding and awareness of their business needs, develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of management and leadership practices and are drawing on these to inform business planning and strategy (via a GAP). Over time, these individual benefits are expected to translate into action by SME leaders to improve the performance of their businesses. There is some early emerging evidence of this, which is discussed later in this chapter.

5.2 Diffusion of knowledge

The majority of SME leaders (89%) who participated in HtGM shared what they had learned or gained with others in their business within six weeks of completing the programme (Figure 36). This diffusion of learning is a key mechanism for driving business-level outcomes. SME leaders who were satisfied with the programme were more likely to share learning with others in their business than those who were dissatisfied. The proportion of programme completers sharing knowledge within their firms was marginally higher after six months (91%), suggesting that most knowledge from HtGM is diffused during or soon after programme completion. Interview evidence with programme completers supports this finding, with SME leaders tending to directly share knowledge from the programme in the short term, whereas diffusion tended to happen more indirectly (i.e., via changes within them as leaders leading to improvements in organisational culture) in the medium and longer term.

Programme completers were better able to share learning from the programme if they had the **time to implements changes** and **buy-in from senior colleagues**, especially if colleagues had also attended HtGM. Evidence from programme completers also referenced elements of the programme design that helped them effectively share knowledge within their business:

- **attending the course over twelve or more weeks** gave participants the opportunity to share in 'real time'.

- the **course content and materials** that were shared with participants were accessible and could be distributed to colleagues.

- **peer learning groups** provided a space to share best practice and experiences of getting colleagues on board with GAPs and other business changes.

- **mentoring sessions** helped programme participants make decisions on what was most relevant to their business and how this could be effectively communicated to colleagues.

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[45] The full programme Theory of Change is set out in Annex D.

Figure 36: To what extent have you shared what you have learned or gained from participation in the programme with others within your businesses? (6 weeks vs. 6 month post HtGM)
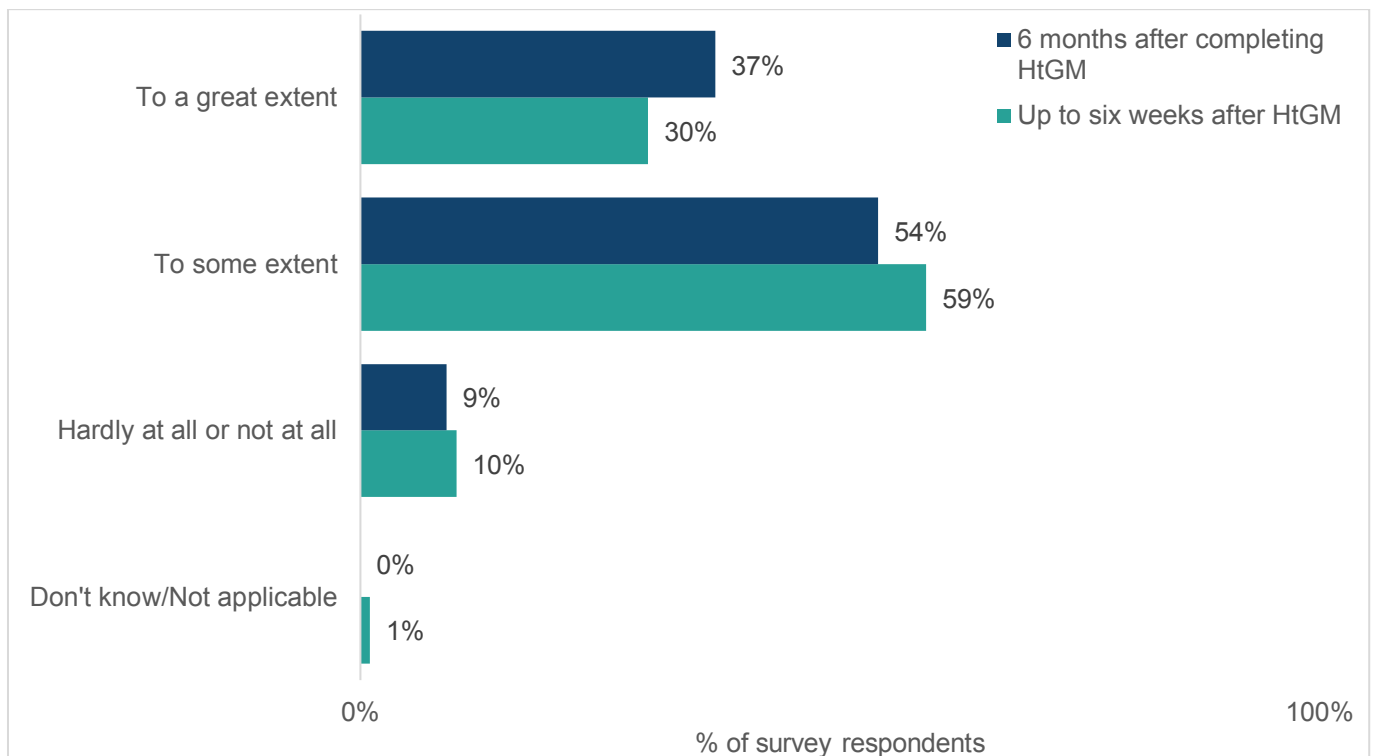
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Post-completion survey (n=738), Six month follow-up survey (n=652)

5.3 Self-reported business outcomes

This section presents perceptions of HtGM completers on the capabilities of their business following completion of the programme.

Firm capabilities

Programme completers reported statistically significant improvements across a range of business practices, capabilities and experience (Figure 37). After six months, SME leaders were most commonly confident in their firm's ability to understand their customers and meet their needs (79%, compared to 50% before completing HtGM), lead through change and uncertainty (73%, compared to 52% before HtGM) and understand the effectiveness of operational processes and how to improve them (71%, compared to 37% before HtGM).

The most substantial improvement was in relation to programme completers' firm-level capability to implement a business plan and strategy (38 percentage point increase, which was statistically significant). This could be driven by their experience of designing, developing and implementing a GAP through the programme.

Figure 37: How would you rate your own firm's capabilities and experience in the following areas? (Before HtGM vs. 6 month post HtGM)

Area	Programme participants 6 months after completion	Before HtGM
Understanding different types of customers and how to meet their needs	79%	50%
Leading through change and uncertainty	73%	52%
Understanding the effectiveness of operational processes and how they could be improved	71%	37%
Understanding your business' positioning compared to market competitors	65%	45%
Using digital technology to help grow the business	64%	36%
Digitalising systems and processes	64%	39%
Communicating the business vision, mission and value statements	63%	29%
Understanding financial management/use of financial data to support strategic decision making	62%	35%
Using data to inform decision making	61%	31%
Implementing a business plan and strategy	61%	23%
Developing and introducing new products or services	60%	41%
Implementing a development plan for employees	49%	20%
Accessing external finance eg. loans, overdraft, equity finance	39%	26%
Entering new markets (including overseas)	31%	14%

% of survey respondents

Source: Ipsos (March 2023) (n=579 – respondents to both the HtGM diagnostic and the six month follow up survey) The orange boxes indicate statistically significant differences at 95% confidence level.

Compared to eligible SME leaders who did not participate in HtGM, programme completers report comparable or better business outcomes (Figure 38). SME leaders who had completed the programme were statistically more likely to report confidence in their firm's ability and experienced in relation to:

- Leading through **change and uncertainty** (73% relative to 66% of non-participants)

- Understanding the effectiveness of **operational processes** and how they could be improved (71% relative to 58%)

- Using **digital technology** to help growth their business (64% relative to 48%)

- **Digitalising** systems and processes (64% relative to 47%).

Conversely, UK SME leaders who did not complete HtGM reported slightly higher confidence in their firm's capabilities and experience in relation to understanding their market position (70% compared to 65% of HtGM completers[46]) and understanding financial management and use of financial data (65% vs 62%).

Figure 38: How would you rate your own firm's capabilities and experience in the following areas? (HtGM programme completers vs SME leaders not completing HtGM)
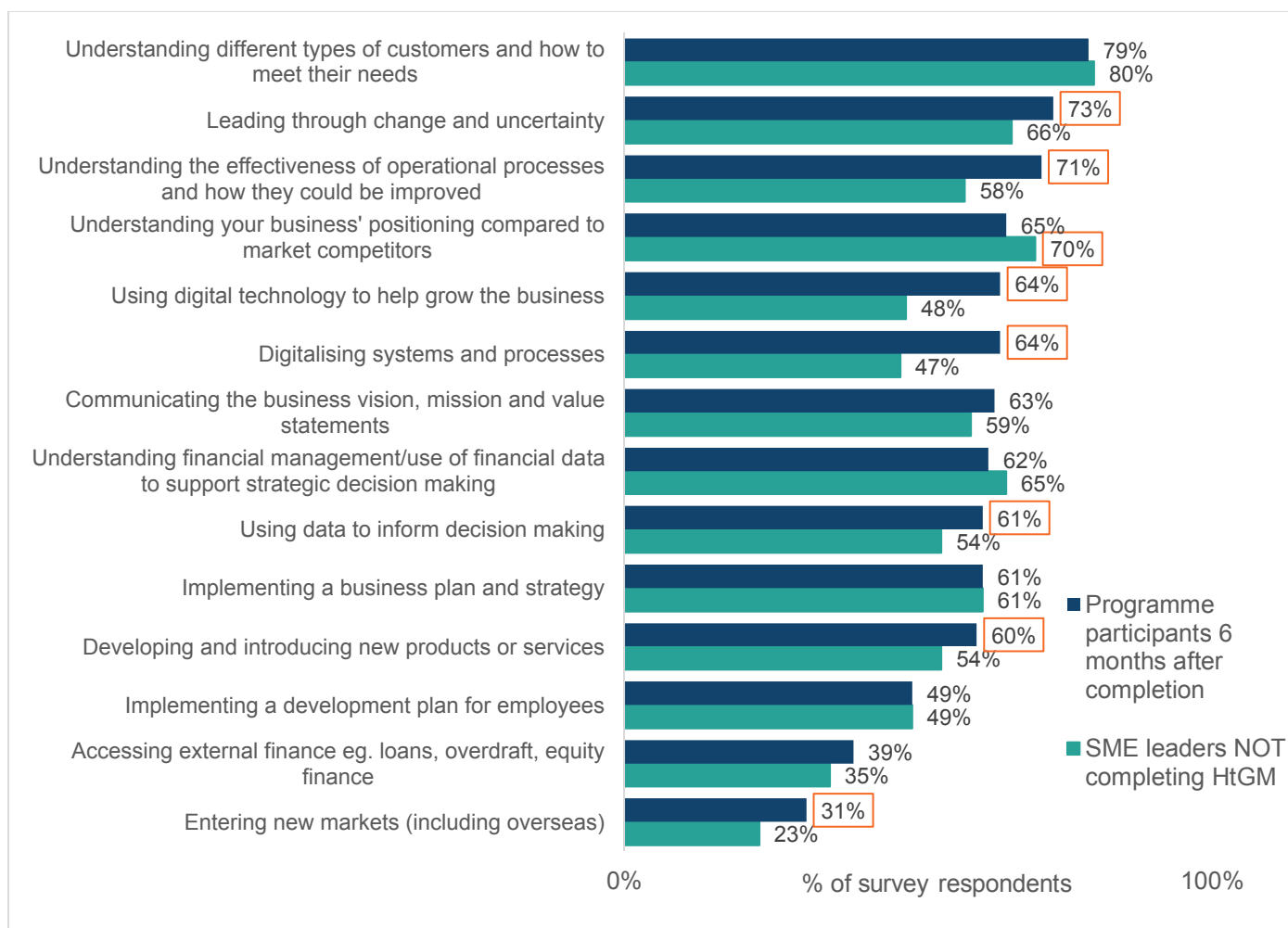
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Six month follow-up survey (n=652), SME survey (n=1004); The orange boxes indicate statistically significant differences at 95% confidence level.

Changes implemented within businesses

Two thirds of programme participants (68%) had already made changes to the way they manage, organise or operate their business within six months of completing HtGM. A further quarter (25%) intended to make changes in the future.[47] Figure 39 shows that over half of post-completion survey respondents reported having made changes within six weeks of completing the programme.[48] SME leaders who participated in a follow-up interview[49] intended

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[46] This proportion is also statistically significant at 95% significance level.
[47] Aggregate figures may not always align to reported categories due to rounding.
[48] The findings presented in Figure 5.8 are informed by two different samples and should not be directly compared.
[49] Several HtGM completers who participated in an evaluation interview were interviewed again over 1-year later.

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to make a range of changes as a result of participating in the programme including diversifying business activities, creating new job opportunities and adopting new CRM and stock management systems.

Figure 39: 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?
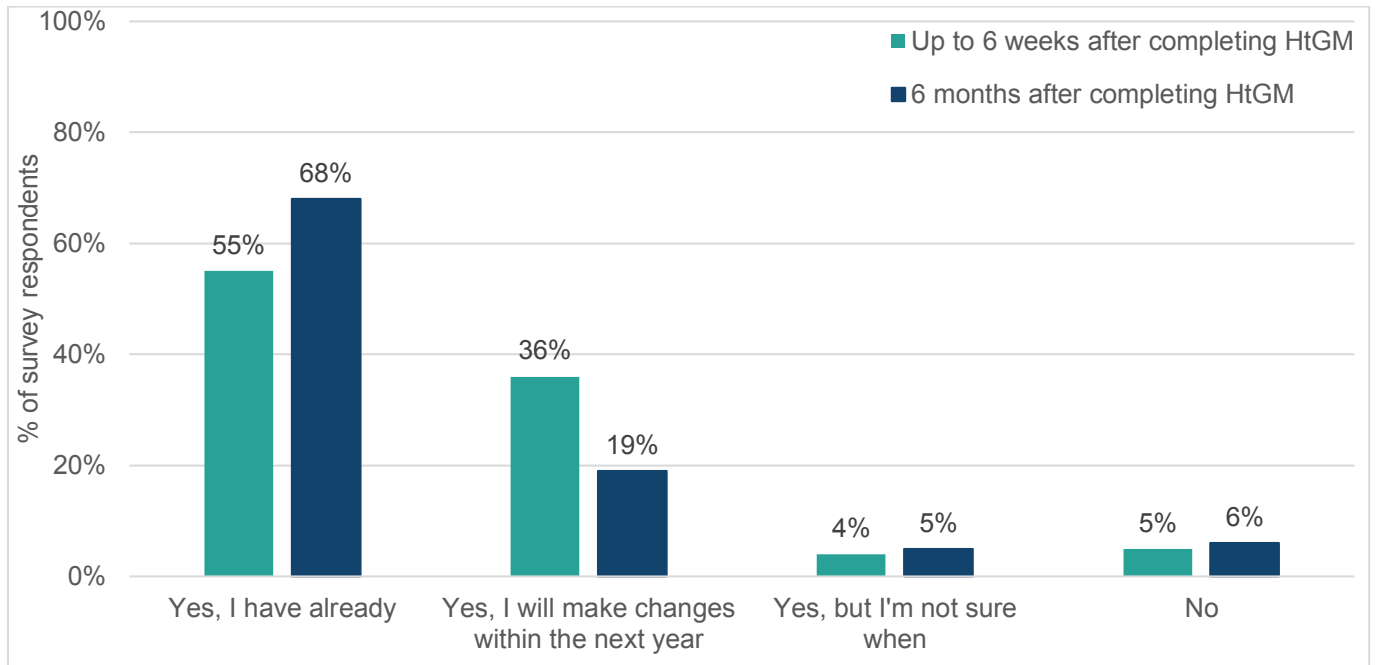
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Post-completion survey (n=738), Six month follow-up survey (n=652)

Programme completers most commonly reported having made changes in relation to **leadership and employee engagement; operational efficiency and vision, purpose and brand** soon after completing HtGM and six months after (Figure 40).

Six months after completing the programme, **SME leaders report having made a wide range of other changes to the way they manage, organise or operate their business**, which were often more focused on processes and infrastructure (Figure 40). Most (89%) reported changes to leadership and employee engagement, but they were more likely to have made changes in relation to the following at six months rather than six weeks after completing HtGM: the use of **data analytics** (57% at six months, 31% after six weeks), **technology adoption** (63% vs 38%), **operational efficiency** (78% vs 55%), **financial management** (51% vs 28%) and **innovation and markets** (60% vs 38%) (Figure 40).

Figure 40: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you made changes in any of the following areas to the way you manage, organise, or operate your business?
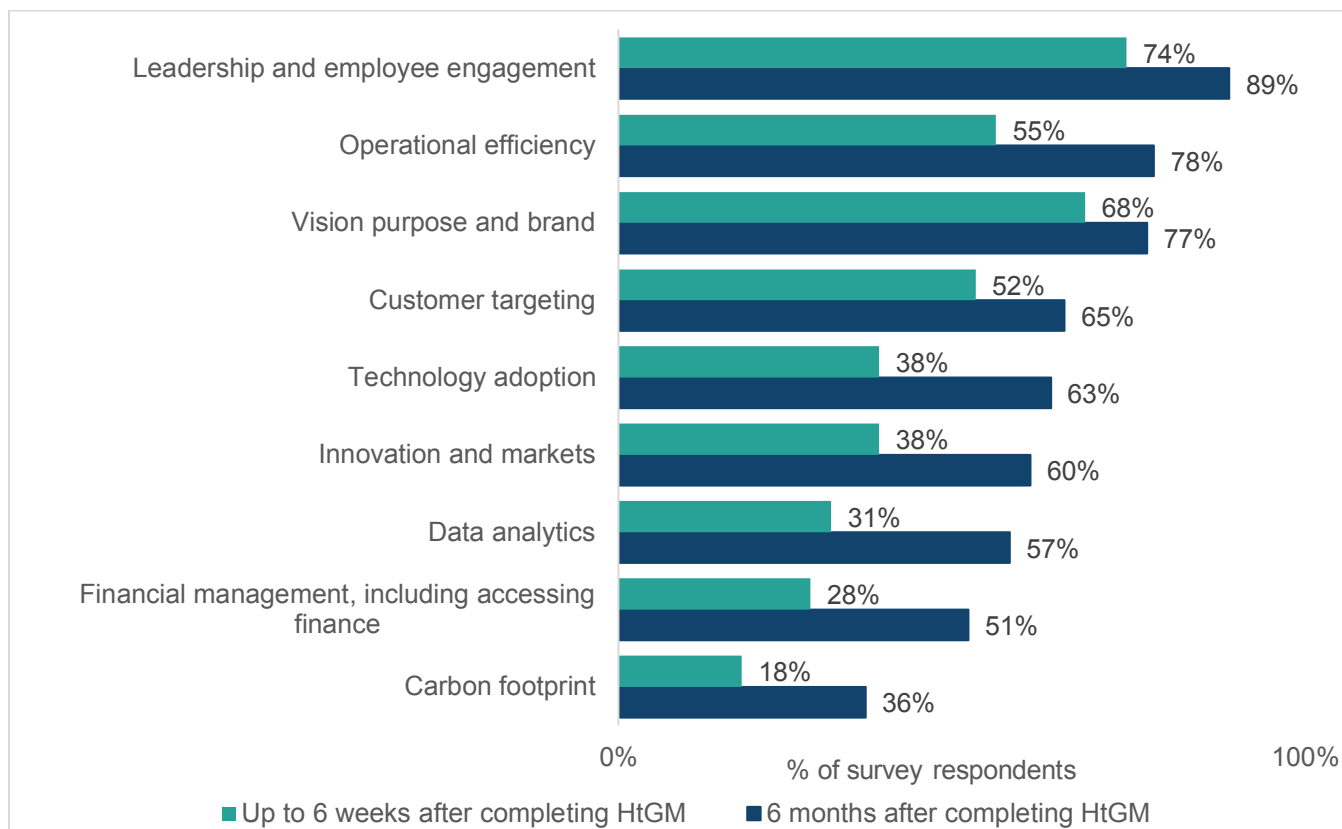
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Post-completion survey (n=405), Six month follow-up survey (n=445); Note: this question was only asked to those who had stated they had made a change to their business. Question type: multiple choice

Programme completers who participated in an interview commonly reported that the key business benefit from HtGM was that it re-affirmed existing plans and gave senior leadership confidence to pursue them. Interviewees also reported changes that had occurred as a result of knowledge they gained on the programme. Some examples of the types of changes firms were making as a result of participating in HtGM are listed below:

- **Introduction of new management structures** following their participation on the programme, enabling employees to work more autonomously and freeing up time for them to focus on strategy.

- **Updated strategies** (e.g. marketing strategies) through support from external marketing consultants and subcontracting website management and content creation to IT companies. One SME leader went on to develop another GAP for a different area of their business to complement the one they had developed through HtGM. Another reviewed and refreshed their mission statement and business values.

- **Improved recruitment practices** to ensure processes are consistent and inclusive, and introduction of new retention measures (e.g., increasing staff training budgets, access to apprenticeships, annual pay reviews and seeking employee feedback).

- **Changes to pricing structure** (e.g., setting up a subscription service, creating a customer loyalty scheme).

- **Investments to support future growth**, ranging from opening a new international office to moving to a large office.
- **Technology adoption** (e.g., online booking systems for customers, project management tools, cyber security and moving business systems to the 'cloud'/data centres).

Business-level benefits

The data presented in Figure 41 gives an indication of the business-level benefits that have occurred as a result of the changes made to the way programme participants manage, organise and operate their firms.

Six months after completing HtGM, SME leaders reported a broad range of benefits to their business operations, most commonly through improvements to leadership and management (91%). This finding is an endorsement of the HtGM Theory of Change: the programme seeks to generate firm level productivity changes by improving SME management and leadership – Figure 41 indicates that in the majority of cases, the programme is generating the first change in this causal pathway. Similarly, SME leaders report improved employee engagement and internal staff processes (79% and 78%) and adoption of best practices approaches within their business (77%). Comparatively, most SME leaders said the programme had hardly or not at all contributed to recovery from COVID-19 impacts on their business, cost savings, cashflow management or employee retention.

Programme completers who participated in an interview gave some examples of the business benefits that have occurred as a result of firm-level changes:

- **Employees working more effectively**: improved management structures and employee engagement have led to staff members being more engaged overall and with their career in the firm, giving them the confidence and impetus to be more autonomous.

- **Improved brand awareness:** One reported a considerable increase in their social network. Having previously had just a small number of contacts, they had now accumulated 10,500 followers on LinkedIn, which has facilitated leads and income generation for the business. Another business explained how developing the GAP helped them identify a new market for their existing product.

- **Improvements to efficiency and effectiveness of key business processes** had led to growth and an increase in net margins for one business. Another reported that, by reminding existing clients of their services, they had reached new clients through referrals and more than one SME reported substantial financial growth following a change of focus.

There were a small number of instances where SME leaders directly attributed business growth (in staff or turnover) to the programme. However, these measures were self-reported and should be treated as indicative. A programme of econometric analysis on secondary business datasets will be undertaken in Year 3 of the evaluation to look at business-level effects.

Figure 41: To what extent has participating in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to …?

Category	To a great/some extent	Hardly/not at all	Don't know
Improved leadership and management of your business	91%	9%	
Improved employee engagement	79%	20%	
Improved effectiveness of internal processes relating to staff	78%	22%	
Adoption of best practice approaches within your business	77%	23%	
Improved efficiency in internal processes relating to staff	76%	24%	
Improved effectiveness relating to business operations	74%	26%	
Improved efficiency in internal processes relating to business operations	74%	26%	
Employee training and/or learning and development plan or budget	73%	27%	
Increased innovation within your business	65%	35%	
Increased engagement with other businesses	60%	40%	
Your business accessing additional business support	50%	49%	1%
Improved employee retention	50%	49%	2%
Improved cashflow management	45%	54%	1%
Cost savings	44%	55%	1%
Recovery from COVID-19 impacts on your business	42%	57%	1%

% of six month survey respondents 0% – 100%

■ To a great/some extent ■ Hardly/not at all ■ Don't know

Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Six month follow-up survey (n=652); Note: improved employee engagement bars do not sum to 100% because of rounding, 0% responded 'don't know'

Barriers to business outcomes

SME leaders who participated in an interview in both the first and second year of the evaluation reported that they were still using learning from the Help to Grow: Management training to inform how and when organisational changes were made. However, many were facing **organisational challenges** that were preventing them from implementing further changes set out in their Growth Action Plan and required for business growth.

- **Recruitment challenges** - one was losing staff for the first time and finding it difficult to replace them with low numbers of applicants and a high demand for part-time work.

- **Challenging economic climate** – this was identified as a key barrier to growth. However, the programme was seen as critical in supporting leaders to develop the resilience required to continue to focus on growth in this context.

- **Access to external finance** – this was cited as a barrier, with some not knowing where to go to for follow-on support and others struggling to find the time to apply. It was suggested that HtGM could be expanded to invest in some of the businesses that had been through the training to capitalise on that initial investment.

5.4 Network effects

The programme was found to be effective in enabling some SME leaders to expand their networks. Two thirds of those who completed the six-month survey (65%) said the programme had enabled them to expand their peer support network to at least some extent (Figure 42). Qualitative interviews with SME leaders indicate that many applied to the programme in order to widen their network, another potential driver behind the high levels of satisfaction.

However, just one in five (19%) participants reported that their network had expanded to a "great extent" through participation in the programme and a third (34%) said it had hardly or not at all expanded as a result of the programme. Formal Alumni Network events increased in late 2022 and so an improvement on this measure might be expected in future as more alumni events and activities are delivered.[50]

Figure 42: To what extent did participation in the HtGM programme enable you to expand your peer support network?
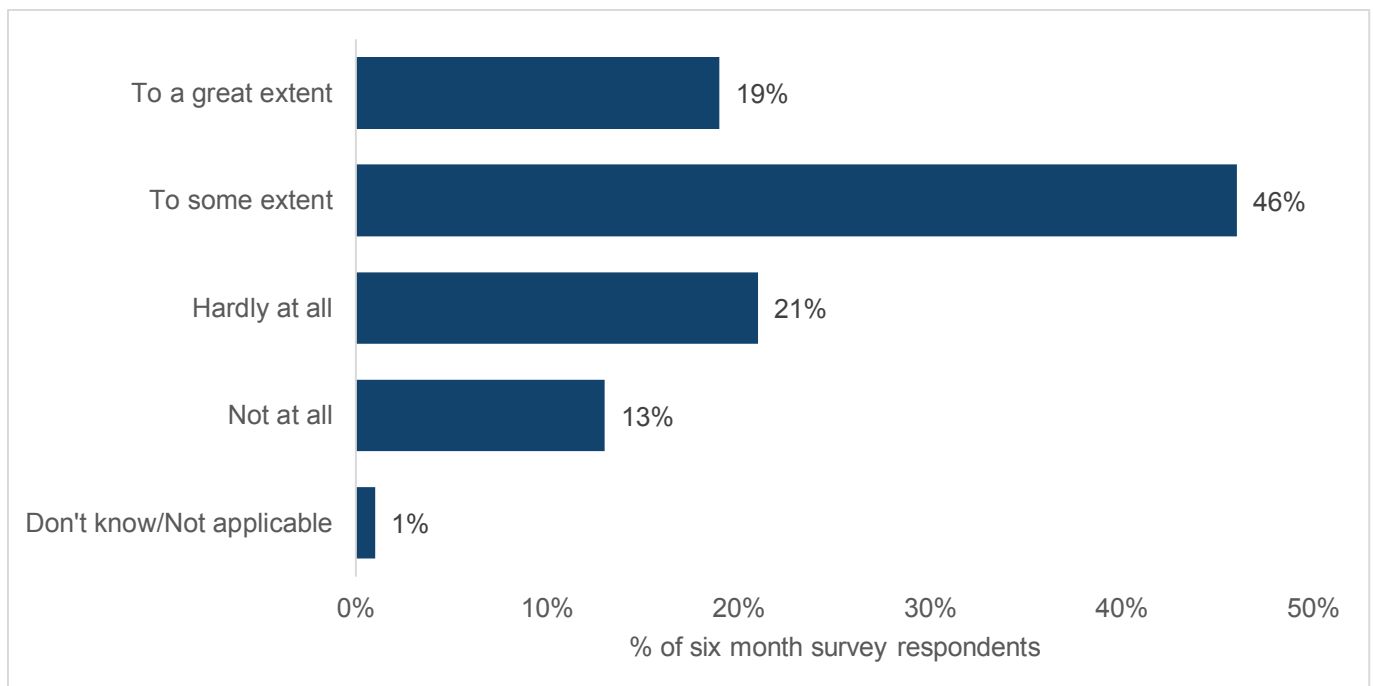
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Six month follow-up survey (n=652)

There was variation between programme completers in the extent to which they have maintained contact with others on their cohort. More than half (58%) have stayed in touch with their cohort and a further fifth (18%) have not but plan to make contact with them in future.

[50] National alumni events were introduced in November 2022 and regional alumni events were introduced in January 2023.

This suggests that the programme has been **effective in supporting some SME leaders to strengthen their peer support networks.**

Programme completers report a wide range of other network benefits from participation in the programme. At six months post-completion of HtGM, the majority thought the programme had contributed to them feeling better supported to make decisions about their business (84%), having a better understanding of the business support available to SMEs (79%) and feeling less isolated in their role as a leader (72%).

5.5 Follow on activities

Programme completers were more likely to have engaged in networking activities with other businesses in the previous quarter than SME leaders who had not participated in the programme (Figure 43). Within six months of completing the programme, most SME leaders had engaged in informal discussions with other businesses (71%) or attended networking or learning events within a business representative organisation (54%), higher than the equivalent figures for SME leaders who had not participated in the programme (67% and 47% respectively). One in three (33%) programme completers had engaged in one-to-one mentoring in the previous quarter compared to 23% of SME leaders who had not participated in the programme. The proportion of non-participants engaging in 'formal' discussions with other businesses was slightly higher than for programme completers (42% relative to 38%).

Figure 43: Since completing the programme, what activities do you engage in at least quarterly?
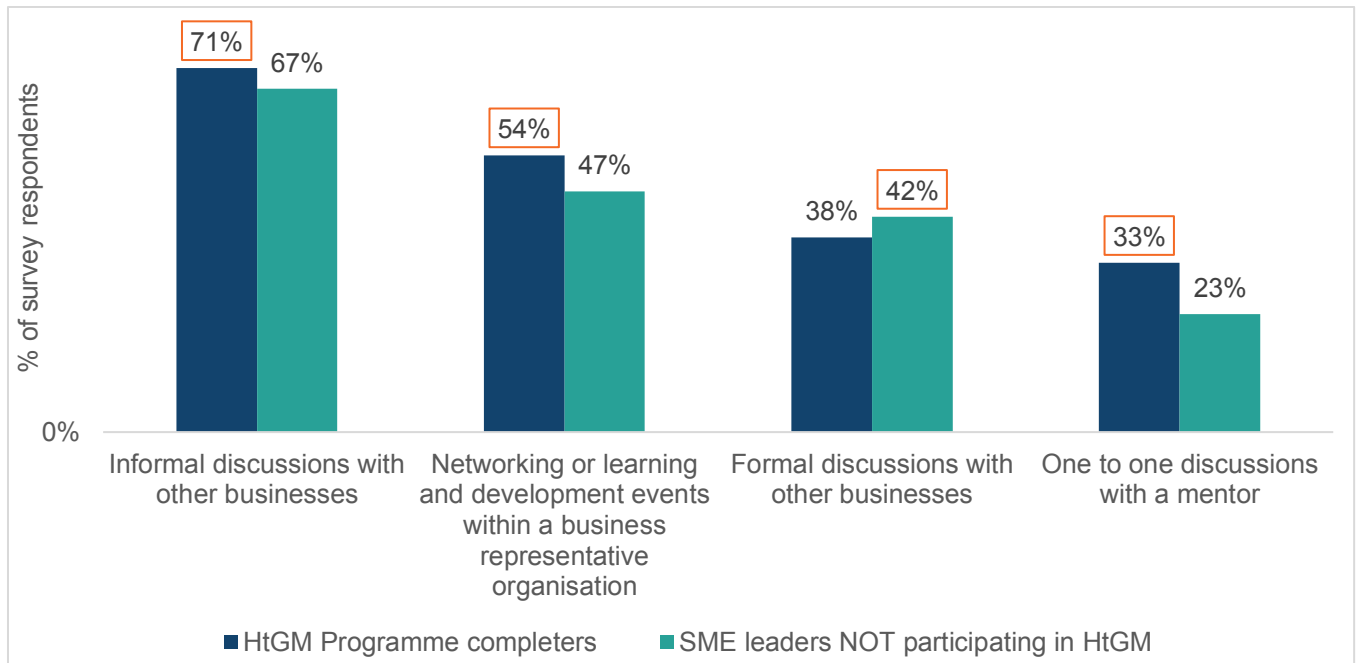
Source: Ipsos (March 2023) Six month follow-up survey (n=652), SME survey (n=1004); The orange boxes indicate statistical significance at 95% confidence level.

6. Conclusions

This report has presented emerging findings to date in relation to the process and impact evaluation questions for both Year 1 and Year 2 of HtGM. This final chapter provides a high level overview of what has worked well and areas for improvement to support ongoing delivery of the programme. It is important to note that the findings presented in this report are not based on a representative sample and participation in primary research will be subject to a degree of self-selection bias. The evidence reported in relation to benefits to individuals and their businesses are self-reported and indicate a direction of travel to impact but should not be treated as definitive evidence of impact.

The findings are intended to provide emerging insights into the quality and effectiveness of HtGM to date rather than definitive conclusions. They will be further built on in the final phases of the evaluation.

What is going well?

- **Recruitment to HtGM has become more consistent and business schools are better able to fill scheduled cohorts**, resulting in a substantial reduction the number of cohorts cancelled between Year 1 and Year 2. Business schools attributed this to changes in the programme's eligibility criteria and budget being allocated for business schools to do their own marketing.

- **Satisfaction with programme delivery is high and increasing.** Since its launch, nine in ten programme completers have been either fairly or very satisfied with their overall experience of the programme. There was a ten percentage point increase between Year 1 and Year 2 in the proportion who said they were very satisfied.

- **SME leaders reflected positively on the quality of the programme** and **almost all said they would be likely to recommend HtGM** to another business leader. This appears to be underpinned by feedback that the course content was comprehensive and relevant; the number, frequency and duration of HtGM sessions was appropriate and balance between online and in-person delivery was about right.

- **The mentoring element of HtGM continues to be highly valued by programme completers**. SME leaders have been consistently satisfied with the quality of their mentoring match and report using the one-to-one sessions to build on topics covered in the programme curriculum and to seek advice, guidance and support on ad hoc issues. Whilst there has been a drop in satisfaction with mentoring since the introduction of the voluntary delivery model, it still remains high overall.

- HtGM completers report a range of **statistically significant improvements to their management and leadership skills** following completion of the programme. Moreover, SME leaders got more from HtGM than they expected at the time of application: in most cases programme participants' primary expectations were met and they also reported a range of other individual outcomes that were less commonly expected at the outset.

- **There is early emerging evidence that these self-reported individual outcomes are translating into benefits for their businesses**. Almost all of those completing the programme saying that they had shared what they learned or gained with others in their business. Programme completers were better able to share learning from the programme if they had the time to implements changes and buy-in from senior colleagues, especially if colleagues had also attended HtGM.

- **SME leaders reported improvements to a range of firm-level strategic capabilities and experiences from participation in the programme**. Most had made changes to the way they manage, organise or operate their business within six months of completing HtGM. Whilst these findings should be treated with caution given that they are self-reported and likely to be subject to an element of positive bias, they provide an early indication that the intended outcomes of the programme on business performance are perceived to have been realised by some completers[51].

- **The programme was found to be effective in enabling some SME leaders to expand their networks**. Two thirds of those who completed the six month survey said the programme had enabled them to expand their peer support network to at least some extent. Moreover, programme completers were more likely to have engaged in networking activities with other businesses in the previous quarter than SME leaders who had not participated in the programme.

Where could HtGM be improved?

- **Improved retention**: Whilst programme recruitment and cohort delivery has improved, around one in ten (16%) of SME leaders who enrolled on the programme did not complete HtGM. More could be done to better understand why and whether there is anything that could be done to improve retention.

- **More case studies incorporated into the curriculum**: The case study modules were well received by programme participants, who regarded them as an opportunity to see how some of the more theoretical modular content worked in practice. This, alongside the mentoring, was the element of the programme that participants most wanted more of, with some suggesting a case study element should be incorporated into each module. One topic that was of particular interest to programme participants was environmental sustainability.

- **Renewed focus on GAP completion**: There has been a downward trend in the proportion of programme completers reporting that they have produced GAPs through participating on HtGM. The GAP is a key mechanism through which business-level benefits are expected to be realised. If this continues to decline, the potential impacts of the programme at firm-level may not be full realised. This could be improved through encouraging programme participants to complete GAPs via:

  - **Mentoring**: The Theory of Change sets out the mentoring as a key mechanism to drive forward completion and implementation of GAPs. Despite the proportion

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[51] The counterfactual impact evaluation to be delivered in 2023/24 will provide a more robust and objective assessment of the extent to which HtGM has resulted in business benefits to those SMEs who have participated in the programme based on analysis of secondary data on business performance.

of programme completers using their mentoring support to develop a GAP declining in recent quarters, those who have sought GAP support from their mentors reflected positively on the quality of support received.

- o **Business schools**: There is also a role for business schools to continue to encourage participants to develop GAPs, ensuring participants understand the role of GAP in realising the potential benefits to their firms.

- **Greater awareness raising amongst mentors of the programme content** to ensure that the support they deliver is complementary to the HtGM curriculum / GAP development, rather than providing more generic ad-hoc support.

- **Signposting to additional support:** programme participants reported several organisational challenges that were preventing them from implementing further changes set out in their Growth Action Plans (GAP) including skills gaps, a challenging economic climate and access to external finance. SME leaders would value more advice and guidance on the next steps after completing HtGM. It is expected that the HtGM Alumni network will help address some of these needs – the Year 3 evaluation will explore this in more detail.

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

June 2023

Annex A – Survey overview and response rates

Table A1 presents an overview of the survey as of 1st April 2023.

Table A1: Overview of HtGM evaluation survey programme

Survey	Participant type	Purpose	Mode	Frequency	Launch date	No. of responses (response rate)
Post-completion survey	Programme participants who complete the programme (defined as having completed >75% of the modules)	To gather feedback on their experiences of participating in the programme and emerging outcomes for themselves and their businesses. Administered two to six weeks after completion of module 12.	Online	Monthly	November 2021	738 (18%)
Follow up survey	Programme participants who complete the programme (defined as having completing >75% of the modules)	To gather feedback on individual outcomes, diffusion of best practices and resulting business outcomes, including engagement with the alumni offer.	Telephone	Quarterly	June 2022	652 (30% unadjusted response rate, adjusted 43% response rate) (note: an additional 34 ineligible survey respondents

Survey	Participant type	Purpose	Mode	Frequency	Launch date	No. of responses (response rate)
						were screened out of this survey into the non-completion survey below)
Non completion survey	Programme participants who did not complete the programme (defined as having completing <75% of the modules)	To gather feedback on the reasons why they did not complete the programme, their satisfaction levels and what, if anything, could have supported them to complete HtGM.	Telephone	Quarterly	June 2022	34 (NA – all non-completers respondents are referred from the follow-up survey sample)
Paid mentor survey	Mentors involved in HtGM until 31st July 2022	To capture feedback from mentors on their experiences of participating in the paid model, from onboarding through to delivery of mentoring relationships.	Online	N/A (one-off)	July 2022	122 (50%)
Voluntary mentor survey	Mentors involved in HtGM from 1st August 2022	To capture feedback from mentors on their experiences of participating in the voluntary model, from onboarding through	Online	Quarterly	December 2022	145 (16%)

Survey	Participant type	Purpose	Mode	Frequency	Launch date	No. of responses (response rate)
		to delivery of mentoring relationships.				
SME survey (Sampling approach is set out in Annex C)	UK SMEs that meet the HtGM eligibility criteria but have not participated in the programme	To gather evidence of management and leadership practices amongst the wider SME population to compare against programme beneficiaries (via subgroup analysis of the follow up survey).	Telephone	Annually	October 2022	1,004 (target =1,000 from a sample of 20,000)

Annex B – Business Schools delivering HtGM

As of 31st March 2023, the following 52 business schools had signed up to deliver the HTGM programme (with completed, live, or scheduled cohorts):

• Aberdeen Business School (Robert Gordan University)

• Anglia Ruskin - Lord Ashcroft International Business School

• Aston Business School

• Bath Management School

• University of Bedfordshire Business School

• Birkbeck School of Business, Economics and Informatics

• Birmingham City Business School

• Bournemouth University Business School

• University of Bradford School of Management

• Brighton Business School

• University of the West of England Bristol

• Brunel Business School

• Cardiff Business School (Cardiff University)

• Cardiff School of Management (Cardiff Metropolitan University)

• Coventry Business School

• Derby Business School

• University of Exeter Business School

• Gloucestershire Business School

• Edinburgh Business School Heriot Watt

• Hertfordshire Business School

• Huddersfield Business School

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- Hull University Business School

- Kent Business School

- Kingston Business School

- Lancaster University Management School

- Leeds Business School (Leeds Beckett University)

- Leeds University Business School

- University of Leicester School of Business

- Leicester Castle Business School (De Montfort University

- Lincoln International Business School

- University of Liverpool Management School

- London College Fashion: Fashion Business School

- London Metropolitan University

- School of Business (London South Bank University)

- Manchester Metropolitan University Business School

- Newcastle Business School Northumbria University

- Nottingham Business School (Nottingham Trent University)

- Nottingham University Business School (University of Nottingham)

- Oxford Brookes Business School

- Pearson Business School

- Portsmouth Business School

- Queens Belfast

- Salford Business School, Sheffield Business School

- Sheffield Business Schools (Sheffield Hallam University)

- Solent Business School

- Stirling Management School, Strathclyde Business School

- Strathclyde Business School

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• Teesside University Business School

• University of East Anglia

• Ulster University Business School

• University of The West of Scotland

• Winchester Business School

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Annex C – SME survey methodology

For year 2, the Evaluation also included a survey of the wider SME population.

The objective of the SME Survey was to collect a representative sample of SME leaders to provide some contextual comparisons between programme completers and businesses not completing the programme. This involved interviewing businesses that had not taken part with the Help to Grow: Management Programme but met the eligibility criteria. This would then enable the data collected from the Post-Completion and 6-month Follow Up surveys to be compared to the general population of business leaders to observe any potential difference between Help to Grow: Management beneficiaries and the general SMEs population.

Methodology

The SME survey consisted of a 20-minute phone survey of small businesses between November 2022 and January 2023.

The SME survey questionnaire was aligned to the six month and diagnostic surveys for HtGM to ensure that programme participant self-reported outcomes and non-participant self-reported outcomes could be compared.

Sampling

The population for the SME Survey was defined as follows:

- Businesses trading for at least one year.

- Based in Great Britain (excluding Northern Ireland and Crown Dependencies such as the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands).

- Businesses had to have at least 5 employees and could not have had more than 249 employees.

- Responding SME leaders must not have taken part in the Help to Grow Management Programme.

Ipsos used the Market Location dataset, a business database containing names and contact details for businesses across the UK, as the sample frame. Ipsos commissioned DataScope, a data provider, to draw a random sample from this data, sorted by English Region/UK Nation. Tables C1 and C2 outline the number of cases that formed the drawn sample.

Table C1: Number of cases drawn in SME survey sample split out by SIC group and size band

Sector	Total	Size band				
		5 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 249
Accommodation and food service activities	1,014	329	224	264	132	66
Activities of households as employers	13	0	13	0	0	0
Administrative and support service activities	395	224	92	66	13	0
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	171	53	53	53	0	13
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,028	553	264	145	40	26
Construction	2,306	830	540	606	66	264
Education	1,067	435	277	250	66	40
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	184	92	40	53	0	0
Financial and insurance activities	883	422	198	132	79	53
Human health and social work activities	1,252	461	224	343	119	105
Information and communication	1,858	804	501	435	79	40
Manufacturing	2,714	672	646	804	329	264
Other service activities	3,030	1331	593	777	211	119
Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,976	988	356	395	198	40
Real estate activities	501	211	171	66	26	26
Transportation and storage	448	198	66	79	66	40
Water supply	132	26	13	40	40	13
Wholesale and retail trade	1,028	435	277	250	40	26

| Total | 20,000 | 8,063 | 4,545 | 4,756 | 1,502 | 1,133 |

Source: Ipsos (2023)

Table C2: Number of cases drawn in SME survey sample split out by region

Region	Count
East Midlands	2,382
East of England	1,048
London	4,336
North East	798
North West	3,228
Scotland	965
South East	2,085
South West	1,060
Wales	405
West Midlands	1,763
Yorkshire & Humber	1,930
Total	20,000

Source: Ipsos (2023)

Analysis

The data collected from these tables was then run up into a series of tables and was then compared to the 6-month Follow Up survey. Statistical significance testing at 95% confidence was performed on these results to check the strength of these relationships.

Annex D – Theory of Change and logic model

Theory of Change

This chapter presents a draft Theory of Change (ToC) for the HtGM programme. The development of a ToC is an essential first step in designing evaluations of public policies and programmes. It sets out the rationale for the intervention, the inputs, activities and outputs to be delivered and how these are expected to result in the intended outcomes/impacts. It essentially tells the story of the change that is expected to occur as a result of the intervention, detailing the key steps along the way and the hypothesised causal pathways/mechanisms between them. The ToC will provide the overarching framework to guide the data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting of the findings from the evaluation.

The section provides a narrative description of the ToC, alongside a diagrammatic depiction of this (see Figure at the end of Annex D). This includes discussion of the key assumptions underpinning the ToC in terms of the hypothesised causal pathways between activities/outputs and outcomes/impacts at individual, business and systemic level.

Inputs

A total of £223m Government funding has been allocated to support deliver the first three years of the HtGM programme and cover 90% of programme costs for SME leaders. This will be the main source of funding for HtGM, although individual participants are required to make a £750 financial contribution to the cost of the programme. The programme design has drawn on existing expertise within DBT and HM Treasury on the relationship between leadership and management practices and productivity; the current business support landscape for low-productivity SMEs; and existing expertise of CABS and business schools. Additional inputs are provided in the form of advice and guidance from an Industry Advisory Council and £750 payments from SMEs for their employee to participate in the programme.

Activities

The inputs to the HtGM programme will be used to develop and deliver a series of programme activities, which can be grouped by those delivered by DBT, CABS / business schools and SME leaders.

DBT are responsible for:

- Programme management, supported by subcontracted Project Management support (from MH+A), and oversight of programme delivery.
- Leading the Project Board, which monitors progress on curriculum development, mentoring, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) through which the programme is

delivered, business school engagement, participant engagement, registrations, data reporting, evaluation, and operating procedures.[52]

- Leading composite workstreams to the main Project Board, covering for example data monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

- Promotion and marketing of the programme and recruitment of eligible SMEs.

CABS/business schools are responsible for:

- Development of the programme learning objectives, curriculum content, course materials and delivery principles to ensure it is delivered cohesively and consistently across the UK.

- Establishing a delivery network of business schools across the UK to provide access to the programme to SMEs across the country.

- Programme delivery, including providing targeted leadership and management training alongside wraparound support (case study workshops, mentoring, peer learning groups and alumni network).

- Recruitment of mentors to the programme and matching them with SME leaders.

SME leaders are responsible for:

- Submitting applications to the programme and completing initial registration and diagnostic tool to assess baseline business characteristics and performance.

- Completing the programme: participation in learning modules and case studies, as well as mentoring, peer learning and alumni network.

Outputs and individual outcomes

The programme is expected to generate short-term quantifiable outputs for DBT: number and profile of SME leaders applying for, completing, and dropping out of the programme; number and profile of cohorts completing the programme; number of business schools participating; and number of mentoring relationships and alumni networks formed. Participation in the programme is expected to result in a series of short- and medium- term benefits (outcomes) for SME leaders. The pathways to impact are numerous and will vary by SME leader, depending on their size, sector, existing awareness of and aptitude in leadership and management. However, these outcomes can be broadly categorised as follows:

- **Personal development**: after completing the twelve modules, peer-learning and mentoring, SME leaders are expected to be more confident in their ability to lead and manage their business, and more aware of their areas for improvement.

- **Skills, knowledge and understanding**: participation in the programme is expected to result in SME leaders developing a better understanding of the importance of leadership and management practices and greater awareness of the relationship between them and improved firm-level productivity. Completion of specific modules is expected to result in

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[52] Help to Grow: Management, Project Board reports 2021

improved individual leadership and management skills (e.g. strategic thinking, decision making), facilitating better understanding of their business' needs.

- **Business planning and strategy:** drawing on improved leadership and management skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as support from a business mentor, SME leaders are expected to produce a Growth Action Plan. This will detail changes to drive productivity improvements within their business.[53]

- **Networks and collaboration**: the peer-learning groups and subsequent alumni networks will result in increased interactions between SME leaders within and between sectors. These newly formed networks are expected to provide a source of additional support to SME leaders to make decisions in their business, share best practice and build personal networks. The alumni network is expected to be a key source of support for participants as they move forward with implementation of the Growth Action Plans developed through the programme.

Business outcomes

The individual outcomes for SME leaders are expected to contribute to short- and medium-term benefits for their firms through diffusion of learning within their businesses and implementation of their Growth Action Plans. As with individual level outcomes, the pathways to business level outcomes are likely to be diverse:

- **Leadership and management**: The skills, knowledge and understanding developed by programme participants are expected to be diffused within their businesses, resulting in more efficient and effective leadership and management approaches and improved workforce engagement, retention, and wellbeing.

    o At least 90% of participants are expected to adopt at least one new management technique (e.g. implemented KPIs)

- **Implementation of Growth Action Plan**: this is expected to happen within one month post-completion of the programme and will contribute to a range of potential business outcomes, such as improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of key business processes and increased innovation and / or adoption of best practices approaches. These changes can be expected to manifest in a range of outcomes such as improved cashflow management and cost savings. Moreover, SME leaders' improved understanding of their business needs could be expected to lead to them accessing relevant follow-on business support appropriate to their needs.

- **Knowledge sharing**: SME leaders' expanded peer support networks can be expected to contribute to improved information sharing and peer support amongst SMEs.

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[53] Growth Action Plans are recorded in an excel spreadsheet and detail specific business issues/opportunities, strategies to address the issue, how these strategies will be applied, resource requirements, barriers, KPIs, monitoring and responsibilities.

Impacts

The longer-term effects of SME leaders implementing changes within their businesses can be expected to take the form of:

- **Business resilience and survival:** the training and support provided through Help to Grow: Management are likely to help businesses address issues triggered by the pandemic (e.g. cashflow), strengthening their balance sheets and ensuring the business can continue operating.

- **Firm expansion (turnover, GVA and employment) business performance:** successful implementation of Growth Action Plans should contribute to expansion of participating firms in terms of turnover, output (GVA) and employment. These types of effects are expected to be particularly significant amongst those implementing more than one change and where learning has been effectively diffused within the business.

  - within 2-3 years, turnover of participating firms is expected to be an average of 9.5% higher than similar sized firms. [54]

- **Improved firm-level productivity**: implementation of Growth Action Plans are expected to result in firms being better able to serve their customers at lower costs, attain higher prices for their products or services, or improved output per worker.

  - participating businesses are expected to experience an average 0.85% increase in productivity per worker. [55]

In the longer term, these early impacts amongst   low-productivity SME leaders could aggregate to increased UK GVA and facilitated recovery from COVID-19. Moreover, the programme can be expected to simplify and better coordinate the UK business support landscape on both the supply and demand side.

On the demand side, SME leaders' improved understanding of their business needs, support from peer networks and embedded learning from alumni networks could contribute to them being better able to navigate the business support landscape. They are also likely to have the skills to judge the quality and suitability of provision to their needs.

On the supply side, the provision of a coordinated nationally branded programme in Help to Grow can be expected to improve accessibility and consistency in the leadership and management support available to individual SMEs. The content is tailored to SME barriers and delivered through a network of business schools that understand the SME landscape and how to support SME leaders. Moreover, the government branding is likely to provide a 'rubber stamp', providing SME leaders with a market signal that the programme is high quality.

Underlying assumptions

The Theory of Change is underpinned by a set of key assumptions set out in the table below.

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[54] Help to Grow: Management DBT target as set out in the ITT, informed by existing work delivered by DBT/HMT
[55] Help to Grow: Management DBT target as set out in the ITT.

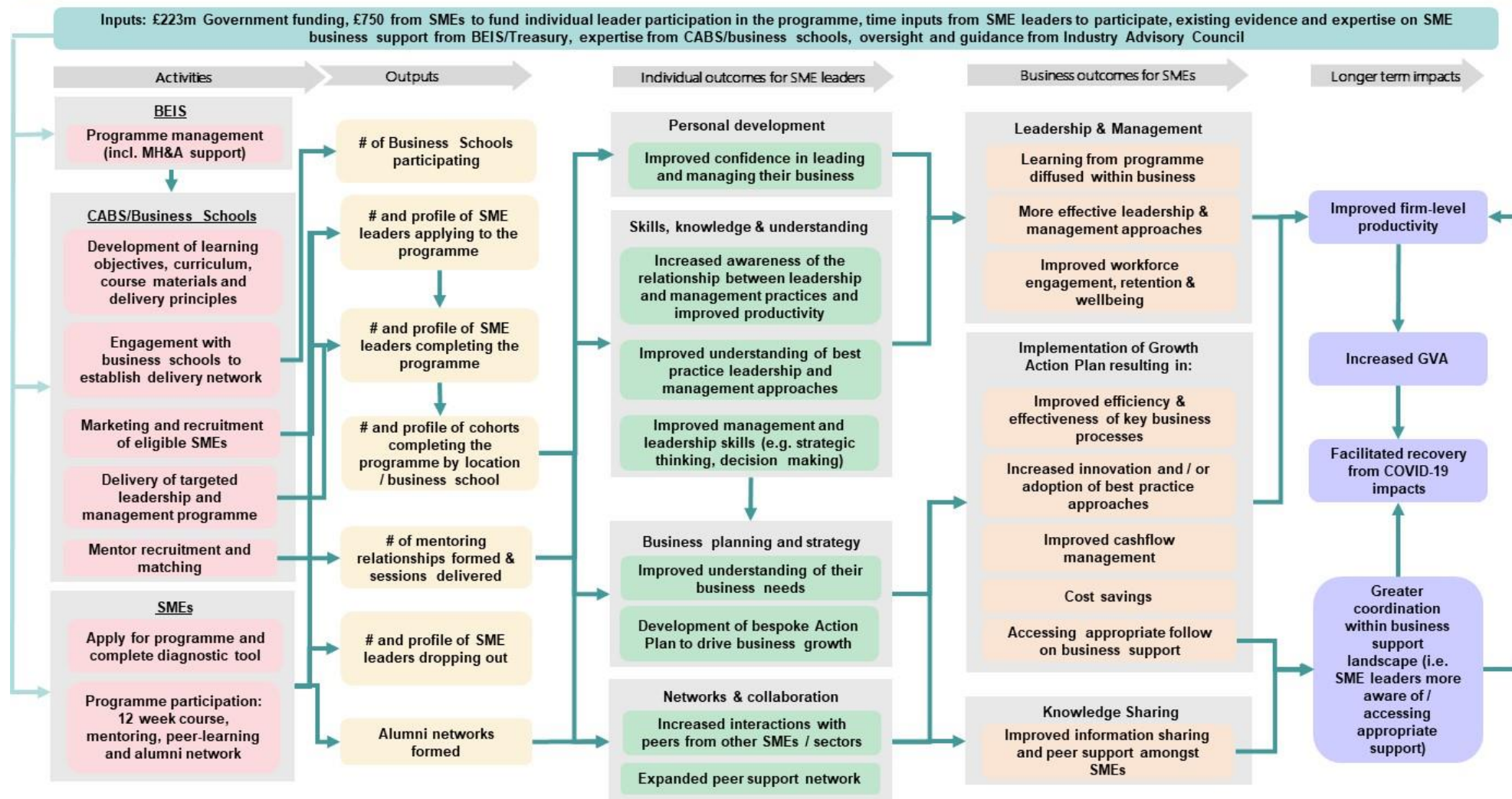**Assumptions underpinning the Help to Grow: Management Theory of Change**

Design	Delivery	Impact
Productivity can be improved by changes in leadership and management practices. The curriculum sufficiently covers the breadth of topics required to drive productivity in long-tail SMEs. The time inputs required by the programme are not too onerous for target SMEs to participate. SME leaders have sufficient information to assess the quality of the programme and are willing to pay £750 to participate. More intensive training programmes have greater impact than light-touch programmes.	Marketing and promotion materials are effective in reaching target SMEs. Sufficient numbers of business schools sign up to delivery to facilitate local provision to SMEs. SME leaders complete all elements of the programme. The programme is delivered consistently across business schools. COVID-19 conditions enable the programme to be delivered both in-person and online. SME leaders are matched to appropriate mentors who are able to provide high quality and relevant advice, guidance and support.	SME leaders develop Growth Action Plans that are SMART. Businesses have the required resources to implement the changes set out in their Growth Action Plans. Businesses have adequate skills in the wider workforce to implement change. Alumni networks work effectively to embed best practice and share learning, including supporting implementation of Action Plans (also applicable to delivery). Curriculum remains relevant to the social-economic context that SMEs operate in.

Source: Ipsos

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Context and rationale: UK productivity has not recovered since the 2008 recession and continues to lag behind other G7 economies. This slowdown is concentrated amongst a 'long tail' of SMEs that account for a large proportion of the UK economy. Micro level productivity can be increased by improved leadership and management practices. There is a wide range of business support available but most SMEs do not have the skills and know-how to identify the right support for their business at the right time. These factors have been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic crisis.

Inputs: £223m Government funding, £750 from SMEs to fund individual leader participation in the programme, time inputs from SME leaders to participate, existing evidence and expertise on SME business support from BEIS/Treasury, expertise from CABS/business schools, oversight and guidance from Industry Advisory Council

Activities

BEIS
- Programme management (incl. MH&A support)

CABS/Business Schools
- Development of learning objectives, curriculum, course materials and delivery principles
- Engagement with business schools to establish delivery network
- Marketing and recruitment of eligible SMEs
- Delivery of targeted leadership and management programme
- Mentor recruitment and matching

SMEs
- Apply for programme and complete diagnostic tool
- Programme participation: 12 week course, mentoring, peer-learning and alumni network

Outputs
- # of Business Schools participating
- # and profile of SME leaders applying to the programme
- # and profile of SME leaders completing the programme
- # and profile of cohorts completing the programme by location / business school
- # of mentoring relationships formed & sessions delivered
- # and profile of SME leaders dropping out
- Alumni networks formed

Individual outcomes for SME leaders

Personal development
- Improved confidence in leading and managing their business

Skills, knowledge & understanding
- Increased awareness of the relationship between leadership and management practices and improved productivity
- Improved understanding of best practice leadership and management approaches
- Improved management and leadership skills (e.g. strategic thinking, decision making)

Business planning and strategy
- Improved understanding of their business needs
- Development of bespoke Action Plan to drive business growth

Networks & collaboration
- Increased interactions with peers from other SMEs / sectors
- Expanded peer support network

Business outcomes for SMEs

Leadership & Management
- Learning from programme diffused within business
- More effective leadership & management approaches
- Improved workforce engagement, retention & wellbeing

Implementation of Growth Action Plan resulting in:
- Improved efficiency & effectiveness of key business processes
- Increased innovation and / or adoption of best practice approaches
- Improved cashflow management
- Cost savings
- Accessing appropriate follow on business support

Knowledge Sharing
- Improved information sharing and peer support amongst SMEs

Longer term impacts
- Improved firm-level productivity
- Increased GVA
- Facilitated recovery from COVID-19 impacts
- Greater coordination within business support landscape (i.e. SME leaders more aware of / accessing appropriate support)

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Annex E – HtGM Curriculum

Table E1: Overview of HtGM evaluation curriculum

Module	Title	Typical mode (Face to Face or online)	Module duration	Synopsis
1	Strategy and Innovation	Online	2 hours	Understanding innovation and its relationship to growth, profitability and productivity. Reviewing your business model and value proposition in relation to current and future market opportunities. Understanding how business model innovation can help you respond to and recover from challenges and finding out about the UK's innovation ecosystem.
2	Digital Adoption	Online	2 hours	Understanding the benefits of digital adoption for SMEs in innovating business models and seizing opportunities. Being alert to the risks of a digitised environment. Consideration of the stage your business has reached on the path to digital adoption from digitisation to digital transformation. Identifying priority areas for future development.
3	Internationalisation and winning new markets: case study	Face to Face	4 hours	A case study taking an in-depth look at how a business has successfully grown through a strategy of developing new markets, looking at how it adapted its business model, and how the experience encouraged the business to innovate
4	Vision, Mission, and Values	Online	2 hours	Understanding the strategic value of your business' vision, mission and brand, their link to the customer value proposition and role in achieving competitive advantage. Reviewing vision, mission and values for your

				organisation defining brand components and recognising how these factors add value to your business and customers.
5	Developing a Marketing Strategy	Online	2 hours	Refining your customer value proposition. Developing your business's strategic approach to marketing using segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP). Understanding the stages in the buyer decision-making processes and considering sources of data to support marketing planning.
6	Building a brand: case study	Face to Face	4 hours	Exploring how a case study business built a market-leading brand and continued to serve its customers' needs through changing times. What challenges had to be overcome and how the company stayed true to its purpose and values.
7	Organisational Design	Online	2 hours	Identifying growth phases and when and how it will be necessary to evolve the shape of the organisation to implement growth. Looking at SME examples of different structures and ways of working. Developing processes to facilitate agile working, and, jointly with others in your business, reviewing skills, roles and training to ensure the required expertise is available to deliver the growth plan.
8	Employee Engagement and Leading Change	Online	2 hours	Identifying appropriate strategies for leading change in an inclusive and engaging way. Recognising the impact of your own leadership approach as a key enabler for growth. How to utilise tools and resources collaboratively to lead your team towards strategic goals.
9	High Performance	Face to Face	4 hours	A case study that reflects how an organisation's structure and employee engagement have been intrinsic to successful growth. Demonstrating how innovation culture, values and a strong sense of purpose contribute

	workplace: case study			to employee engagement and have impacted on the organisation's design and leadership.
10	Efficient Operations	Online	2 hours	Understanding the role of operations and how to take a systemic approach, aligning operations with marketing strategy. How to develop an approach to key metrics which engages teams and creates a culture of continuous improvement in value flow. Recognising how your operations improvement strategy contributes towards your Growth Action Plan.
11	Finance and Financial Management	Online	2 hours	Using financial data to make informed decisions about future operations, including identifying relevant financial metrics for monitoring growth and productivity. Understanding the importance of cash flow forecasting in managing crisis and recovery. Awareness of the options for financing growth and advice - both internally and externally.
12	Implementing Growth Action Plans: case study	Face to Face	4 hours	A case study demonstrating how a high growth company has planned, managed and resourced its growth, highlighting key management practices critical to growth and productivity. Developing priorities and a timeline for implementation, together with the resources required to achieve the objectives in your Growth Action Plan.

Annex F – Alumni Network

Overview

The Alumni Network provide ongoing support and opportunities to SME leaders that complete the HtG:M programme (i.e. completed at least 75% of module content). All Alumni are automatically enrolled into the Alumni Network with the option to opt-out should they choose.

The three objectives for the Alumni Network are:

- To support participants to implement their Growth Action Plans by providing participants with ongoing learning, tools and resources, and business development opportunities.

- To build a community of participants, support ongoing peer learning and promote referrals to the programme.

- Provide the knowledge and tools to support participants to implement strong management practices and create high-performing teams.

Events

Local events

Local events focus on peer-to-peer learning and networking, local business speakers and signposting local business to support opportunities. Devolved to HTG Business Schools, we anticipate approximately 100- 150 local events per year across the UK. A certain degree of flexibility is maintained to avoid clashes with other local, regional and national events and to take into account dates that suit the Alumni themselves.

Regional / devolved nation events

Run by CABS, regional events enable participants to build their networks with Alumni beyond their existing business school, and access business growth opportunities from regional providers. These will be single track events in a non-business school setting.

Compared to local events, these are:

- Conceived with more of an aspirational focus

- Explore big picture issues for small businesses with a longer conference session and with senior practitioners speaking

- A strong networking/peer to peer learning element allowing Alumni to expand their network beyond their business school

A typical programme may include a keynote speech, a business schools panel, regional business leaders panel and an alumni networking lunch.

UK-wide events

National events celebrate the programme and provide recognition to alumni and external partners alongside further learning opportunities. National events take place on an annual basis every Autumn.

Webinars

These will be online (zoom) events that all HTG Alumni will be invited to attend. A prospective programme is outlined below:

Online and on-demand content and CPD

Alumni can access additional tools and resources to progress their learning through the dedicated Alumni Network Content Hub. CABS work with a wide range of content contributors to populate the Content Hub. Tools and resources include articles, videos, case studies and infographics. Content is responsive to emerging economic trends and SME priorities such as Net Zero and the cost of living crisis. Alumni ambassadors also provide content that gives first-hand insight and inspiration for further growth

LinkedIn.

All Alumni are invited to join the national, Alumni Network LinkedIn group as soon as they are eligible. This will be updated providing links to new material whenever appropriate. The LinkedIn group will continue to point alumni towards useful content such as sources of funding alongside the content published in the Content Hub.

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Newsletters / emails

CABS deliver informative, user-oriented newsletters throughout the year.