



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Help to Grow: Management Evaluation

Summary quarterly progress report #4 (Jan-
March 2023)

July 2023

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Introduction

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

This report is the fourth in a series of quarterly updates to DBT, presenting evidence collected through Ipsos' ongoing programme of surveys with SME leaders completing the programme and those that dropped out.¹ It draws on evidence collected between January 2023 to March 2023 and was submitted alongside an accompanying slide deck.² In this report, quarterly data corresponds to the financial year of HtGM delivery (i.e., Y2Q1 = April-June 2022, Y2Q2 = July-Sept 2022, Y2Q3 = Oct-Dec 2022, Y2Q4 = Jan-Mar 2023) and refers to the period of time in which SME leaders completed the questionnaire.

In some cases, the report compares the results between quarters, in other cases it reports all evidence collected to date. The data source and associated time period is clearly referenced in the sources.

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

¹ The data informing these reports are updated on a quarterly basis and sometimes data from previous quarters is updated leading to very small differences in the original tables (usually <1%). This may mean that the data reported here is not always identical to earlier quarterly reports. In these cases, the most recent report will use the most accurate data.

² This report presents all of the evidence collected to date on the programme of surveys, including the post-completion survey that launched in September 2021.

Programme overview and survey update

Overview of surveys

An overview of the three HtGM evaluation surveys that are presented in this quarterly report is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Overview of HtGM Evaluation surveys

Post completion	6 month follow-up	Non-completion
<p>Issued to all participants four to six weeks after completing module 12 of the Help to Grow: Management programme. It gathers feedback on the processes associated with delivery of the programme and emerging evidence on the short-term outcomes in the Theory of Change.</p>	<p>All participants are contacted six months after completion of the programme to participate in a telephone interview designed to capture data on the outcomes / impact of the programme on them and their business. Some respondents will have completed the post-completion survey but not all.</p>	<p>Participants who start the programme but did not complete (completing <75% of the programme) are contacted by telephone and asked to provide feedback on their experiences and reasons why they did not complete the programme.</p>
<p>Launch date: September 2021</p> <p>Mode: Online</p> <p>Frequency Monthly</p> <p>Waves completed: 18</p> <p>Next wave: 19th April</p>	<p>Launch date: June 2022</p> <p>Mode: Telephone</p> <p>Frequency Quarterly</p> <p>Waves completed 4</p> <p>Next wave: Mid May</p>	<p>Launch date: June 2022</p> <p>Mode: Telephone</p> <p>Frequency Quarterly</p> <p>Waves completed: 4</p> <p>Next wave: Mid May</p>

Survey update

As of 31st March 2023, 1,390 responses had been received to the post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 2):

- The post-completion online survey was issued to 5,315 SME leaders who completed HtGM before December 2022. As of 31st March 2023, 738 responses had been received, **representing a 18% response rate.**³
- 2,150 SME leaders who completed HtGM before August 2022 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey.⁴ As of 31st March 2023, 652 responses had been received, **representing a 43% adjusted response rate.**

Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n=34). This comes from a sample frame containing 306 cases, 21 of which were ineligible.

Figure 3 shows how the aggregate response rates to the three surveys has varied over time.⁵

³ Ipsos is having ongoing discussions with DBT and CABS around measures that can be taken to improve the survey response rates.

⁴ An additional 634 SME leaders were contacted but were not eligible for the survey and were therefore excluded from the adjusted response rate.

⁵ Response rate over time is based on cumulative figures.

Figure 2: Post completion and six month follow up survey response rates as of 31st March 2023

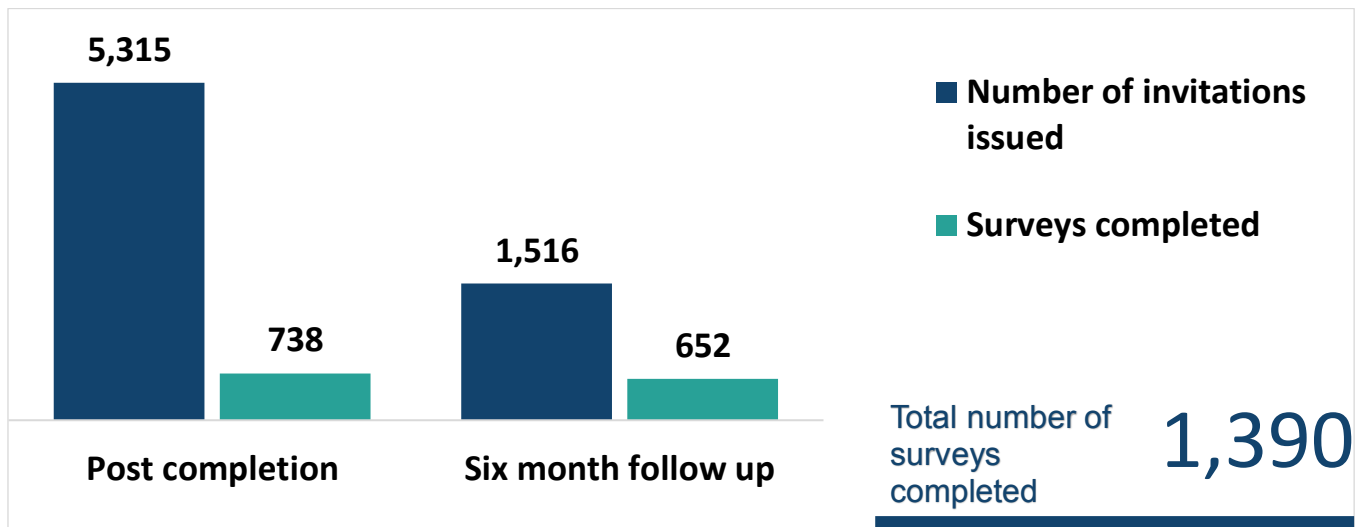
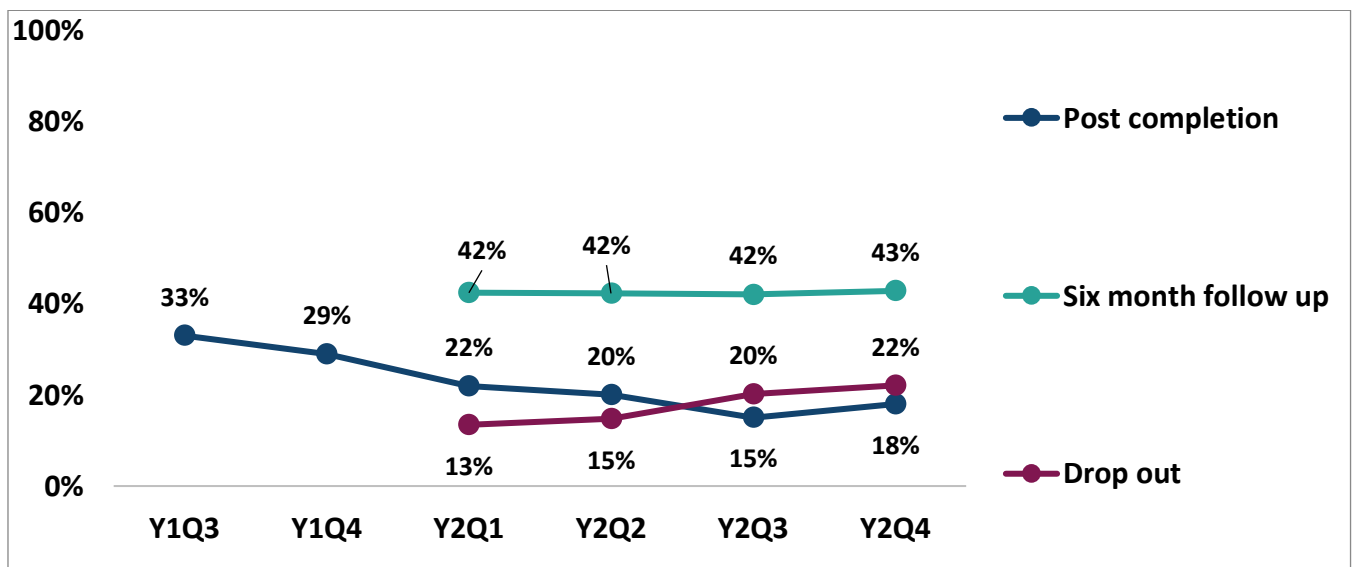


Figure 3: Cumulative response rates over time



Note: this figure shows cumulative response rates over time, reporting all responses to date as a percentage of all those who have completed the programme to date. The six month follow up survey and non-completion survey results show the adjusted response rate over time.

Profile of demand

Businesses

To date, the HtGM programme has attracted interest from a broad range of businesses (Figures 4-7):

- Location:** the programme has stimulated interest from firms across all regions of the UK. Just under one third of businesses registering or enrolling to HtGM were based in London or the South East (28% for both) (Figure 4). These figures broadly align to the

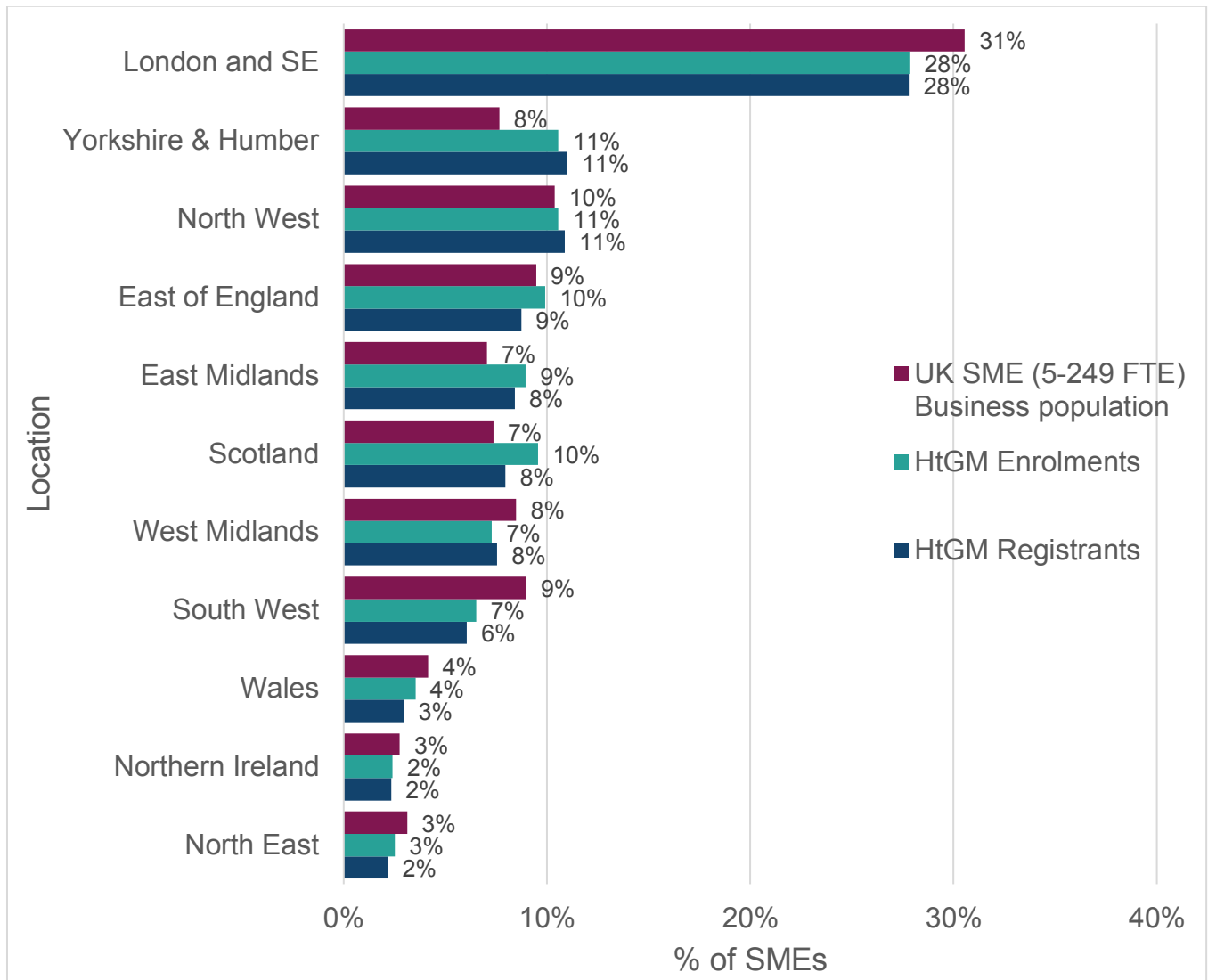
wider UK SME population (with 5-249 employees), for which London and the South East account for the largest share (31%).

- **Sector:** businesses that registered for HtGM operate across a broad range of industry sectors (Figure 5). 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 followed by the manufacturing sector (13% of registrations, 14% enrolments) and construction sector (both 11%). The remainder operate across a range of different industries.
- **Age:** Half of SMEs that registered (52%) / enrolled (50%) 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 6).⁶
- **Size:** firms registering and enrolling for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (Both median 10 FTE) (Figure 7). The median annual turnover in 2021/22 financial year was £870k for both registrants and enrolments, the average differed slightly (£2.77M for registrants and £2.86M for enrolments).⁷

⁶ Note: businesses that have been operating for less than one year are not eligible for the programme.

⁷ Median results are reported here over mean because of large outliers. However, mean results are also presented in Figure 1.

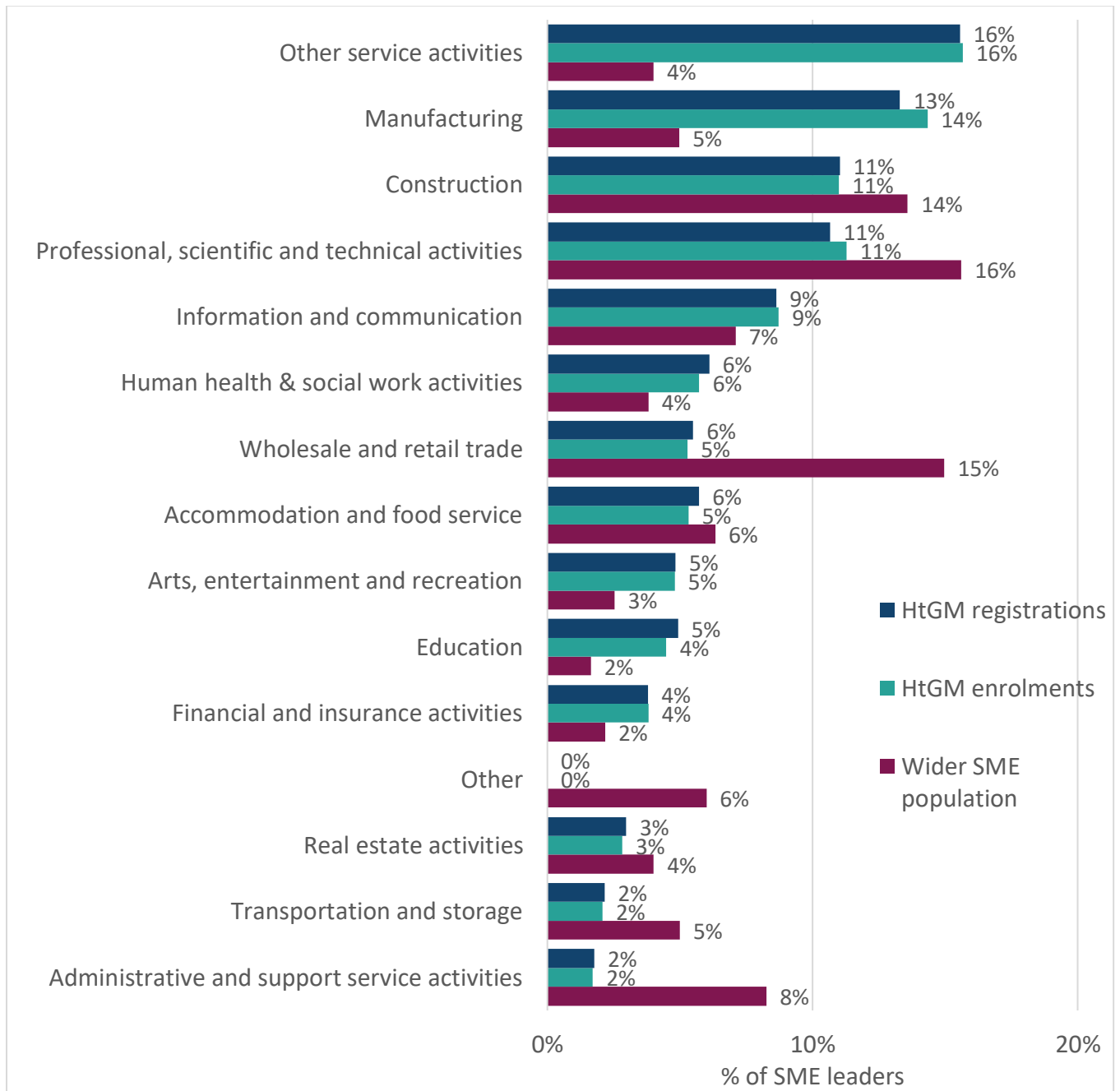
Figure 4: Location of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM before 1st April 2023⁸



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

⁸ SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

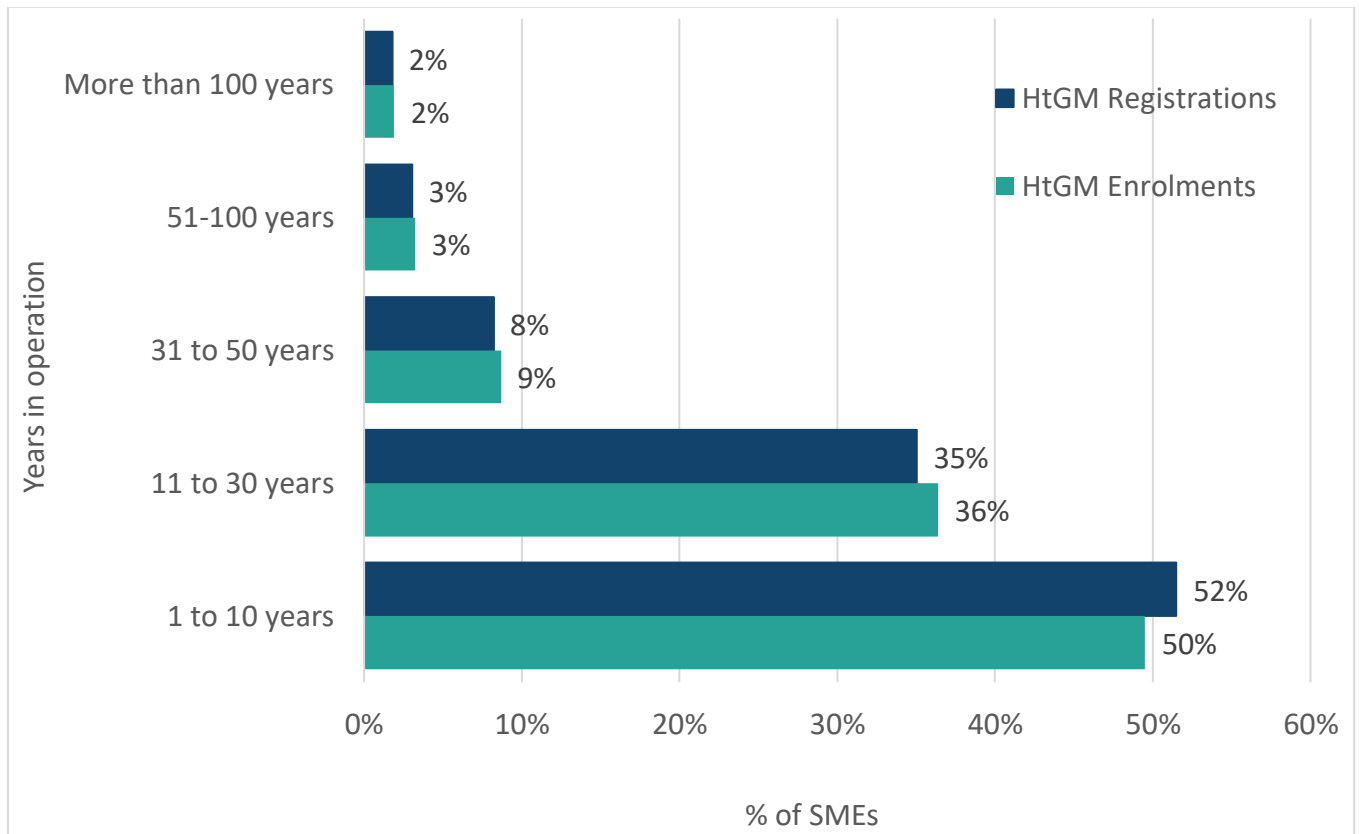
Figure 5: Sector of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM before 1st April 2023⁹



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.

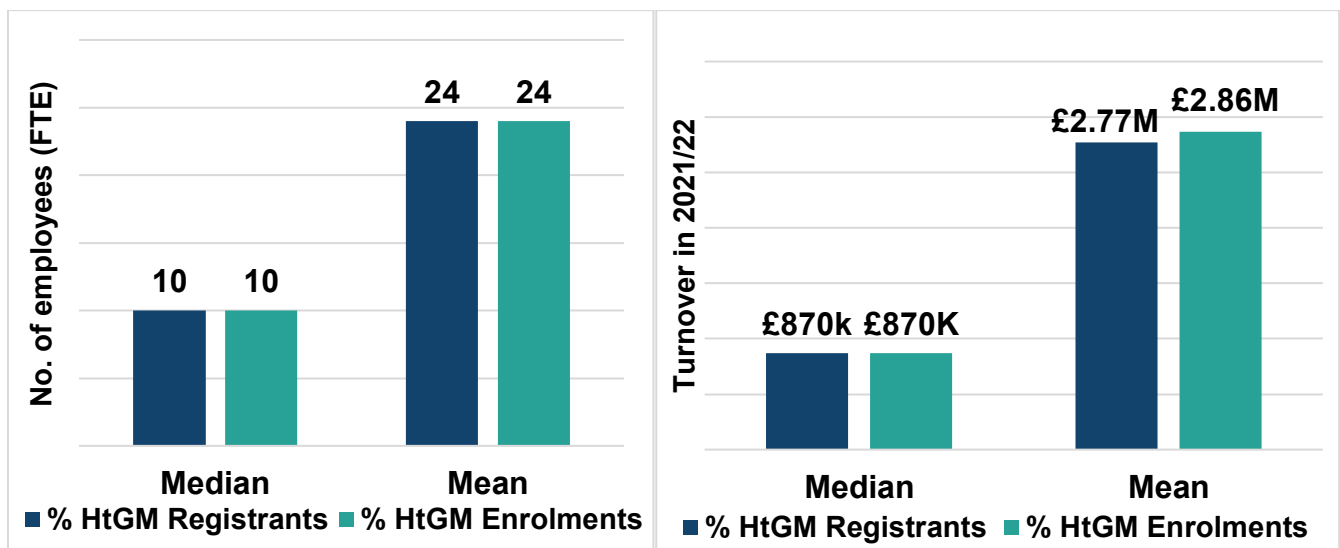
⁹ SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

Figure 6: Age of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM before 1st April 2023



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

Figure 7: Size (turnover and employees) of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM before 1st January 2023



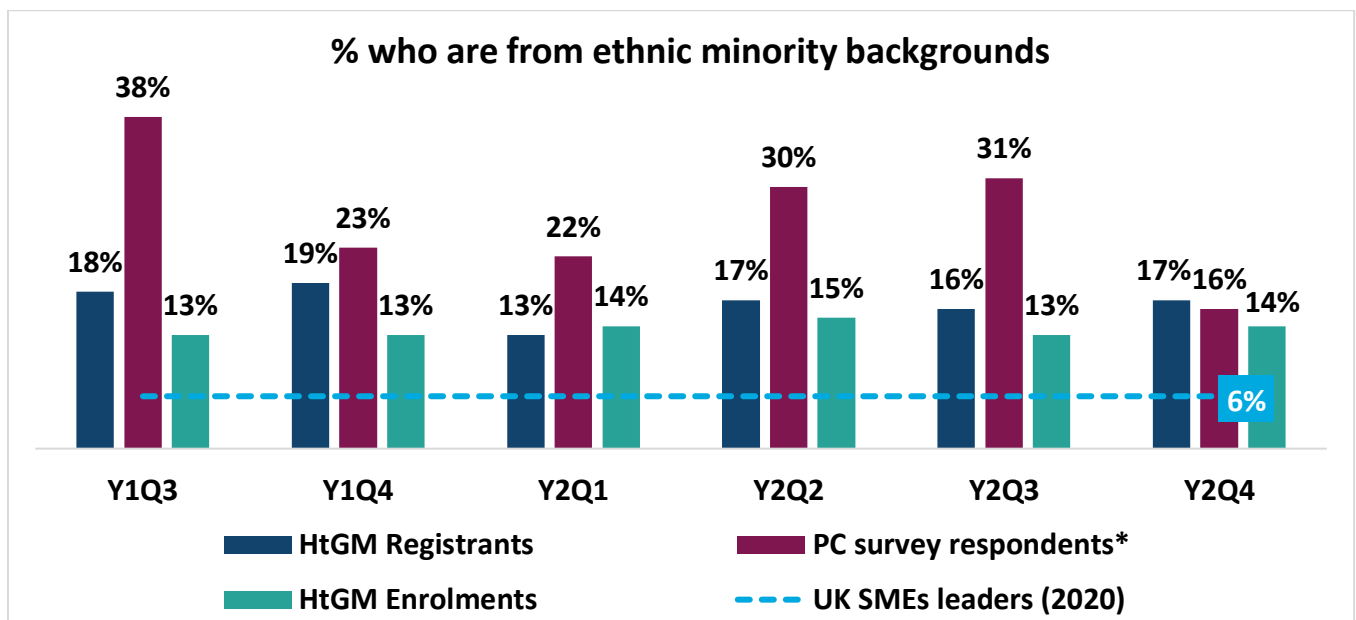
Source: DBT monitoring data; Base: registrations (n=8,200), enrolments (n=6,414); Note: data on employees and turnover and are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers (for both mean and median)

SME leaders

To date, the HtGM programme has attracted interest from a diverse range of SME leaders when compared to the gender and ethnic profile of SME leaders in the wider business population. In the most recent quarter, the proportion of female SME leaders registering on the programme (36%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses.¹⁰ The proportion of SME leaders registering for HtGM who are from an ethnic minority background (17%) is also 10 percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses (see Figure 8).¹¹

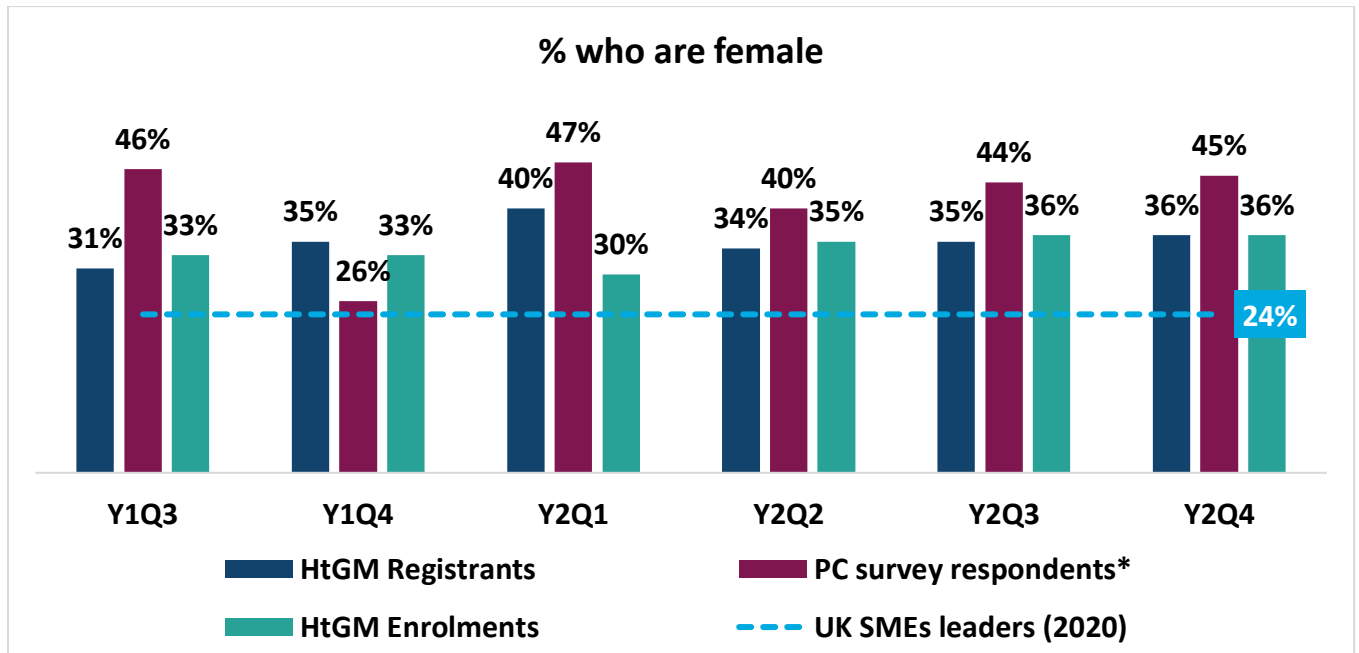
The profile of those responding to the post completion (PC) evaluation survey is broadly in line with all SME leaders involved in HtGM in terms of ethnicity, whereas female SME leaders are overrepresented in the survey.

Figure 8: Proportion of SME leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds / proportion of SME leaders who are female before 1st April 2023



¹⁰ Women owned and women led businesses provide a total of 24% private sector employment – Federation for Small Businesses - <https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/supporting-women-s-enterprise-in-the-uk.html>

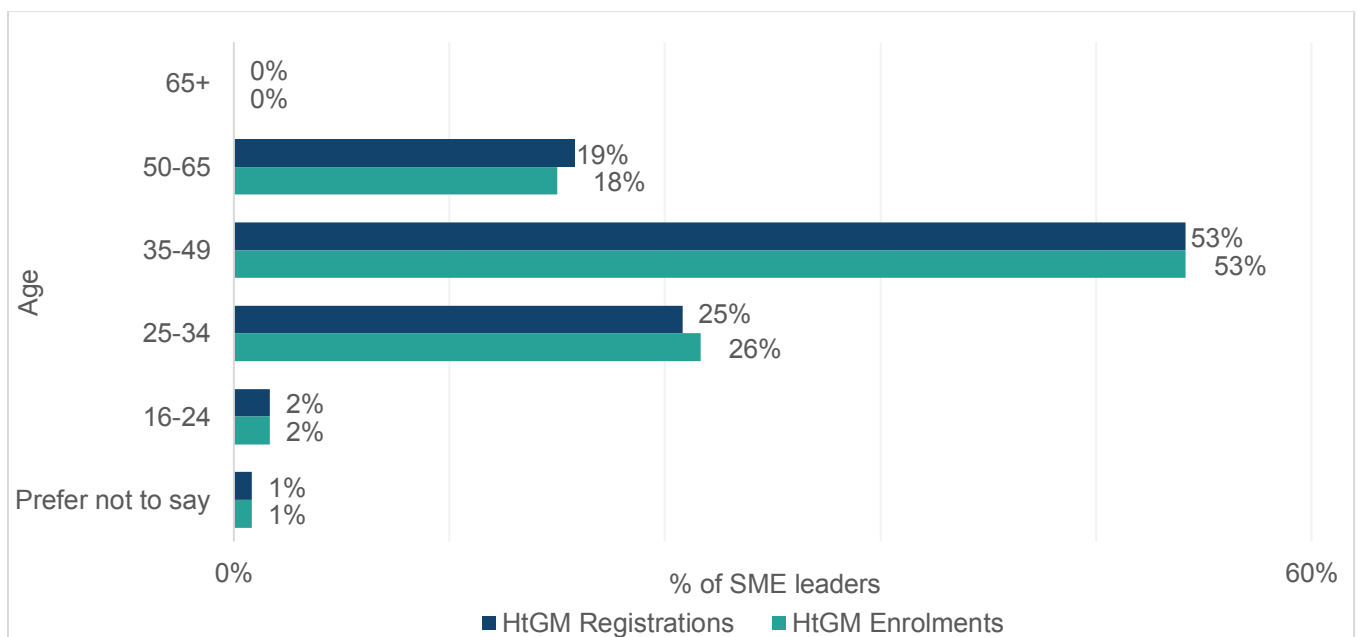
¹¹ Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises - <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf>



Source: DBT monitoring data, (gender data: registrations (n=7,875), enrolments (n=6,165) (ethnicity data: (n=7,875), enrolments (n=6,185); Post completion survey (n=738); Government Workforce and Business Statistics (2020); FSB (2020); Note: Blue dashed line represents a singular point in time. It should be used to contextualise and not be interpreted as time series

To date, just over half of SME leaders registering and enrolling (53% both) to the programme were aged between 35-49 years (Figure 9). Around one quarter were aged between 25-34 years (25% registered and 26% enrolled) and one in five were aged between 50-65 years (19% registered and 18% enrolled).

Figure 9: Age of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM before 1st April 2023



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.

Applying to HtGM

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

Expectations and understanding of HtGM

At the time of applying, SME leaders most commonly expected to improve their **leadership and management skills** (75%), be more **confident** to lead their business (74%) and have an **increased awareness of productivity and growth** (73%) through participating in HtGM (Figure 10). Fewer respondents expected to improve their understanding of how to improve employee wellbeing (27%), the value of data analytics (22%) or how to embed equality, diversity and inclusivity practices (16%).

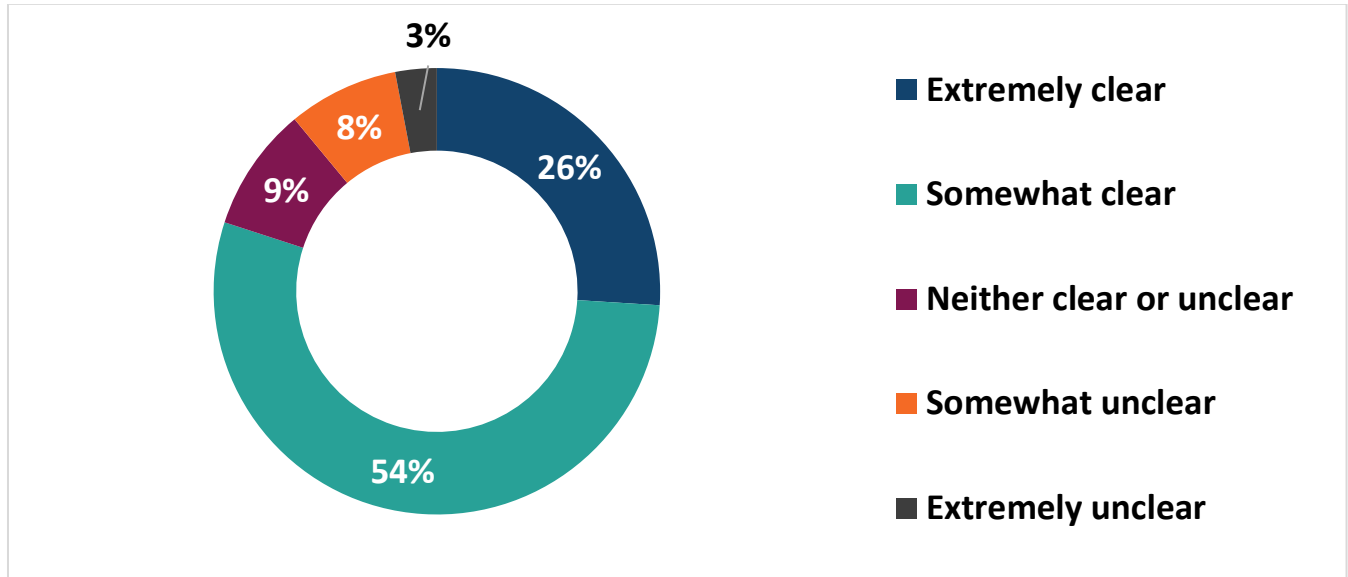
Figure 10: What were your expectations of the Help to Grow: Management programme? What were you hoping to get out of it?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 738 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Multiple choice; Note: figure shows the most and least selected options.

Most (80%) of survey respondents were **clear on the programme’s aims and objectives** at the time of application. Around one in ten (11%) were unclear.

Figure 11: When you applied, how clear were you on the aims and objectives of the programme?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 738 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Multiple choice

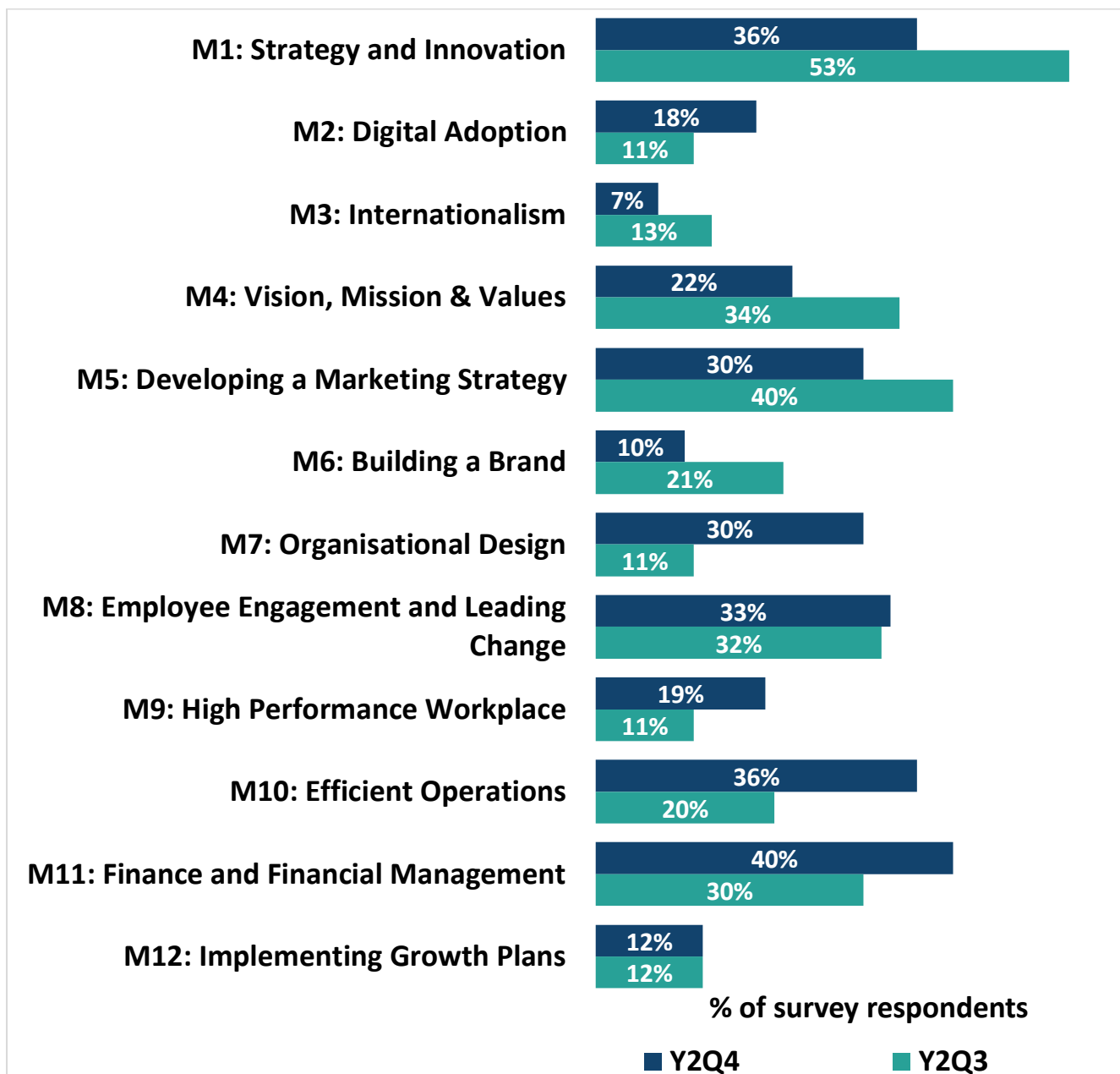
Expectations and understanding of HtGM

In the recent quarter (Y2Q4), two in five SME leaders ranked **finance and financial management** in their top three modules of interest at the time of applying (40%). Other modules identified as being of most interest were **strategy and innovation** (36%); **efficient operations** (36%) and **employee engagement and leading change** (33%).

This is the first quarter where strategy and innovation has not ranked the highest in terms of interest at registration, decreasing by 17 percentage points from 53% in Y2Q3 to 36% in Y2Q4.

The proportion of programme completers reporting an interest in the **efficient operations** module at registration increased by 15 percentage points since the previous quarter (from 20% in Y2Q3 to 36% in Y2Q4). Similarly, organisational design has also seen a noticeable increase in interest since Y2Q3 (11% in Y2Q3 to 30% in Y2Q4).

Figure 12: Which three modules were you most interested in when you signed up to the programme?

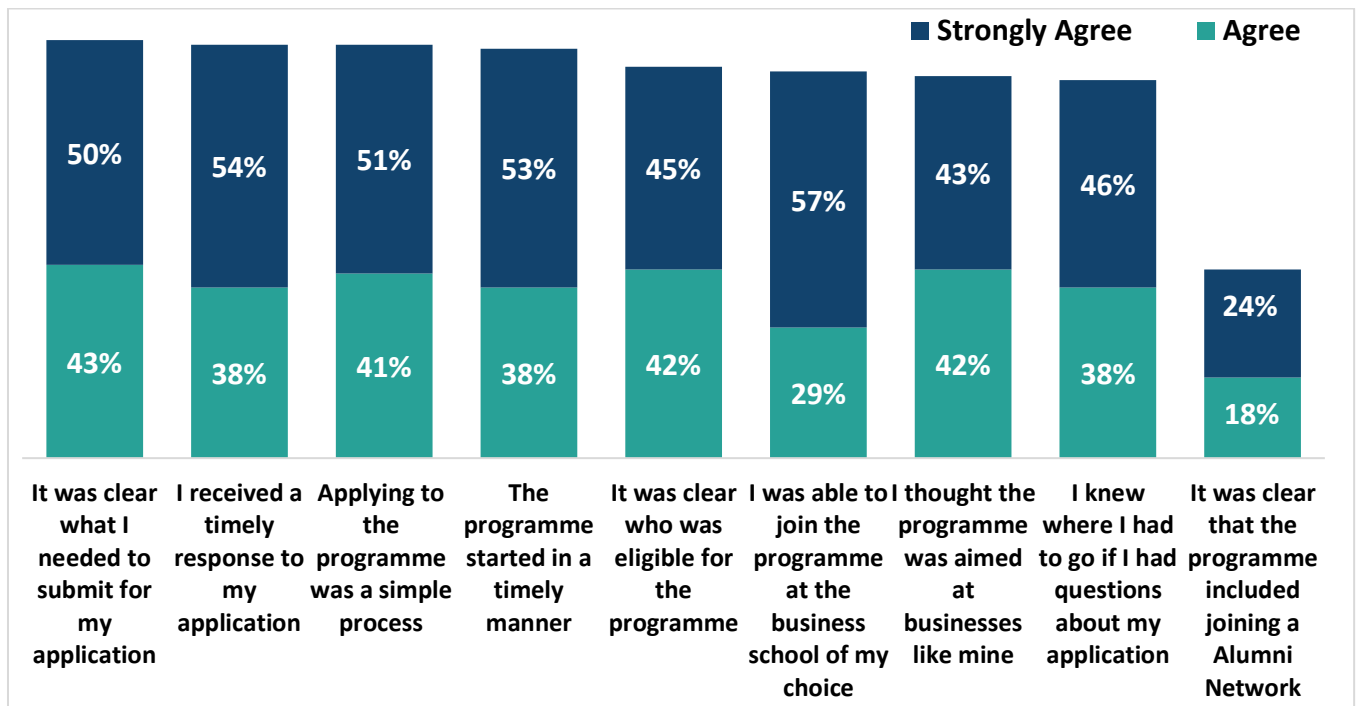


Source: Post completion survey; Base: (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y2Q4 (67), Y2Q3 (90); Question type: Multiple choice

Feedback remains positive on the application and onboarding process. Nearly all respondents agreed it was clear what was required to submit an application (93%), they received a timely response to their application (92%), application process was simple (92%), and the programme started in a timely manner (91%).

In December 2022, an additional response option relating to the alumni network was added to the question presented below. Findings suggest participants are becoming more aware of the alumni offer between the two most recent quarters – with 63% reporting they were aware in Y2Q4 compared to 28% in Y2Q3.

Figure 13: Thinking about your experience of applying to HtGM, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 738 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses). Question type: Single choice per statement; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding. The code 'It was clear that the programme included joining a Alumni Network' was added in Y2Q3, meaning it has a smaller sample (113). This base excludes 'Not stated/not answered'.

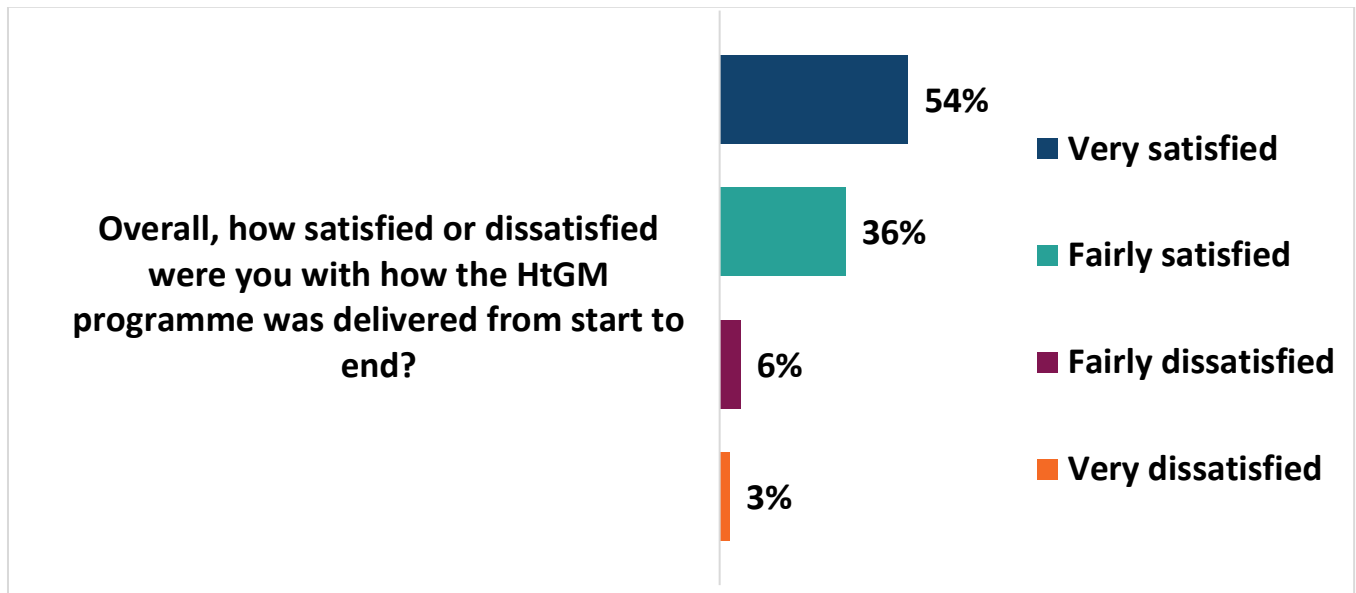
Experience of HtGM

This section presents findings on overall satisfaction with the HtGM programme, the relevance of individual programme modules and programme participant experiences of mentoring.

Delivery

Overall, SME leaders are reporting high levels of satisfaction with programme delivery, with 91% saying they were fairly or very satisfied and 9% saying they were fairly or very dissatisfied.

Figure 14: Programme satisfaction (Overall)



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 738 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

Participants are reporting high levels of satisfaction with the overall design and content of the modules. Those relating to strategy and innovation (88%); vision, mission and values (85%); and marketing (84%) were deemed most relevant. Since the previous quarter, there have not been any significant changes in levels of satisfaction between modules.

Figure 15: How relevant were each of the Help to Grow: Management modules to your business?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 738 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice per statement.

Mentoring

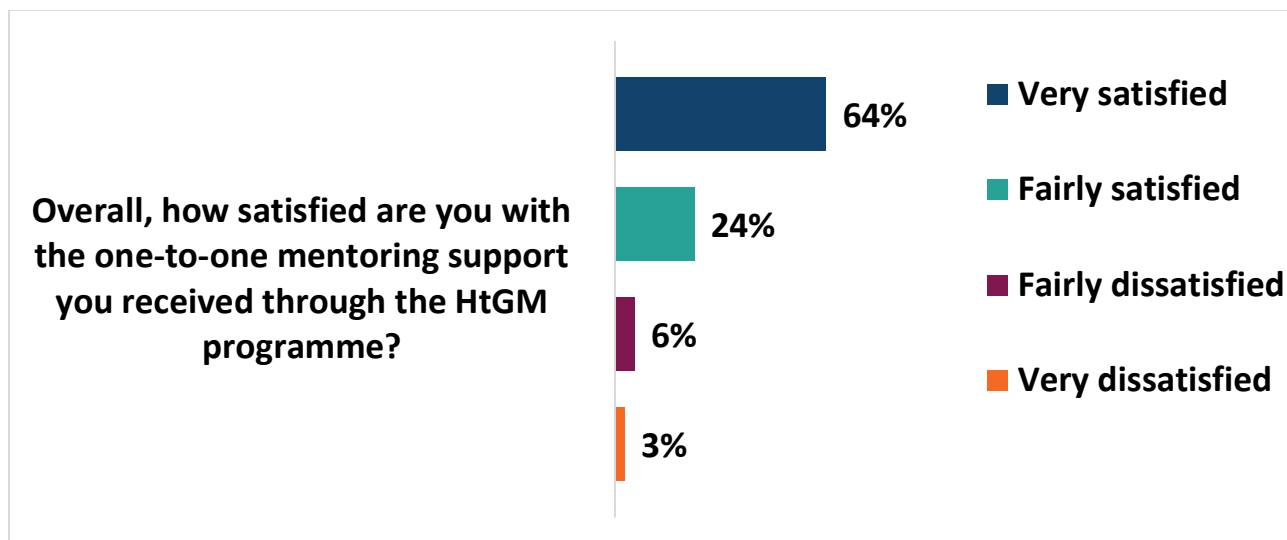
As of 1st August 2022, DBT changed the mentoring element of HtGM from mentors being paid for their time to mentors participating on a voluntary basis. All respondents to the Y2Q4 survey will have received mentoring under the new delivery model, and some, but not all, respondents to Y2Q3 will have been supported by a voluntary mentor.

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.

Overall, levels of satisfaction are high amongst participants. Nine in every ten (87%) survey respondents were satisfied with mentoring support received and almost two thirds (64%) were very satisfied.

Looking at the recent underlying quarterly data, levels of satisfaction with the mentoring model have decreased, from 89% in Y2Q3 to 78% in Y2Q4.

Figure 16: Satisfaction with mentoring

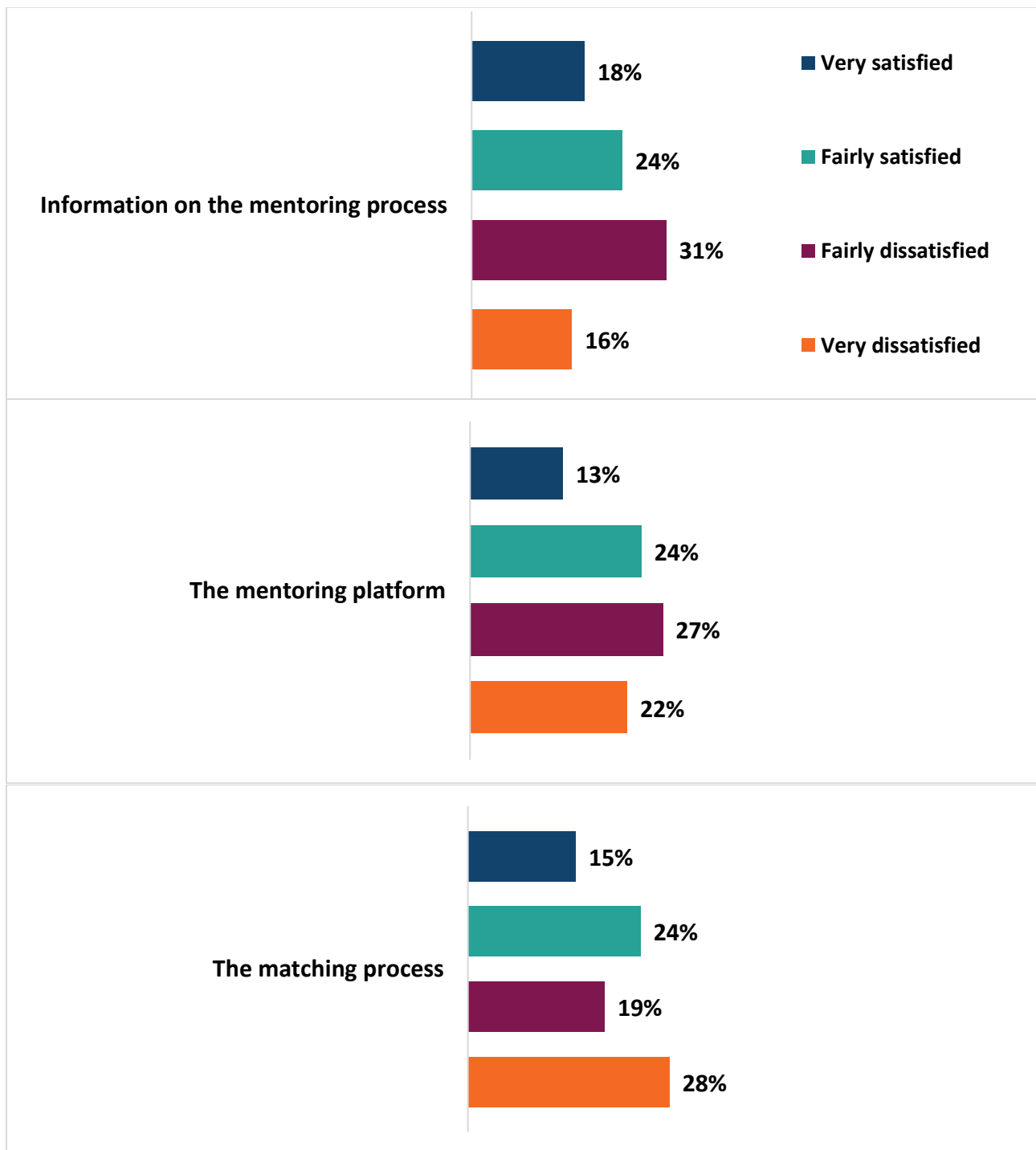


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 674 (Asked only to those that were matched to a mentor and had completed all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice
Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

Participants with a voluntary mentor were asked about their satisfaction with different elements of the new mentoring process. They were most satisfied with the **information on the mentoring process** (42%), followed by the **matching process** (39%) and the **mentoring platform** (37%) (Figure 17). There is scope to improve satisfaction across each of the three elements, particularly the matching process where nearly half (47%) were dissatisfied.¹²

¹² DBT made changes to the mentoring matching process during delivery of the programme, whereby participants were given the option of being matched with a mentor by the mentoring consortium. These changes may not be reflected in the data at this point in time.

Figure 17: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the mentoring process?



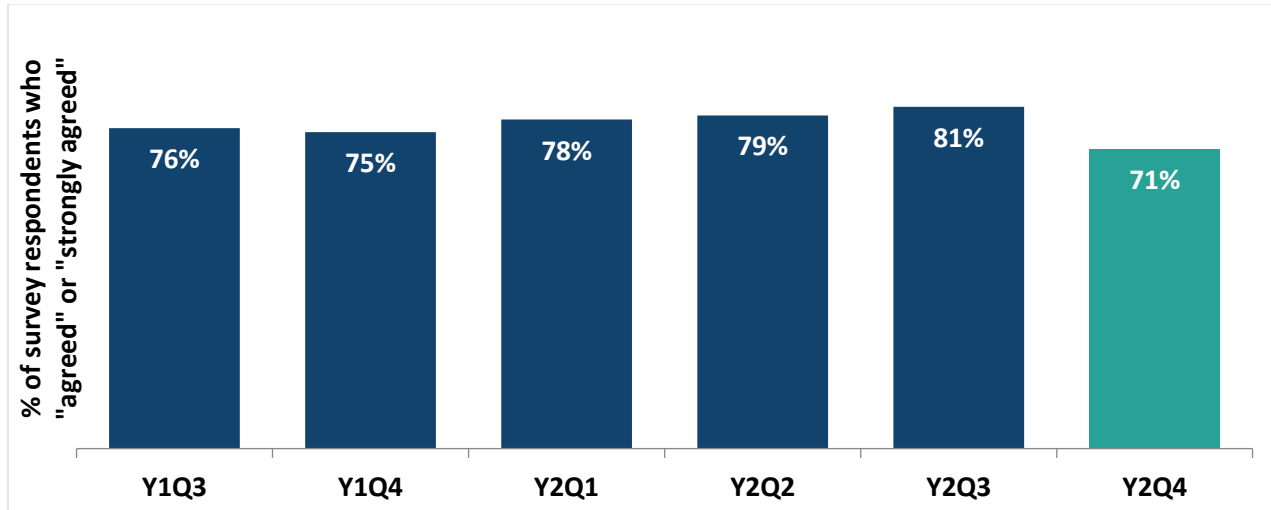
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 67 (Figures show quarterly survey responses) (This question was added to the survey in December 2022 resulting in a smaller sample); Question type: single choice per statement
 Note: this figure excludes does not include 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses

The majority (71%) of survey respondents in Y2Q4 thought that their mentor’s experience was well matched to their needs (Figure 18). This has decreased by ten percentage points since the last quarter – this may be linked to the mixed satisfaction in the matching process presented in Figure 17.

Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) respondents had attended all ten hours of mentoring in Y2Q4.

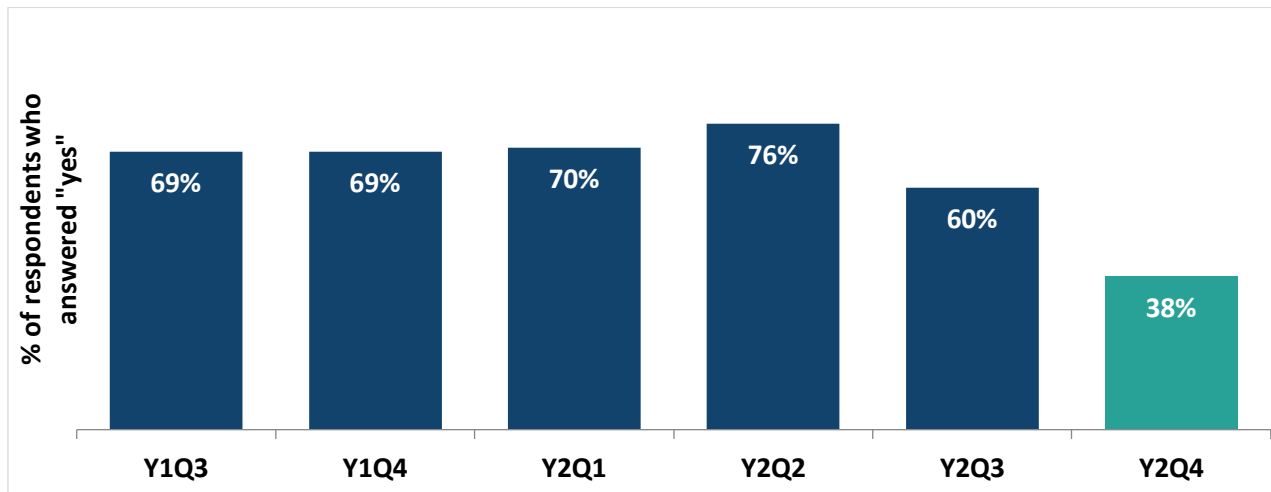
However, since Y2Q2, there has been a decrease of 38 percentage points (Figure 19).

Figure 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your mentor's experience was well matched to your needs?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 48 Y2Q4 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

Figure 19: Did you complete / attend all ten hours of mentoring with your mentor?



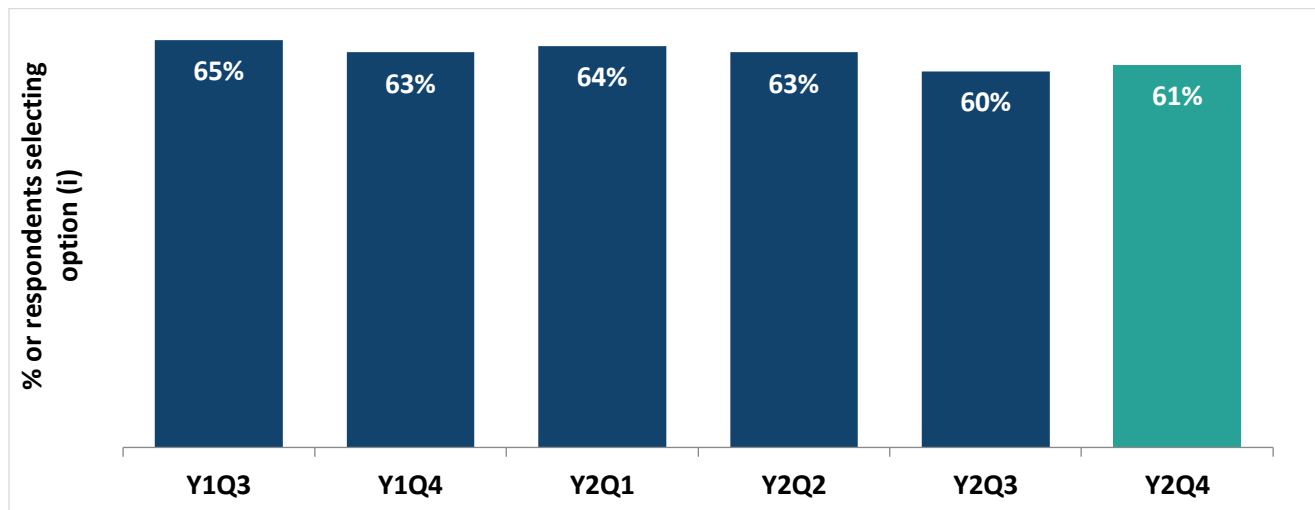
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 48 Y2Q4 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

Note: the post completion survey is issued between two and six weeks after completing module 12, so some respondents may still be in the process of completing their mentoring relationship at the time of the survey (Figure shows quarterly survey responses). From January 2023, participants were permitted to complete their mentoring relationship up to eight weeks after completing module 12, as opposed to four weeks previously.

The mentoring support is used by programme participants to cover a range of topics including those covered in the curriculum and those that are not. To date, the mentoring has most commonly been used to build on topics covered in the programme (61% average),

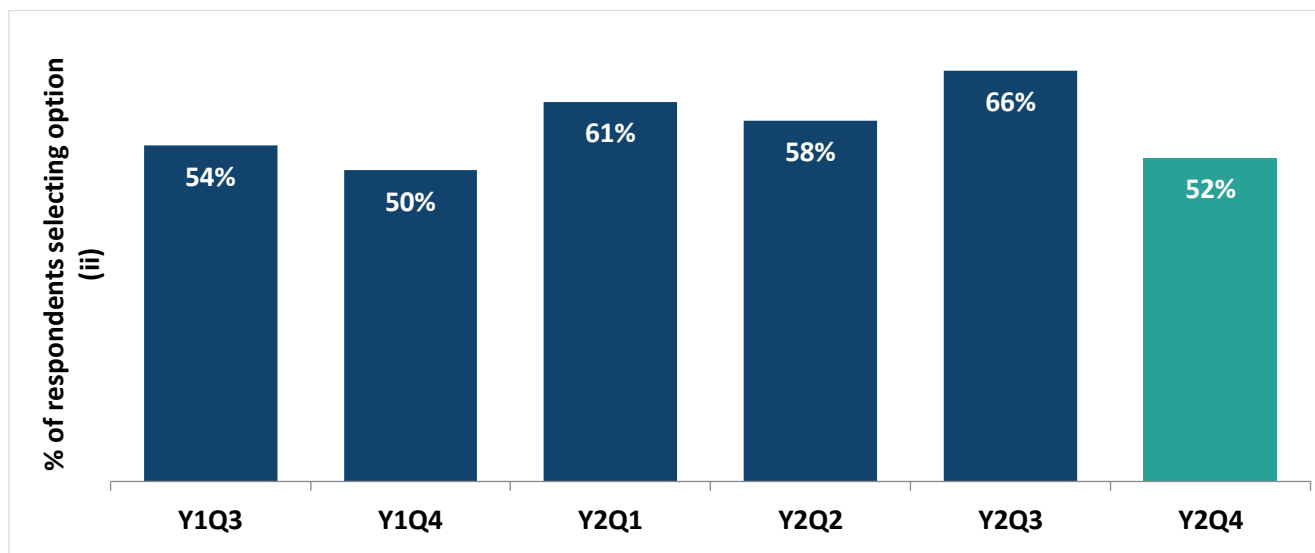
this has been fairly consistent quarter by quarter (Figure 20). Comparatively, the number of respondents using mentoring to cover topics not in the programme has fluctuated throughout Y2 of programme delivery (see Figure 21).

**Figure 20: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support?
(i) I used the mentoring support to build on topics covered in the programme**



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 47 Y2Q4 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice
Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3 and Y2Q4;

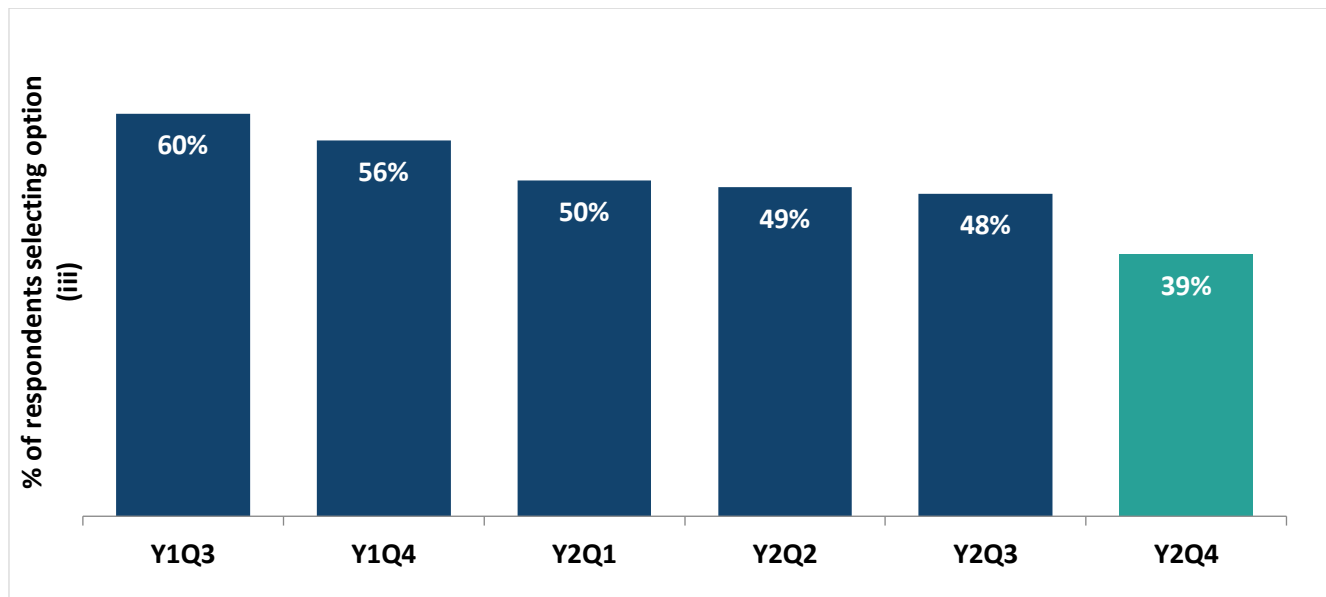
**Figure 21: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support?
(ii) I used the mentoring support for topics that were not covered in the programme**



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 47 Y2Q4 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice
Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3 and Y2Q4

More than one third of Y2Q4 survey respondents used their mentoring support to **develop and implement their GAPs**. This has fallen quarter-on-quarter since the survey began, declining from 60% in the first wave to 39% in the most recent quarter (Figure 22).

**Figure 22: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support?
(iii) I used the mentoring support to get help with my Growth Action Plan**



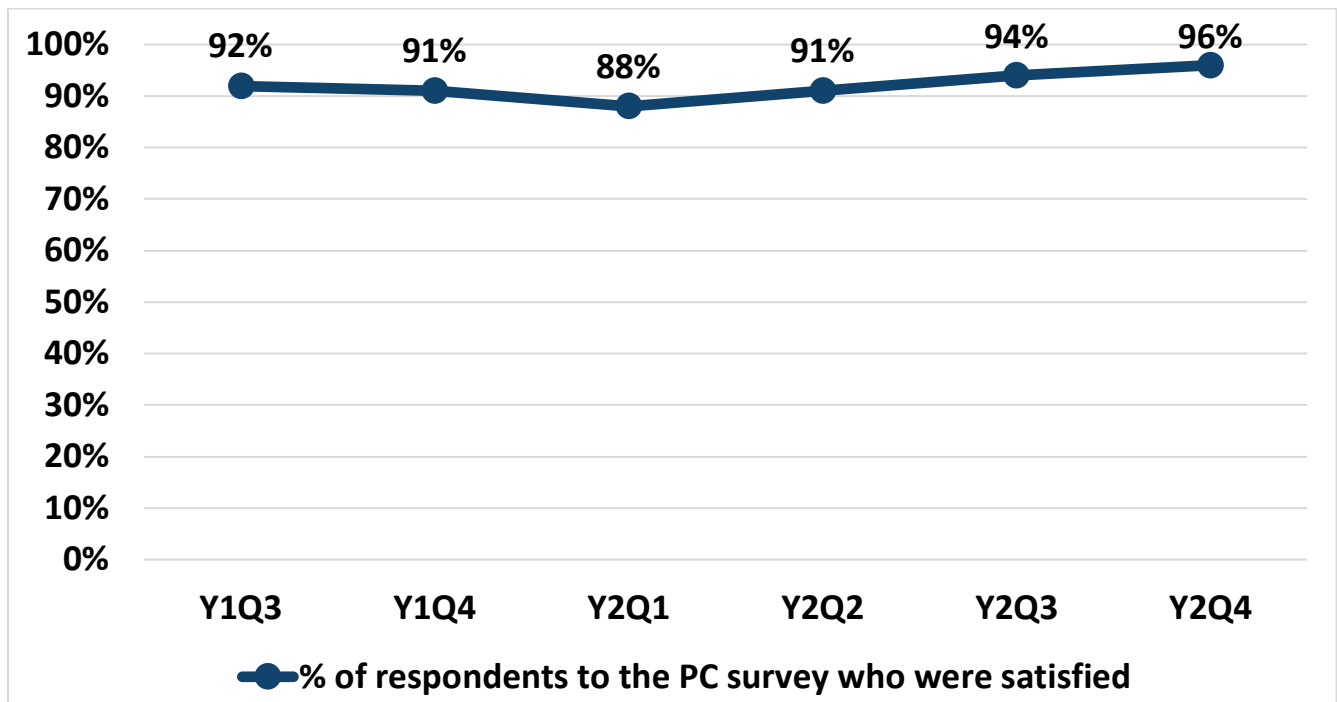
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 47 Y2Q4 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice
Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3 and Y2Q4;

Satisfaction scores over time

Satisfaction with programme delivery and mentoring has been consistently high since the post-completion survey was launched.

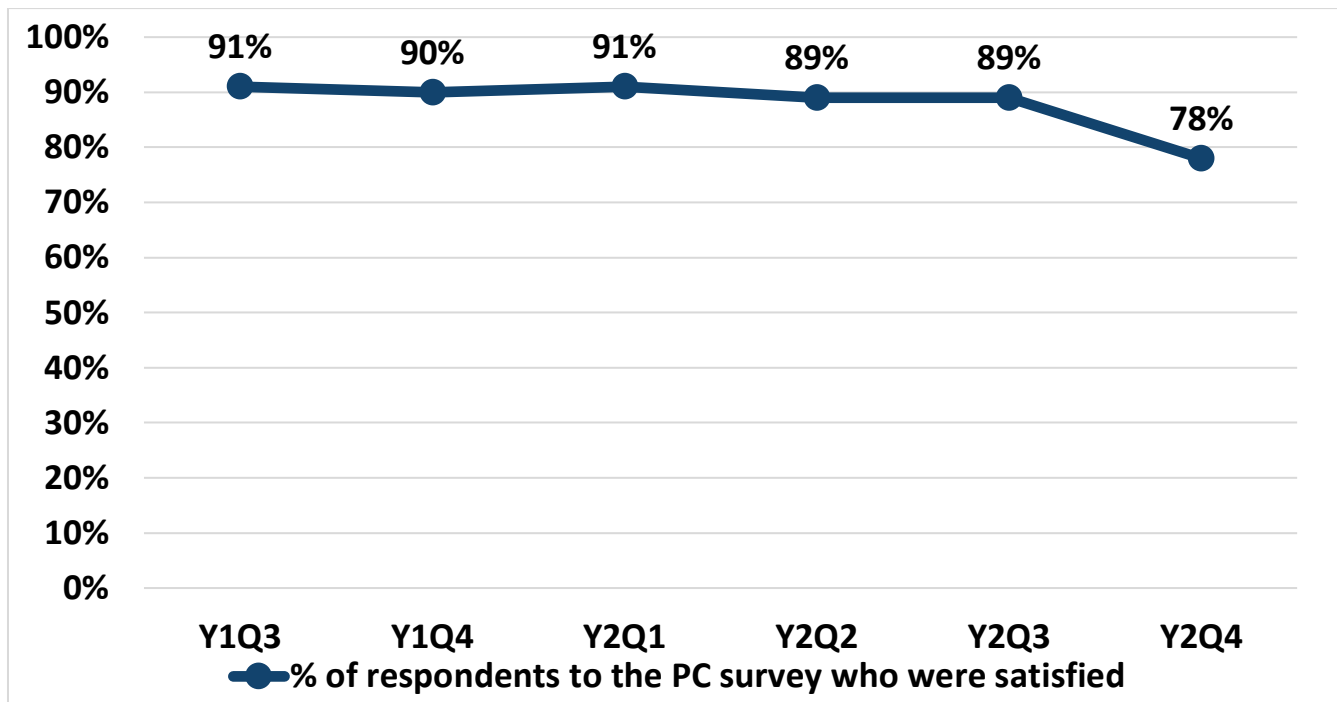
- In the most recent quarter, 96% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered, the highest since the survey began.
- In contrast, the proportion of programme completers who were satisfied with their mentoring support dropped by more than ten percentage points in the most recent quarters (from 89% in Y2Q3 to 78% in Y2Q4) the lowest since the survey began.

Figure 23: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how HtGM was delivered from start to end?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 85 Y1Q3; 91 Y1Q4, 256 Y2Q1, 149 Y2Q2, 90 Y2Q3, 67 Y2Q4; Question type: single choice.

Figure 24: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you the mentoring support you received through the HtGM programme?

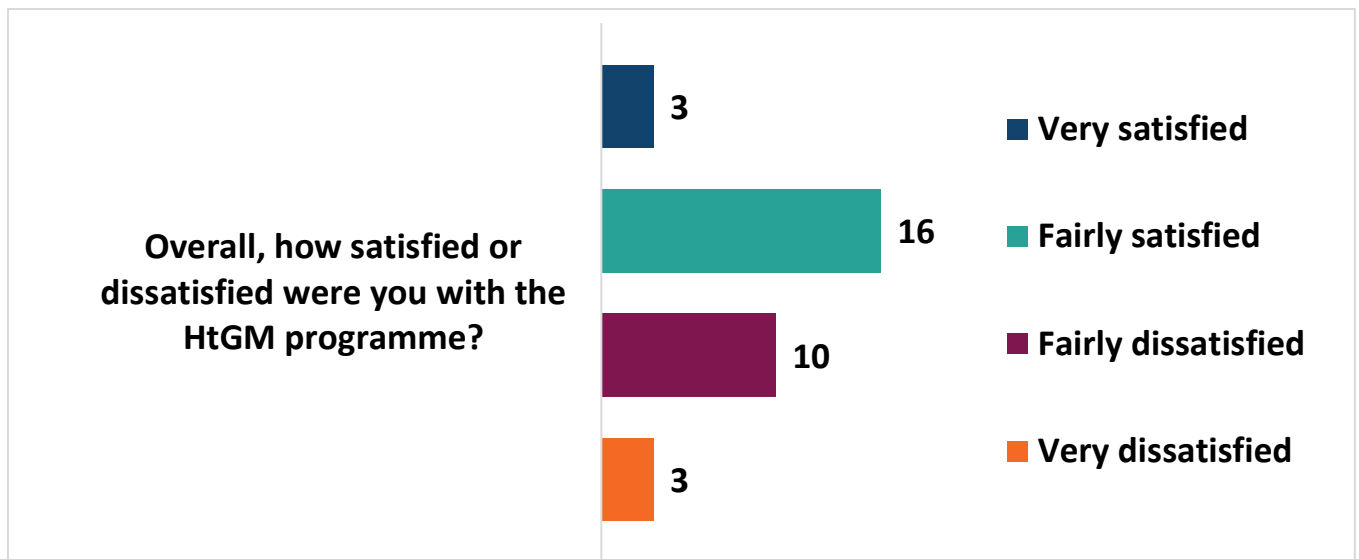


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 36 Y2Q4 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice; Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base and the base for Y2Q4 is small and should be interpreted with caution.

Non-completion survey¹³

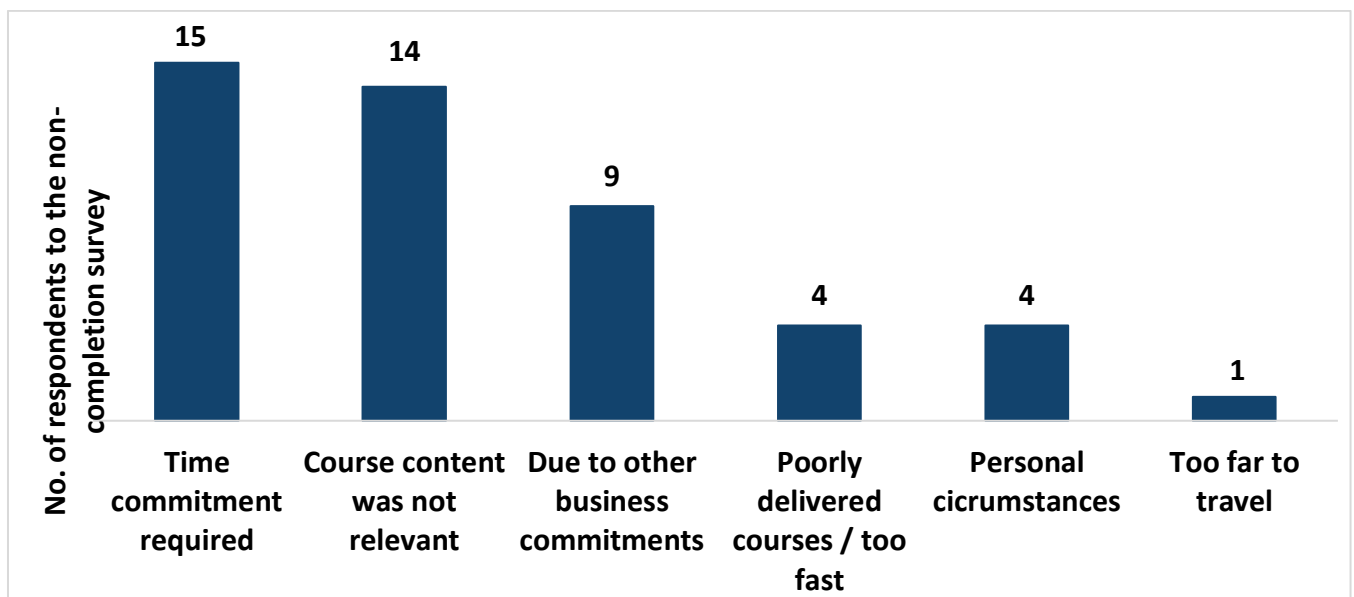
This section sets out early evidence on the experiences of SME leaders who enrolled on the programme but completed <75% of the modular content. It presents findings on overall satisfaction, reasons for not completing and whether anything could have supported dropouts to attend more of the programme. These findings are based on an aggregate response.

Figure 25: Programme satisfaction amongst non-completers



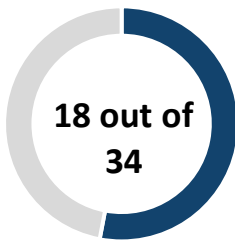
Source: Non-completion survey; Base: 34; Question type: Single choice (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Figure 26: What was the main reason for you not completing the programme?



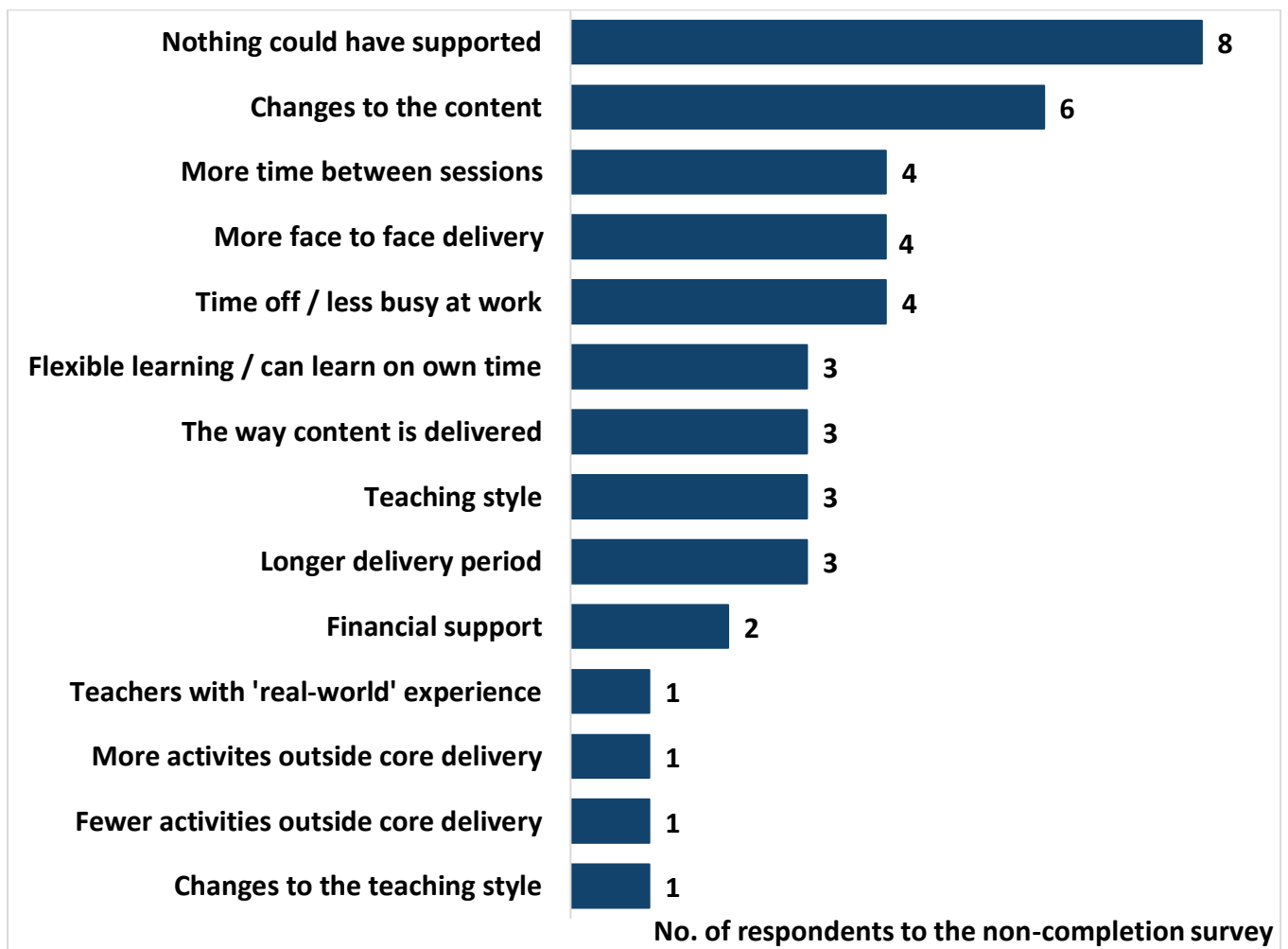
Source: Non-completion survey; Base: 34; Question type: Multiple choice (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

¹³ Commentary will be added to future reports once the sample size has increased.



SME leaders who did not complete HtGM would be interested in completing the programme at a later point in time

Figure 27: What, if anything, could have supported you to attend more of the programme?



Source: Non-completion survey; Base: 34; Question type: Multiple choice (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Self-reported individual outcomes

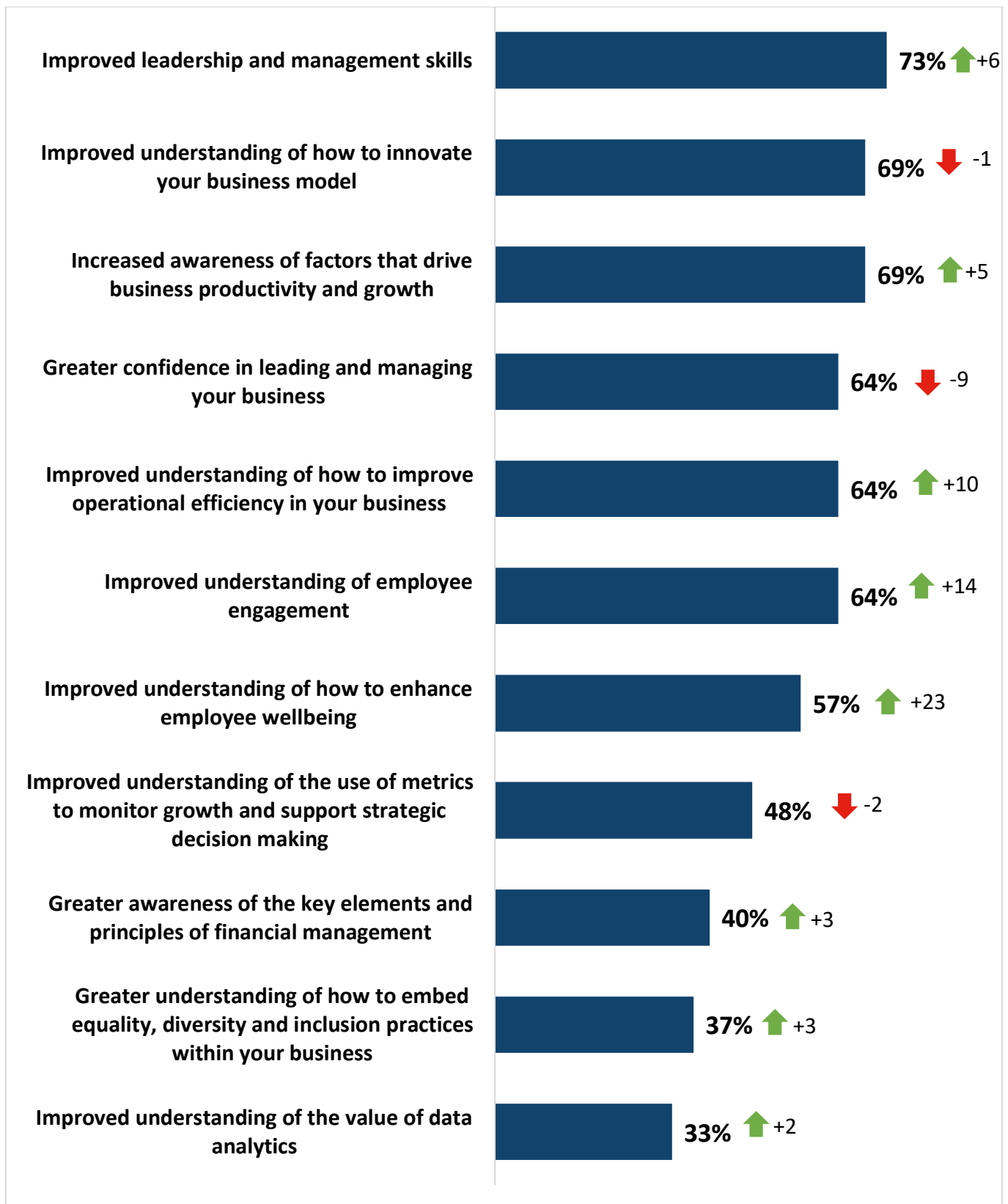
This section focuses on individual level outcomes. All findings presented are self-reported and should therefore be treated as indicative rather than conclusive.

Within six weeks, HtGM programme completers report having improved leadership and management skills (73%), improved understanding of how to innovate their business model (69%) and increased awareness of productivity and growth (69%) (Figure 28).

There were some noticeable differences between responses in Y2Q3 and Y2Q4:

- The largest increase was reported for understanding of how to **enhance employee wellbeing** which increased by 23 percentage points. There was also a 14 percentage point increase in the proportion reporting improved understanding of **employee engagement**.
- The largest decrease was in the proportion reporting greater **confidence in leading and managing their business**, which decreased by nine percentage points.

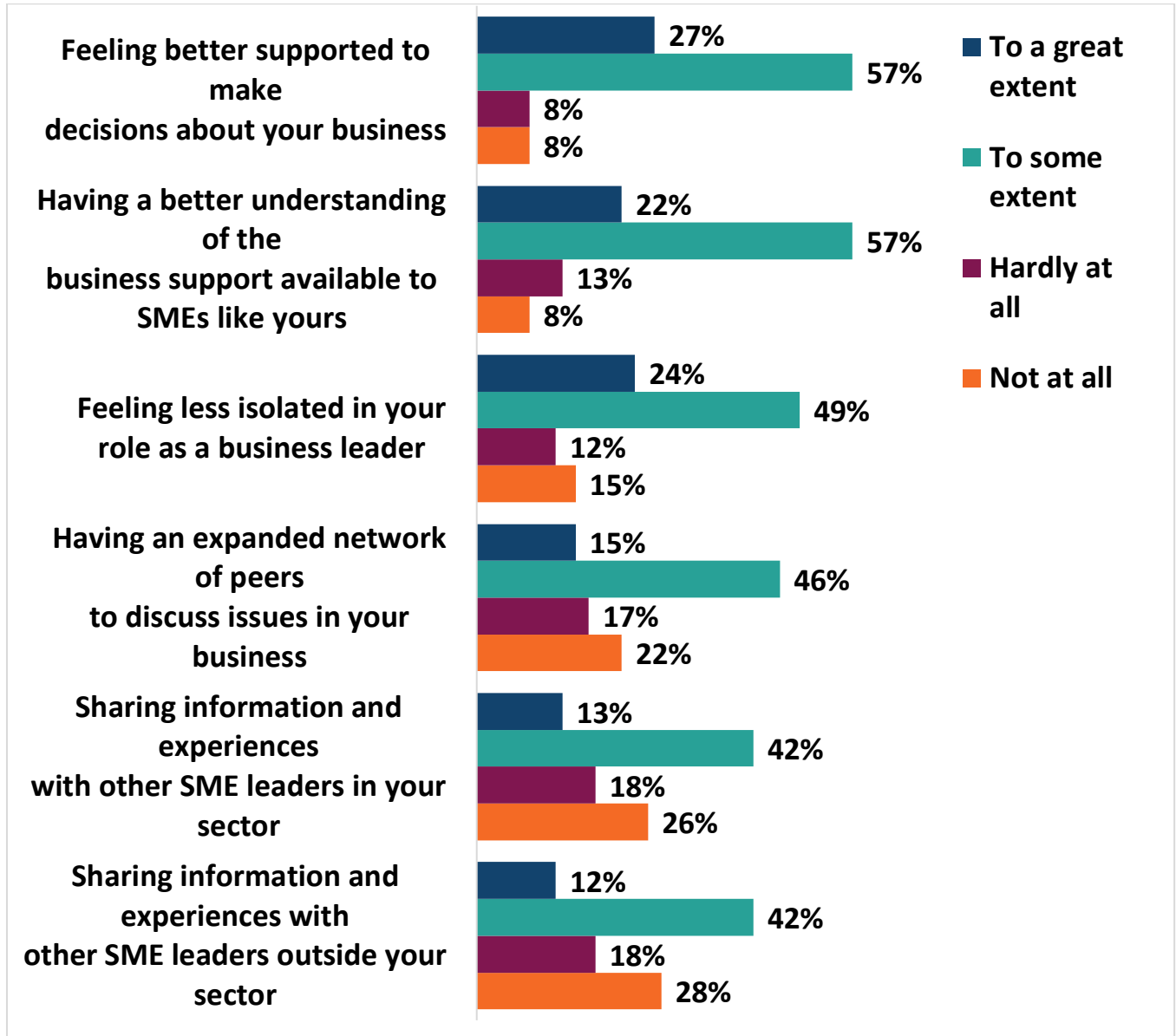
Figure 28: Which (if any) of the following have you learned or gained from participation in the Help to Grow: Management programme? Please select all that apply (Quarterly comparison)



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 157; Y2Q3 (90), Y2Q4 (67); Note: bars show data from wave 4 of the post completion survey (Jan-Mar 2023), arrows show changes from wave 3 (Oct-Dec 2022); Question type: Multiple choice; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

Within six months, most SME leaders completing the programme felt better supported to **make decisions in their business** (84%), had an improved understanding of available **business support** (79%) and **less isolated** in their role (72%) (Figure 29).

Figure 29: To what extent has participation in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to you...

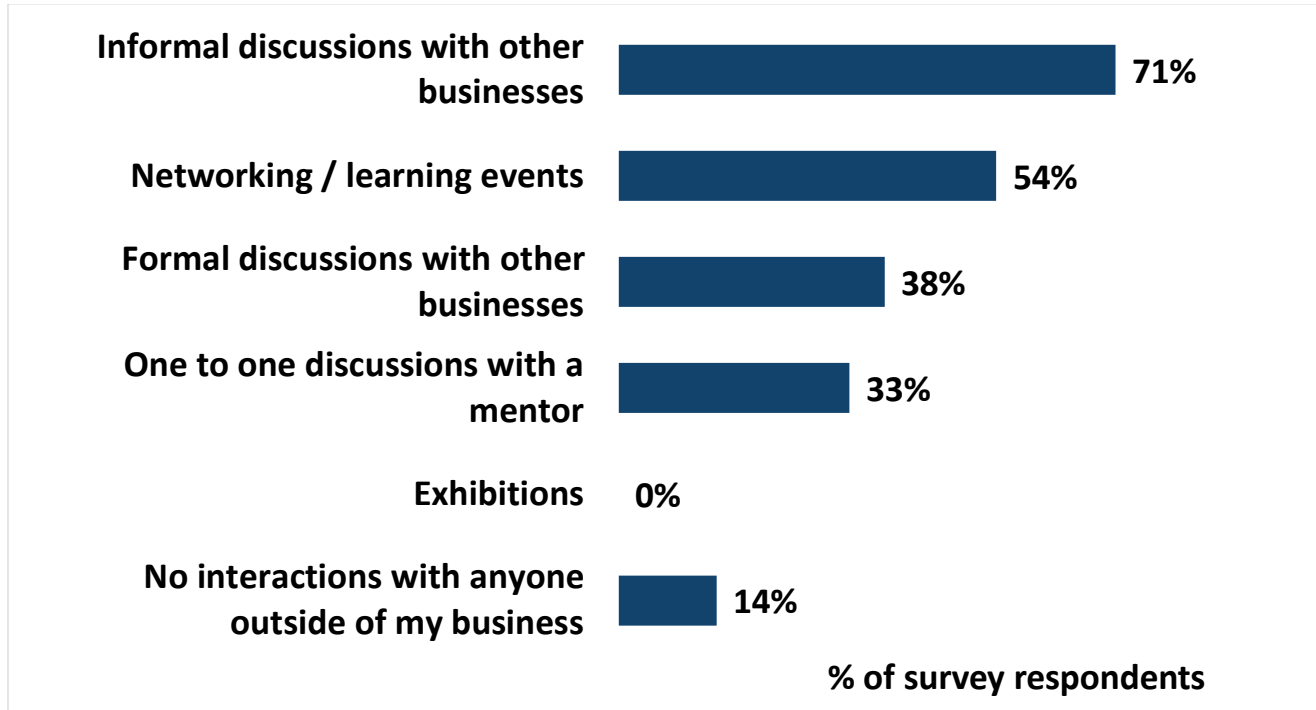


Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 652 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice per statement; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

Since completing the programme, the majority of SME leaders (86%) had interacted with SME leaders outside of their firm, typically through **informal discussions** (71%) or **networking events** (54%) (Figure 30). The results have been fairly consistent quarter-on-quarter, although

the number of programme completers attending networking events increased from 48% to 69% between Y2Q3 and Y2Q4.¹⁴

Figure 30: Since completing the programme, what activities do you engage in at least quarterly?



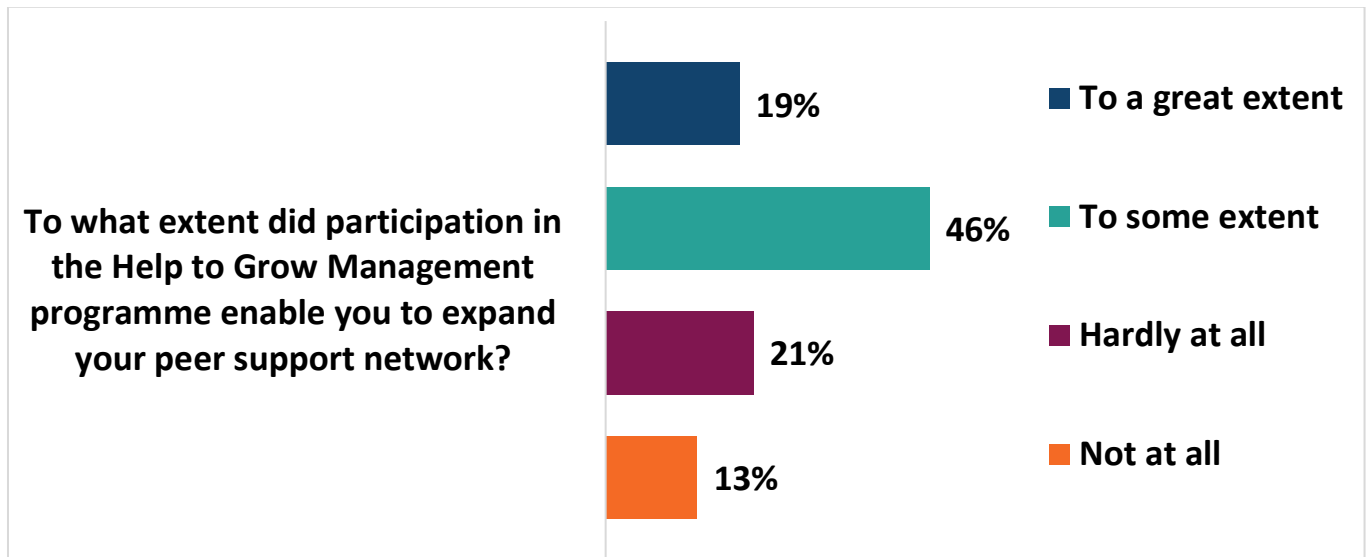
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 652 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Multiple choice

Network benefits

Overall, two thirds (65%) of SME leaders completing the programme reported that HtGM helped to expand their peer network (Figure 31). There was an increase of five percentage points on this measure between this quarter and the last (from 64% to 69%).

¹⁴ This aligns to the formal launch of the HtGM Alumni Network.

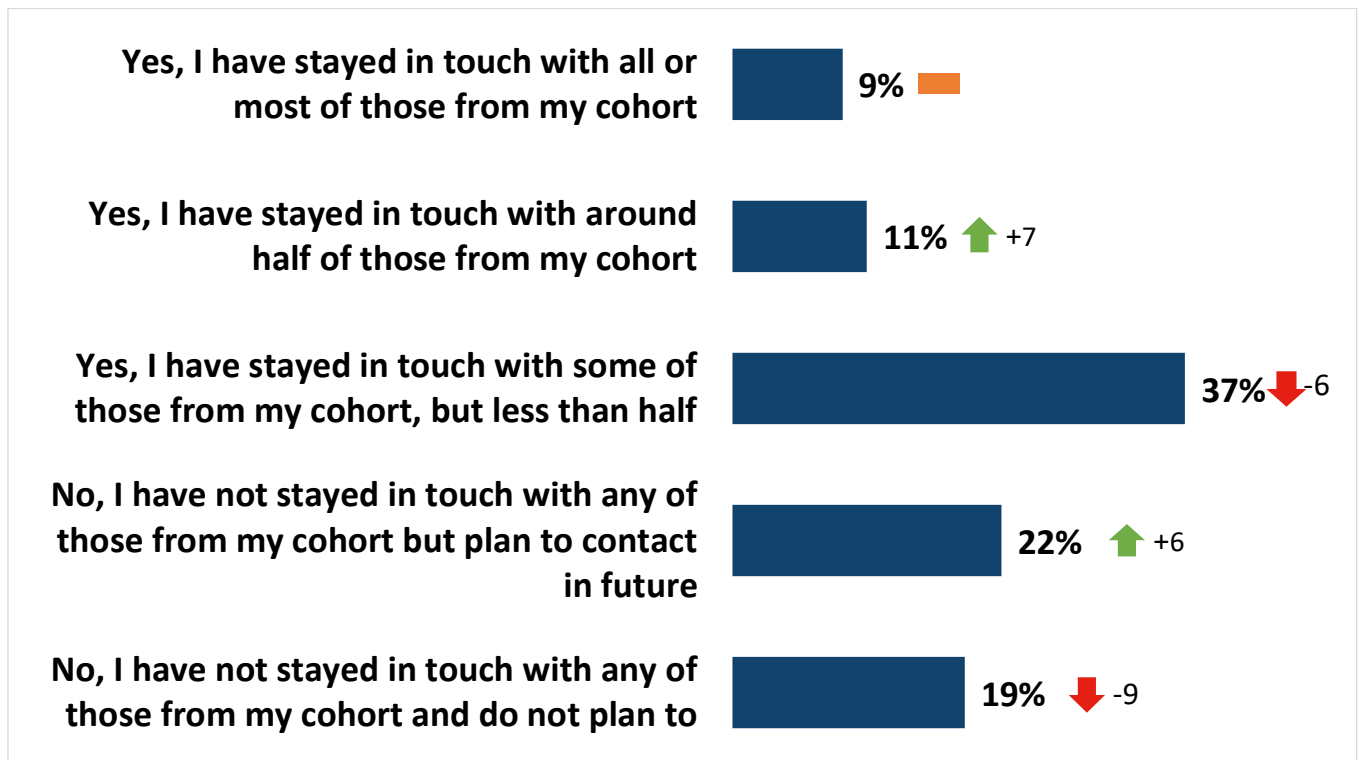
Figure 31: Network benefits



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 652 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Question type: single choice

After six months, **over half of programme participants from Y2Q4 (58%) had stayed in touch with peers from their HtGM cohort** and a further 22% intended to in the future (Figure 32). Both of these groups have increased since the previous quarter.

Figure 32: Have you stayed in touch with peers from your HtGM cohort since you completed the programme? (Quarterly comparison)

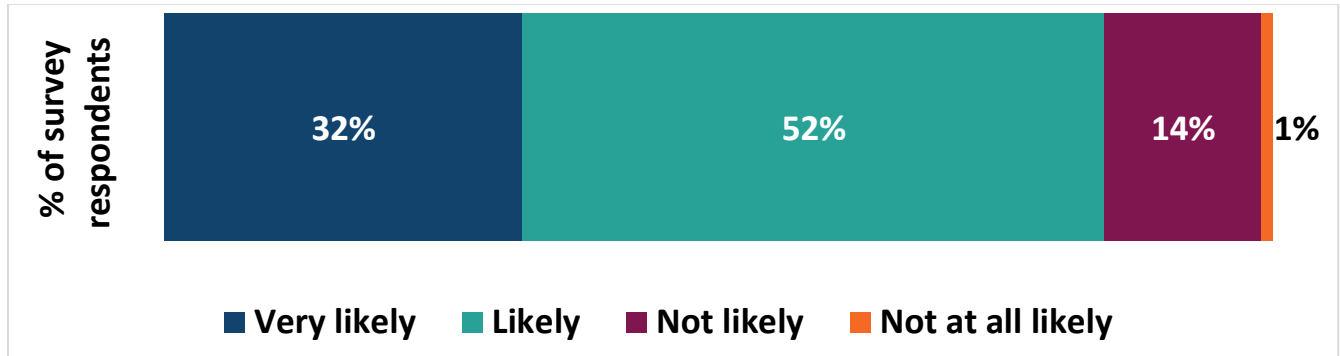


Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 131 (Y2Q4), 160 (Y2Q3); Question type: single choice

Note: bars show data from wave 4 of the post completion survey (Jan – Mar 2023), arrows show changes from wave 3 (Oct - Dec 2022) The dash indicates no change between waves.

Of those that were already in touch with their HtGM peers, or intended to be, the majority (84%) expected that they would stay in contact with their HtGM peers in future (Figure 33).

Figure 33: How likely are you to stay in contact with peers from your HtGM programme cohort in the future?

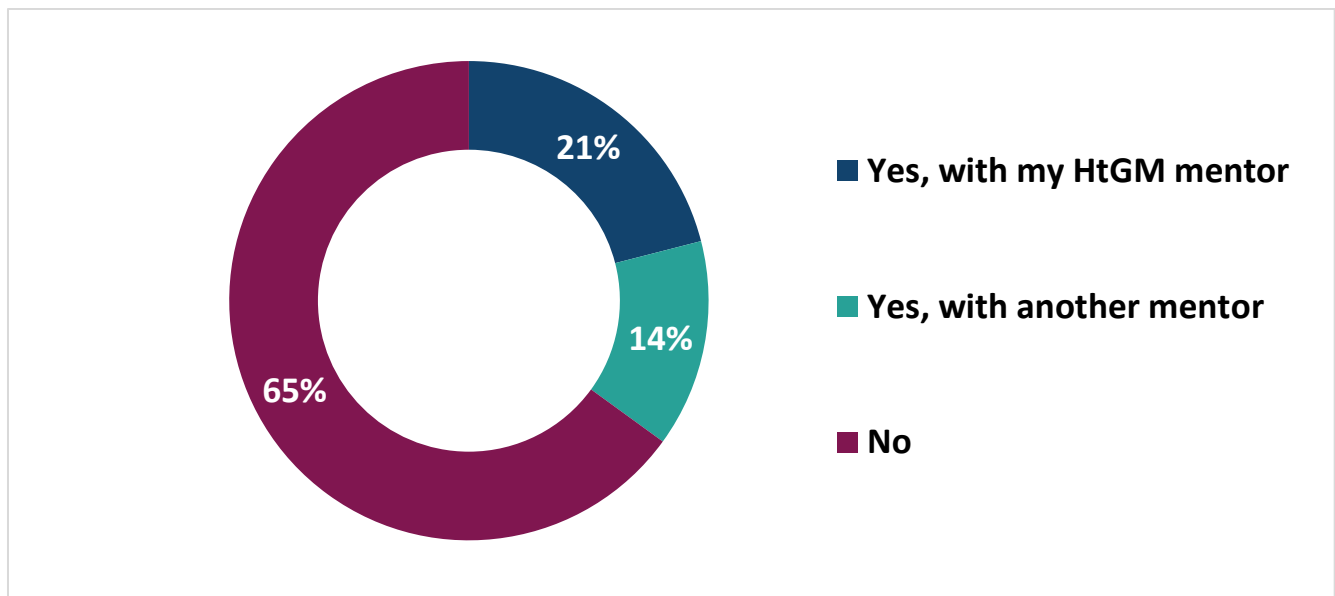


Source: Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 497 (Asked only to those who kept in touch with their cohort or planned to) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice

Follow on activity

Six months after completing HtGM, one third (35%) of SME leaders were engaged in mentoring activity. One in five (21%) were continuing to be mentored by their HtGM mentor.

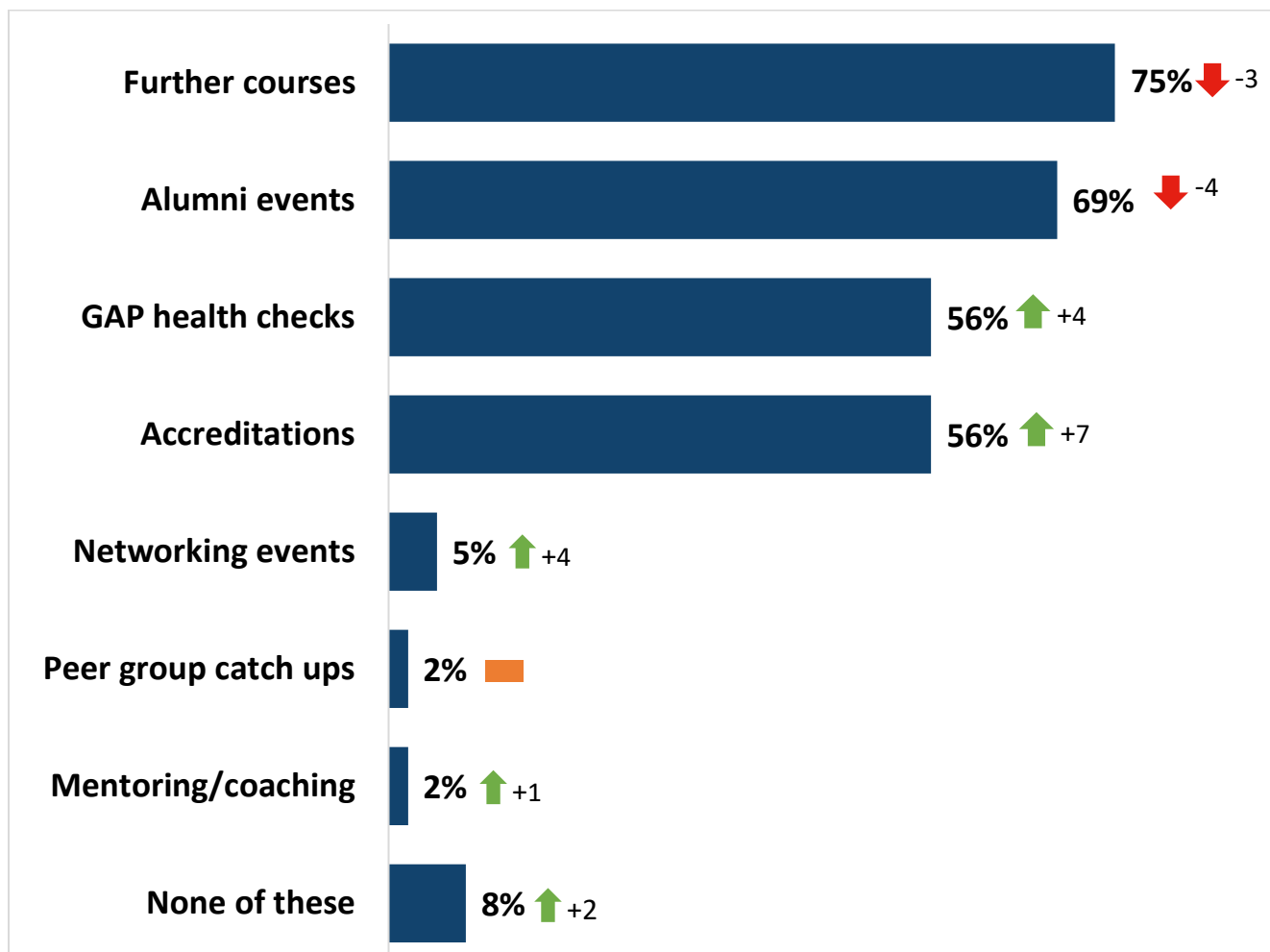
Figure 34: Have you continued mentoring since completing?



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 652 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice

Programme completers expressed an interest in a range of alumni activities. In the most recent quarter (Y2Q4), further courses (75%), alumni events (69%), accreditations and GAP health checks (both 56%) are the most popular. Accreditations have seen the biggest increase since the last quarter.

Figure 35: What type of HtGM alumni activities or offers would you be interested in taking part in? Please select all that apply (Y2Q4)



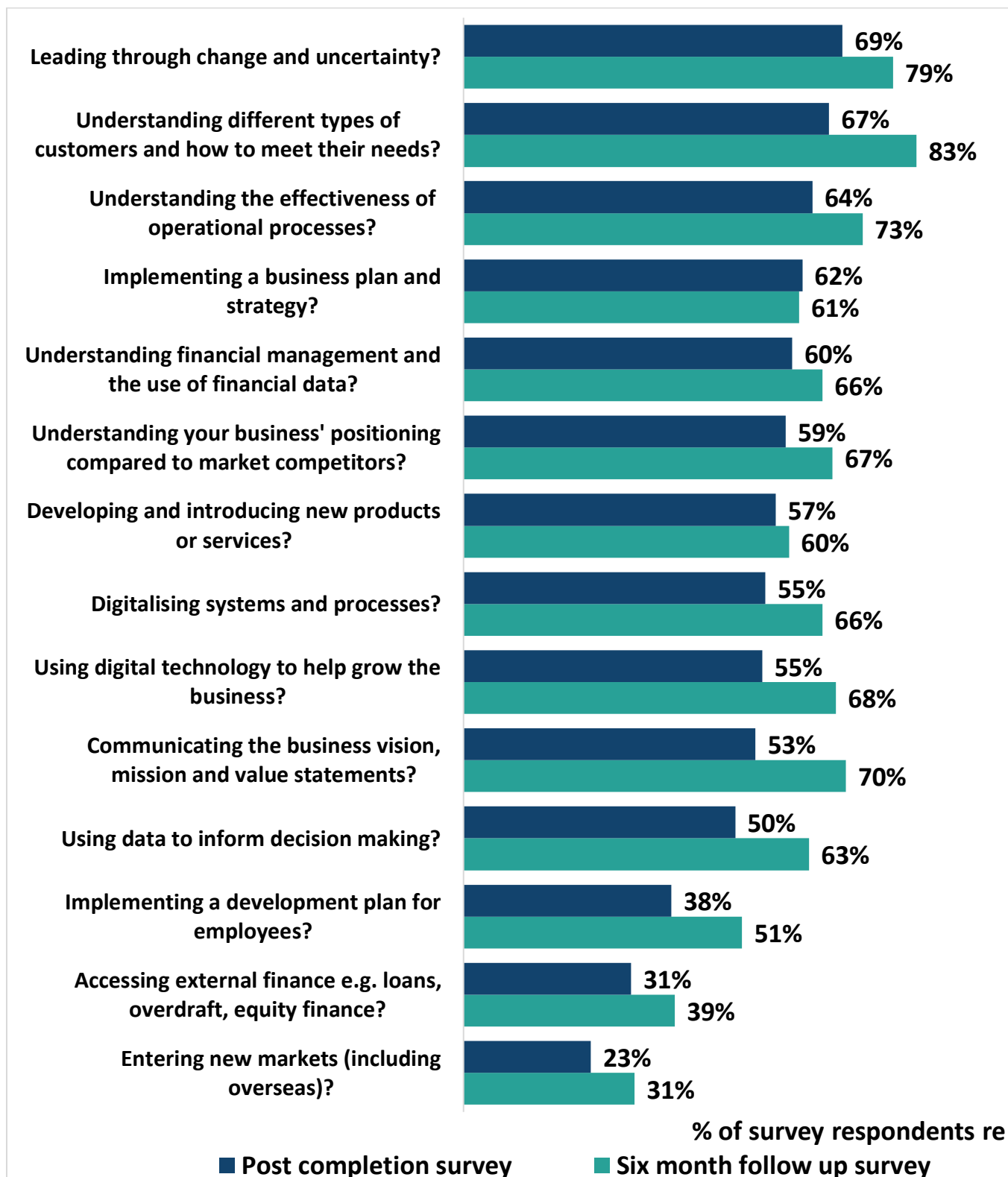
Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 131 (Y2Q4), 160 (Y2Q3); Question type: Multiple choice
 Note: bars show data from wave 4 of the post completion survey (Jan – Mar 2023), arrows show changes from wave 3 (Oct - Dec 2022). The dash indicates no change between waves.

Self-reported business outcomes

This section provides an overview of emerging evidence on business-level outcomes from HtGM. As with individual outcomes, these are self-reported and should therefore be interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive. Moreover, causal claims cannot be made about the extent to which any self-reported outcomes can be attributed to the programme. Business level impacts will be explored through data linking with secondary data sources at a later stage in the evaluation.

Upon completing the programme, SME leaders report that their firms have strong capabilities and experience in a breadth of areas and, in most cases, these continued to strengthen up to six months after completing HtGM (see Figure 36).

Figure 36: How would you rate your own firm's capabilities and experience in the following areas?¹⁵ (“Good” and “Very good”)

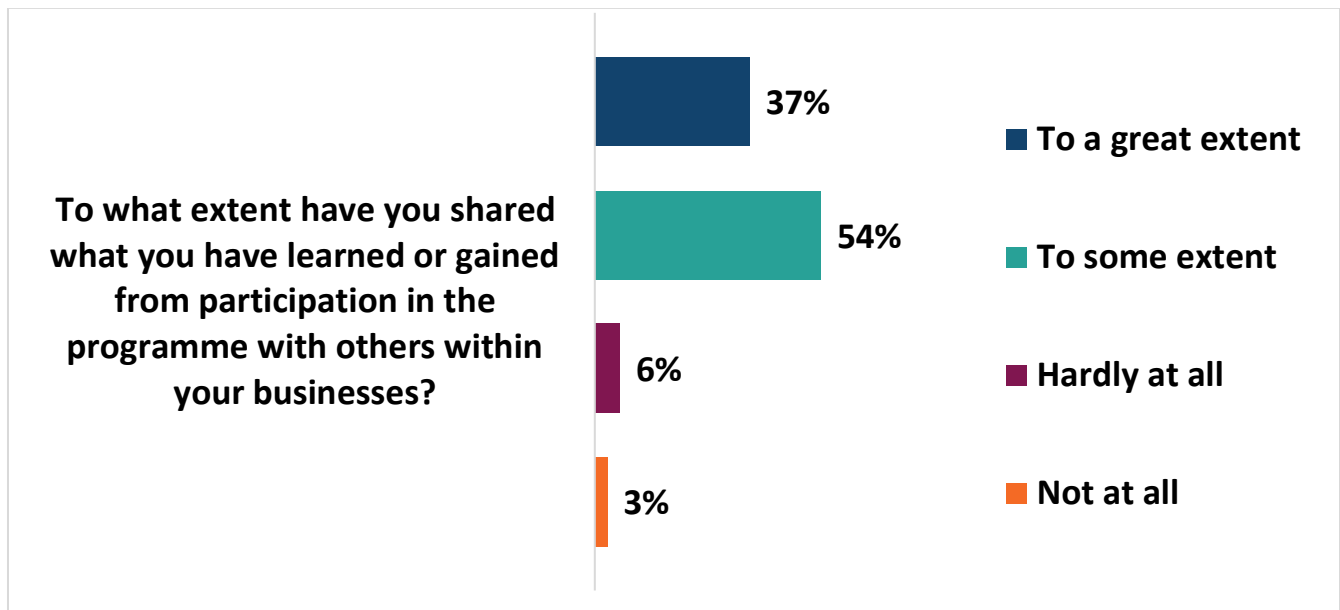


Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Base: 163 (respondents answering both surveys) (This figure reports aggregate responses to date); Question type: Single choice per statement

¹⁵ Some survey response options have been shortened for reporting purposes: “understanding financial management and use of financial data” is “Understanding financial management and the use of financial data to support strategic decision making in the organisation” in the survey and “understanding effectiveness of operational processes” is “Understanding the effectiveness of operational processes and how they could be improved?” in the survey questionnaire

Most (91%) respondents to the post-completion survey had gone on to share what they had learned or gained from participating in the programme with others in their business (to a great/some extent) (Figure 37). Only 3% had not shared what they had learned with others. This diffusion of learning is one of the key mechanisms for generating the outcomes and impacts set out in the Theory of Change for the programme.

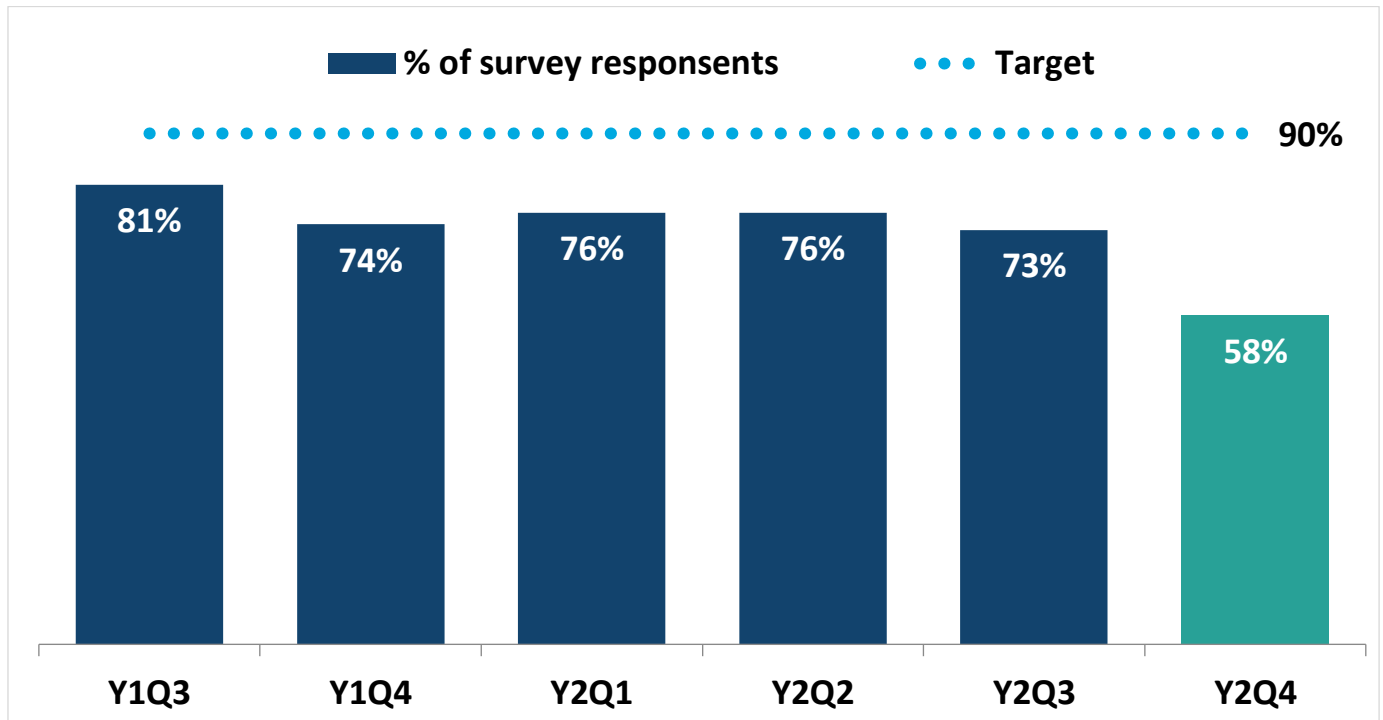
Figure 37: Diffusion of knowledge



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 652 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice

To date, three quarters (74%) of all post-completion survey respondents reported that they had produced a Growth Action Plan for their business through participation in the programme. The quarterly data also suggests that the proportion of SME leaders producing a GAP has remained relatively constant since the survey began, until the most recent quarter where there has been a notable drop of 15 percentage points (73% in Y2Q3 to 58% in Y2Q4). The target of 90% completion set by DBT has not yet been reached in any quarter.

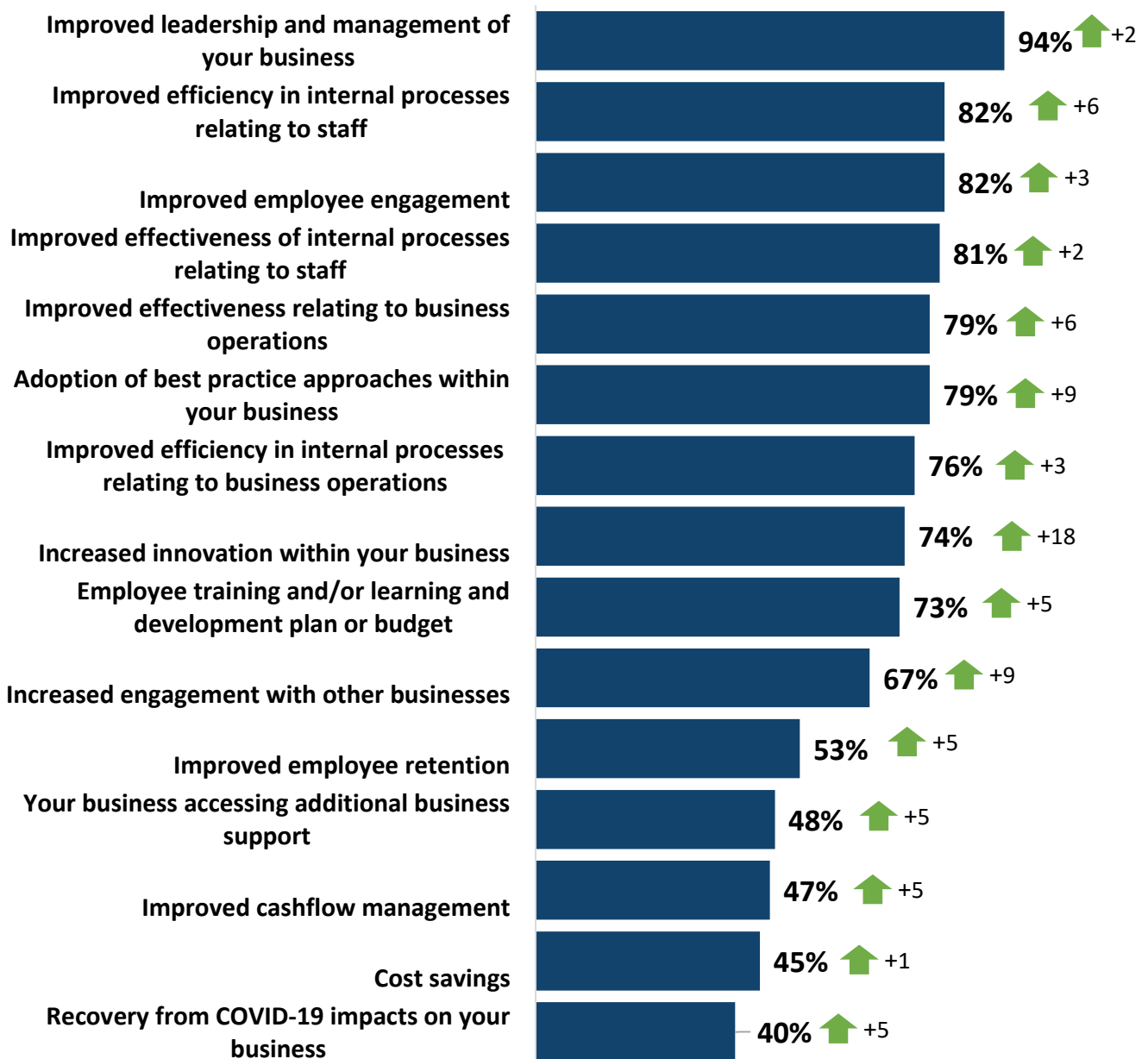
Figure 38: Have you produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP) for your business as a result of your participation on the Help to Grow programme?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 738 (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter) Question type: Single choice

Within six months of completing the programme, participants report a range of business benefits. In the most recent quarter, Y2Q4, the most commonly reported benefits were improved leadership and management of business (94%), improved efficiency in internal staff processes (82%) and improved employee engagement (82%). Figure 39 shows that there were increases across all self-reported business benefits, with the largest for increased innovation (18 percentage points) and increased engagement with other businesses (9 percentage points).

Figure 39: To what extent has participating in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to...



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 131 (Y2Q4), 160 (Y2Q3); Question type: Multiple choice
 Note: bars show data from wave 4 of the post completion survey (Jan – Mar 2023), arrows show changes from wave 3 (Oct - Dec 2022); Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

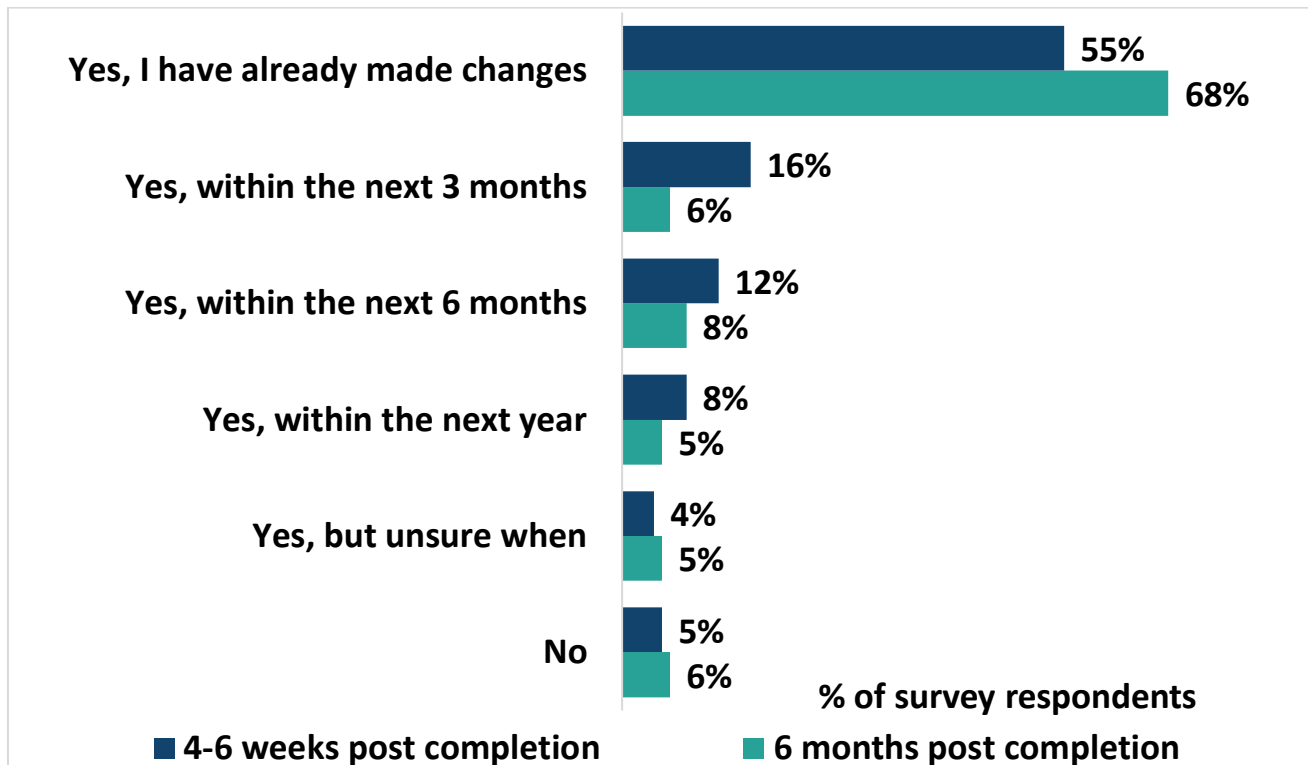
Business outcomes immediately following completion vs 6 months later

The post-completion and follow-up surveys have different samples and so cannot not be directly compared. However, collectively they provide some early insight into the nature and likely timescales of outcomes from HtGM.

After six months, **most business leaders (68%) had already made changes to their business (see Figure 40)**. These changes were most commonly to their leadership and employee engagement (89%) and operational efficiency (78%) (see Figure 41).

Early evidence suggests that business-level benefits continue to accrue six months after completing HtGM: respondents reported more outcomes in the six month follow up survey than the short-term completion survey.

Figure 40: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you or do you plan to make any changes to the way you manage, organise, or operate your business?



Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Bases: 738, 652 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice

Figure 41: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you already made changes in any of the following ways in which you manage, organise or operate your business?



Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Bases: 405; 445 (Asked to those who had already made a change in their business) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: multiple choice

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