Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Help to Grow: Management Evaluation

Summary quarterly progress report #3 (Oct-Dec 2022)

July 2023

Contents

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 third 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 October 2022 to December 2022 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,) 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.

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.

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[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.

Figure 1: Overview of HtGM evaluation surveys

Post completion		6 month follow-up		Non-completion	
Issued to all participants four to six weeks after completing module 12 of the Help to Grow: Management programme. It gathers feedback on the processes associated with delivery of the programme and emerging evidence on the short-term outcomes in the Theory of Change.	**Launch date:** September 2021 **Mode:** Online **Frequency** Monthly **Waves completed:** 15 **Next wave:** 15 January	All participants are contacted six months after completion of the programme to participate in a telephone interview designed to capture data on the outcomes / impact of the programme on them and their business. Some respondents will have completed the post-completion survey but not all.	**Launch date:** June 2022 **Mode:** Telephone **Frequency** Quarterly **Waves completed:** 3 **Next wave:** Early February	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.	**Launch date:** June 2022 **Mode:** Telephone **Frequency** Quarterly **Waves completed:** 3 **Next wave:** Early February

Survey update

As of 30th December 2022, 1,190 responses had been received to the post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 2):

- The post-completion online survey was issued to 4,472 SME leaders who completed HtGM before December 2022. As of 30th December 2022, 670 responses had been received, representing a **15% overall response rate**.

- 1,658 SME leaders who completed HtGM before May 2022 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey. As of 30th December 2022, 520 responses had been received, representing a **42% overall adjusted response rate**.

Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n=28). This comes from a sample frame containing 300 cases, 21 of which were ineligible. [3] Figure 3 shows how the aggregate response rates to the three surveys has varied over time.

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

Figure 2: Post completion and six month follow up survey response rates

- 4,472 — Post completion — Number of invitations issued
- 670 — Post completion — Surveys completed
- 1,238 — Six month follow up — Number of invitations issued
- 520 — Six month follow up — Surveys completed

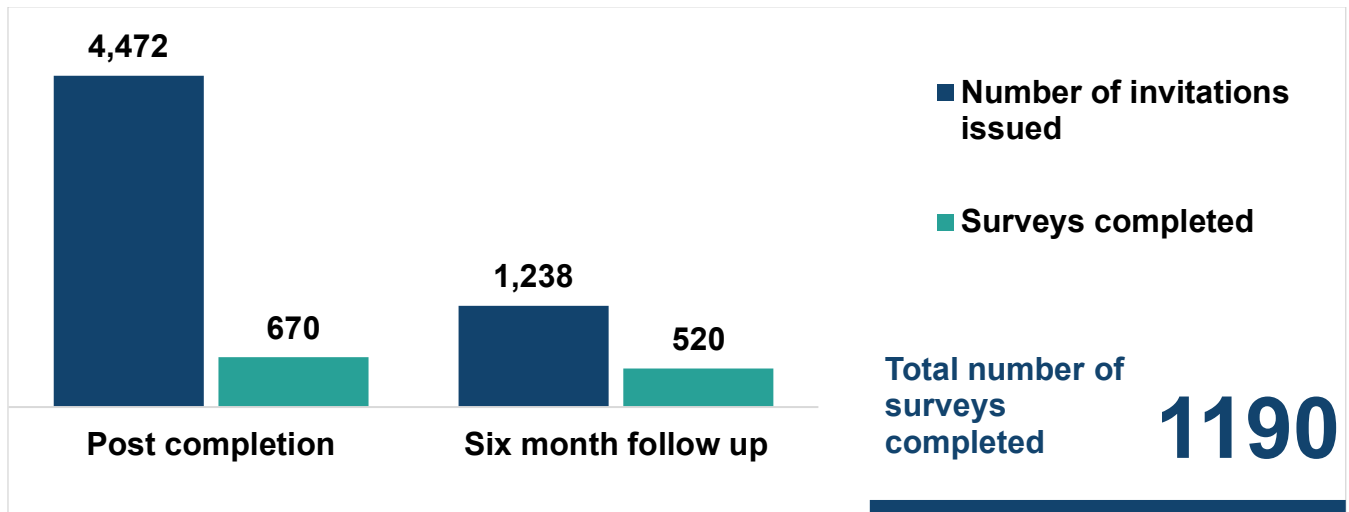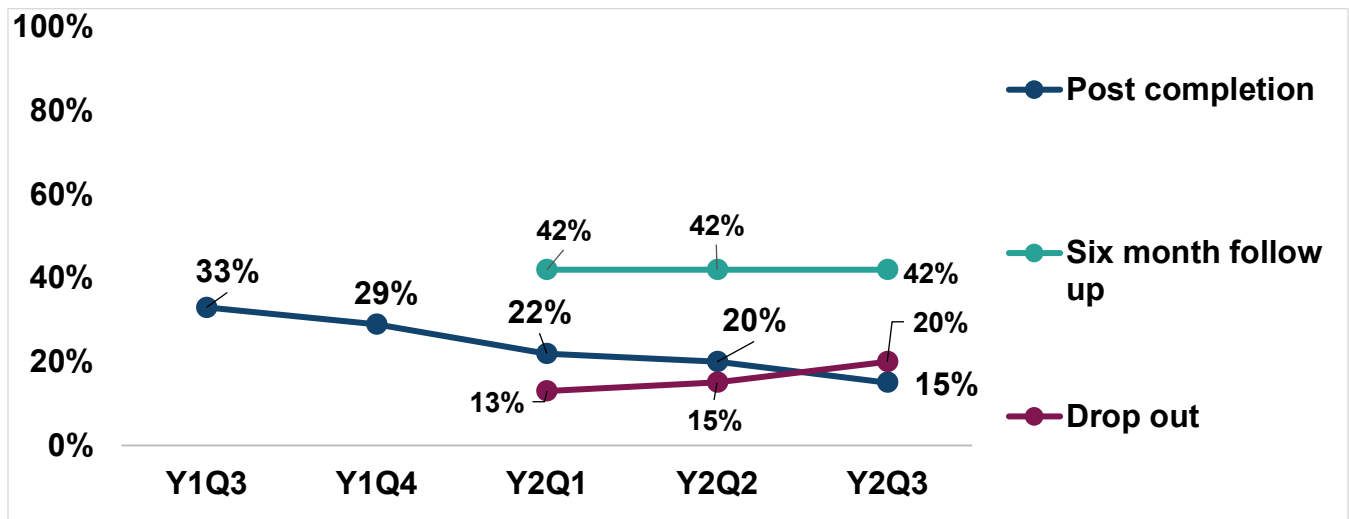**Total number of surveys completed** **1190**

Figure 3: Cumulative survey 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. Data for six month follow up survey show adjusted response rates.

Profile of demand[4]

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. One third of registrations (32%) and enrolments (31%)[5] to the programme were made by businesses based in London and the South East. These figures broadly align

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[4] Note: DBT data in this report may not always directly align to data presented in following quarterly reports due to data lags.

[5] N.B. A participant is considered to have enrolled onto HtGM once they have registered and paid for their place.

to the wider UK SME population (with 5-249 employees), for which London and the South East account for the largest shares (18% and 14%, respectively).[6]

- **Sector**: businesses that registered for HtGM operate across a broad range of industry sectors. The most common was 'other service activities' (15%), which includes member organisations, trade unions, businesses involved in the repair of computers and household goods and personal service activities, such as hairdressing, beauty, and physical wellbeing. Other sectors of SMEs registered and enrolled on the programme include manufacturing (14% both), construction (11% both), professional, scientific and technical industries (11% registrants, 12% enrollers) and information and communication (9% both).

- **Age**: around half of firms registering and enrolling on HtGM had been in operation for 10 years or less (52% and 49%, respectively). Most commonly, applicant businesses had been operating for longer, between 11 and 49 years (43% registrants, 44% enrollers).

- **Size**: firms registering and enrolling for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (median 12 and 13 FTE respectively). The median annual turnover in 2021/22 financial year was £805k for registrants and £923k for enrolments.[7]

[6] ONS SME Business Characteristics (2021)
[7] Median results are reported here over mean because of large outliers. However, mean results are also presented in Figure 7.

Figure 4: Location of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM before 1st January 2023
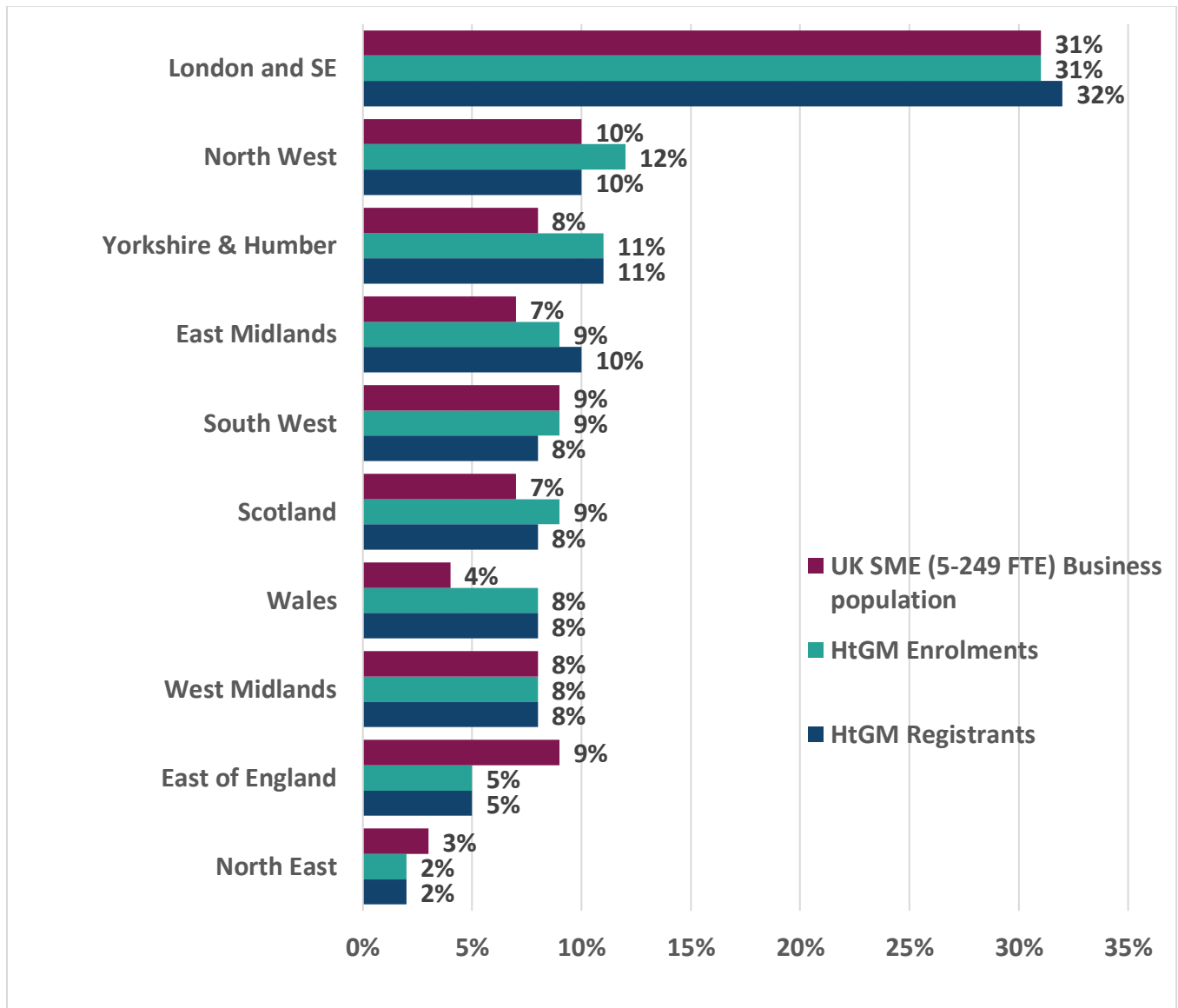
Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,985 for registrants and n=4,650 for enrolments) and UK Business Counts data (2022). Note: In some instances bars with the same label differ in length because of differences at the decimal point;
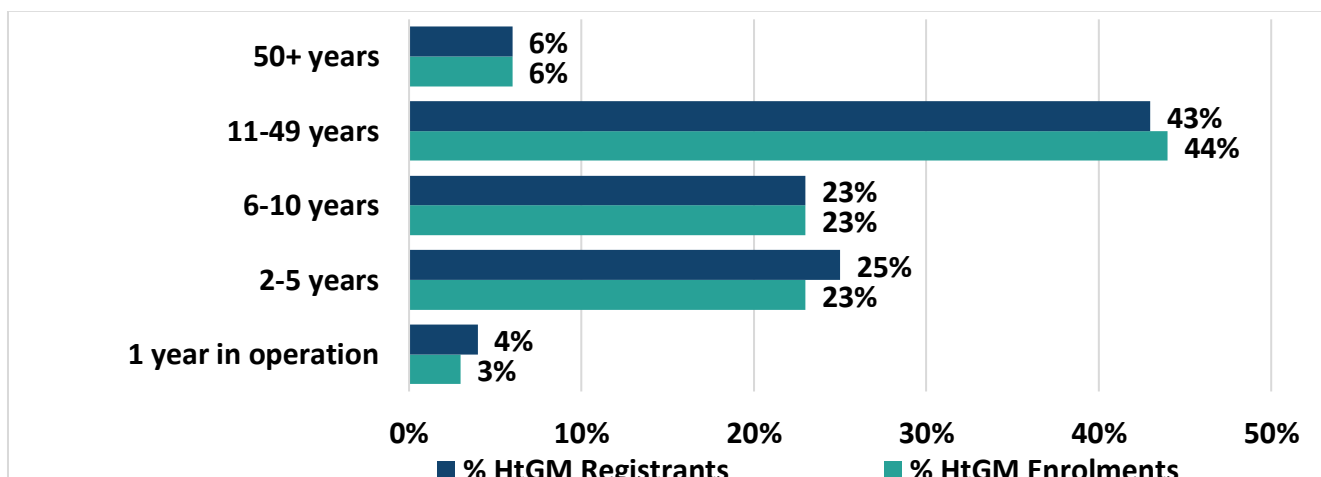
Figure 5: Sector of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM before 1st January 2023
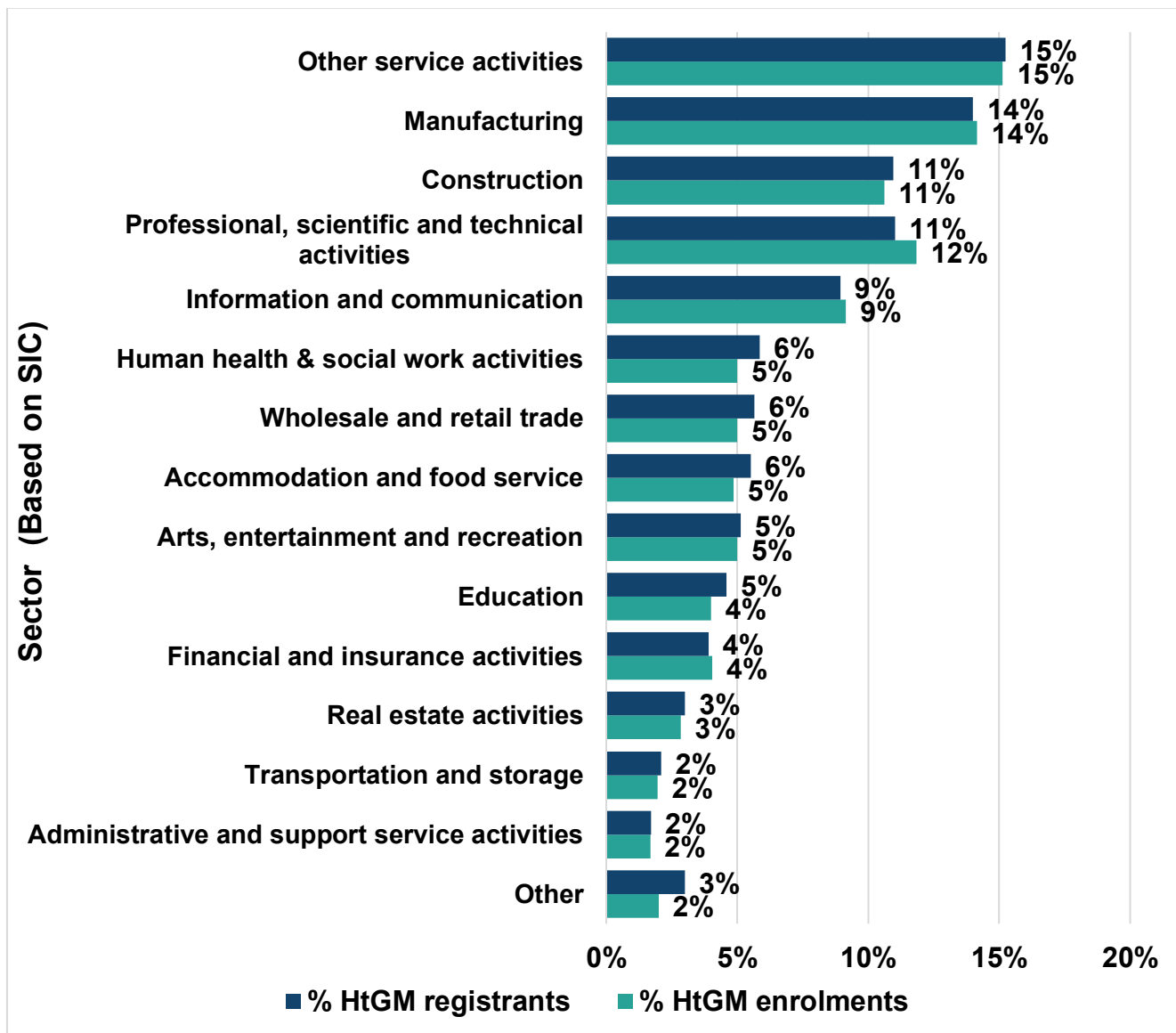
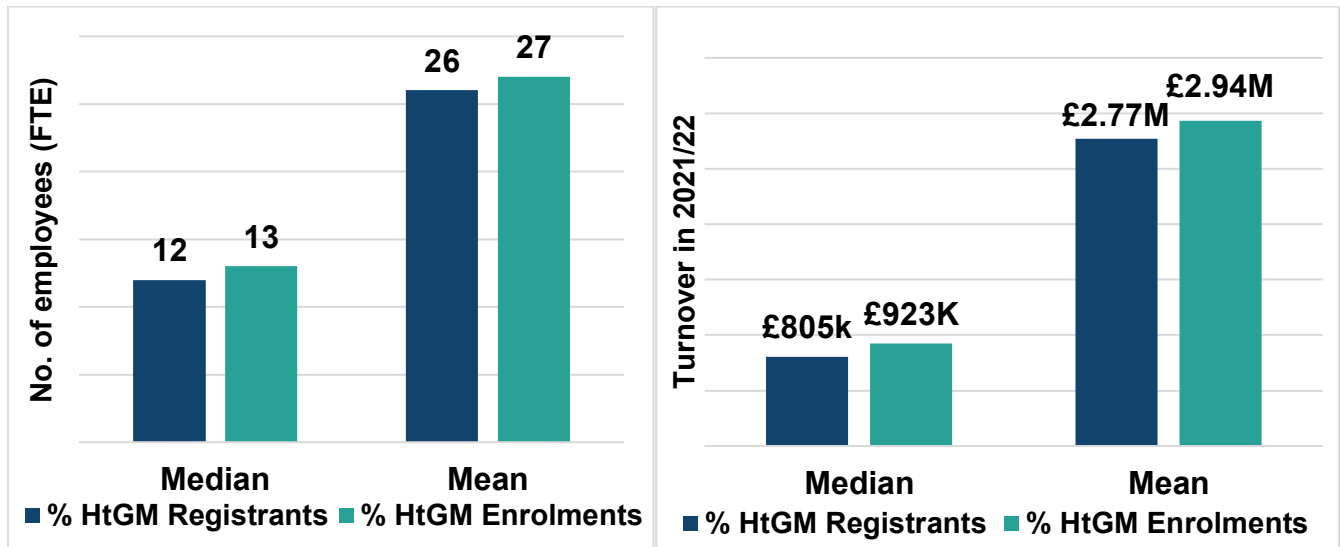Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,985 for registrants and n=4,650 for enrolments);
Note: In some instances bars with the same label differ in length because of differences at the decimal point

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

Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,985 for registrants and n=4,650 for enrolments);

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

Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,985 for registrants and n=4,650 for enrolments)
Note: data on employees and turnover and are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers (for both mean and median)
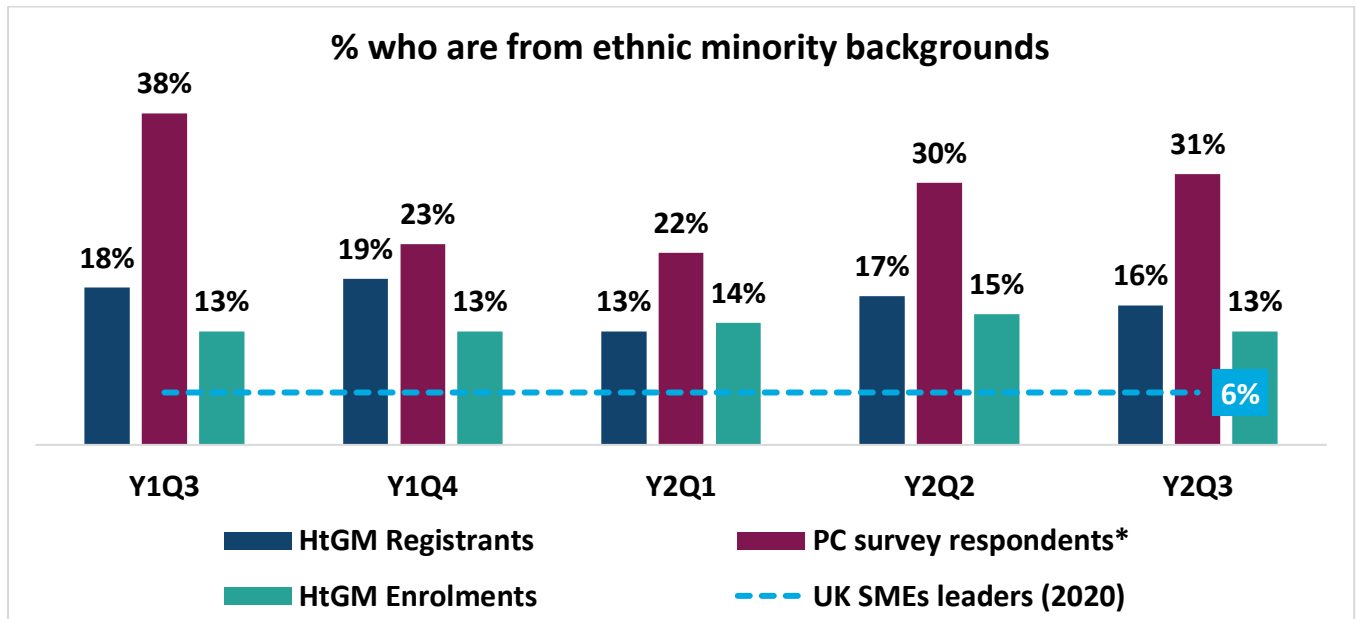
SME leaders

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 (35%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses. [8] The proportion of SME leaders registering from an ethnic minority background (16%) is also 10 percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses[9] (see Figure 8).

SME leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds and female leaders are both overrepresented in the post-completion evaluation survey compared to SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM.

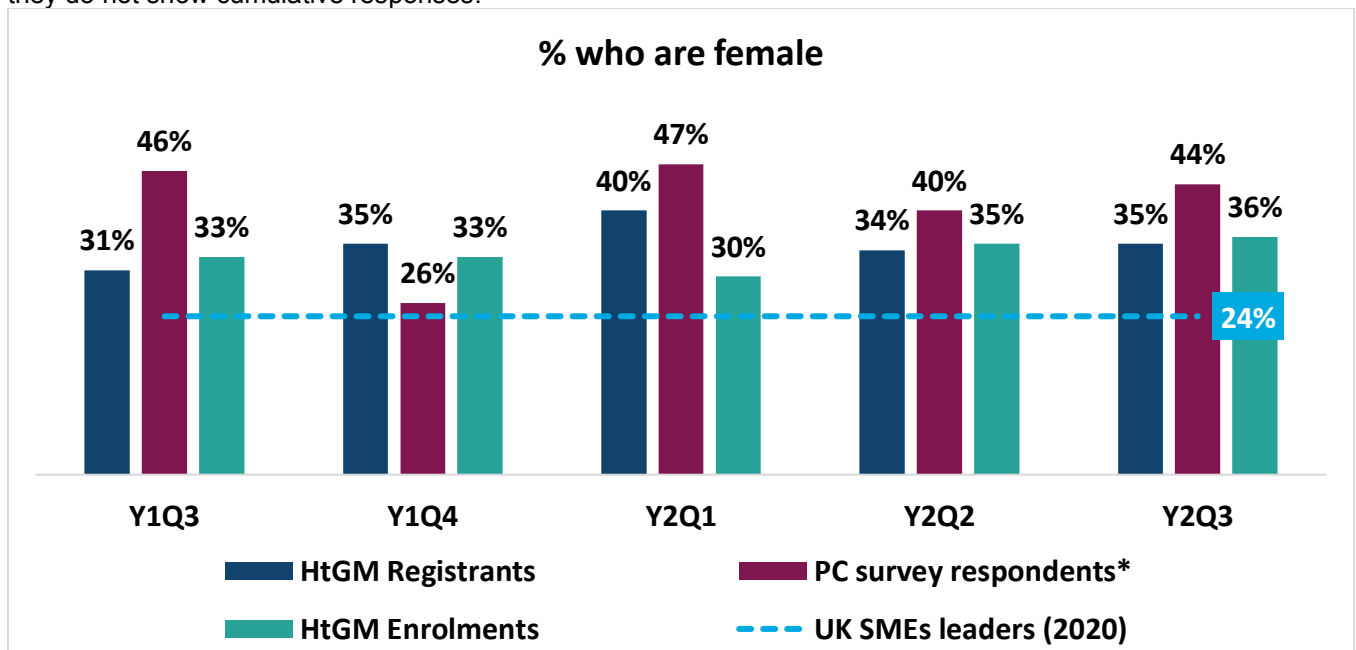[8] Women owned and women led businesses provide a total of 24% private sector employment – Federation for Small Businesses - https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/supporting-women-s-enterprise-in-the-uk.html
[9] Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises - https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf

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

% who are from ethnic minority backgrounds

Legend:
- HtGM Registrants
- PC survey respondents*
- HtGM Enrolments
- UK SMEs leaders (2020)

Y1Q3: HtGM Registrants 18%, PC survey respondents 38%, HtGM Enrolments 13%
Y1Q4: HtGM Registrants 19%, PC survey respondents 23%, HtGM Enrolments 13%
Y2Q1: HtGM Registrants 13%, PC survey respondents 22%, HtGM Enrolments 14%
Y2Q2: HtGM Registrants 17%, PC survey respondents 30%, HtGM Enrolments 15%
Y2Q3: HtGM Registrants 16%, PC survey respondents 31%, HtGM Enrolments 13%, UK SMEs leaders 6%

Note: the bars showing data from post-completing survey respondents are based on the discrete quarterly data, they do not show cumulative responses.

% who are female

Legend:
- HtGM Registrants
- PC survey respondents*
- HtGM Enrolments
- UK SMEs leaders (2020)

Y1Q3: HtGM Registrants 31%, PC survey respondents 46%, HtGM Enrolments 33%
Y1Q4: HtGM Registrants 35%, PC survey respondents 26%, HtGM Enrolments 33%
Y2Q1: HtGM Registrants 40%, PC survey respondents 47%, HtGM Enrolments 30%
Y2Q2: HtGM Registrants 34%, PC survey respondents 40%, HtGM Enrolments 35%
Y2Q3: HtGM Registrants 35%, PC survey respondents 44%, HtGM Enrolments 36%, UK SMEs leaders 24%

Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,985 for registrants and n=4,650 for enrolments) Post completion survey (n=670); 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

SME leaders registering and enrolling in HtGM were most commonly aged between 35 and 49 years old (52% of both registrants and enrolments). Around one quarter were younger, with 26% aged 25 to 34 years old (for both registrants and enrolments) and 2% of both registrants and enrolments aged 16 to 24 years old.

Figure 9: Age of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM before 1st January 2023[10]
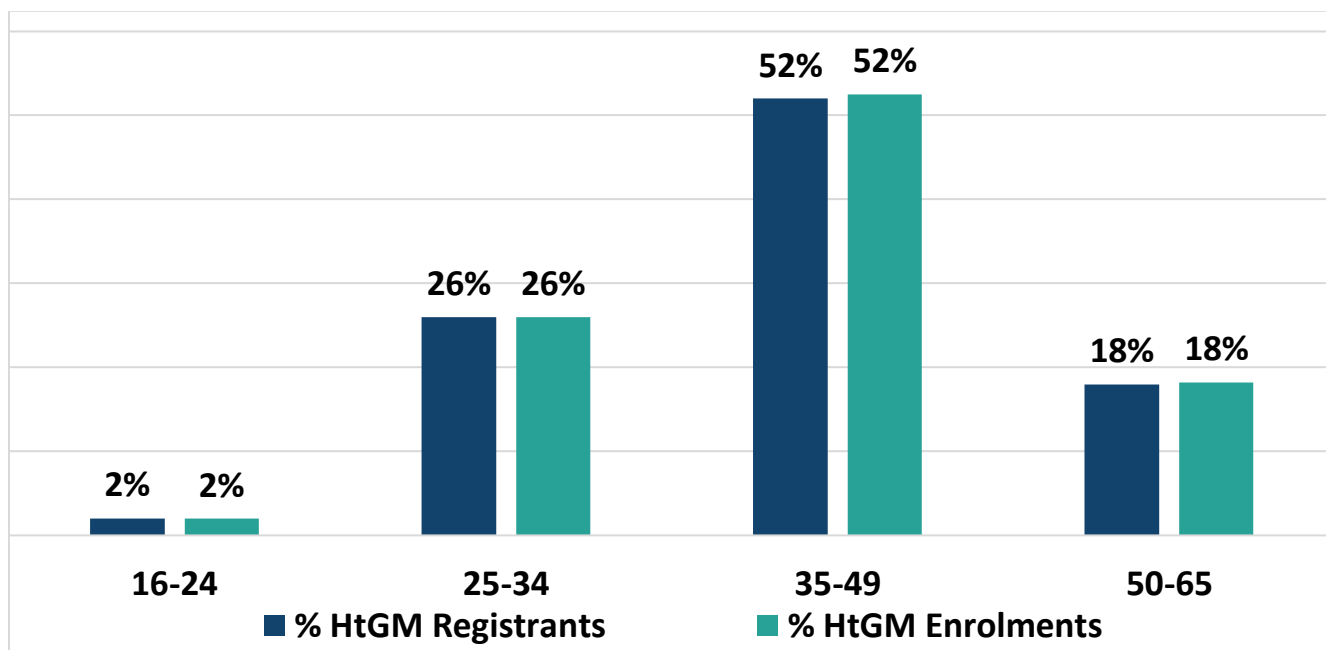
Source: HtGM Registration form (n=5,985 for registrants and n=4,650 for enrolments)
Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding, this figure excludes 'don't know'

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** (74%), be more **confident** to lead their business (74%) and have an **improved understanding 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%).

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[10] Note: the categories of data presented here may differ slightly to data presented in later quarterly reports.

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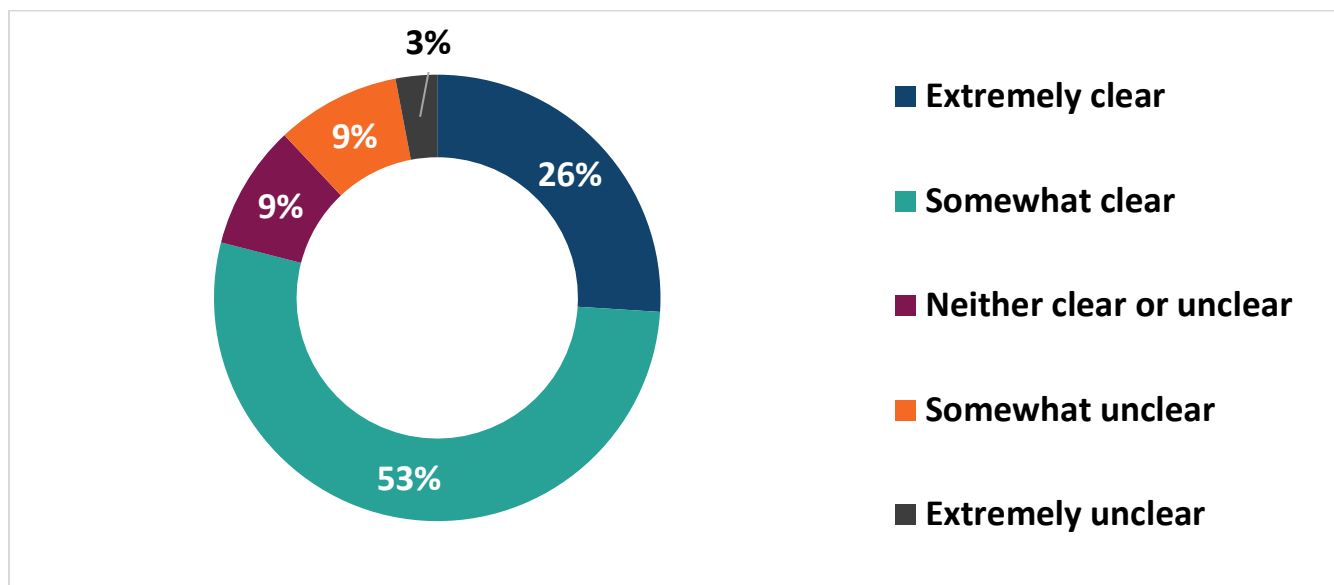

Source: Post completion survey; Base: 670 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Multiple choice

Most survey respondents (80%) were somewhat or extremely **clear on the programme's aims and objectives** at the time of application (see Figure 11). Around one in ten (11%) were unclear (Figure 11). Looking at the underpinning quarterly data, the percentage of respondents reporting that they were extremely clear increased from 26% to 43% between Y2Q2 and Y2Q3.[11]

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[11] This figure in Y2Q3 is anomalously high relative to all other quarters of the survey, which range from 15% to 26% reporting the programme's aims and objectives were 'extremely clear'

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

Source: Post completion survey; Base: 670 (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
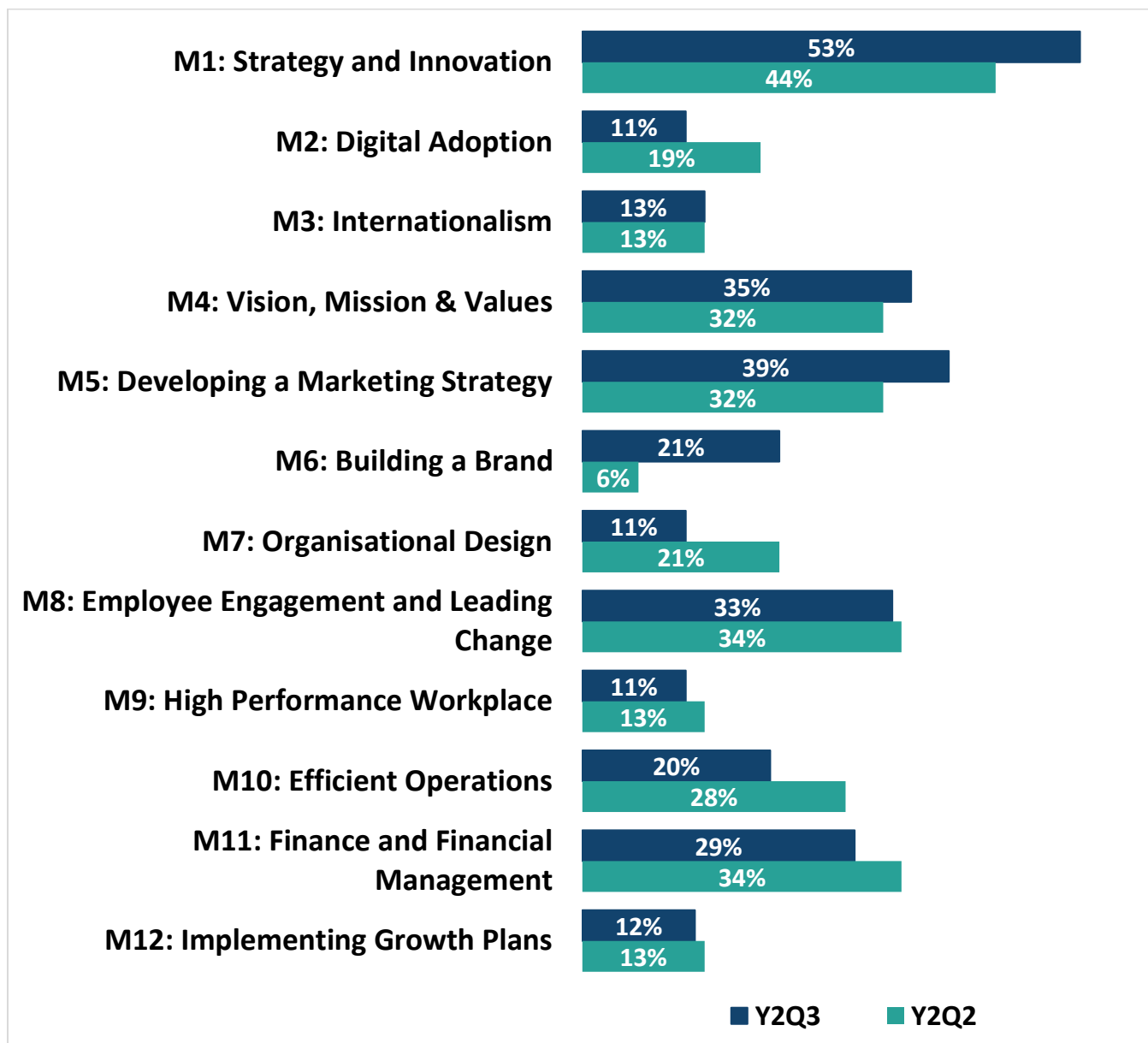
Expectations and understanding of HtGM

In the recent quarter (Y2Q3), over half (53%) of SME leaders ranked **strategy and innovation** in their top three modules of interest at the time of applying. Other modules identified as being of most interest were **developing a marketing strategy** (39%); **vision, mission and values** (35%) and **employee engagement and leading change** (33%) (Figure 12). This pattern is reflected in the aggregate data (all quarters combined), where strategy and innovation (47%) and marketing (36%) rank highest in terms of interest at registration.

Since the previous quarter, interest in the **building a brand** module has increased (from 6% in Y2Q2 to 21% in Y2Q3)[12], whilst there has been a drop in interest in the **organisational design** module by 10 percentage points and **digital adoption** by 8 percentage points.

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[12] This figure in Y2Q3 is anomalously high relative to all other quarters of the survey, which range from 4% to 11% of respondents selecting 'Building a Brand' as one of the top three modules they were most interested in at the time of applying to HtGM.

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


Module	Y2Q3	Y2Q2
M1: Strategy and Innovation	53%	44%
M2: Digital Adoption	11%	19%
M3: Internationalism	13%	13%
M4: Vision, Mission & Values	35%	32%
M5: Developing a Marketing Strategy	39%	32%
M6: Building a Brand	21%	6%
M7: Organisational Design	11%	21%
M8: Employee Engagement and Leading Change	33%	34%
M9: High Performance Workplace	11%	13%
M10: Efficient Operations	20%	28%
M11: Finance and Financial Management	29%	34%
M12: Implementing Growth Plans	12%	13%

Source: Post completion survey; Base: (Figure shows quarterly survey responses) Y2Q2 (149), Y2Q3 (90); Question type: = Multiple choice (limited to three options)

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

In December 2022, an additional response option relating to the alumni network was added to the question presented in Figure 13. The first national event was held in November 2022 and the first regional event was held in January 2023. Prior to this, some schools were organising informal local alumni events. Early findings suggest that most participants were unclear that the programme included joining an alumni network – less than one third were clear on this (28%).

Figure 13: Thinking about your experience of applying to HtGM, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
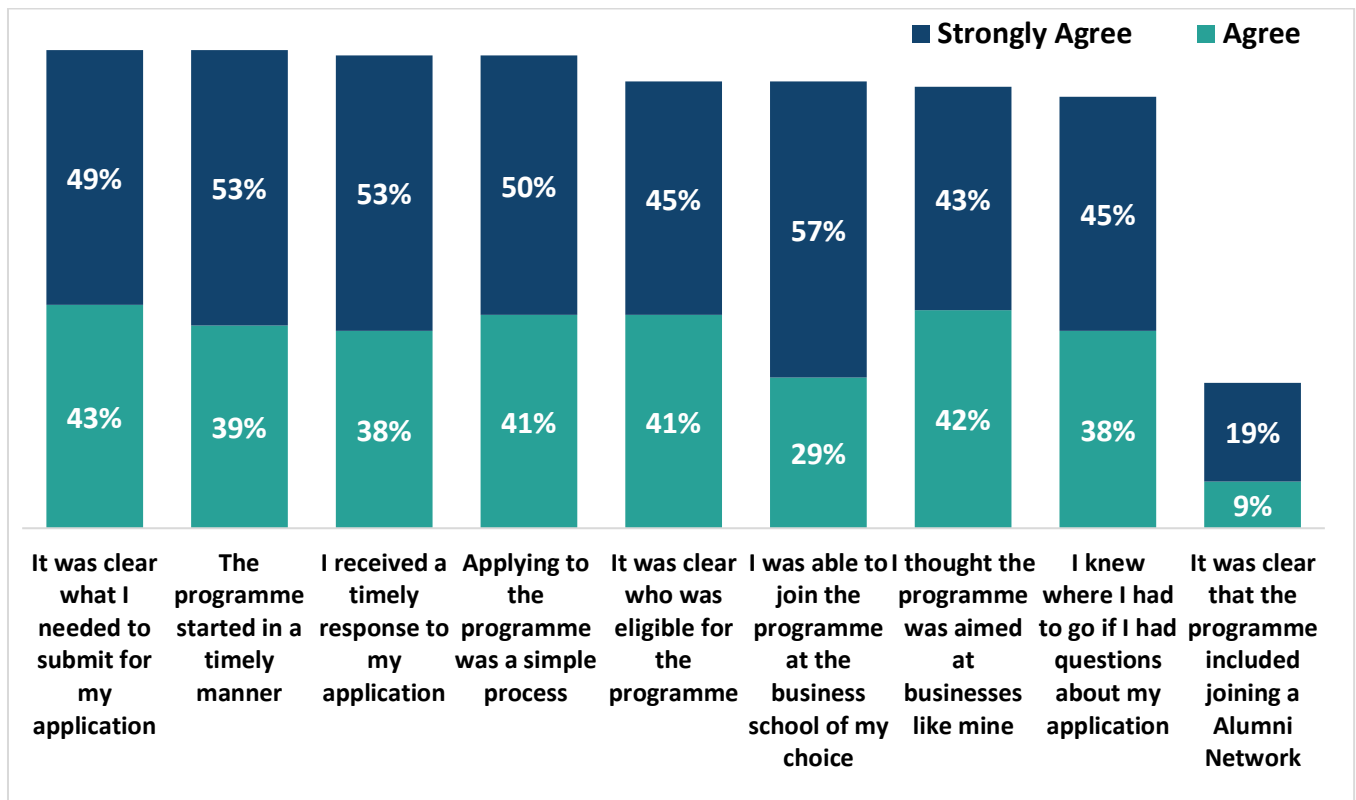
Source: Post completion, Base: 670 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) except for 'It was clear that the programme included joining an Alumni Network' was added in Y2Q3, meaning it has a smaller sample (45); Question type: Single choice per statement

Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

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 90% saying they were fairly or very satisfied and 9% saying they were fairly or very dissatisfied (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Programme satisfaction (Overall)
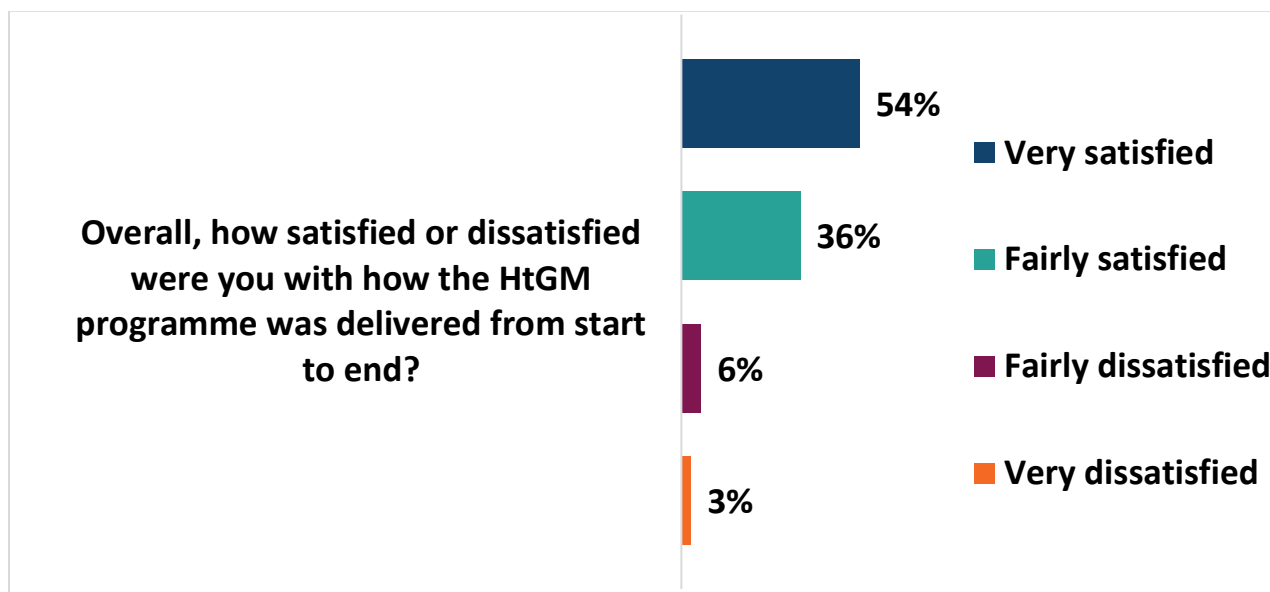
Source: Post completion, Base: 670 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice

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 (Figure 15).

The aggregate survey results show that programme completers are divided on the relevance of the internationalisation module, with 48% finding it relevant. However, this is the module that has seen the **greatest increase** in reported relevance in the underpinning quarterly data – increasing from 41% in Y1Q4 to 57% in Y2Q3.

The finance and financial management module has also seen a notable increase over the same time period, from 65% in Y1Q4 to 78% in Y2Q3.

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

% extremely or somewhat relevant

Source: Post completion survey, Base: 670 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice per statement

Mentoring

As of 1st August 2022, BEIS changed the mentoring element of HtGM from mentors being paid for their time to mentors delivering support to programme participants on a voluntary basis.. Some respondents to Y2Q3 survey will have received mentoring under the new delivery model.

Overall, the mentoring element of the programme is highly regarded by programme participants. Nine in every ten (89%) survey respondents were satisfied with mentoring support received and of these two thirds (66%) were very satisfied (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Satisfaction with mentoring
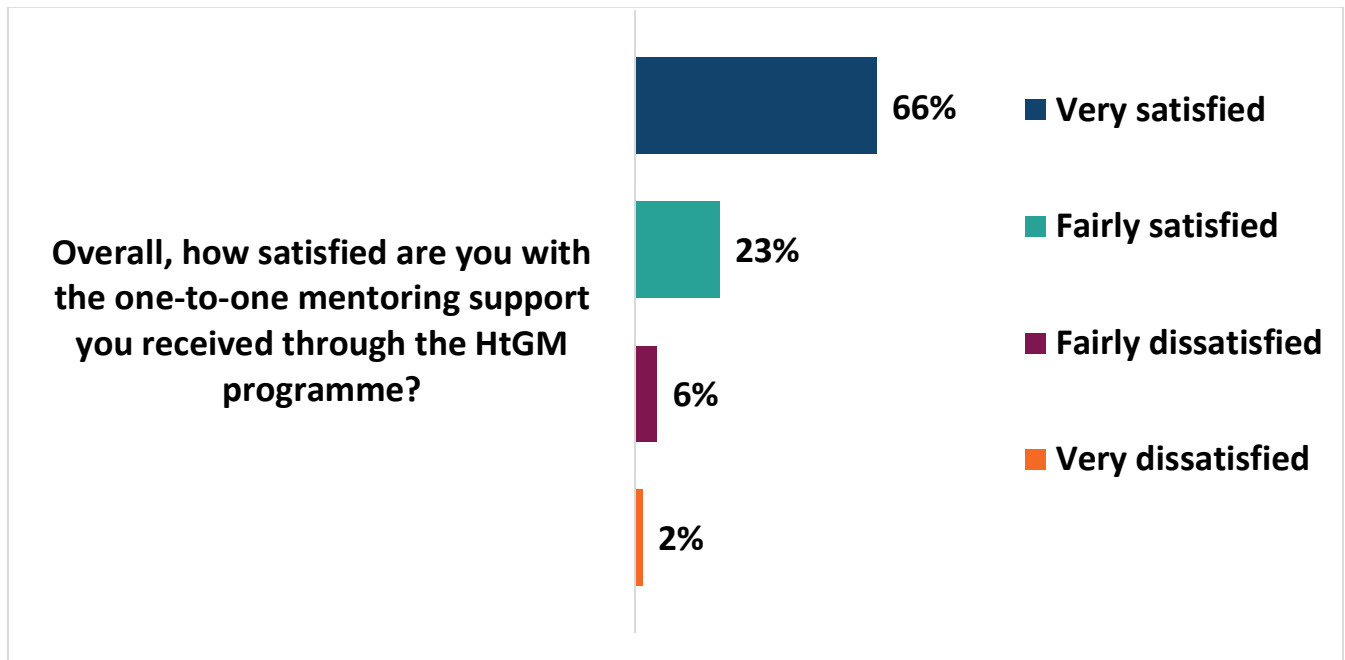
Source: Post completion, Base: 627 (asked only to those that were matched to a mentor and had completed all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice Note: Figure does not include 'not stated' or 'don't know' responses

New questions were added to the December wave of the post-completion survey to look at satisfaction levels with different elements of the new mentoring model. To date, the sample size is too small to report in percentages, but the early data indicates that programme participants involved in the new mentor delivery model were divided in terms of satisfaction with the information provided, the platform and the matching process (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the mentoring process?**
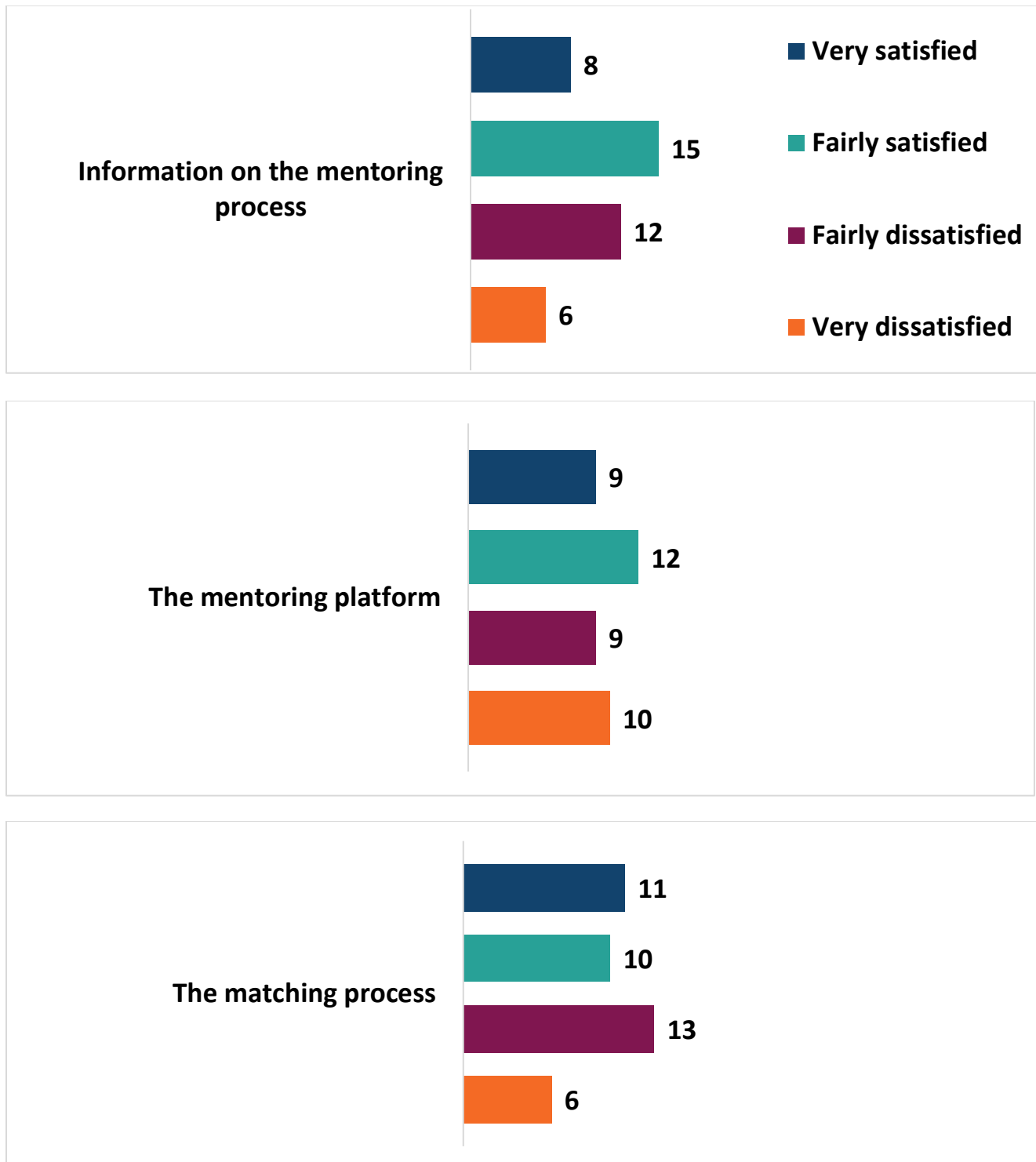
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 41 (This question was added to the survey in December 2022 so response numbers are too small for percentages) (Figures show aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice per statement

Overall, the majority (81%) of survey respondents to date thought that their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs. Looking at the underpinning quarterly data we can see a quarter-on-quarter increase since the survey began – 81% of respondents thought their mentor's experience was matched to their needs in Y2Q3 compared to 76% in Y1Q3(see Figure 18).

More than half of respondents report completing all ten hours of mentoring. However, there was a 16 percentage point drop between the two most recent quarters, going from 76% in Y2Q2 to 60% in Y2Q3 (Figure 19).

Figure 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree that your mentor's experience was well matched to your needs?
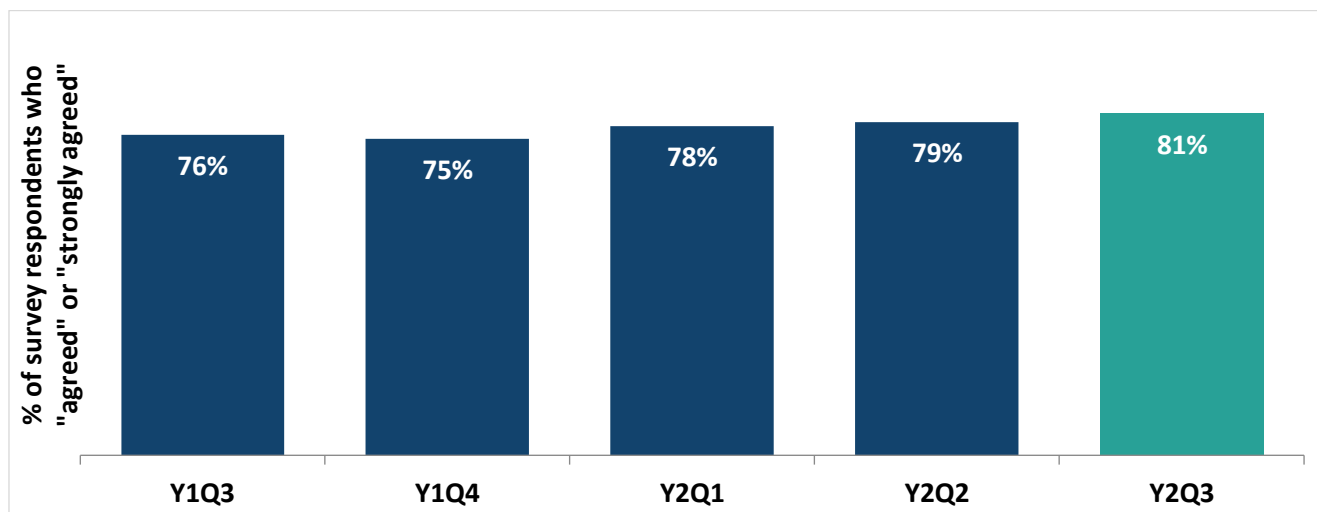
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3, 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

Figure 19: Did you complete / attend all ten hours of mentoring with your mentor?
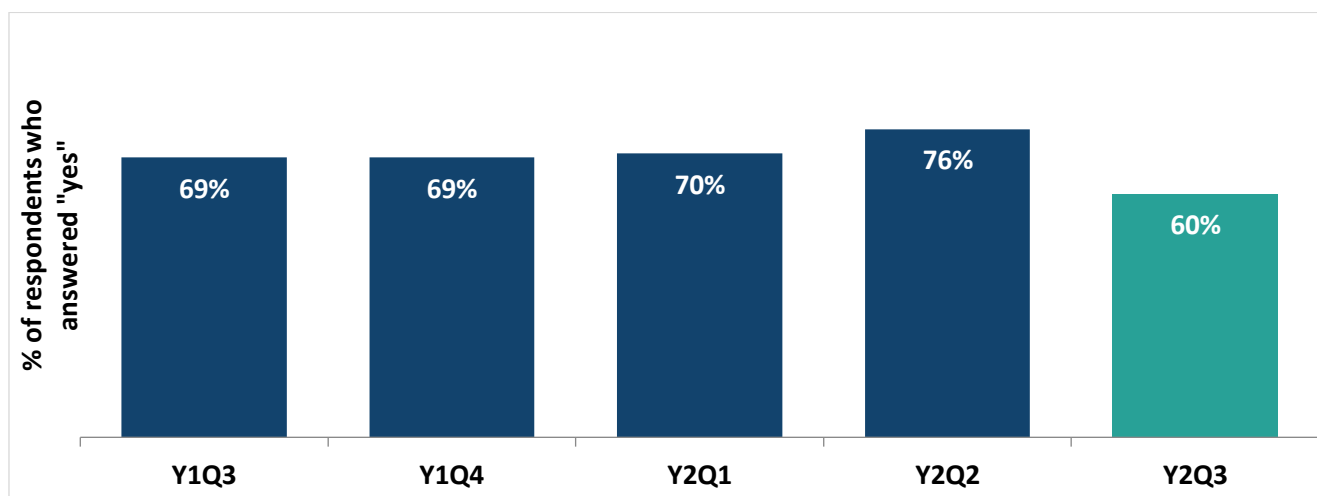
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3, 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice
Note: the post completion survey is issued between two and six weeks after completing module 12, so some respondents may still be in the process of completing their mentoring relationship at the time of the survey. This Figure shows quarterly survey responses)

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. The recent quarterly data shows a slight shift in the use of mentoring support:

- In the most recent quarter (Y2Q3), programme participants were most commonly using the mentoring to build on **topics not covered in the HtGM programme** compared to

topics in the curriculum for the first time (66% compared to 60%) (See Figures 20 and 21).

- This is being driven by an upward trend in those using the support to cover wider issues. Comparatively, the proportion using the support to cover topics in the curriculum has remained relatively constant since the survey began.

- The proportion of participants using mentoring support to develop their Growth Action Plan has **fallen quarter-on-quarter** since the survey began, with 48% reporting in Y2Q3 (Figure 22).

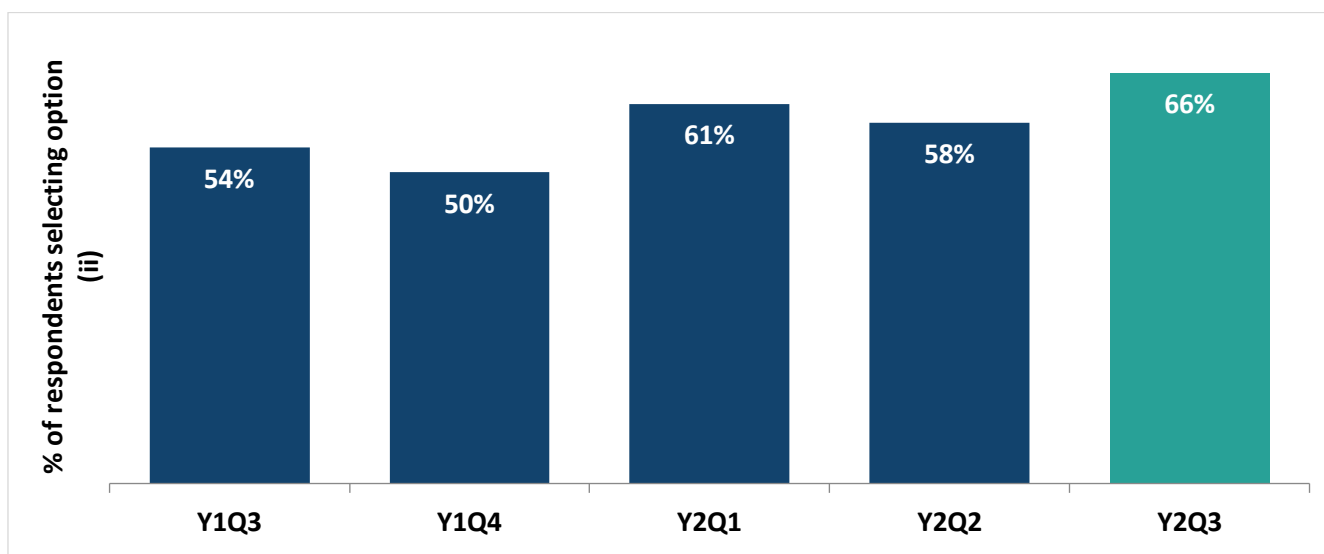**Figure 20: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support? (i) I used the mentoring support to build on topics covered in the programme**
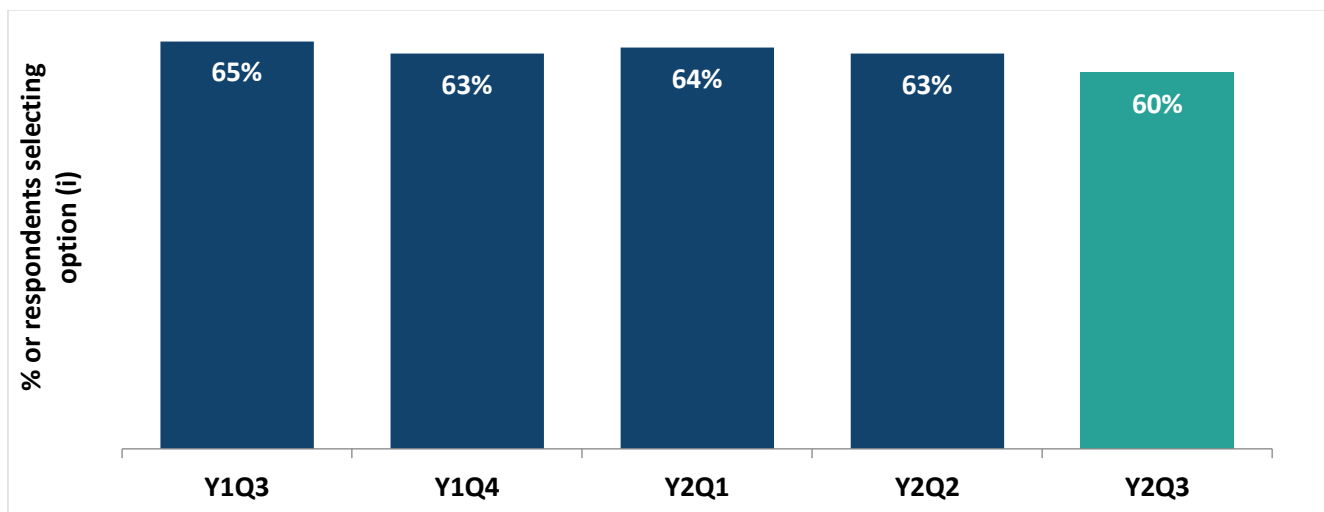
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3, 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours); Question type: Single choice per option
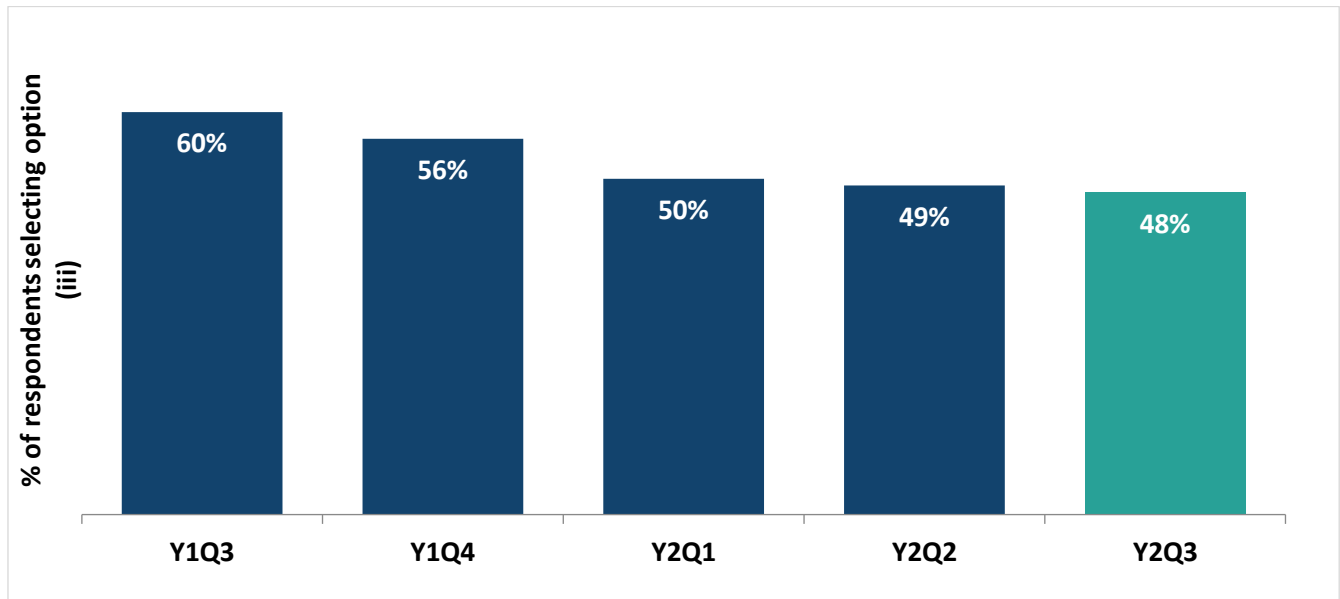Note: Base excludes those who did not answer in Y2Q3

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 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours); Question type: Single choice per option
Note: Base excludes those who did not answer in Y2Q3

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
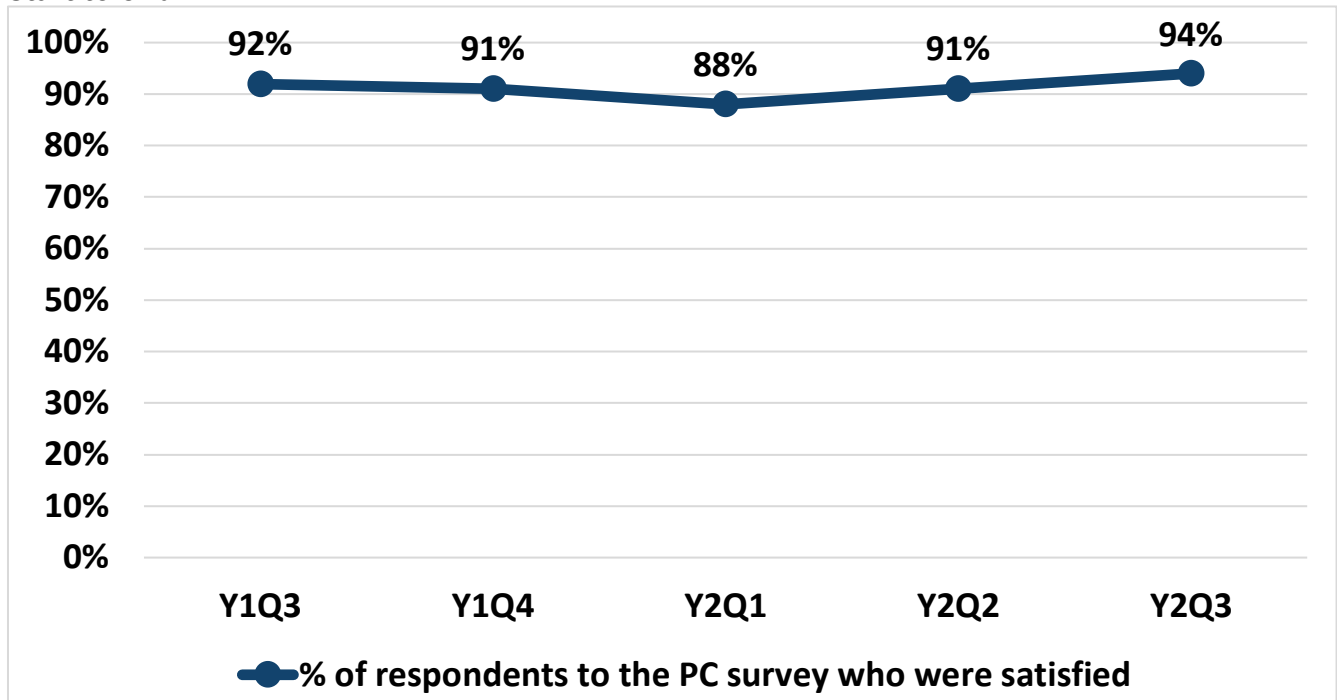

Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3, 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours); Question type: Single choice per option
Note: Base excludes those who did not answer in Y2Q3

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, 94% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered, the highest since the survey began (Figure 23).

- The proportion of programme completers that were satisfied with their mentoring support has remained relatively constant at around 90% (Figure 24).

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 ; Question type: single choice;

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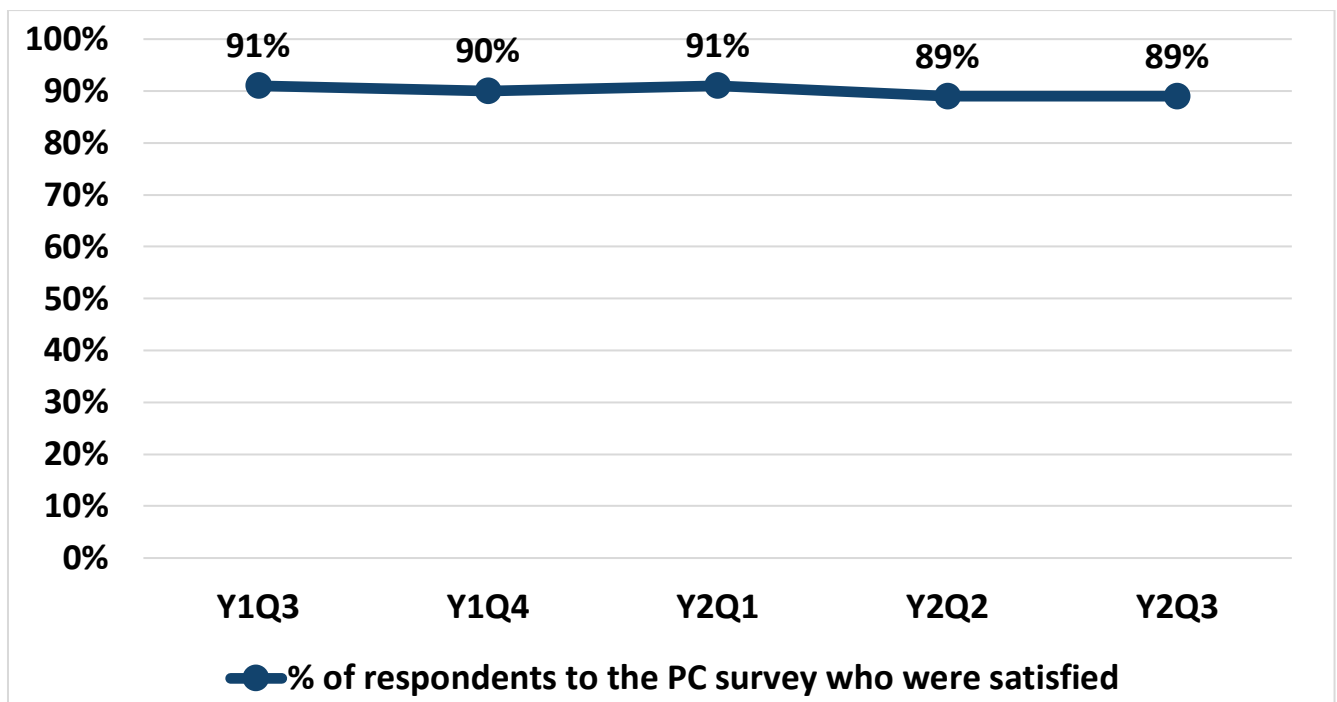

Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3, 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3 (Asked only of those who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours); Question type: single choice
Note: 'Not stated' responses have been excluded from the base
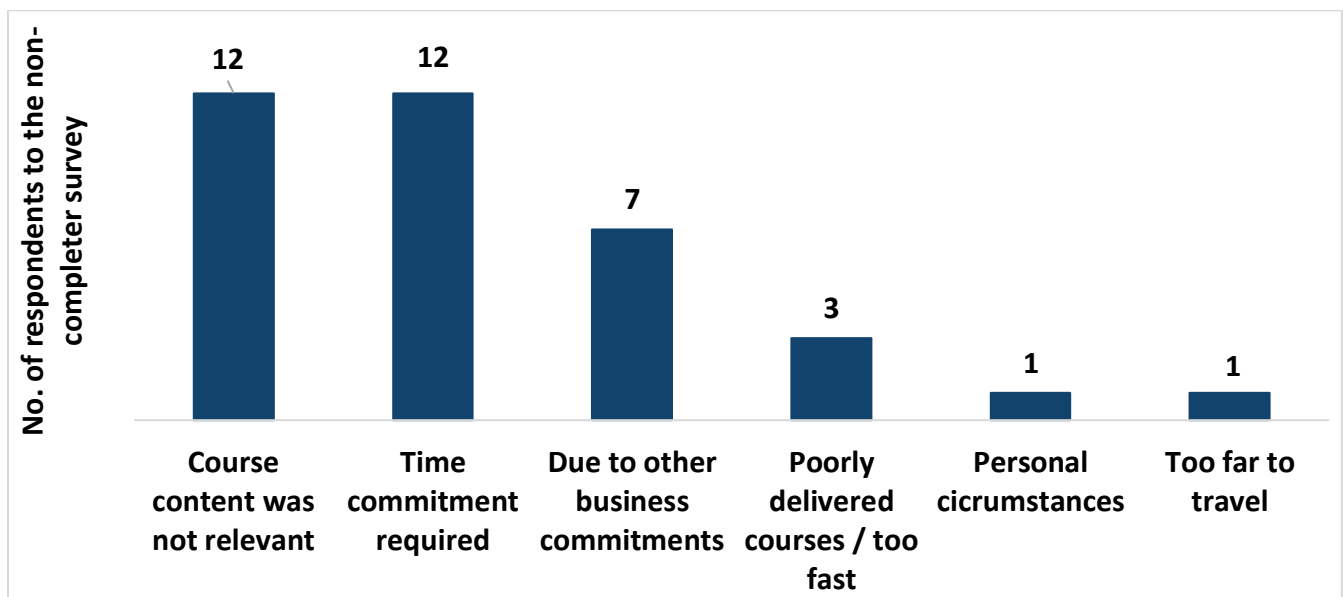
Non-completion survey[13]

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 those who did not complete to attend more of the programme.

Figure 25: Programme satisfaction amongst non-completers
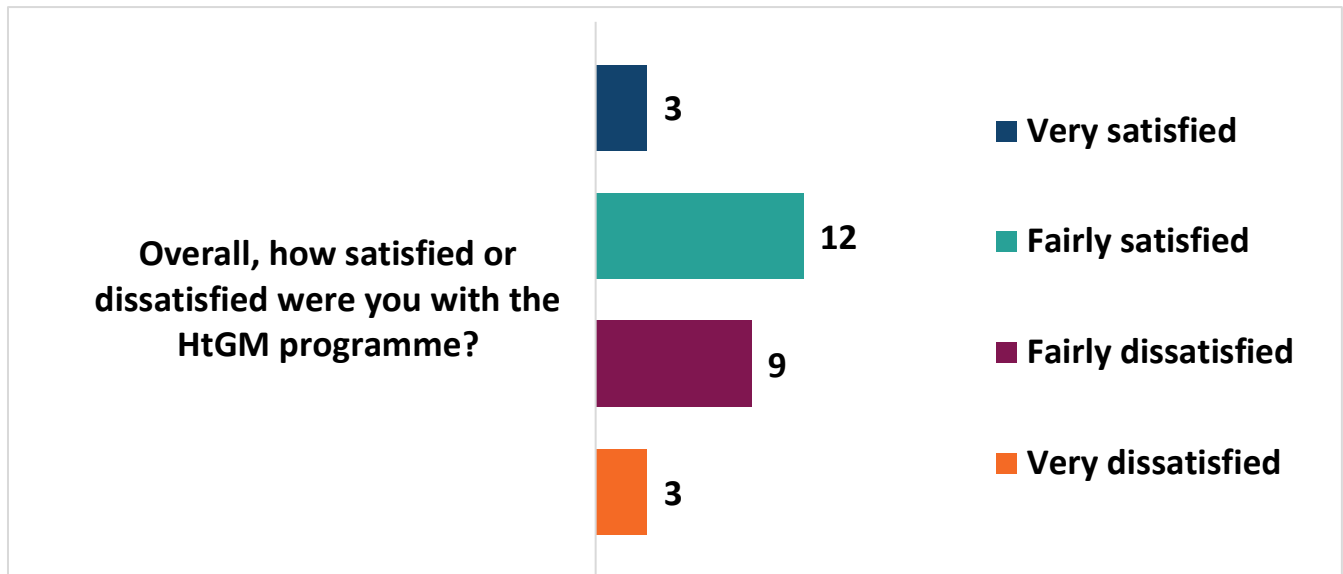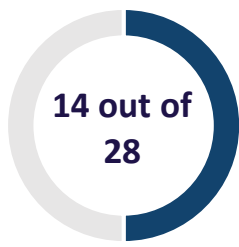

Source: Non-completion survey; Base: 28; Question type: Single choice (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

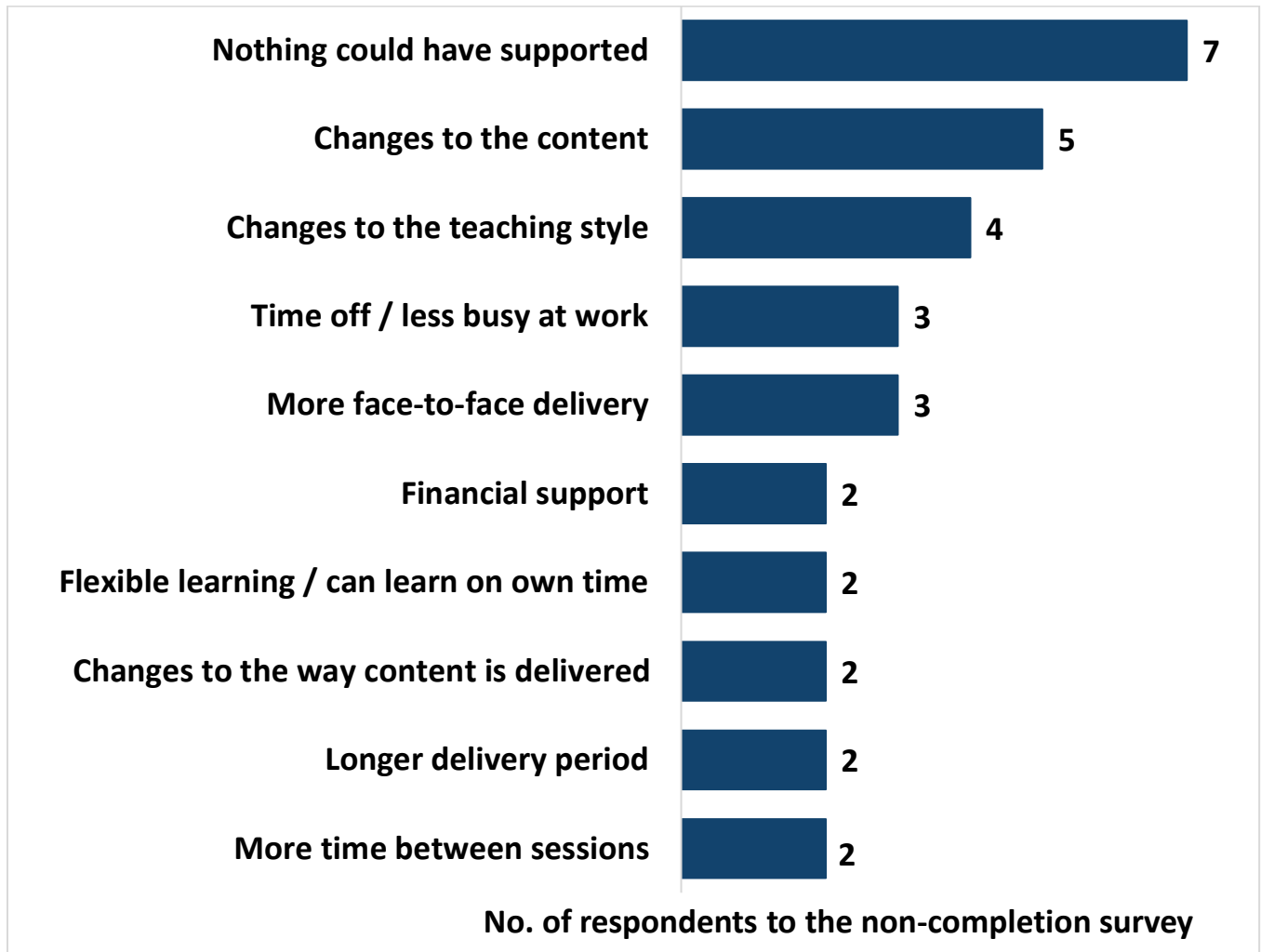**Figure 26: What was the main reason for you not completing the programme?**

Source: Non-completion survey; Base: 28; Question type: Open text (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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

14 out of 28

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?

Response	No. of respondents
Nothing could have supported	7
Changes to the content	5
Changes to the teaching style	4
Time off / less busy at work	3
More face-to-face delivery	3
Financial support	2
Flexible learning / can learn on own time	2
Changes to the way content is delivered	2
Longer delivery period	2
More time between sessions	2

No. of respondents to the non-completion survey

Source: Non-completion survey; Base: 28; Question type: Open text (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.

Individual outcomes

Within **six weeks** of completing the programme, the majority of respondents to the post completion survey in Y2Q3 report **greater confidence in leading and managing** their business (73%), improved understanding of **how to innovate their business model** (70%) and **improved leadership and management skills** (66%) as a result of participating in HtGM (Figure 28).
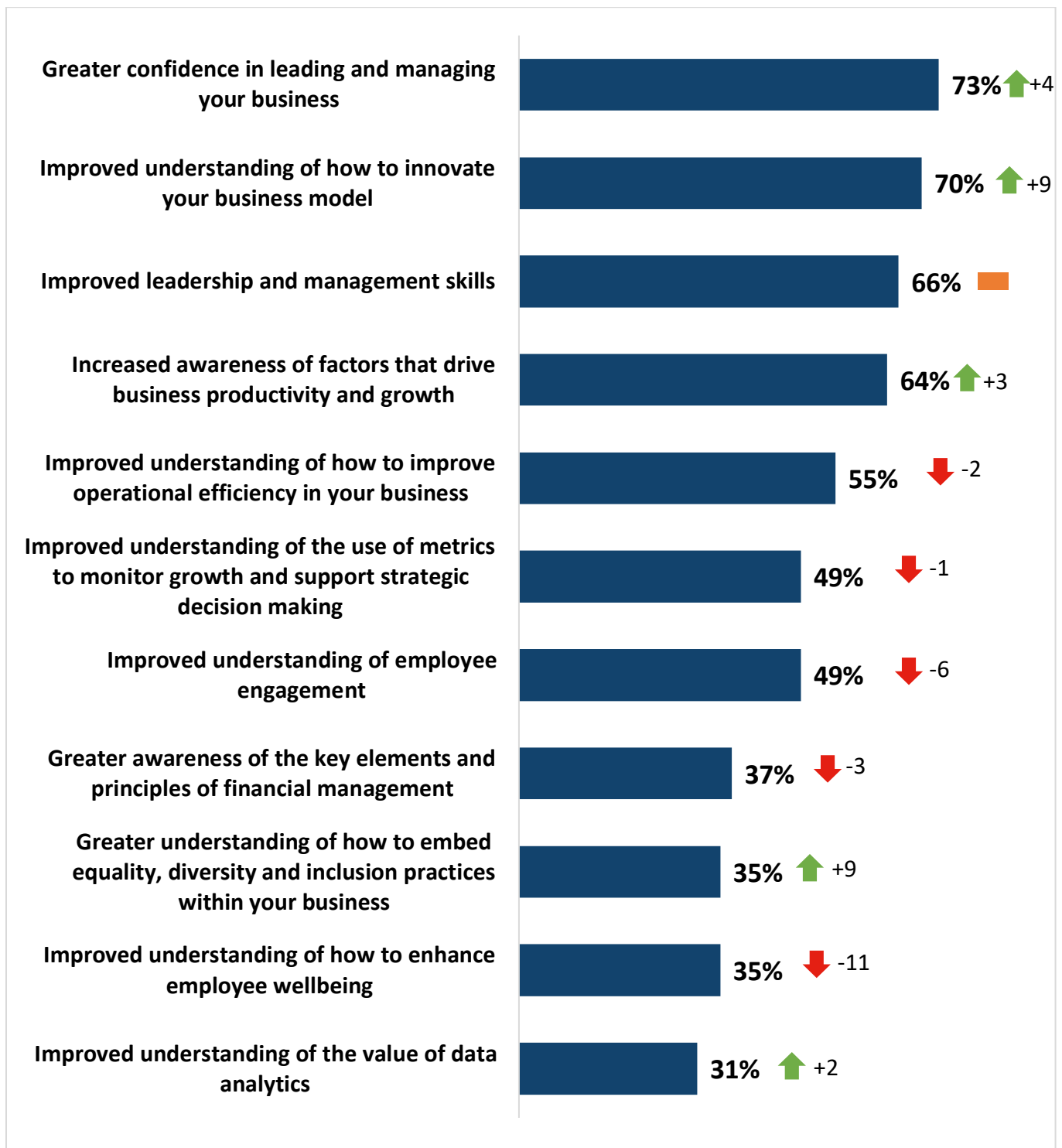
There were some noticeable differences between responses in Y2Q2 and Y2Q3:

- The largest increase was in the proportion of completers who reported improved understanding of how to **innovate their business model** and understanding of how to **embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices** in their businesses – each increasing by nine percentage points.

- The largest decrease was in the proportion of completers reporting improved understanding of how to **enhance employee wellbeing**, with an eleven percentage point decrease between the two most recent quarters.

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).

Since completing the programme, **the majority of SME leaders** (86%) **had interacted with SME leaders outside of their firm,** typically through informal discussions (69%) or networking events (51%) (Figure 30).

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)

Category	Value	Change
Greater confidence in leading and managing your business	73%	+4
Improved understanding of how to innovate your business model	70%	+9
Improved leadership and management skills	66%	—
Increased awareness of factors that drive business productivity and growth	64%	+3
Improved understanding of how to improve operational efficiency in your business	55%	-2
Improved understanding of the use of metrics to monitor growth and support strategic decision making	49%	-1
Improved understanding of employee engagement	49%	-6
Greater awareness of the key elements and principles of financial management	37%	-3
Greater understanding of how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices within your business	35%	+9
Improved understanding of how to enhance employee wellbeing	35%	-11
Improved understanding of the value of data analytics	31%	+2

Source: Post completion survey; Base: Y2Q2 (149), Y2Q3 (90),
Note: bars show data from wave 3 of the post completion survey (Oct-Dec 2022), arrows show changes from wave 2 (July-Sept 2022) the dash indicates no change between waves. Differences may not align to labels between quarterly reports because of rounding.
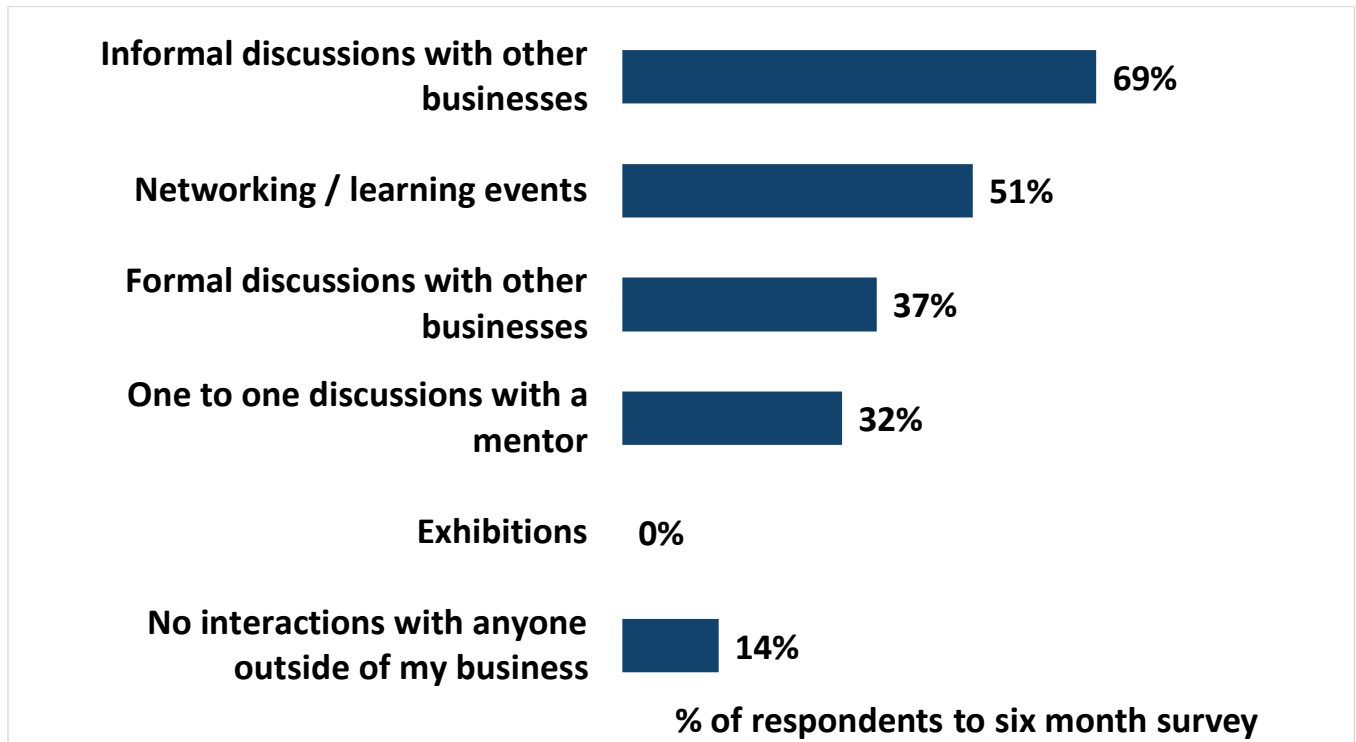
Figure 29: To what extent has participation in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to you…
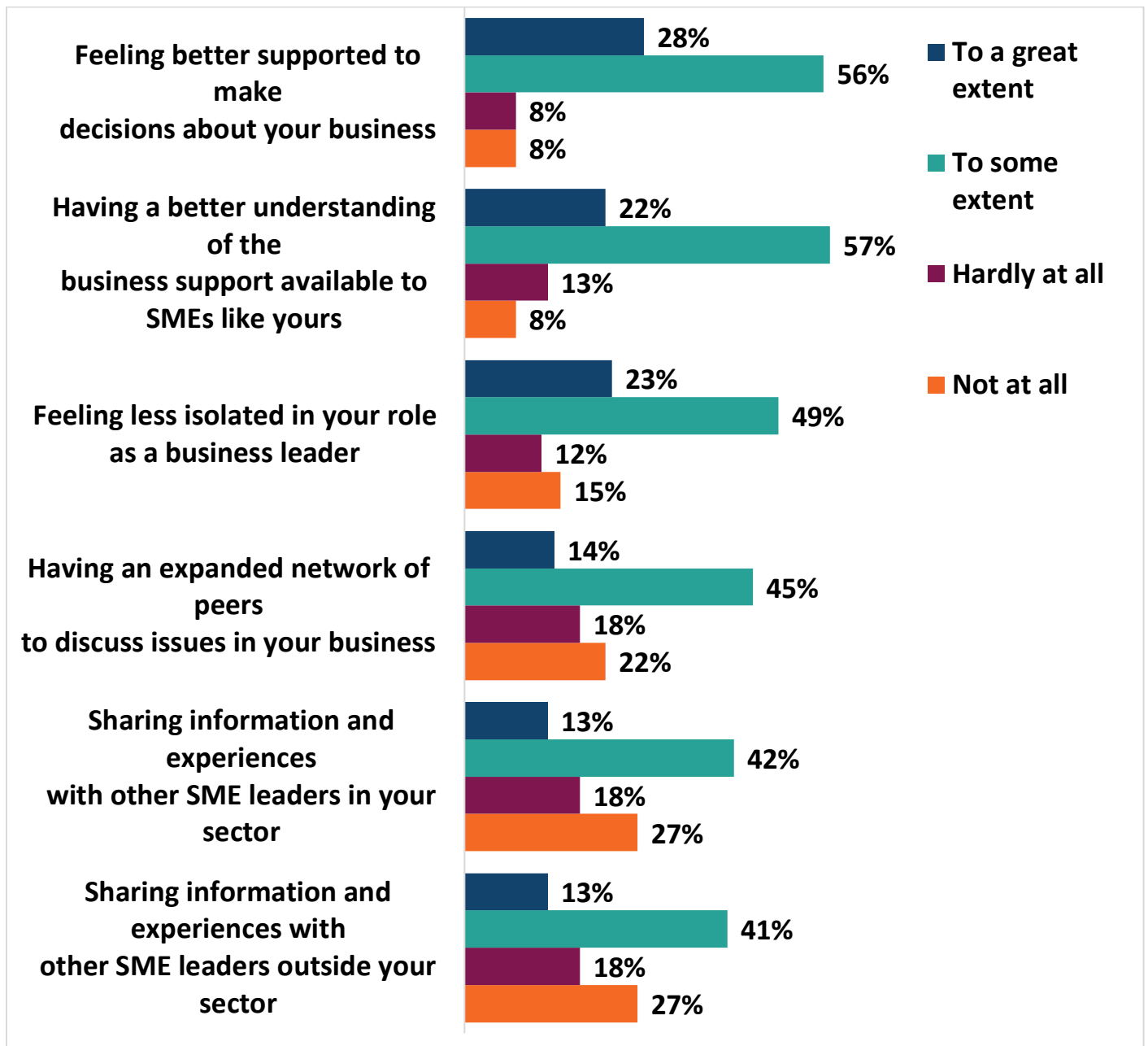
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 520 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice per statement

Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

Figure 30: Since completing the programme, what activities do you engage in at least quarterly?
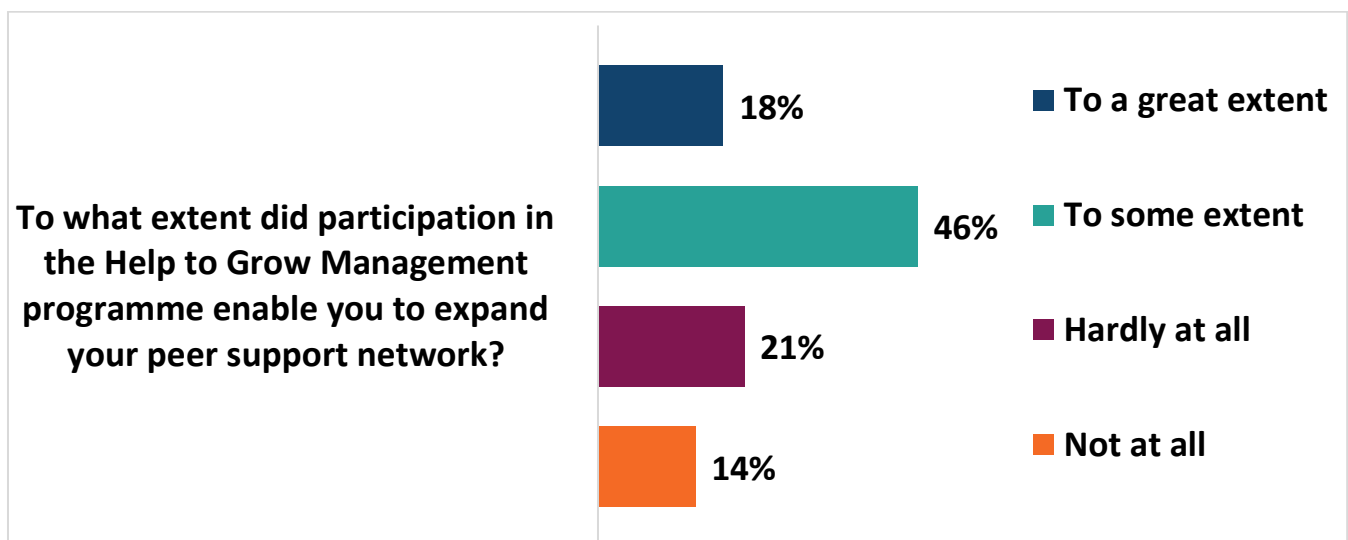
Activity	%
Informal discussions with other businesses	69%
Networking / learning events	51%
Formal discussions with other businesses	37%
One to one discussions with a mentor	32%
Exhibitions	0%
No interactions with anyone outside of my business	14%

% of respondents to six month survey

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 520 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Open text

Network benefits

Overall, two thirds (64%) of SME leaders completing the programme reported that HtGM helped to expand their peer network (Figure 31). There was a decrease of 4 percentage points on this measure between this quarter and the last (from 68% to 64%).

Figure 31: Network benefits

To what extent did participation in the Help to Grow Management programme enable you to expand your peer support network?

- To a great extent: 18%
- To some extent: 46%
- Hardly at all: 21%
- Not at all: 14%

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 520 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice

After six months, over half of programme participants (55%) had stayed in touch with peers from their HtGM cohort and a further 16% intended to in the future (Figure 32). Both of these groups have decreased since the previous quarter. 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 32: Have you stayed in touch with peers from your HtGM cohort since you completed the programme? (Quarterly comparison)
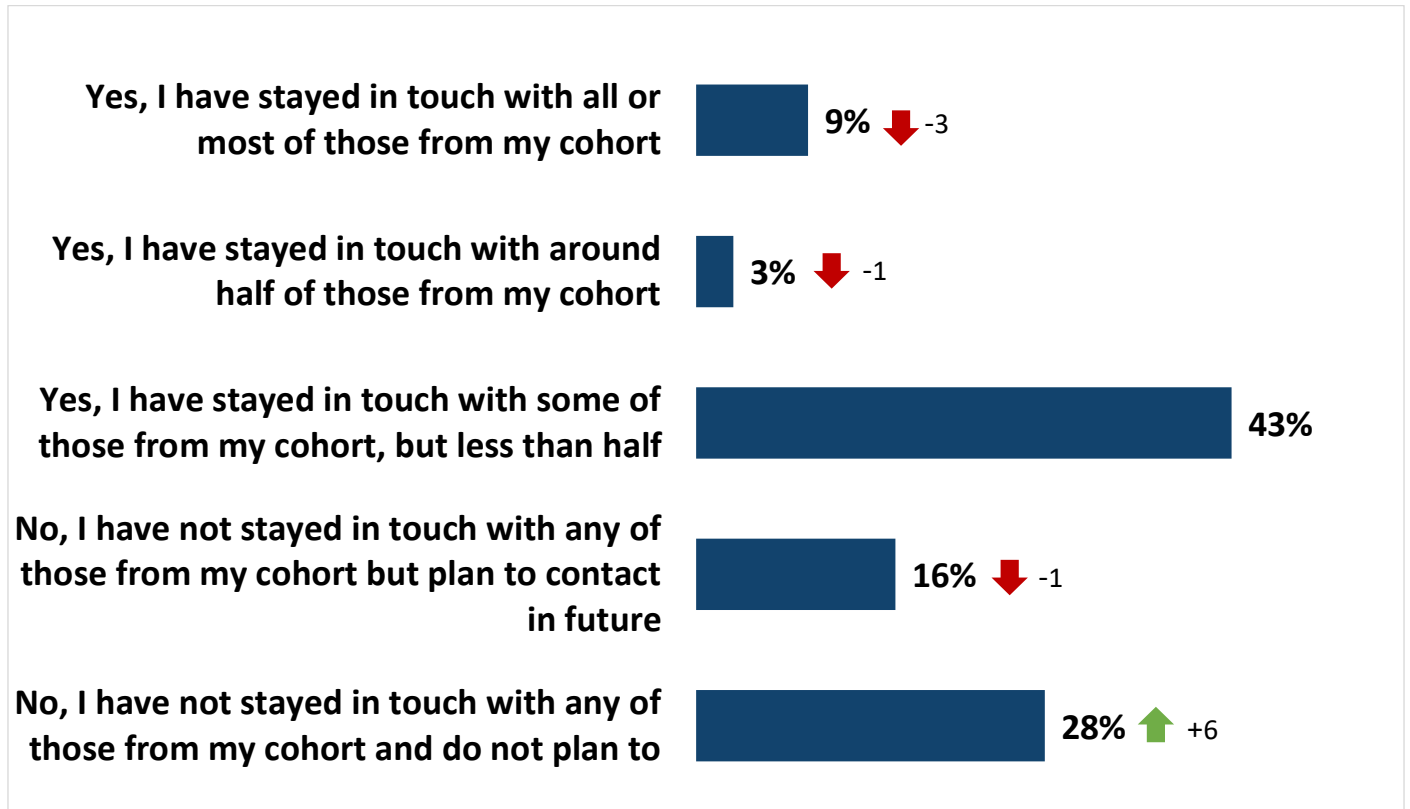
Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 169 (Y2Q2), 160 (Y2Q3)
Note: bars show data from wave 3 of the post completion survey (Oct –Dec 2022), arrows show changes from wave 2 (July-Sept 2022) the dash indicates no change between waves. Differences may not align to labels between quarterly reports because of rounding.

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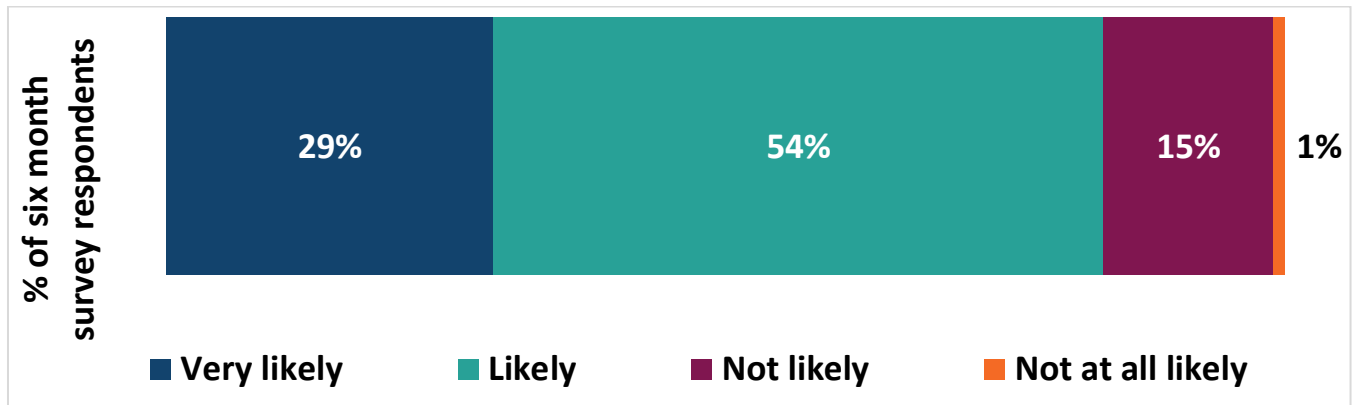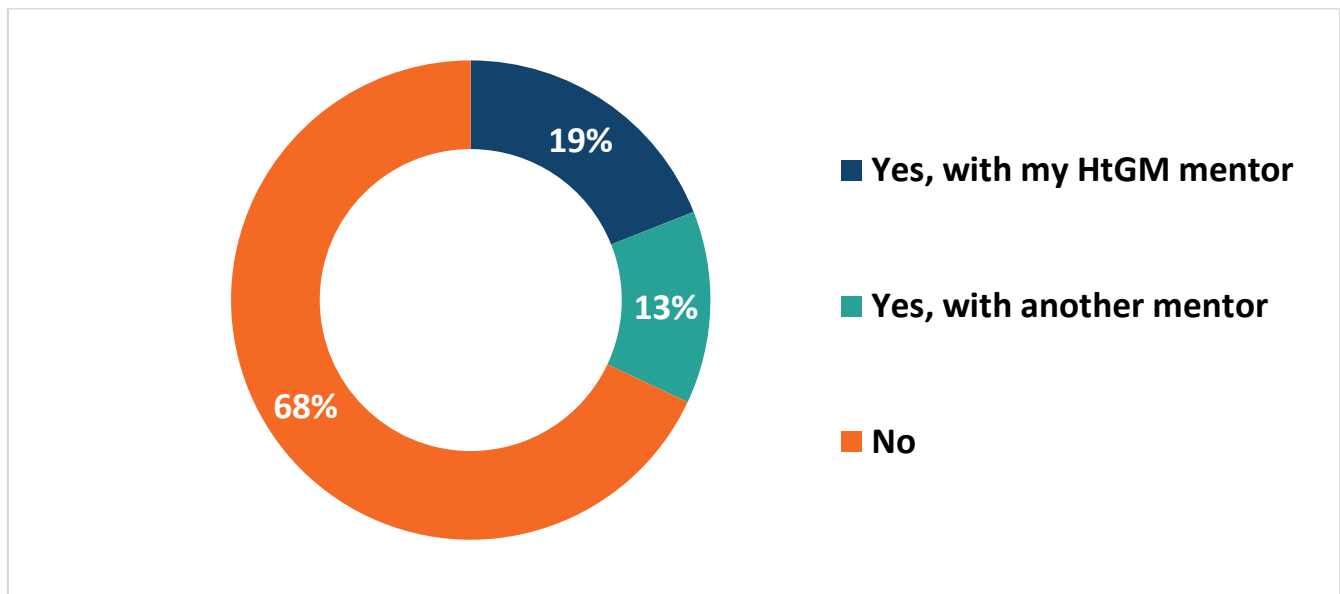

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 391 (Asked only to those who kept in touch with their cohort or planned to) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Follow on activity

Six months after completing HtGM, one third (32%) of SME leaders were engaged in mentoring activity (Figure 34). **Almost one in five (19%) were continuing to be mentored by their HtGM mentor.**

Looking at the underpinning quarterly data, the proportion of programme participants who have chosen to stop mentoring after completing HtGM has increased by six percentage points between Y2Q2 and Y2Q3, from 62% to 68%.

Figure 34: Have you continued mentoring since completing?

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 520 (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 (Y2Q3), programme completers were most interested in further courses (78%), alumni events (74%) and GAP health checks (52%) (Figure 35). There has been noticeable increases in the proportion of programme completers expressing an interest in these three types of alumni activities (see green arrows in Figure 35).

Figure 35: What type of HtGM alumni activities or offers would you be interested in taking part in? Please select all that apply (Quarterly comparison)
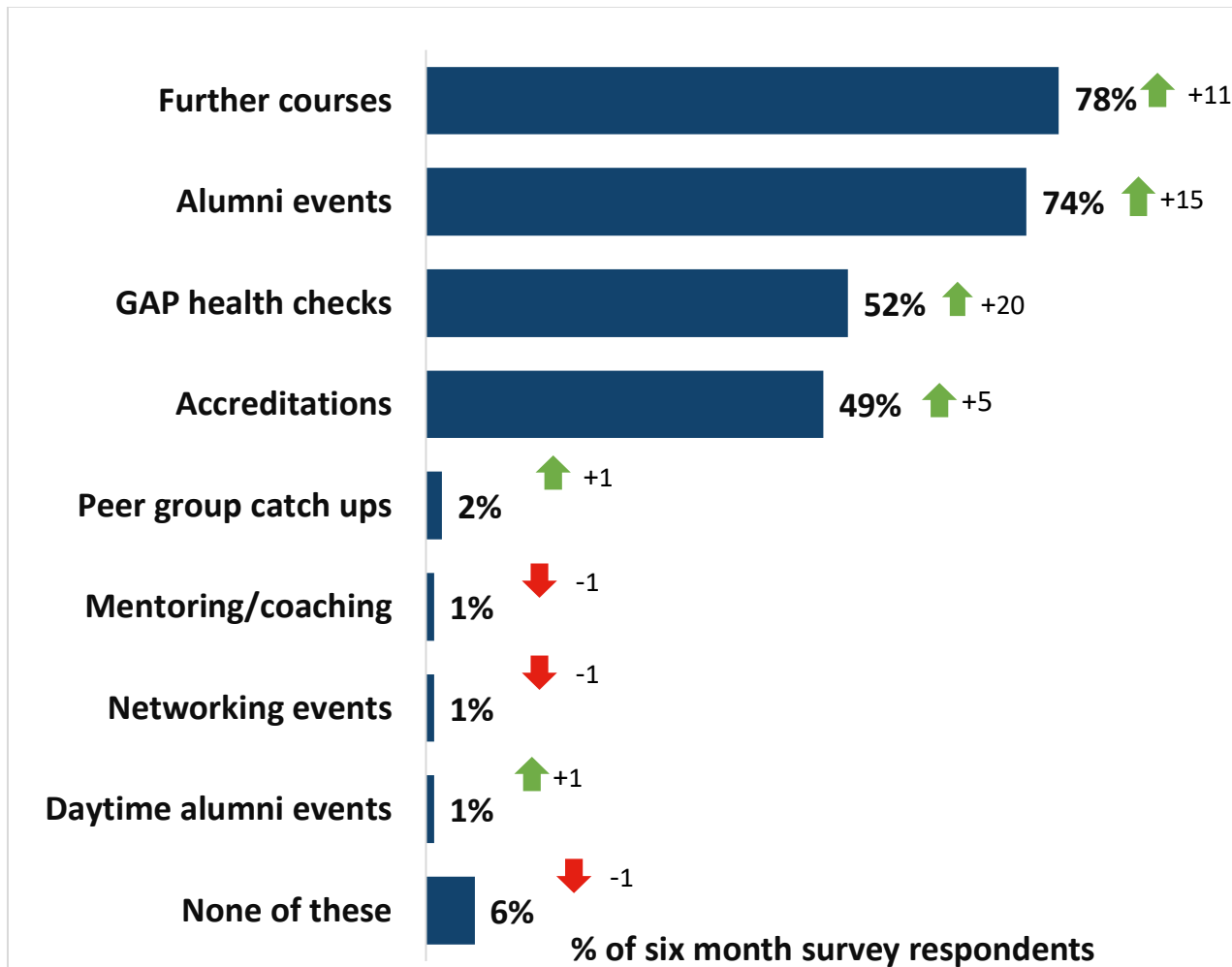
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: Y2Q3 (159), Y2Q2 (169); Question type: Multiple choice
Note: bars show data from wave 3 of the post completion survey (Oct-Dec 2022), arrows show changes from wave 2 (July-Sept 2022) the dash indicates no change between waves. Differences may not align to labels between quarterly reports because of rounding.

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 reported that their firms had strong capabilities and experience across a breadth of areas and, in most cases, these continued to strengthen up to six months after completing HtGM (Figure 36).

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.

To date, three quarters (76%) of all post-completion survey respondents reported that they had produced a Growth Action Plan for their business through participation in the programme. As mentioned previously, around half of participants used mentoring to support the development of their GAP (Figure 22). The quarterly data also suggests that the proportion of SME leaders producing a GAP has remained relatively constant since the survey began, although the target of 90% completion set by DBT has not yet been reached in any quarter (Figure 38).

Figure 36: How would you rate your own firm's capabilities and experience in the following areas?
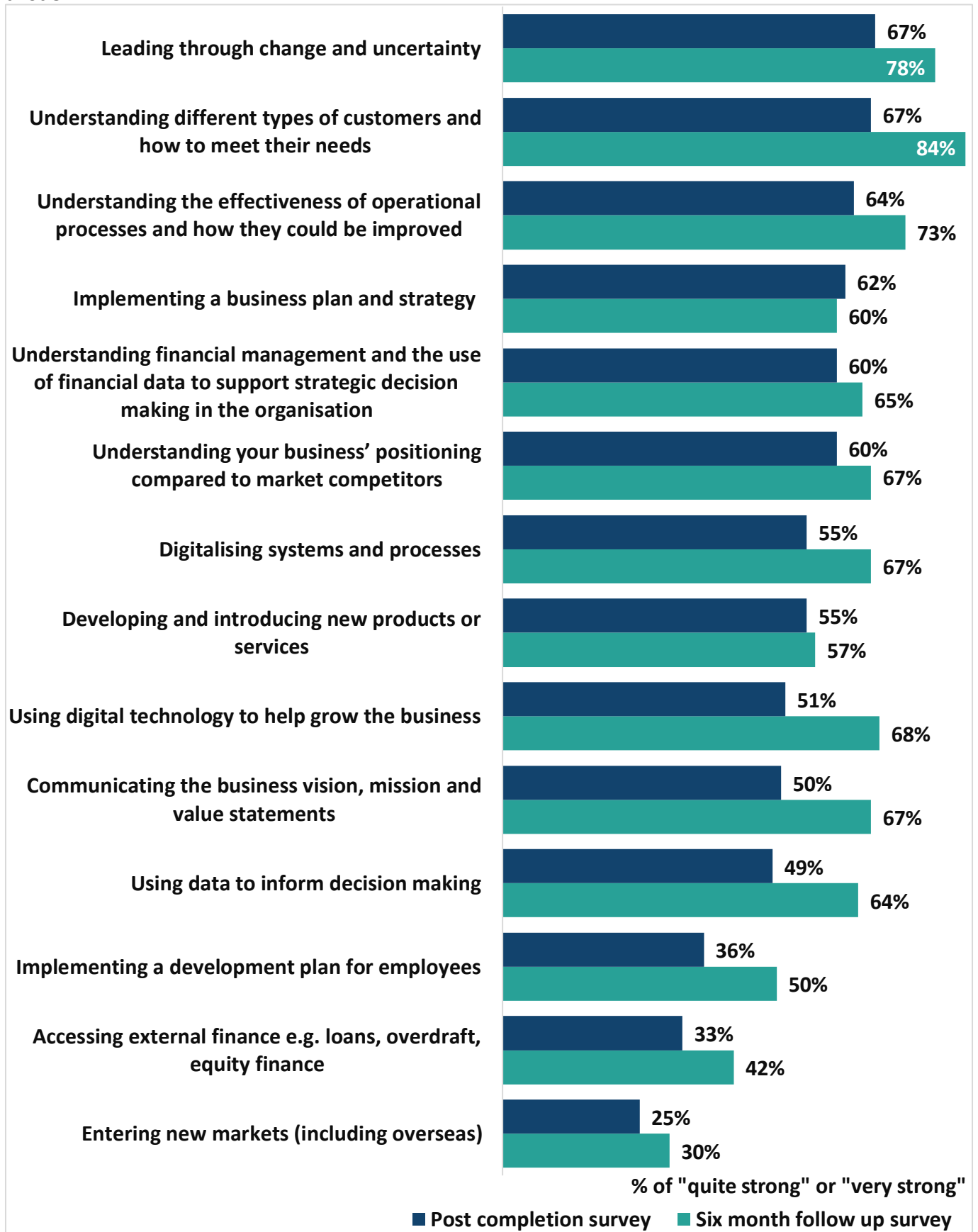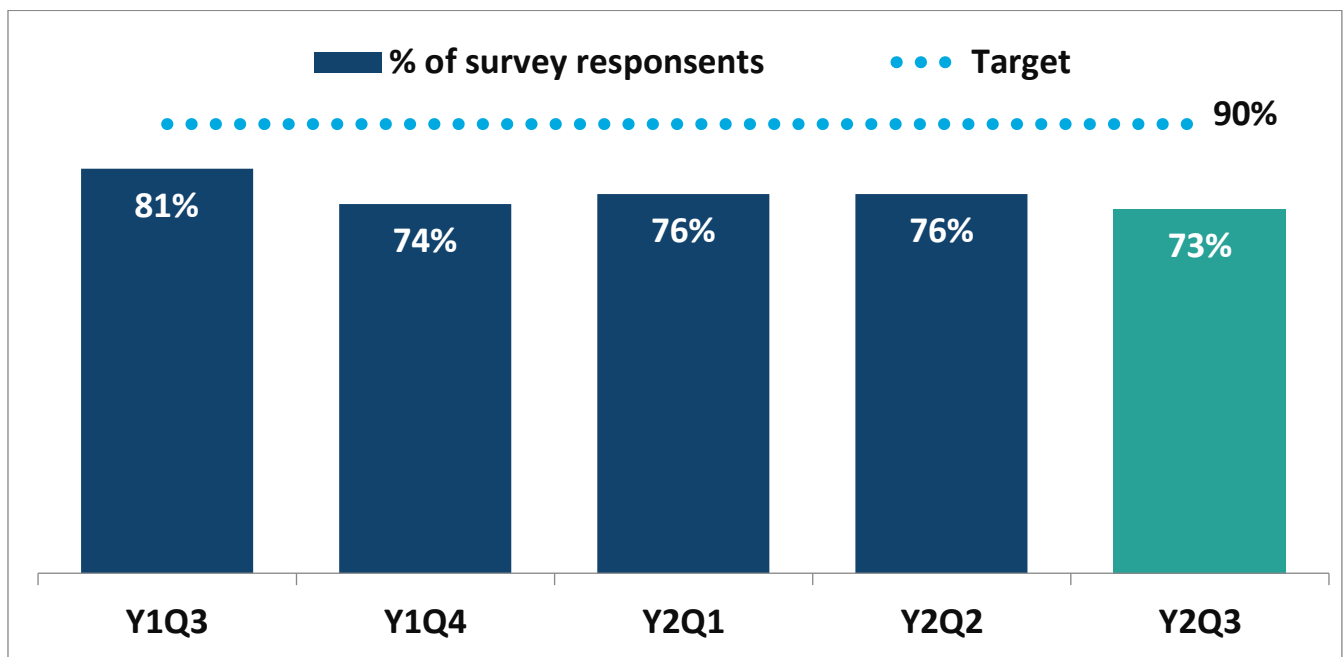

Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Base: 129 (respondents answering both surveys); Question type: Single choice per statement (Figure shows aggregated responses).

Figure 37: Diffusion of knowledge
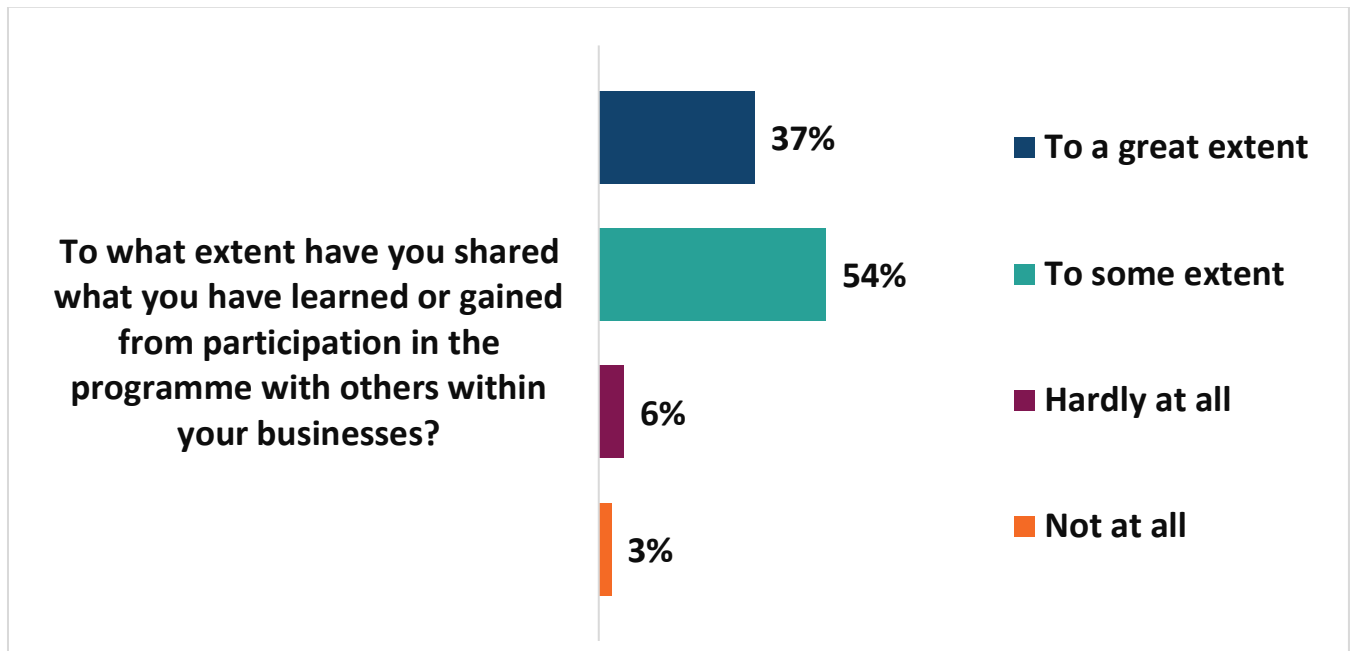
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 520 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: single choice

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?
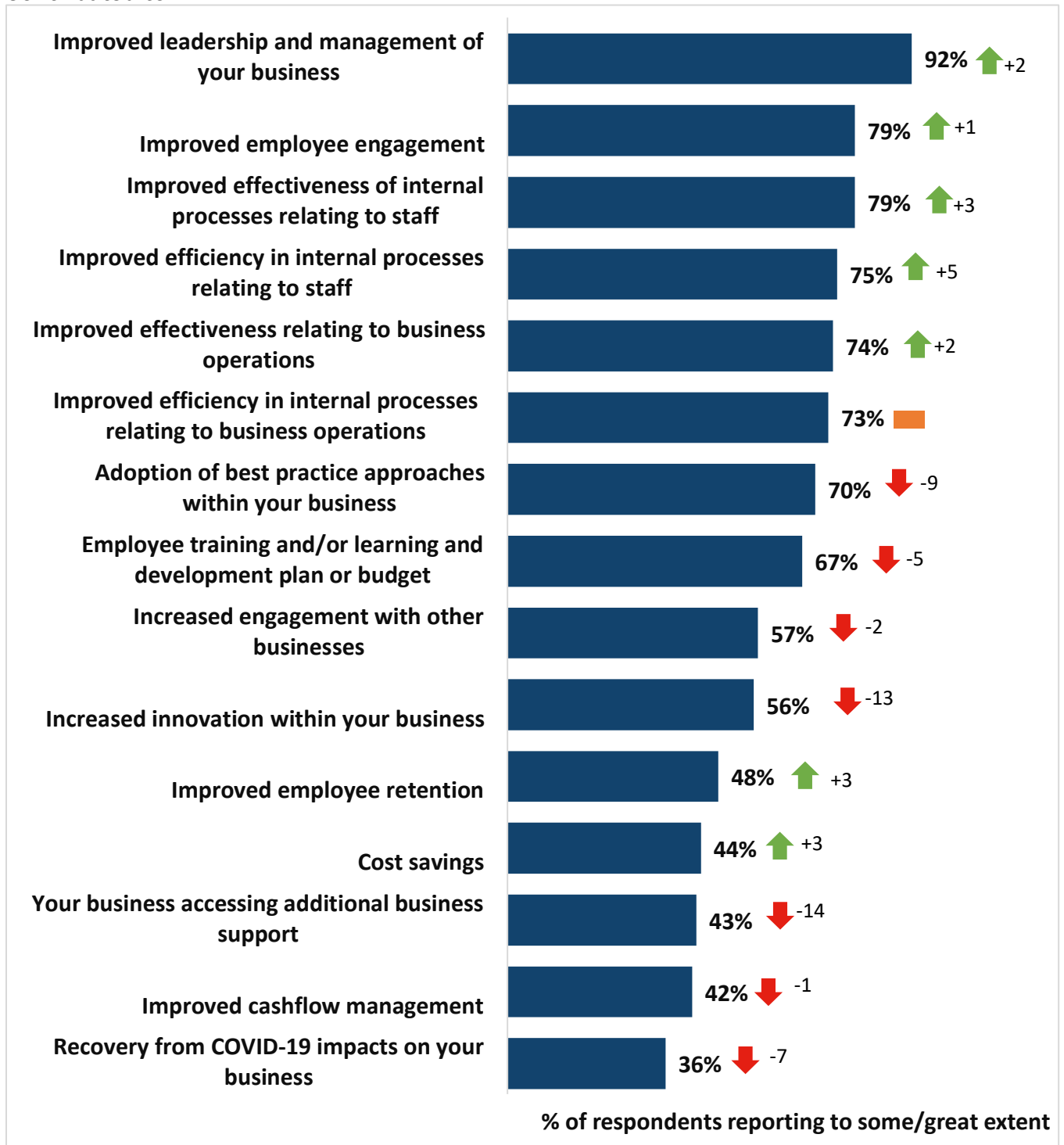

Source: Post completion survey; Base: 670 (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: Single choice

Within six months of completing the programme, participants report a range of business benefits. In Y2Q3, the most commonly reported outcomes were **improved leadership and management of their business** (92%), **improved employee engagement** (79%) and **improved effectiveness of internal processes relating to staff** (79%) (Figure 39). The largest increase between Y2Q2 and Y2Q3 was reported for improvements to efficiency in

internal processes relating to staff (five percentage points). The largest decreases over the same time period were in relation to accessing additional business support (14 percentage points) and increasing innovation within their business (13 percentage points).

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

Category	%	Change
Improved leadership and management of your business	92%	+2
Improved employee engagement	79%	+1
Improved effectiveness of internal processes relating to staff	79%	+3
Improved efficiency in internal processes relating to staff	75%	+5
Improved effectiveness relating to business operations	74%	+2
Improved efficiency in internal processes relating to business operations	73%	(no change)
Adoption of best practice approaches within your business	70%	-9
Employee training and/or learning and development plan or budget	67%	-5
Increased engagement with other businesses	57%	-2
Increased innovation within your business	56%	-13
Improved employee retention	48%	+3
Cost savings	44%	+3
Your business accessing additional business support	43%	-14
Improved cashflow management	42%	-1
Recovery from COVID-19 impacts on your business	36%	-7

**% of respondents reporting to some/great extent**

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: Y2Q3 (160), Y2Q2 (169); Question type: multiple choice.
Note: bars show data from wave 3 of the six month survey (Oct-Dec 2022), arrows show changes from wave 2 (July-Sept 2022) the dash indicates no change between waves. Differences may not align to labels between quarterly reports because of 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, typically to their **leadership and employee engagement** (89%) and **operational efficiency** (78%) (Figure 40 and 41).
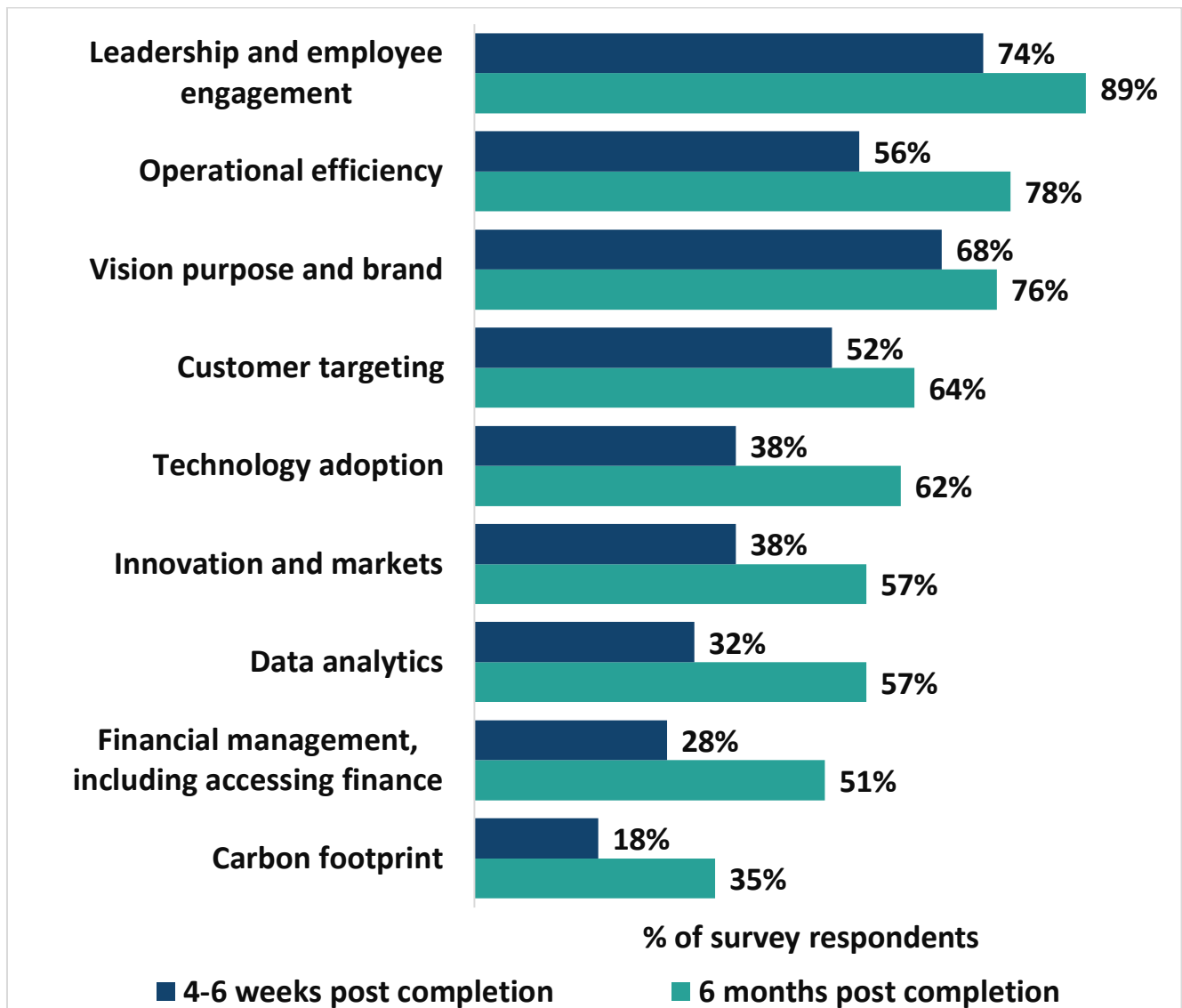
Figure 40: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you or do you plan to make any changes to the way you manage, organise, or operate your business?
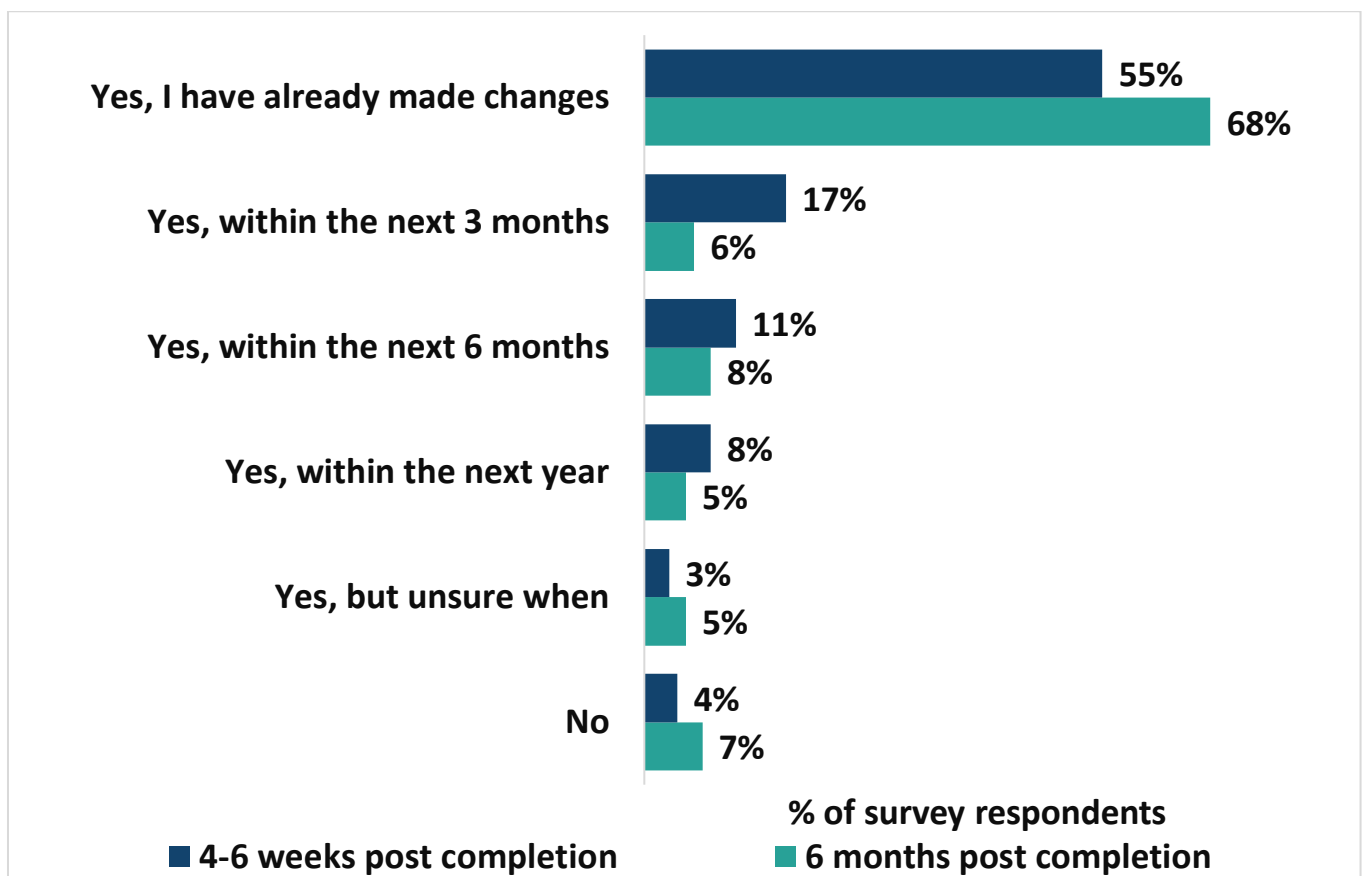
Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Bases: 670, 520 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: Single choice

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 41).

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?

% of survey respondents

■ 4-6 weeks post completion   ■ 6 months post completion

Category	4-6 weeks post completion	6 months post completion
Leadership and employee engagement	74%	89%
Operational efficiency	56%	78%
Vision purpose and brand	68%	76%
Customer targeting	52%	64%
Technology adoption	38%	62%
Innovation and markets	38%	57%
Data analytics	32%	57%
Financial management, including accessing finance	28%	51%
Carbon footprint	18%	35%

Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys Base: 371; 353 (Asked to those who had already made a change in their business) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses); Question type: multiple choice