



Department for
Business & Trade

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

Quarterly Progress Update (July - September 2023)

Update #6

Ipsos and the Institute for Employment Studies

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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 sixth 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 July 2023 to October 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, Y3Q1 Apr-Jun 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		Six-month follow-up		Non-completion	
Issued to all participants two 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	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	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: Online		Mode: Telephone		Mode: Telephone
	Frequency Monthly		Frequency Quarterly		Frequency Quarterly
	Waves completed: 22		Waves completed 6		Waves completed: 6
	Next wave: 15 th November 2023		Next wave: November 2023		Next wave: November 2023

The survey analysis in this report is based on **aggregate survey responses** unless otherwise specified as quarterly breakdowns or comparisons between the two most recent quarters. Aggregate data combines evidence across **all years** of the evaluation and therefore may differ from annual evaluation reporting.

Survey update

As of 31st October 2023, a combined total of 1,875 responses had been received to the post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 2):

- 6,582 SME leaders were invited to complete the post completion survey³. 1,002 responses have been received, representing a 15% response rate.⁴
- In total 3,104 SME leaders who completed HtGM before November 2022 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey, of which 2,101 were eligible to take part. 873 responses had been received, representing a 42% response rate.⁵

The analysis presented on the following slides are based on the 1,875 responses to one or both surveys. Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n = 58).

³ A higher number of survey invites than were needed were issued during the first year of the programme (e.g. to all those registered as opposed to enrolled). CABS, DBT and IPSOS have worked to limit the impact of these responses on survey results. Data quality has improved over the course of the programme delivery and the figures published have been fully quality assured.

⁴ Ipsos has produced an updated report containing measures to be taken that can be taken to improve the survey response rates.

⁵ This is the adjusted response rate, excluding those SME leaders who were not eligible for the survey from the sample.

Figure 3 shows how the aggregate response rates to the three surveys has varied over time.⁶

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

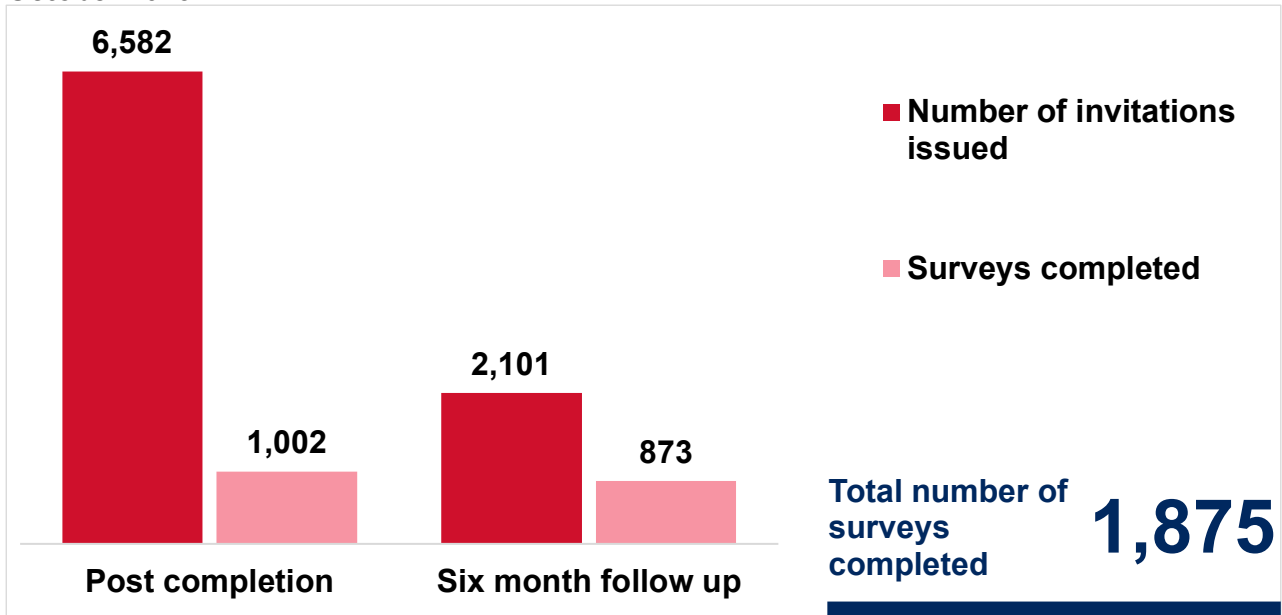
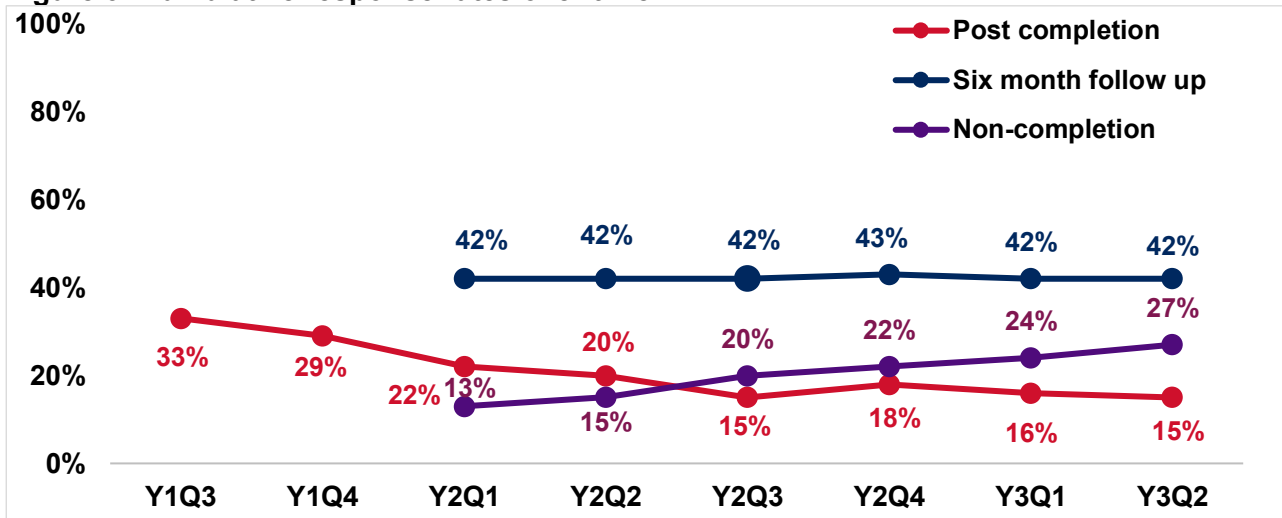


Figure 3: Cumulative response rates over time



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 response rate shows the adjusted response rate over time.

The non-completion survey and six-month survey use the same sample, with those reporting completing less

⁶ Response rate over time is based on cumulative figures.

than 75% of the module content directed to the non-completion survey and those completing 75% or more completing the six-month follow up survey.

Profile of demand

Businesses

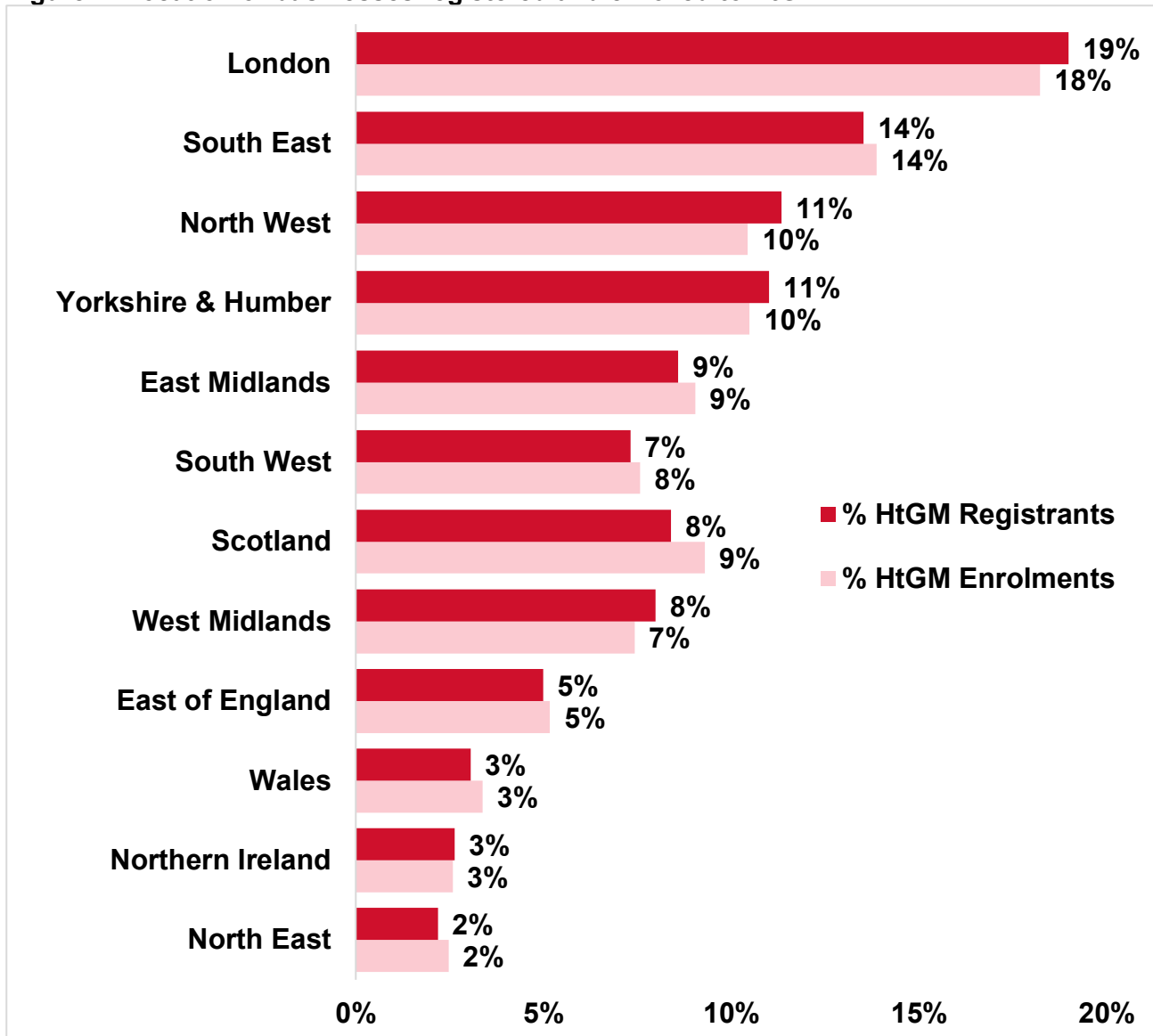
To date, the HtGM programme has attracted interest from a broad range of businesses (Figures 4-7):

- 1 **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 (33% registering, 32% enrolling) (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%).
- 2 **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 services' (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.
- 3 **Age:** around half of SMEs that registered (51%) / enrolled (49%) on HtGM had been in operation for between one and ten years and more than a third (36% registering, 37% enrolling) had been in operation for between 11 and 30 years (Figure 6)⁷.
- 4 **Size:** firms registering and enrolling for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (median 12 FTE registering / 13 FTE enrolling) (Figure 7). The median annual turnover in 2021/22 financial year was £852k for registrants and £970k for enrolments, the average differed slightly (£2.64M for registrants and £2.77M for enrolments)⁸.

⁷ Note: businesses that have been operating for less than one year are not eligible for the programme.

⁸ Median results are reported here over mean because of large outliers. However, mean results are also presented in Figure 1.

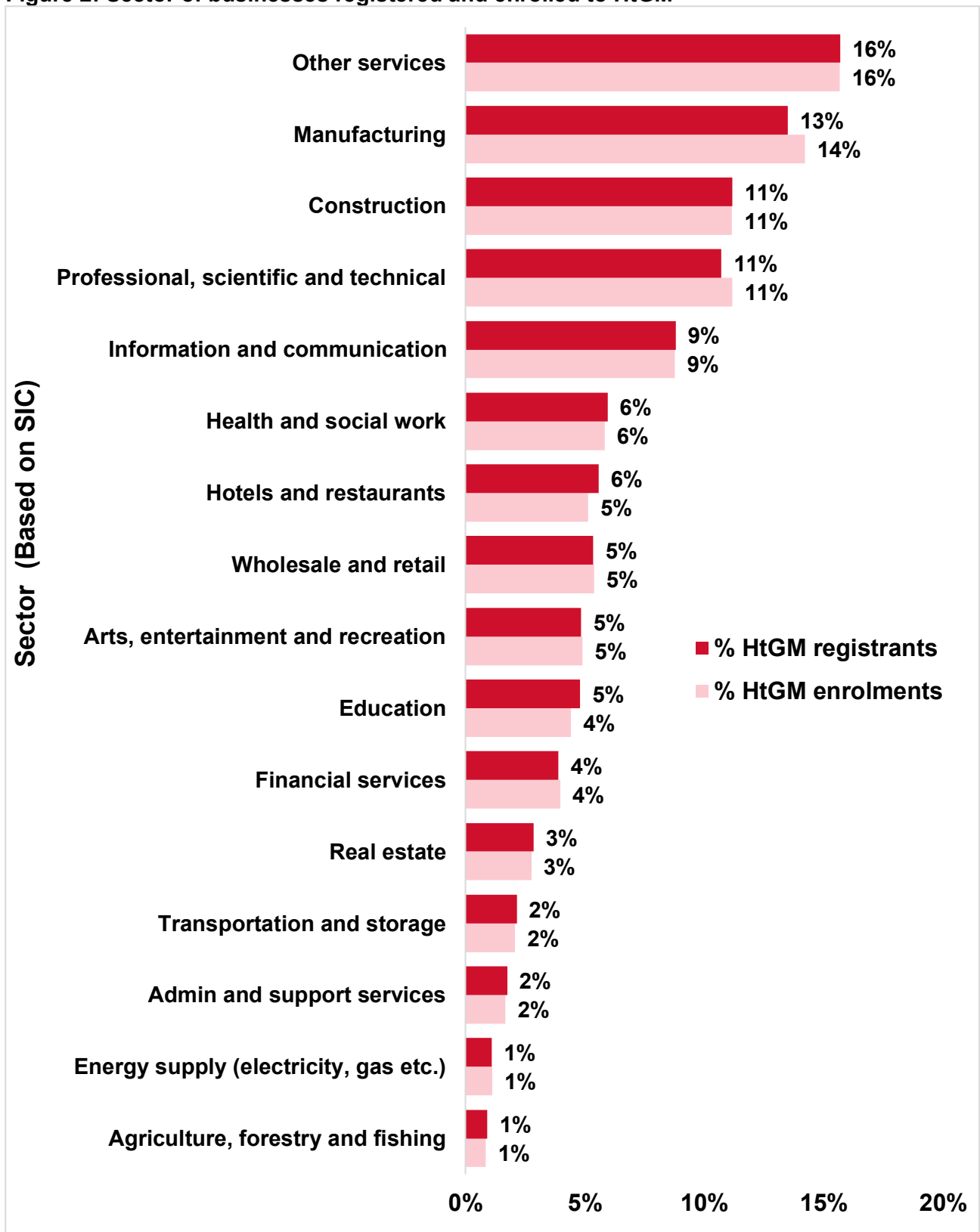
Figure 1: Location of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM⁹



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=7,261), enrolments (n=6,300). Question type: single choice, Note: 'OxCamArc' data constitutes East of England for DBT data; ONS SME Business Characteristics (2021). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q2.

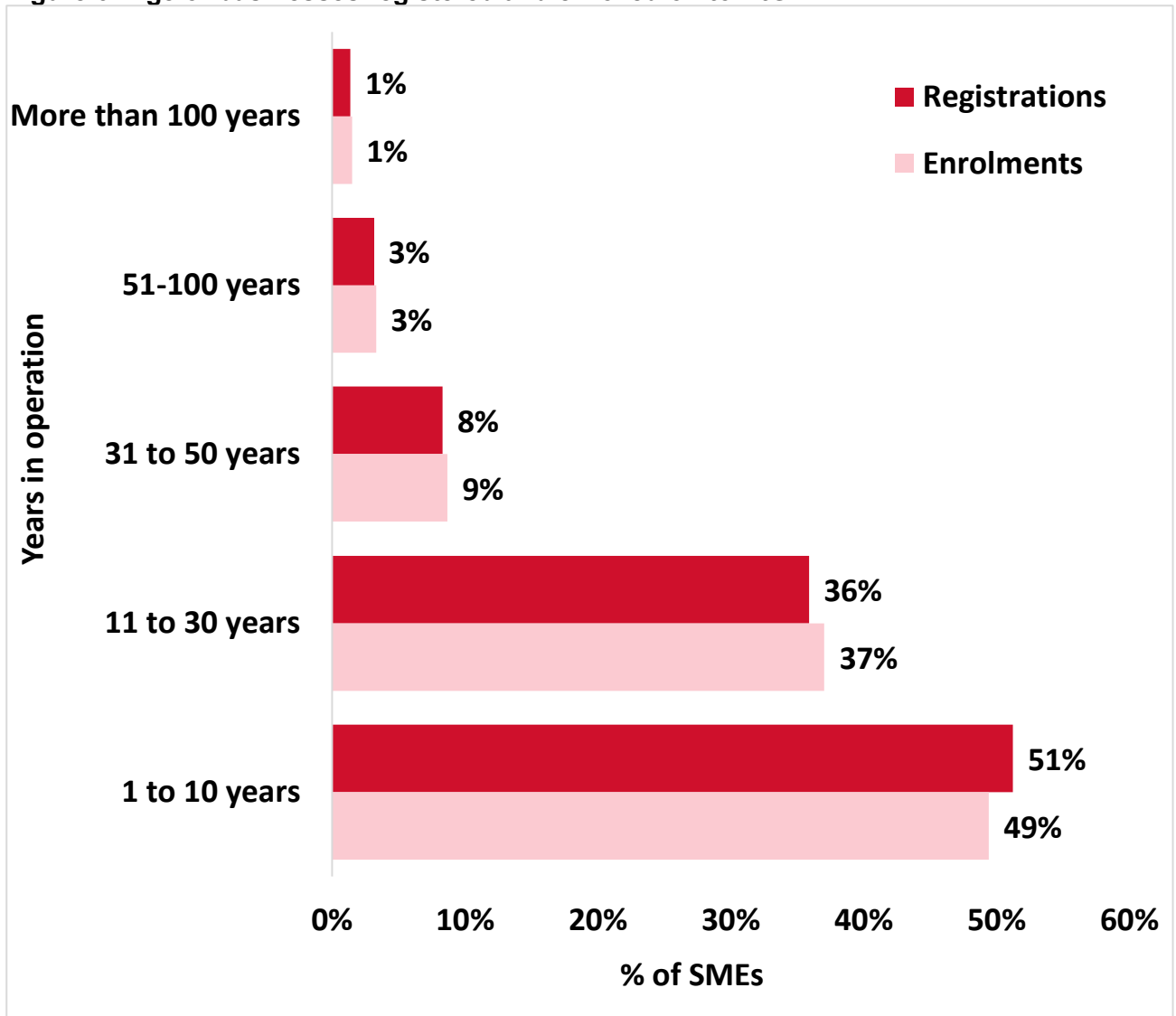
⁹ SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

Figure 2: Sector of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM¹⁰



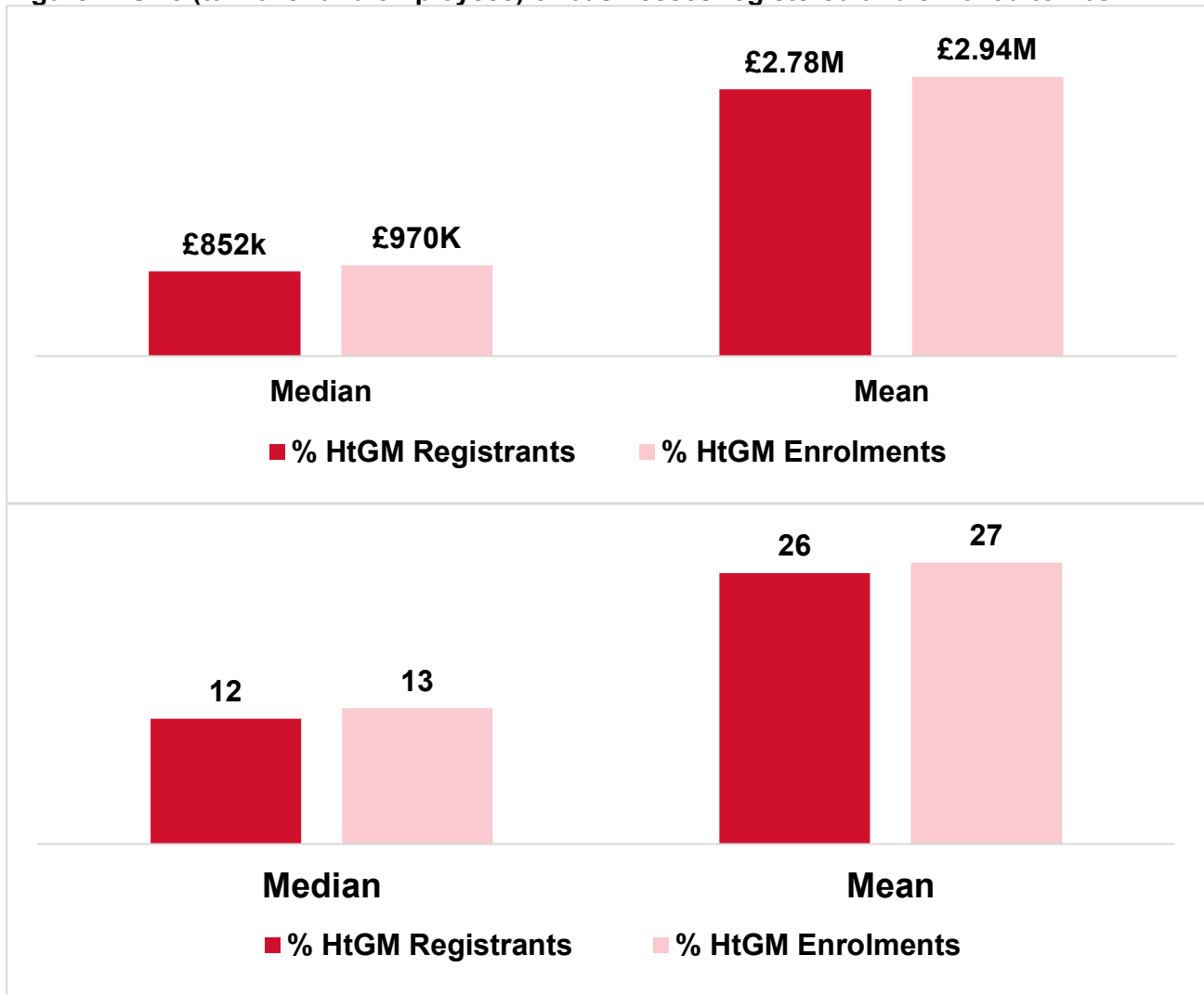
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=7,261), enrolments (n=6,300). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q2.

Figure 6: Age of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM



Source: DBT monitoring data; Base: registrations (n=7,184), enrolments (n=6,242). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q2.

Figure 7: Size (turnover and employees) of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM



Turnover source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=7,272), enrolments (n=6,317)
 Number of employees (FTE) Source: HtGM Registration form (n=7,013), enrolments (n=6,069)
 Note: these data are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q2.

SME leaders

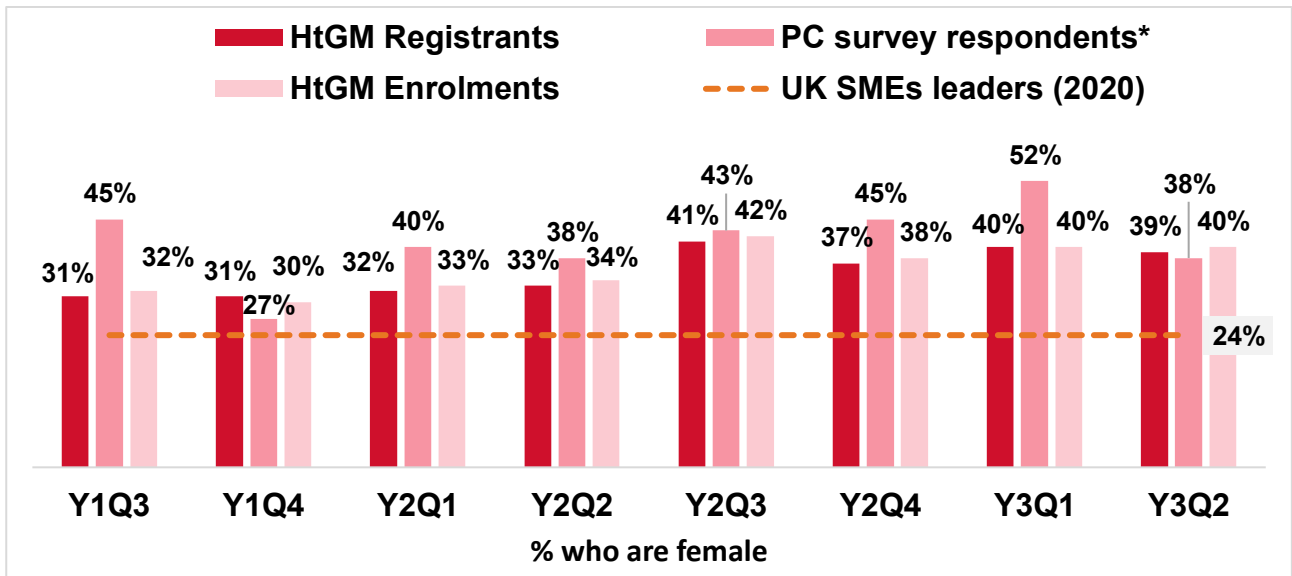
To date, the HtGM programme has attracted interest from a diverse range of SME leaders when compared to the gender and ethnic profile of SME leaders in the wider business population. In the most recent quarter, the proportion of female SME leaders registering on the programme (39%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses.¹¹ The proportion of SME leaders registering for HtGM who are from an ethnic minority background

¹¹ 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>

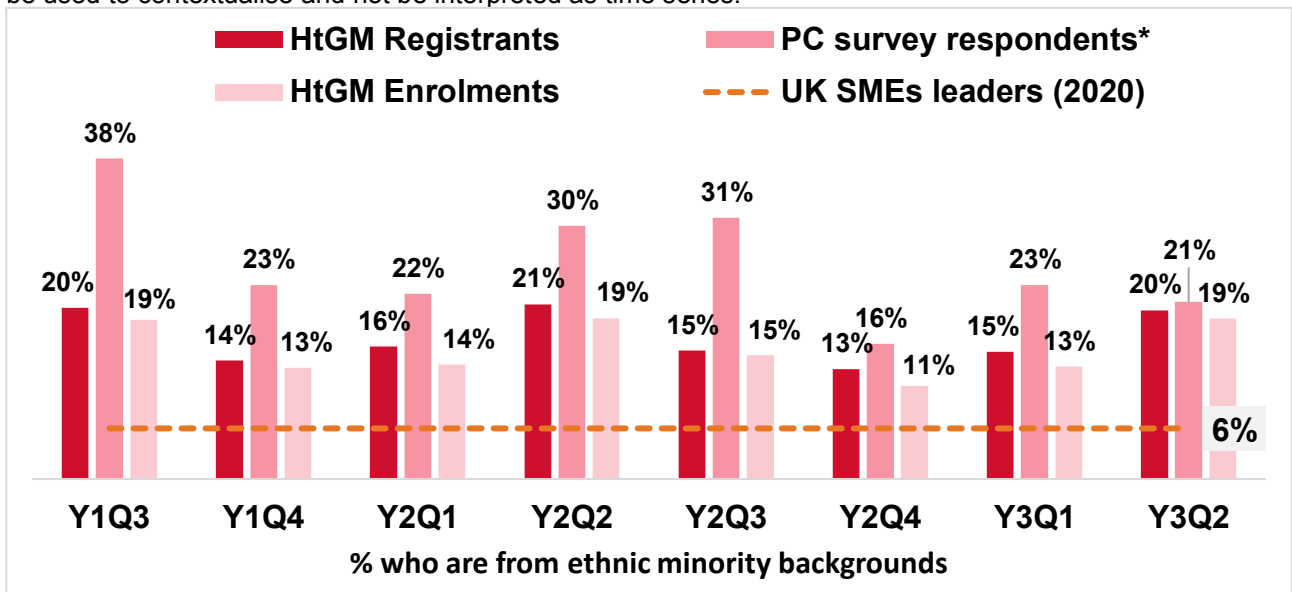
(20%) is also 14 percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses (see Figure 8).¹²

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 and gender.

Figure 3: Proportion of SME leaders who are female / proportion of SME leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds



Source: DBT monitoring data (n=9,946 for registrants and n=8,261 for enrolments); Post-completion survey (n=659); Leadership of small and medium enterprises (2023), Longitudinal Small Business Survey (2021). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q2. Note: Orange dashed line represents a singular point in time. It should be used to contextualise and not be interpreted as time series.



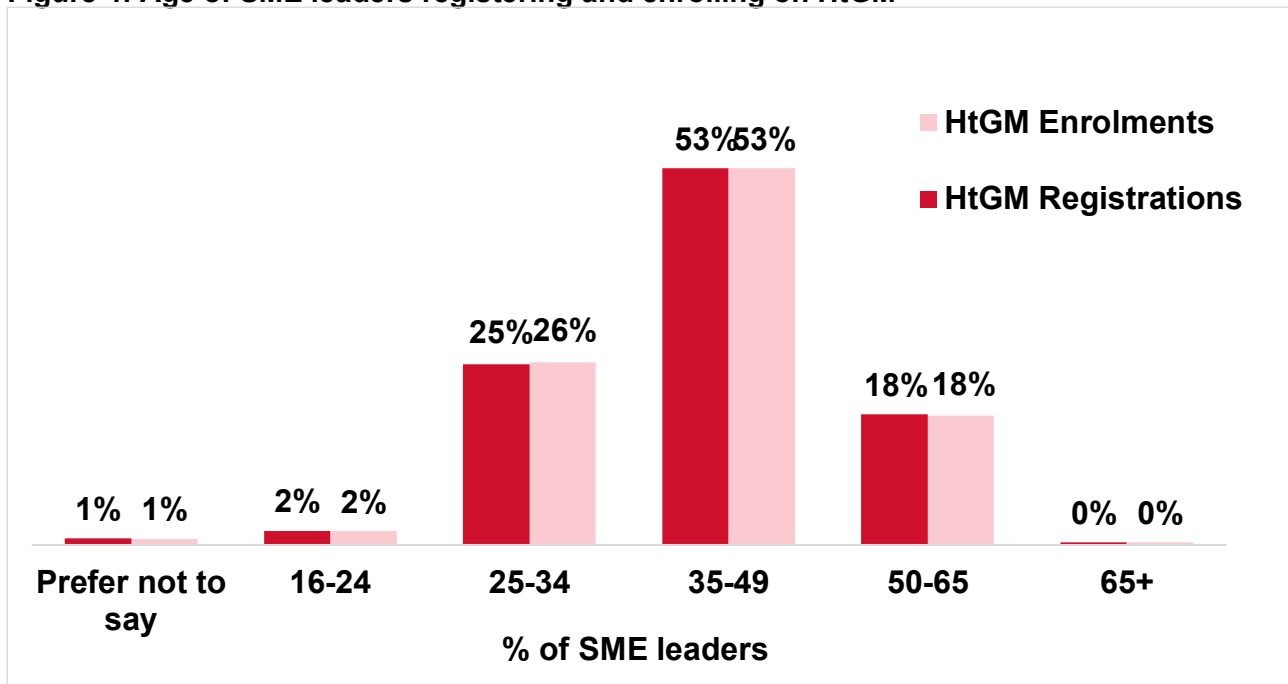
¹² Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises - <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf>

Note: Orange dashed line represents a singular point in time. It should be used to contextualise and not be interpreted as time series.

*PC survey respondents answering yes to 'Are any of the senior leaders in your business from an ethnic minority background?'

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

Figure 4: Age of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=9,946), enrolments (n=8,261)
Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q2.

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

Through participating in HtGM, SME leaders most commonly expected to improve leadership and management skills (76%), improve confidence in leading their business (73%) and have an increased awareness of productivity and growth (73%) at the time of applying.

Survey respondents were less likely to expect to improve their understanding of data analytics (24%), to widen their professional and peer networks (18%) and to improve their understanding of how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices (17%).

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

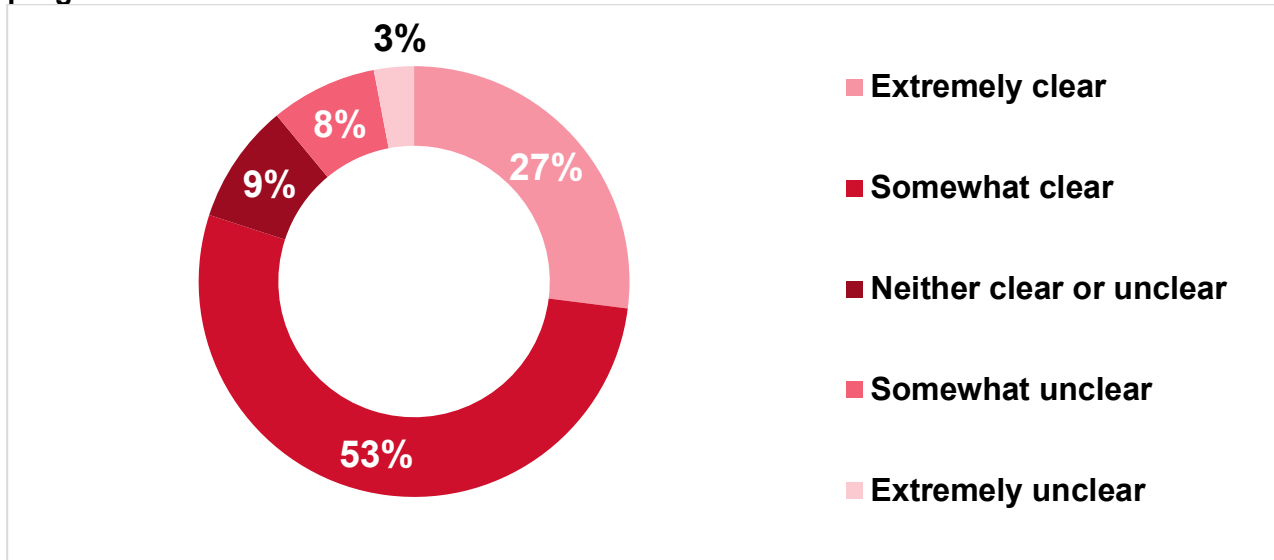


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1002 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Note: Respondents could select more than one option. Only the top three most reported and least three reported are included in the chart

Most survey respondents (80%) were somewhat or extremely 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: 1,002 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

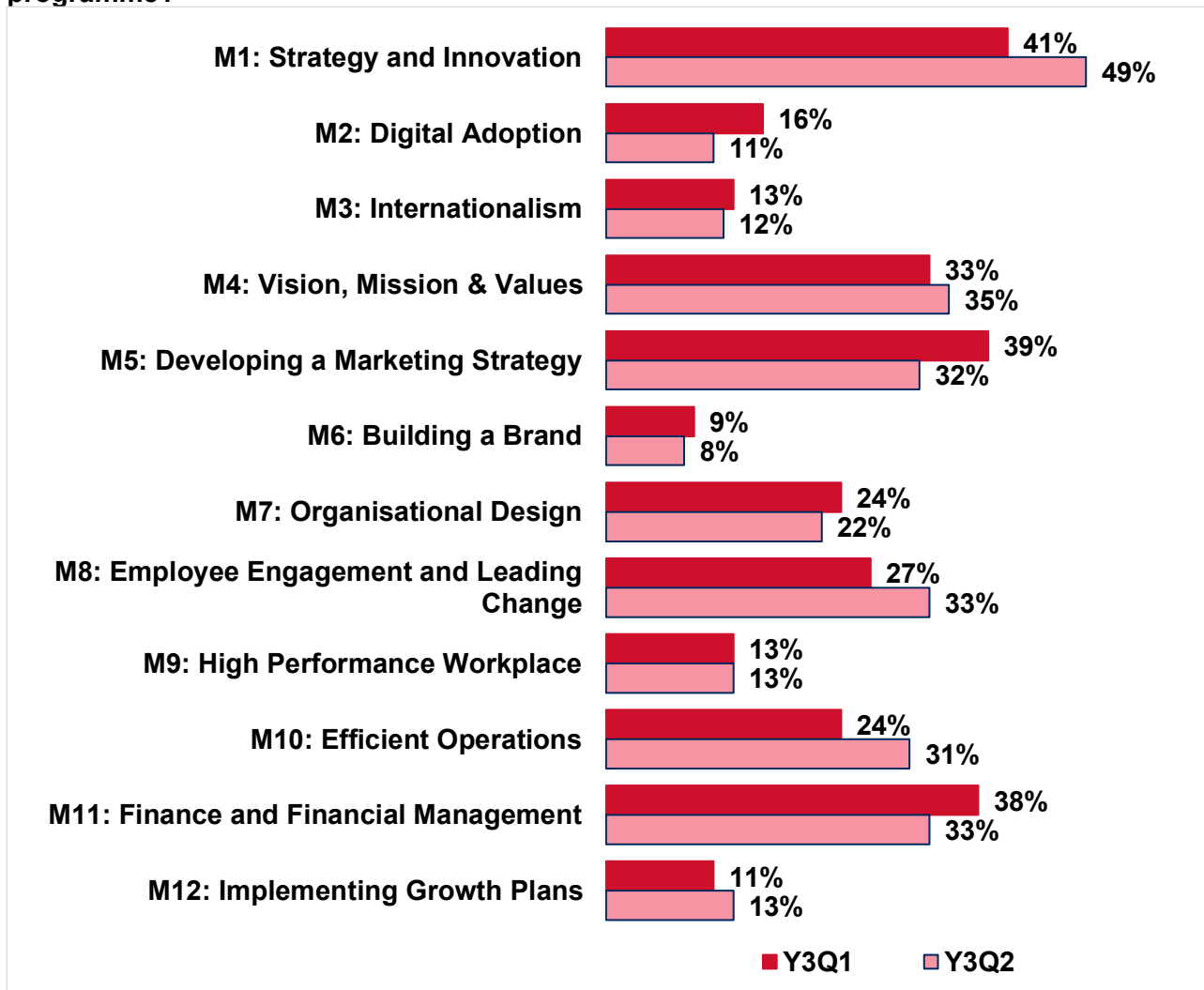
Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

Motivations and experience of applying

In the most recent quarter (Y3Q2), the modules reported by programme completers as being of most interest at the time of applying were Strategy and Innovation (49%), Vision, Mission and Values (35%), Employee Engagement and Leading Change (33%) and Finance and Financial Management (33%). This differs slightly to the previous quarter (Y3Q1), where Developing a Marketing Strategy was in the top three and Employee Engagement and Leading Change was not.

Strategy and Innovation has seen the biggest increase in interest since the previous quarter (41% in Y3Q1 compared to 49% in Y3Q2).

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

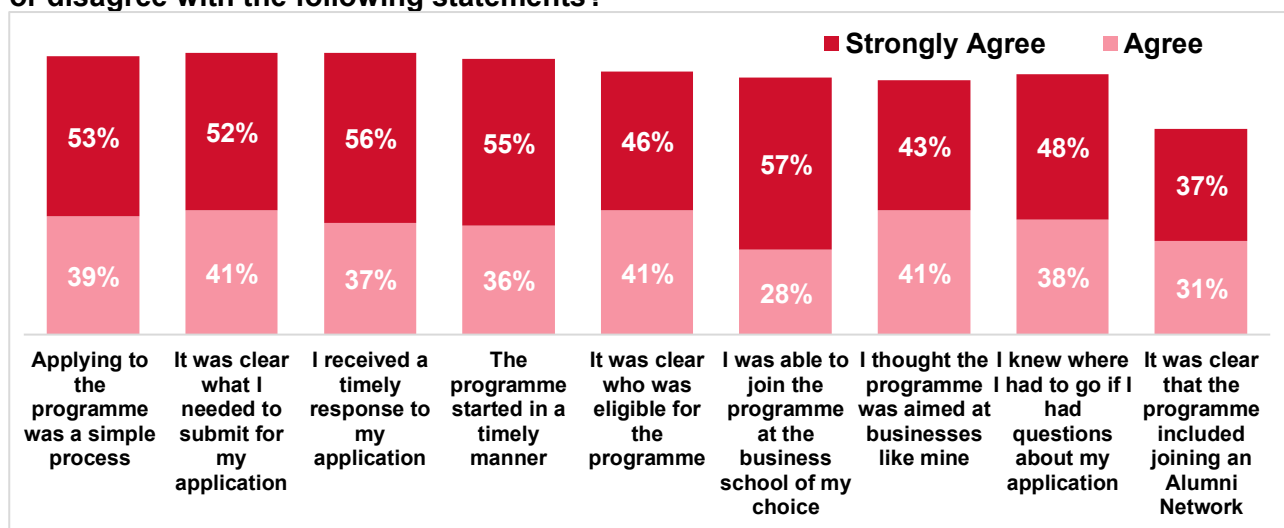


Source: Post completion survey; Base: (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y3Q1 (128), Y3Q2 (136)
 Note: Respondents could select up to three options.

Feedback remains positive on the application and onboarding process. A high proportion of respondents agreed that the application process was simple (92%), submitting an application was clear (93%) and responses to applications were timely (92%). This has remained consistent across quarters.

In December 2022, an additional response option relating to the alumni network was added to the question presented below. It is relatively unclear that the programme included joining an alumni network for one in three programme participants (70% Y3Q1, 72% Y3Q2).

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: 1002 (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 an Alumni Network' was added in Y2Q3, meaning it has a smaller sample (413). This base excludes 'Not stated/not answered'

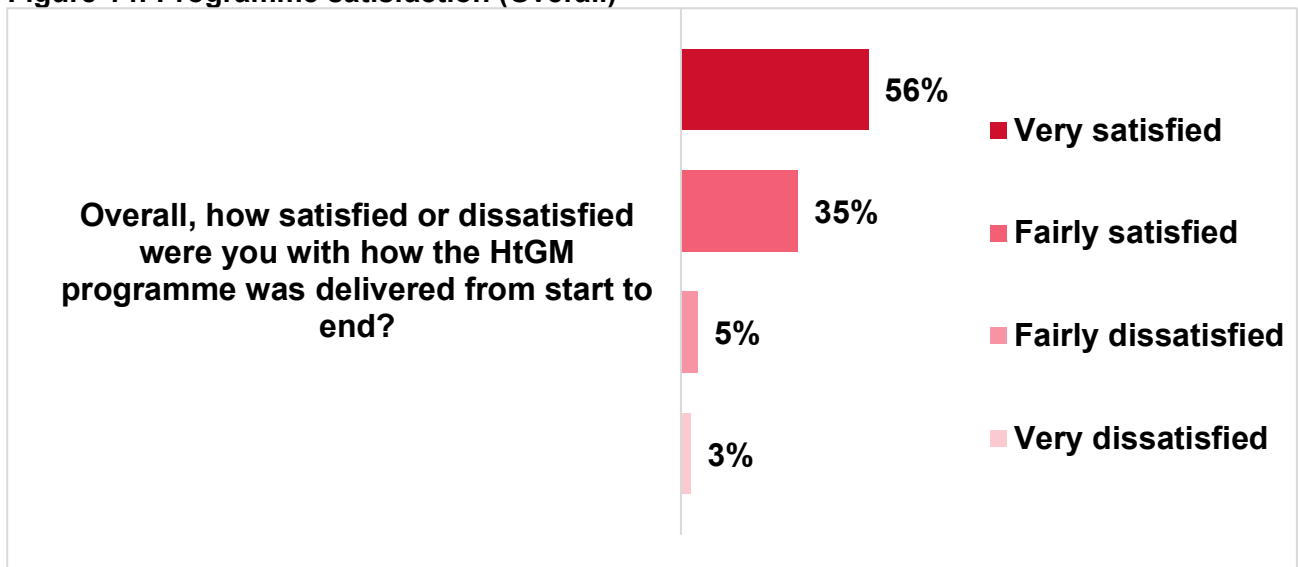
Experience of HtGM

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 8% saying they were fairly or very dissatisfied. Overall levels of satisfaction have dropped slightly since the previous quarter (from 96% in Y3Q1 to 90% in Y3Q2 – see Figure 24).

Figure 14: Programme satisfaction (Overall)



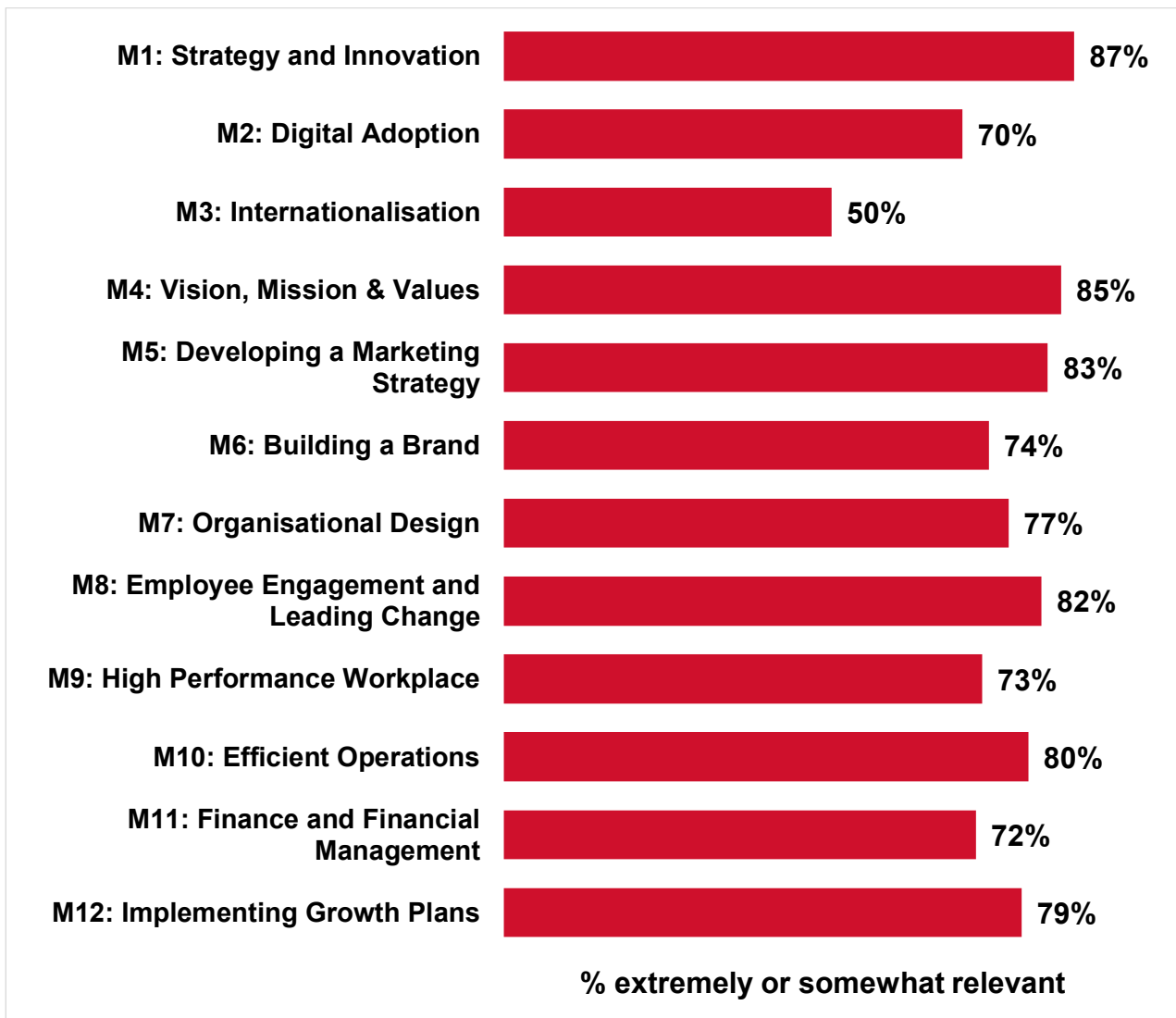
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1002 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Question type: single choice; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

Participants are reporting high levels of satisfaction with the overall design and content of the modules. To date, Strategy and Innovation has been deemed most relevant by programme completers (87%) with Vision, Missions and Values (85%), Developing a Marketing Strategy (83%), Employee Engagement and Leading Change (82%) and Efficient Operations (80%) also deemed highly relevant.

The module that saw the largest increase in relevance since the previous quarter was Developing a Marketing Strategy, which increased from 80% in Y3Q1 to 84% in Y3Q2. Internationalism has been steadily increasing each quarter (43% in Y2Q4, 54% in Y3Q1, 57% in Y3Q2).

Across quarters, the module that saw the biggest decrease in perceived relevance since Y3Q1 was Employee Engagement and Leading Change (from 89% in Y3Q1 to 76% in Y3Q2).

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



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1002 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Note: Respondents could select relevancy for each statement

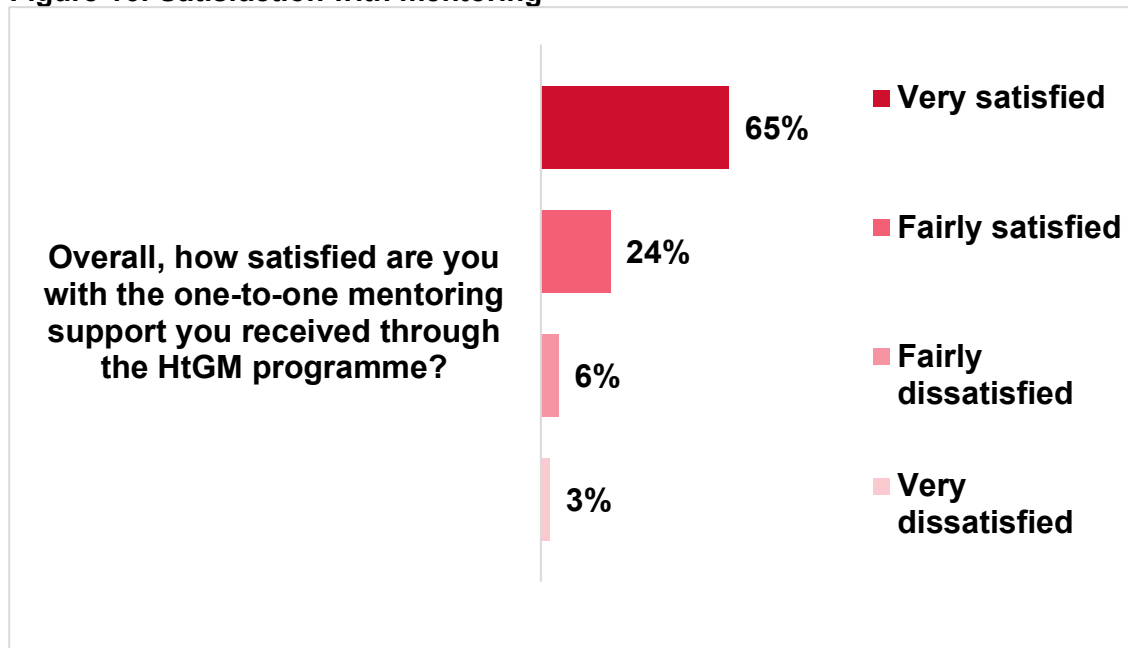
Mentoring

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 Y3Q2 survey will have received mentoring under the new delivery model.

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 with the mentoring element of the programme are high. Around nine in ten (89%) survey respondents were satisfied with the mentoring support received. There has been a slight decrease in satisfaction since Y3Q1 (92% to 86% in Y3Q2– See Figure 25).

Figure 16: Satisfaction with mentoring

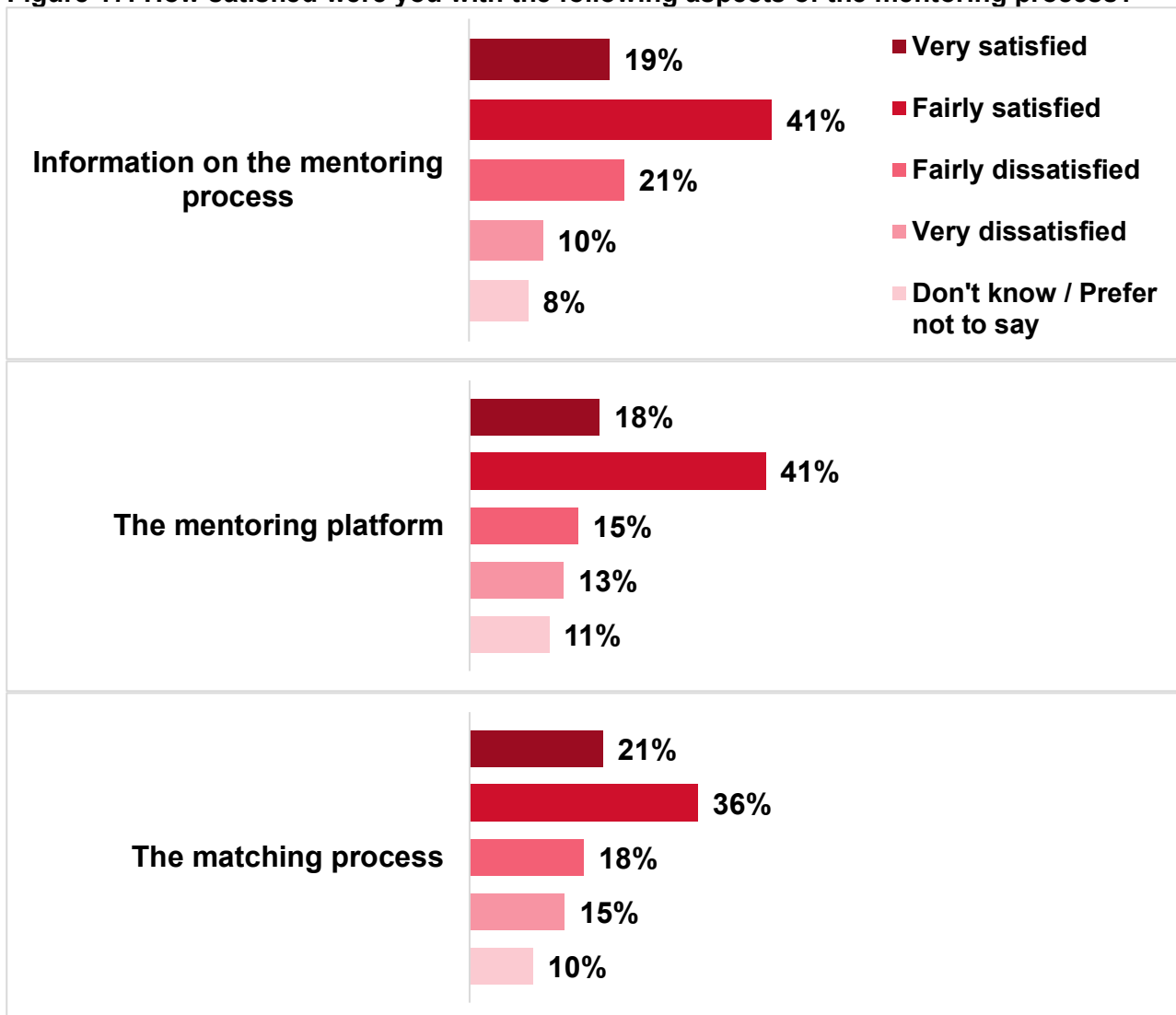


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 841 (Asked only to those that were matched to a mentor and had completed all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)
 Note: This base excludes 'Not stated/not answered' and figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

In the most recent quarter (Y3Q1), over half of respondents were fairly/very satisfied with information on the mentoring process (60%), the mentoring platform (59%) and the matching process (57%).¹³ All aspects of the voluntary mentoring model have seen a decrease in satisfaction since the last quarter (Y3Q2): information on the mentoring process (72%), the mentoring platform (69%), the matching process (64%).

¹³ 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.

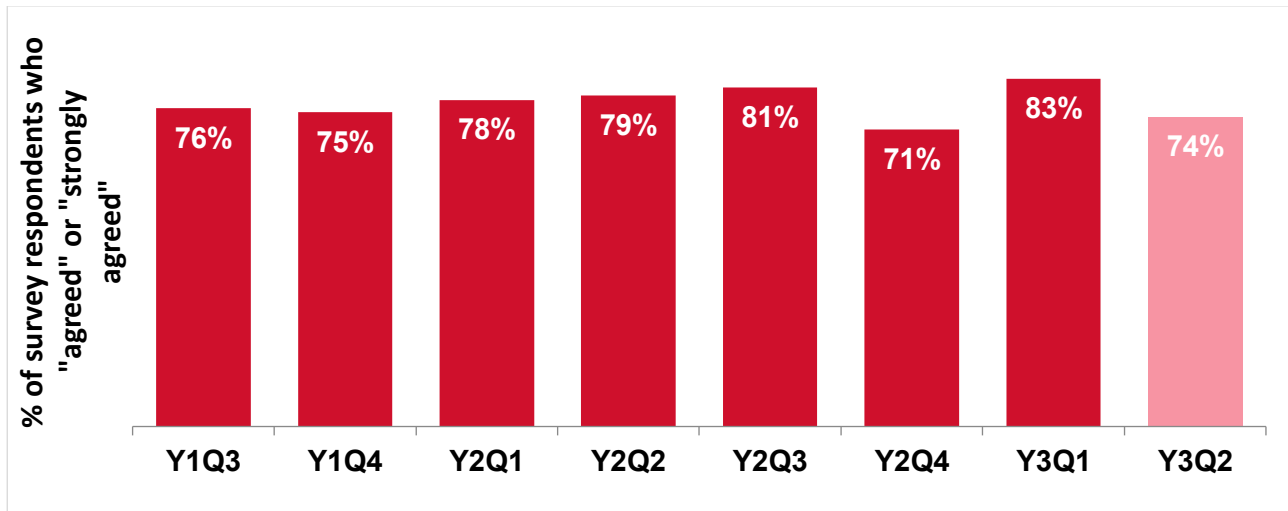
Figure 17: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the mentoring process?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 136 (Figure shows quarterly responses) (This question was added to the survey in December 2022 resulting in a smaller sample); Question type: single choice per statement

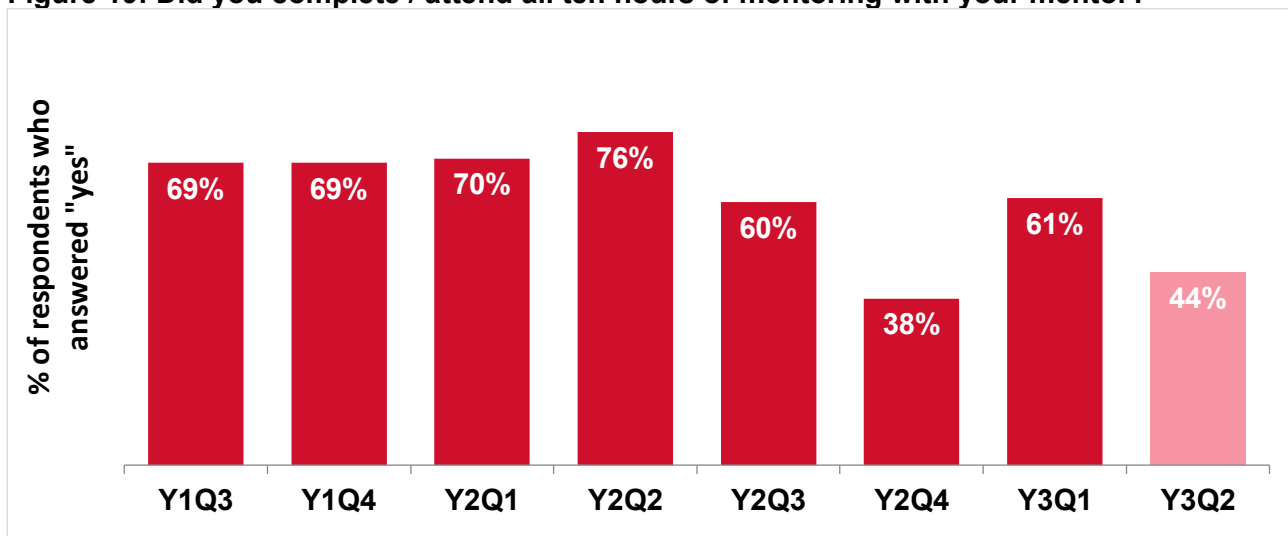
The majority (74%) of survey respondents thought their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs. However, this was lower than in the previous quarter (83%). Less than half of respondents in the most recent quarter (44%) had attended all ten hours of mentoring, which was a 17 percentage point decrease from the previous quarter (61%).

Figure 5: 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 , 103 Y3Q1, 109 Y3Q2 (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?

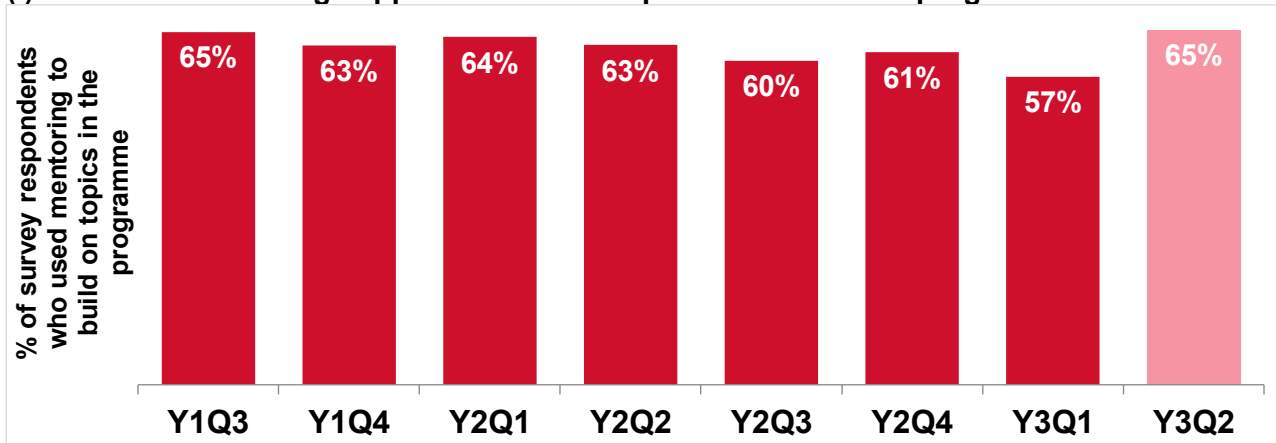


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 48 Y2Q4 , 103 Y3Q1, 109 Y3Q2 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

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)

The mentoring support is used by programme participants to cover a range of topics both in the curriculum and beyond (Figure 20). The number of respondents using mentoring to build on topics in the programme has increased substantially since the last quarter (from 57% in Y3Q1 to 65% in Y3Q2).

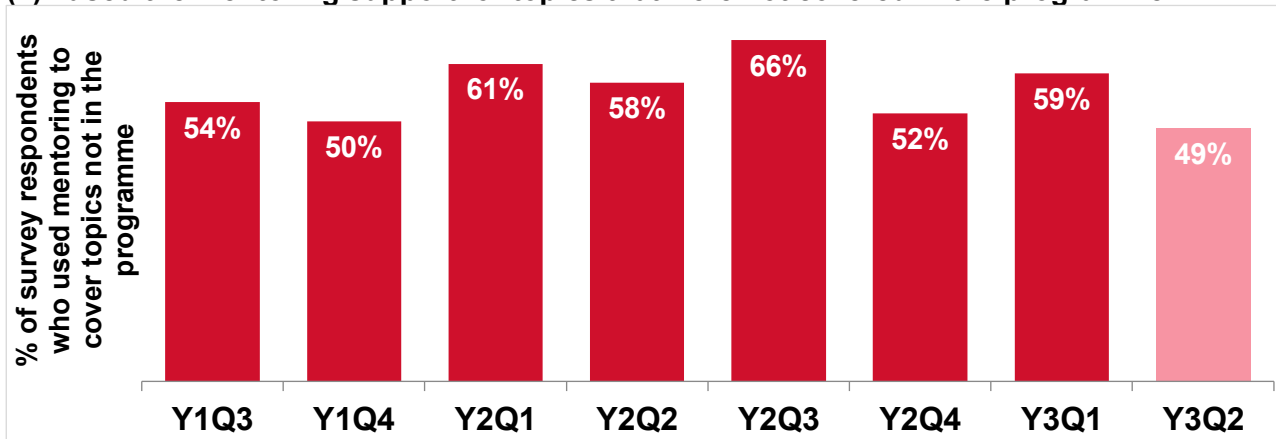
**Figure 20: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support?
(i) I used the mentoring support to build on topics covered in the programme**



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 in Y3Q2 (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: the tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves. 'not stated' responses are excluded from Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1 bases.

**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**

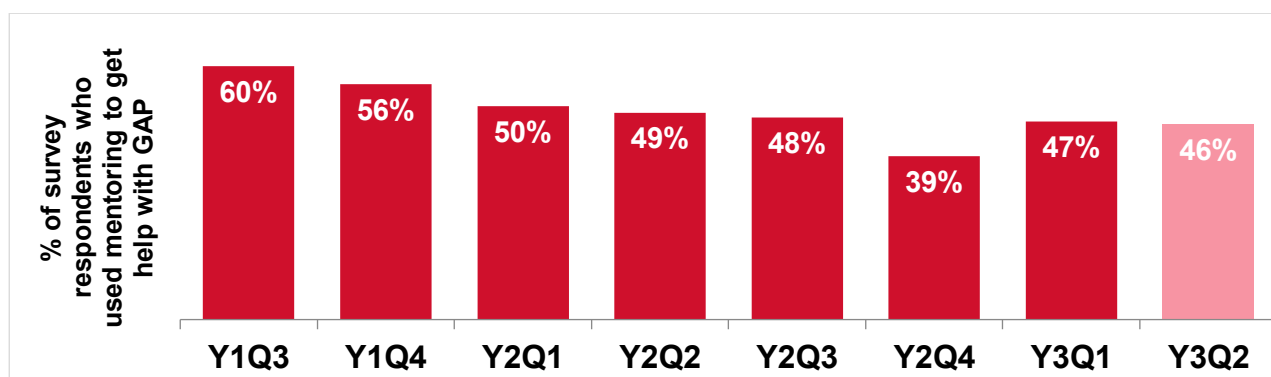


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1. The tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves.

Almost two-fifths (46%) of Y3Q2 respondents used mentoring to get help with their Growth Action Plan. This is similar to Y3Q1 (47%) and up on Y2Q4 (39%).

**Figure 6: 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**

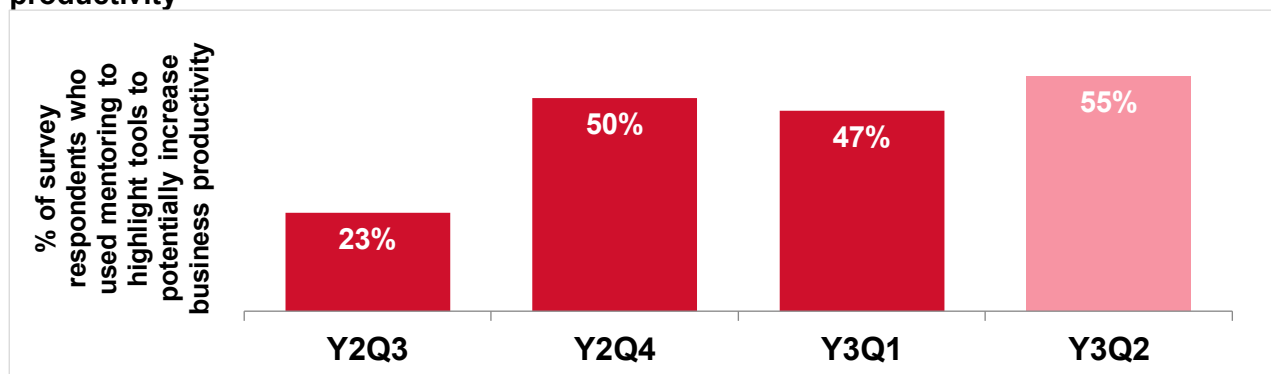


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1. The tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves.

Over half (55%) of respondents used mentoring to highlight tools to increase their business productivity. This response option was introduced in Y2Q3 and has increased since the previous quarter (47% in Y3Q1 to 55% in Y3Q2).

**Figure 23: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support?
(iii) I used the mentoring support to highlight tools to potentially increase business productivity**



Source: Post completion survey; 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2 (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

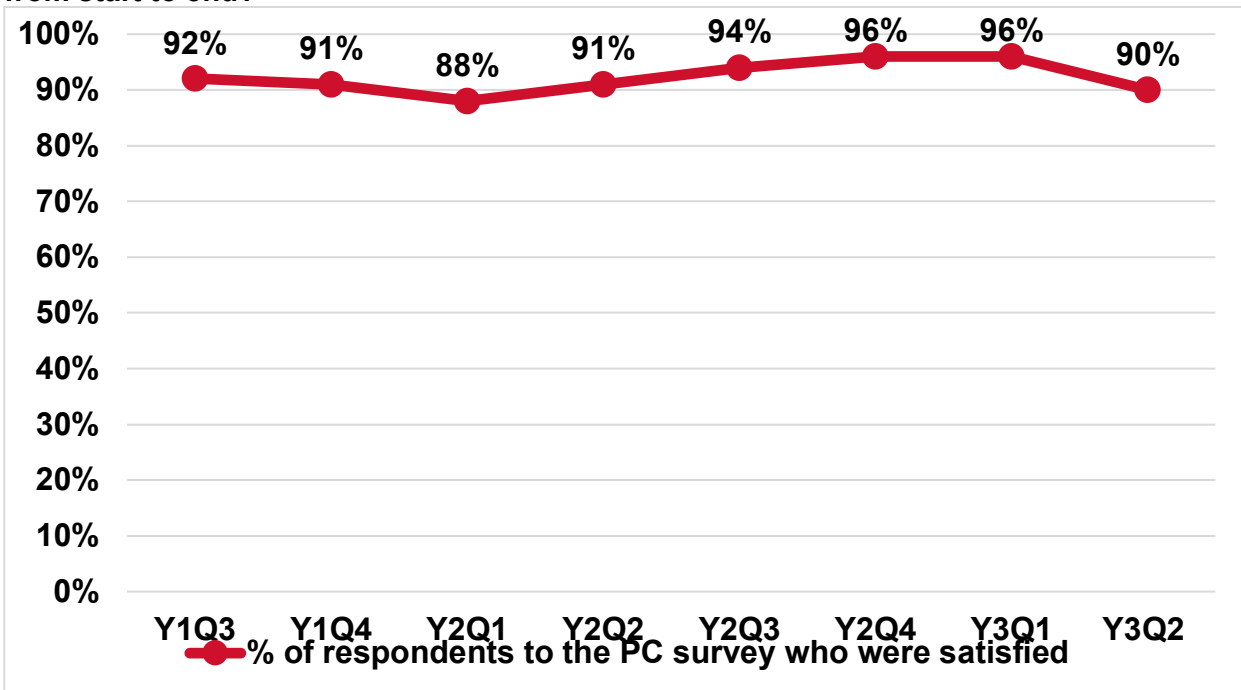
Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded. This measure was introduced in Y2Q3. The chart includes the full base including all data codes.

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, 90% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered. Satisfaction has decreased since the last quarter but remains high.
- The proportion of programme completers who were satisfied with their mentoring support dropped by six percentage points relative to the previous quarter (from 92% in Y3Q1 to 86% in Y3Q2).

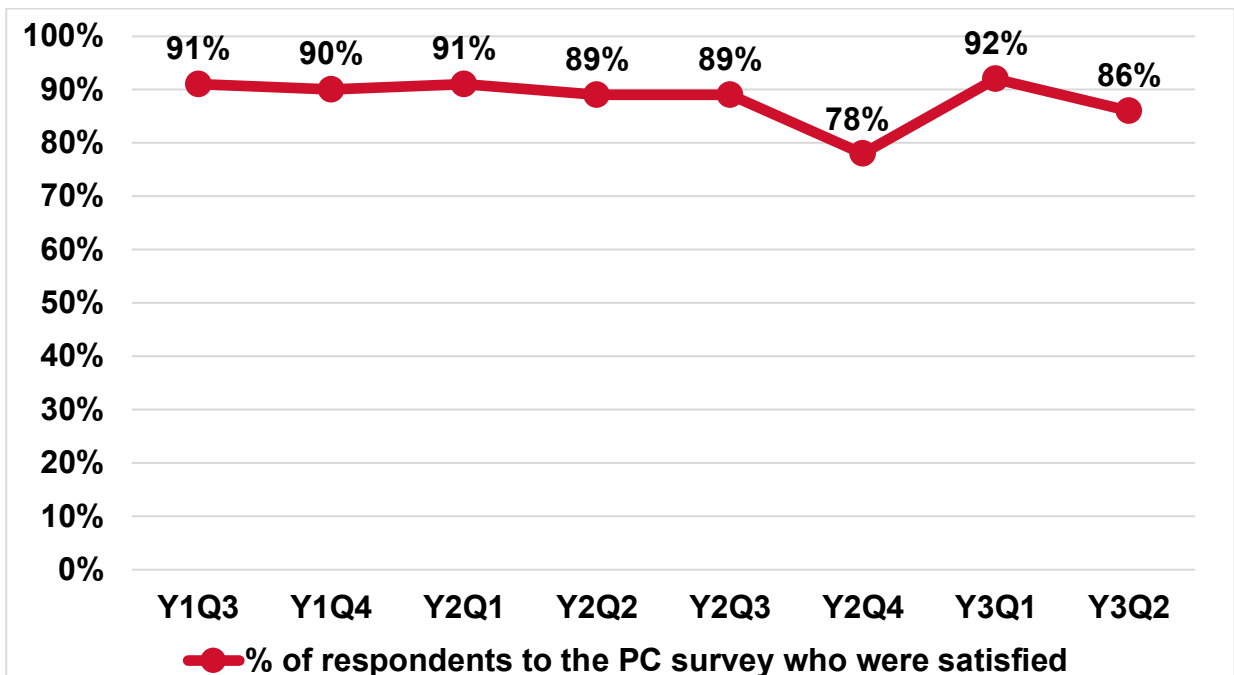
Figure 24: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how HtGM was delivered from start to end?



Source: Post completion survey

Base: 85 Y1Q3; 91 Y1Q4, 256 Y2Q1, 149 Y2Q2, 90 Y2Q3, 67 Y2Q4 , 128 Y3Q1, 136 Y3Q2

Figure 25: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you the mentoring support you received through the HtGM programme?



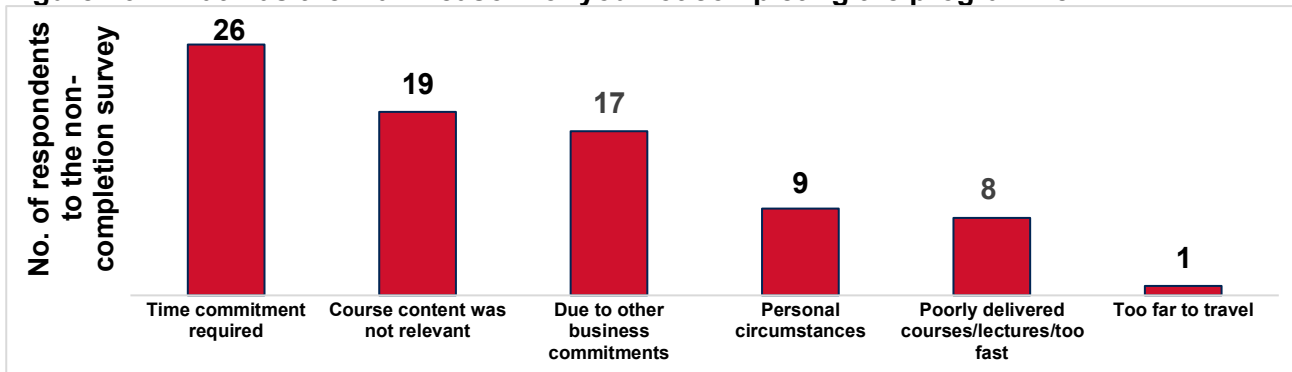
Source: Post completion survey

Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 73 Y2Q3, 36 Y2Q4 , 88 Y3Q1, 95 Y3Q2 (Asked only of those who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base

Non-completion survey¹⁴

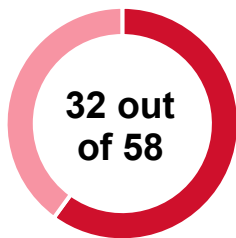
This section sets out early evidence on the experiences of SME leaders who enrolled on the programme but completed less than 75% of the modular content. It presents findings on overall satisfaction, reasons for not completing and whether anything could have supported them to attend more of the programme.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

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



Source: Non completion survey Base: 58

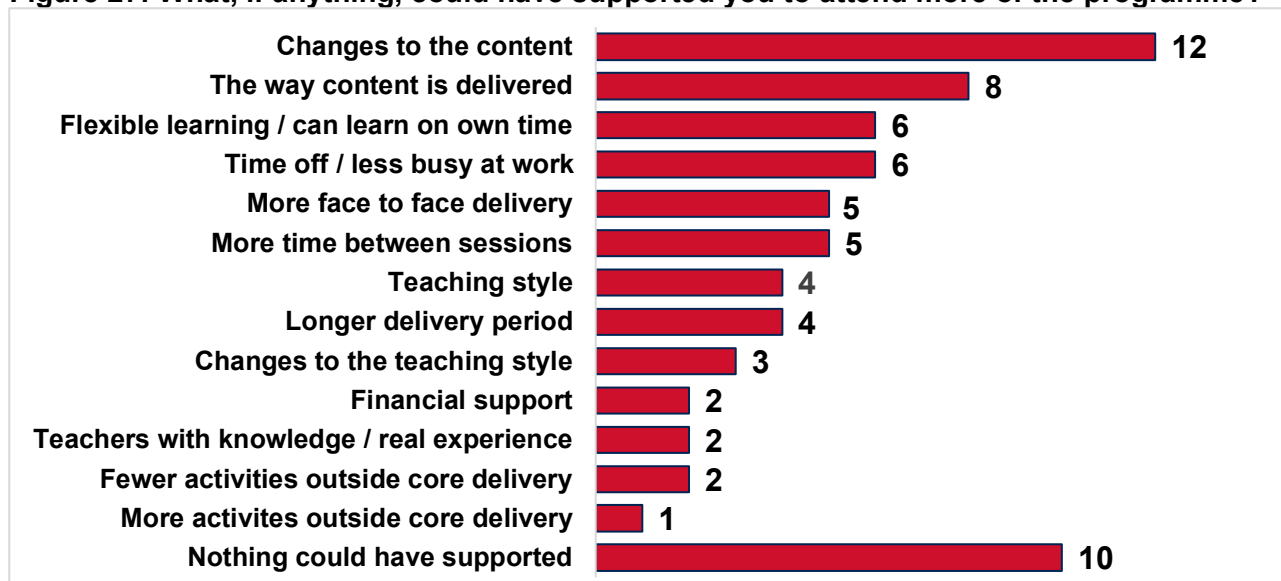
Note: Respondents could select more than one option (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)



SME leaders who completed less than 75% of module content would be interested in completing the programme at a later point in time

¹⁴ Commentary will be added to future reports once the sample size has increased.

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



Source: Non completion survey; Base: 58

Note: Respondents could select more than one option (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Self-reported individual outcomes

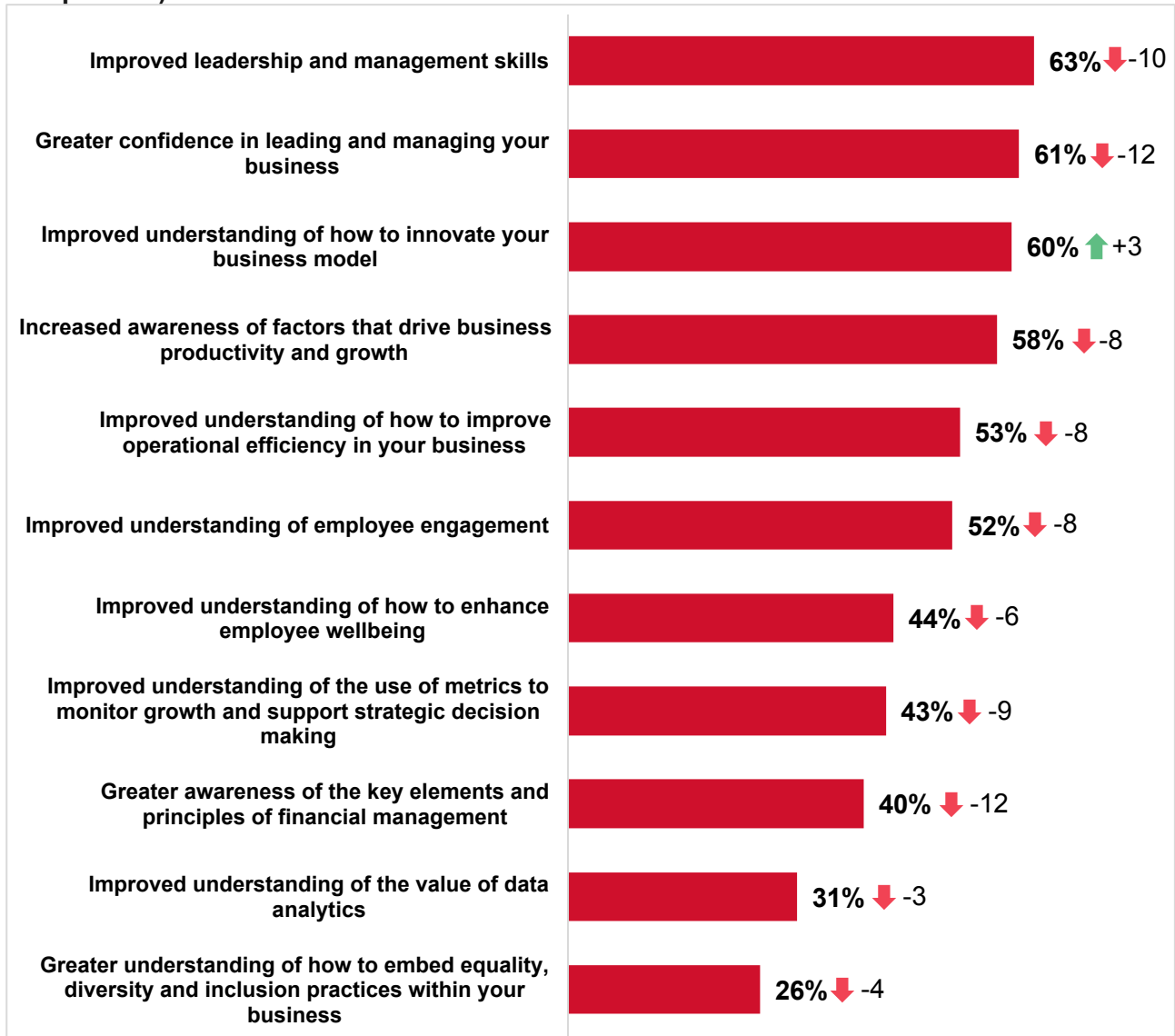
This section focuses on individual level outcomes. All findings presented are self-reported and should therefore be treated as indicative rather than conclusive.

Within six weeks, HtGM programme completers in Y3Q2 report having improved leadership and management skills (63%), greater confidence in leading and managing their business (61%) and an improved understanding of how to innovate their business model (60%) (Figure 28).

There were some noticeable differences between Y3Q1 and Y3Q2:

- The only increase was reported for 'improved understanding of how to innovate your business model' which increased by three percentage points.
- The largest decreases were in the proportion reporting greater confidence in leading and managing their business and greater awareness of the key elements and principles of financial management, which each decreased by 12 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)

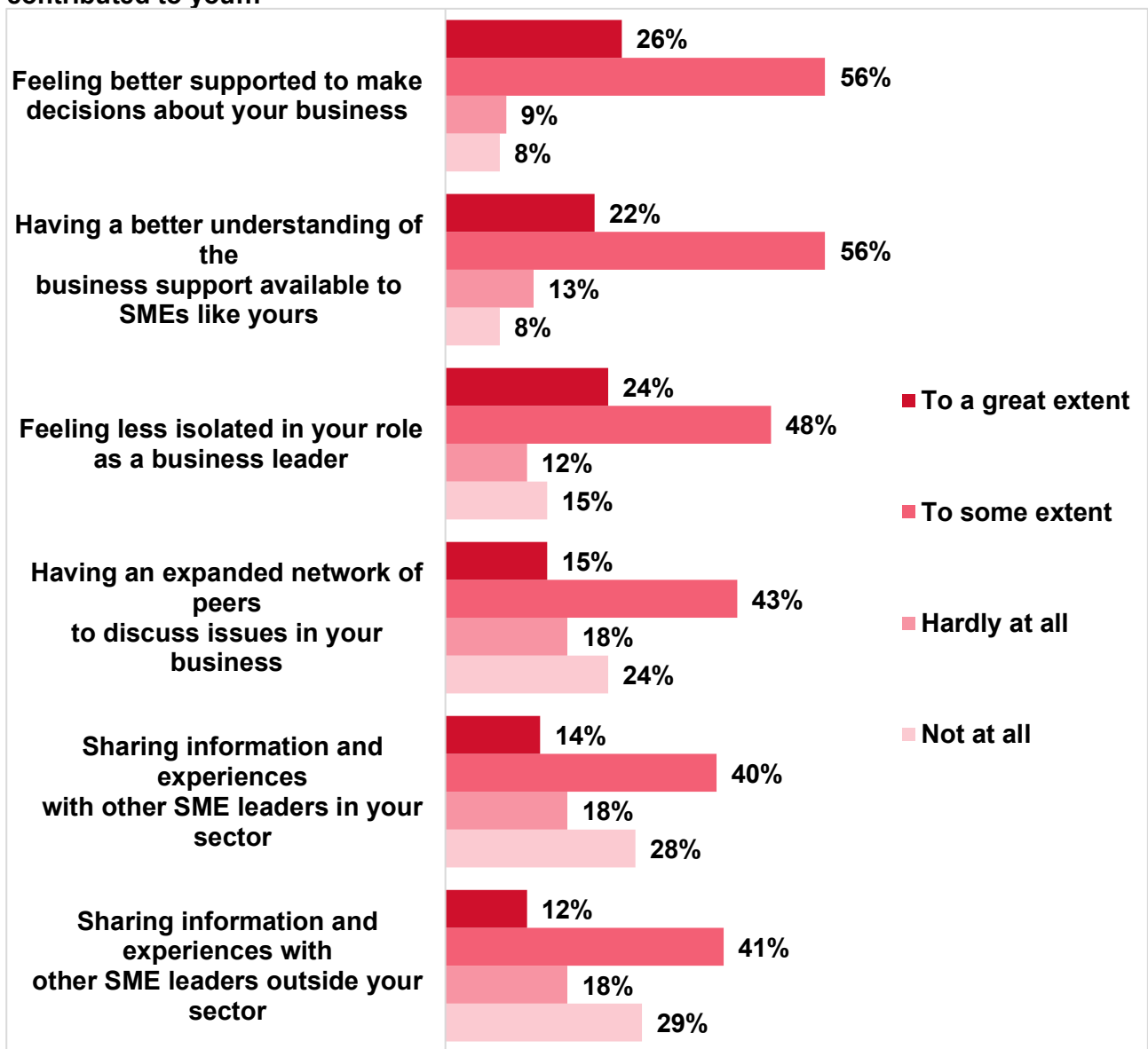


Source: Post completion survey; Base: Y3Q1 (128), Y3Q2 (136)

Note: bars show data from Y3Q2 of the post completion survey, arrows show changes from Y3Q1 and dashes show no change; Question type: Multiple choice; Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

HtGM programme completers also reported feeling better supported to make decisions, (82%), better understanding of support available (78%) and feeling less isolated in their role as a business leader (72%).

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

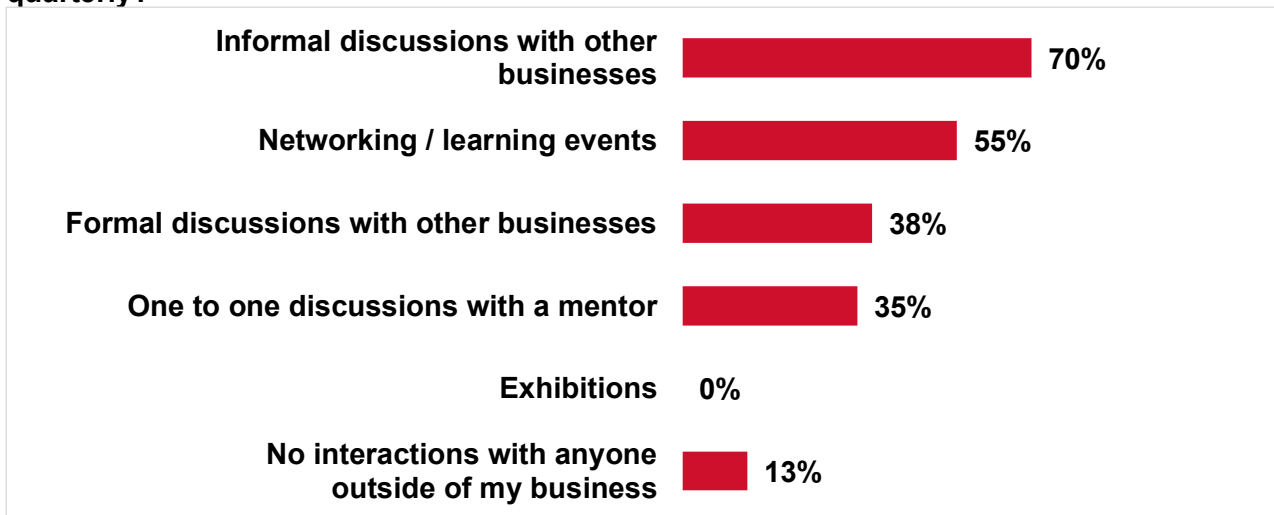


Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 873 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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 (87%) had interacted with SME leaders outside of their firm, typically through informal discussions (70%) or networking events (55%). The proportion of programme completers who had no interactions with anyone outside their business has consistently remained low (as shown in Figure 30, the aggregate average is 13%).

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

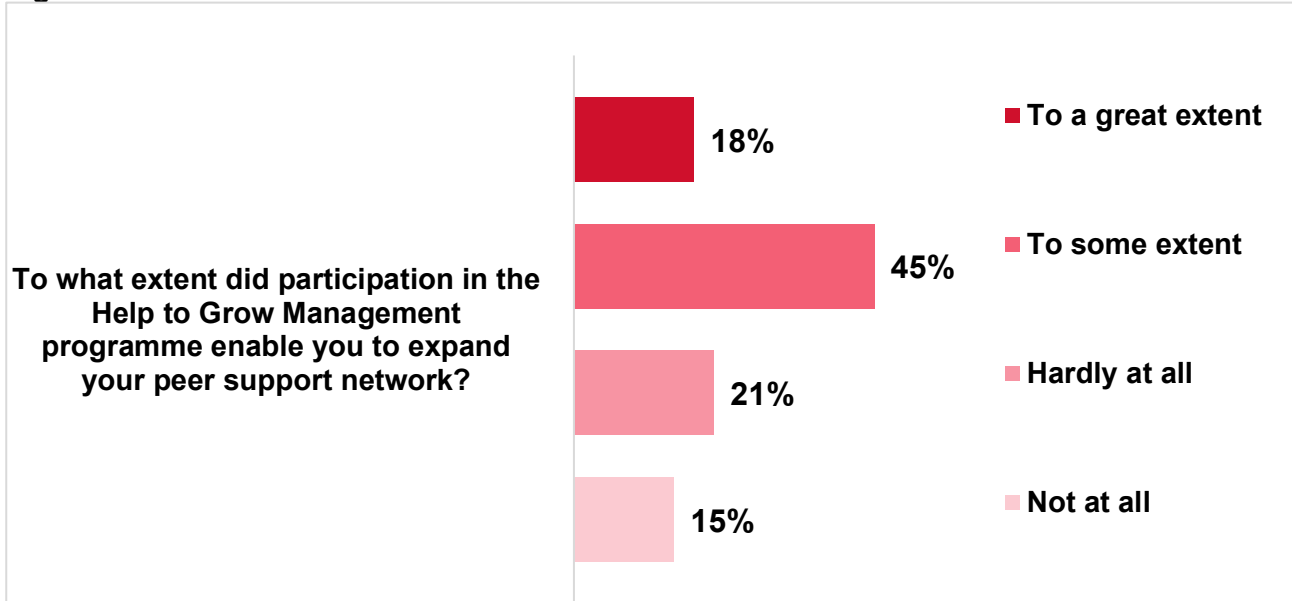


Source: Six month follow up survey; Respondents could select more than one option
Base: 873 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Network benefits

Around two thirds (63%) of SME leaders completing the programme said that HtGM enabled them to expand their peer support network.

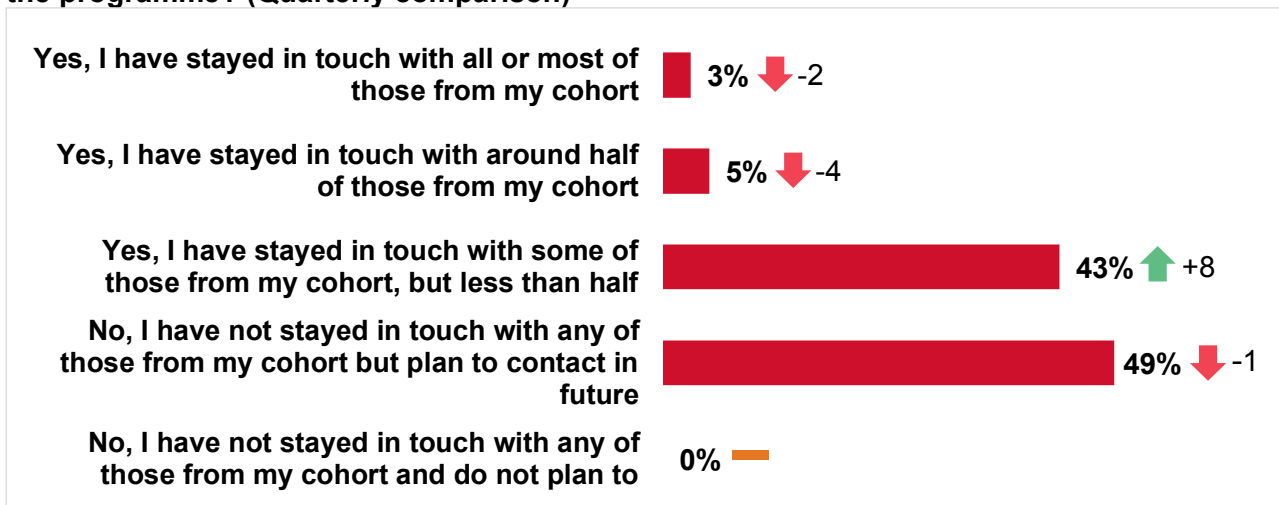
Figure 31: Network benefits



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 873 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

More than half of programme participants from Y3Q2 (51%) had stayed in touch with peers from their HtGM cohort within 6 months, and the remaining 49% intended to in the future.

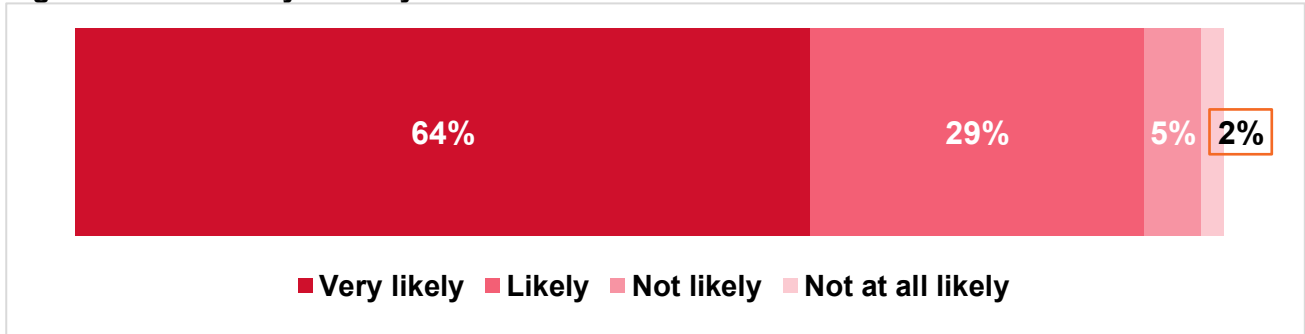
Figure 32: Have you stayed in touch with peers from your HtGM cohort since you completed the programme? (Quarterly comparison)



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 221 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y3Q2 (147), Y3Q1 (74) Note: bars show data from Y3Q2 of the six-month survey (May-June 2023), arrows show changes from Y3Q1 (Jan-Mar 2023)

Most SME leaders who completed the programme (93%) said they were likely to recommend HtGM to another business leader, with almost two thirds (64%) saying they were very likely to.

Figure 33: How likely would you be to recommend HtGM to another business leader?



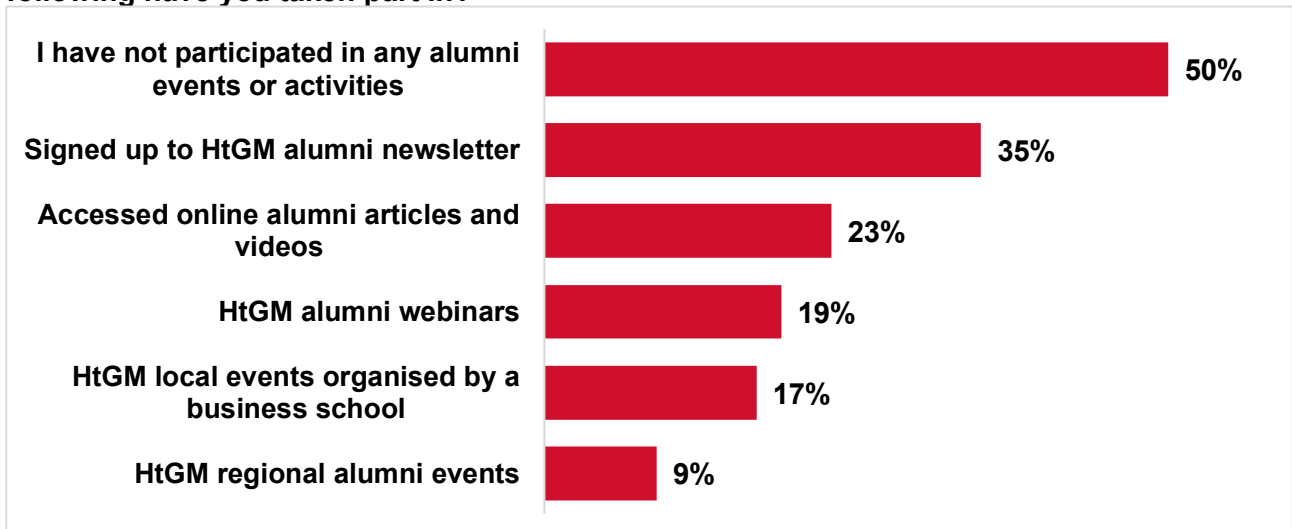
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 873 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Alumni activity

Please note: the alumni survey questions presented and discussed in this section were added from Y3Q1 and so base sizes are relatively low and should be interpreted with caution.

Half of respondents said they had not participated in any alumni events or activities six months after completing the programme. However, over one third signed up to the HtGM alumni newsletter (35%).

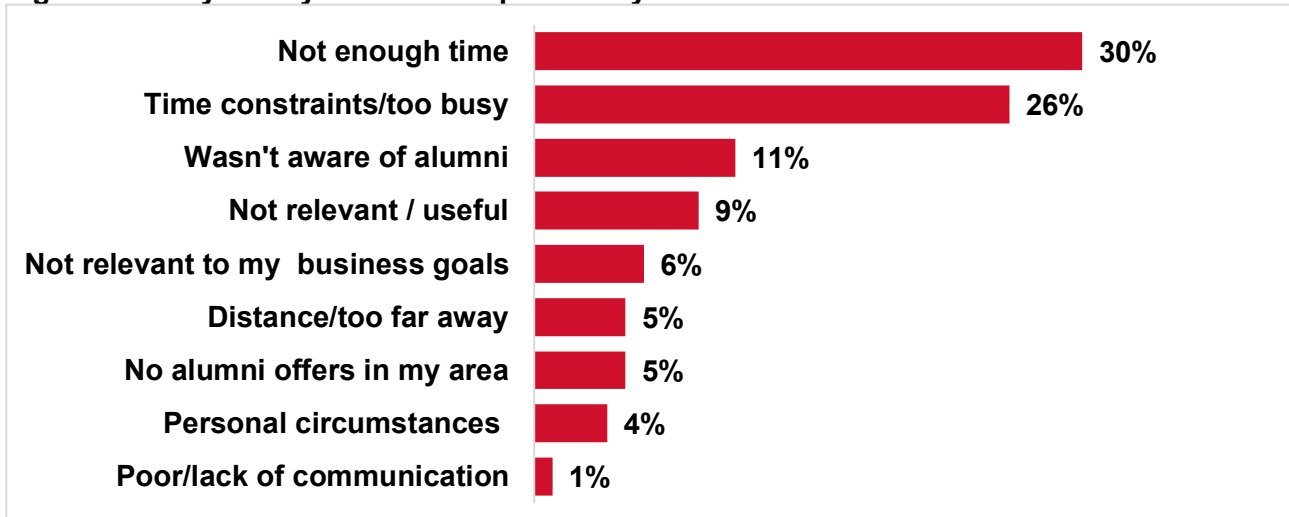
Figure 34: Have you participated in any HtGM alumni activities and, if so, which of the following have you taken part in?



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 221. This is a new question added at Y3Q1.

The most common reasons for not taking part in alumni activities were not having enough time (30%) and time constraints/being too busy (26%). A further 11% said they were not aware of the alumni network and 9% said they did not find it relevant / useful.

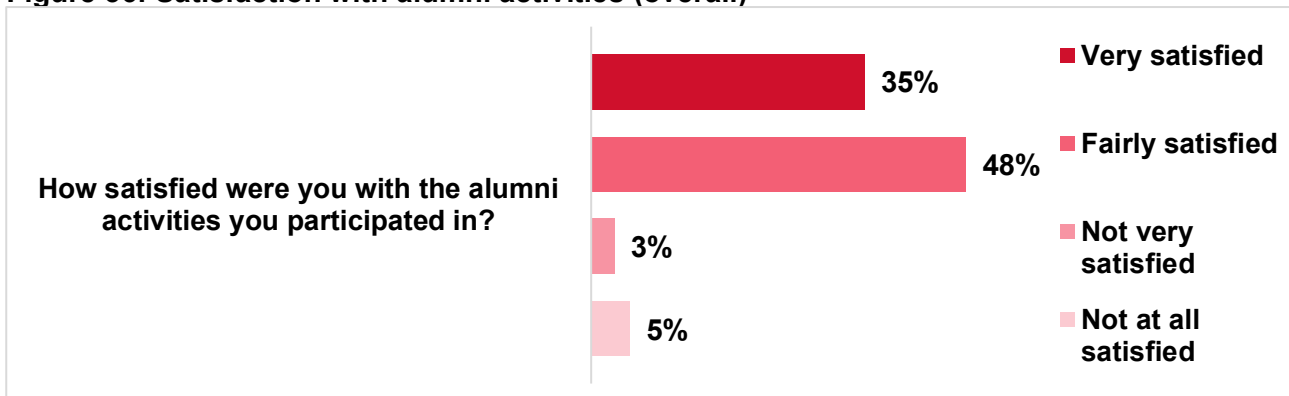
Figure 35: Why have you not taken part in any alumni related activities?



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 110 (all completers who have not taken part in any alumni activities). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: very small base, interpret with caution.

The majority of respondents participating in alumni activity were very/fairly satisfied with this (83%).

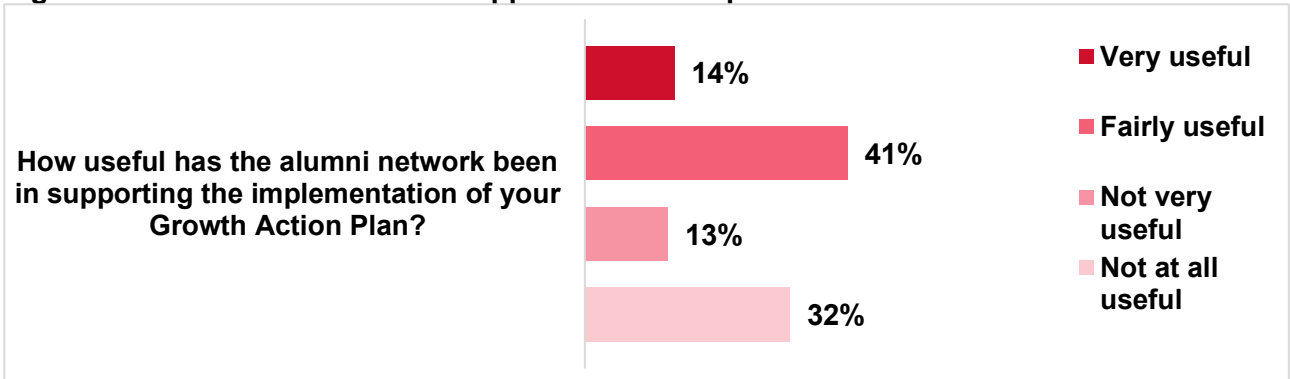
Figure 36: Satisfaction with alumni activities (overall)



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 111 (all completers who have taken part in an alumni activity). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: very small base, interpret with caution.

There are mixed views on whether the alumni network is useful in supporting the implementation of Growth Action Plans. Over half of respondents (55%) found it very/fairly useful for this purpose, whilst 45% found it not very/not at all useful.

Figure 37: Usefulness of alumni support with the implementation of Growth Action Plans



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 111 (all completers who have taken part in an alumni activity). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: very small base, interpret with caution.

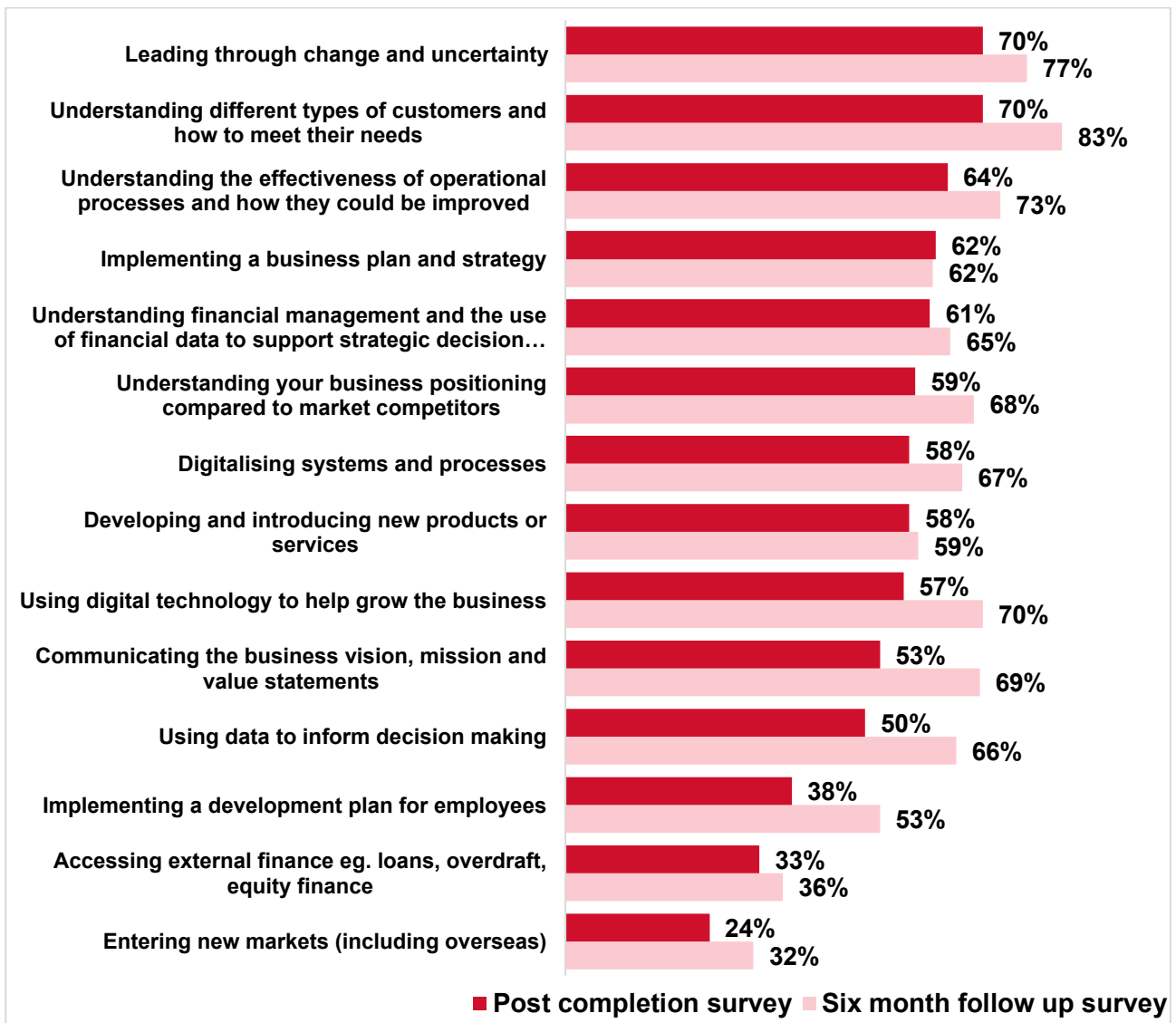
Self-reported business outcomes

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 only. 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 good capabilities and experience across a breadth of areas and, in most cases, these continued to improve up to six months after completing HtGM (see Figure 38).

Figure 38: How would you rate your own firm's capabilities and experience in the following areas?¹⁵ (“Good” and “Very good”)

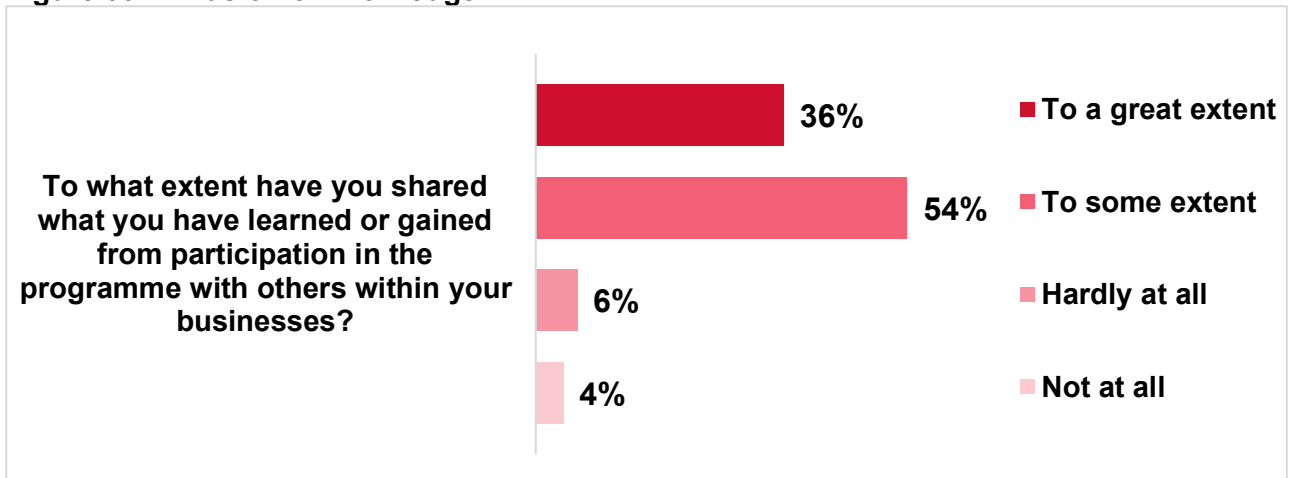
¹⁵ Some survey response options have been shortened for reporting purposes: “understanding financial management and use of financial data” is “Understanding financial management and the use of financial data to support strategic decision making in the organisation” in the survey and “understanding effectiveness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



Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Base: 203 (respondents answering both surveys) (This figure reports aggregate responses); Note: Graph shows Very strong/strong NET

Most (90%) 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 39). Only 4% 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.

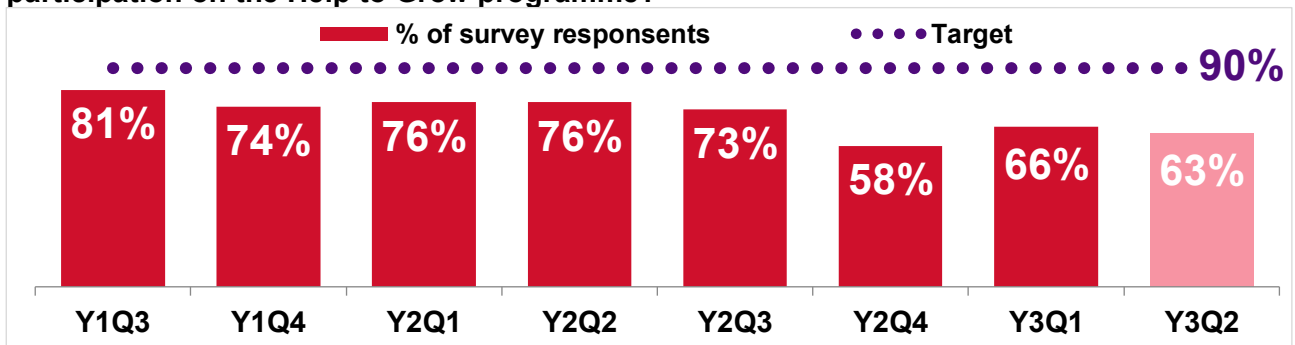
Figure 39: Diffusion of knowledge



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 873 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

To date, almost three quarters (72%) of all post-completion survey respondents said they had produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP) for their business through participation in the programme. The figure has remained relatively constant since the survey began until Y2Q4 where there was 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.

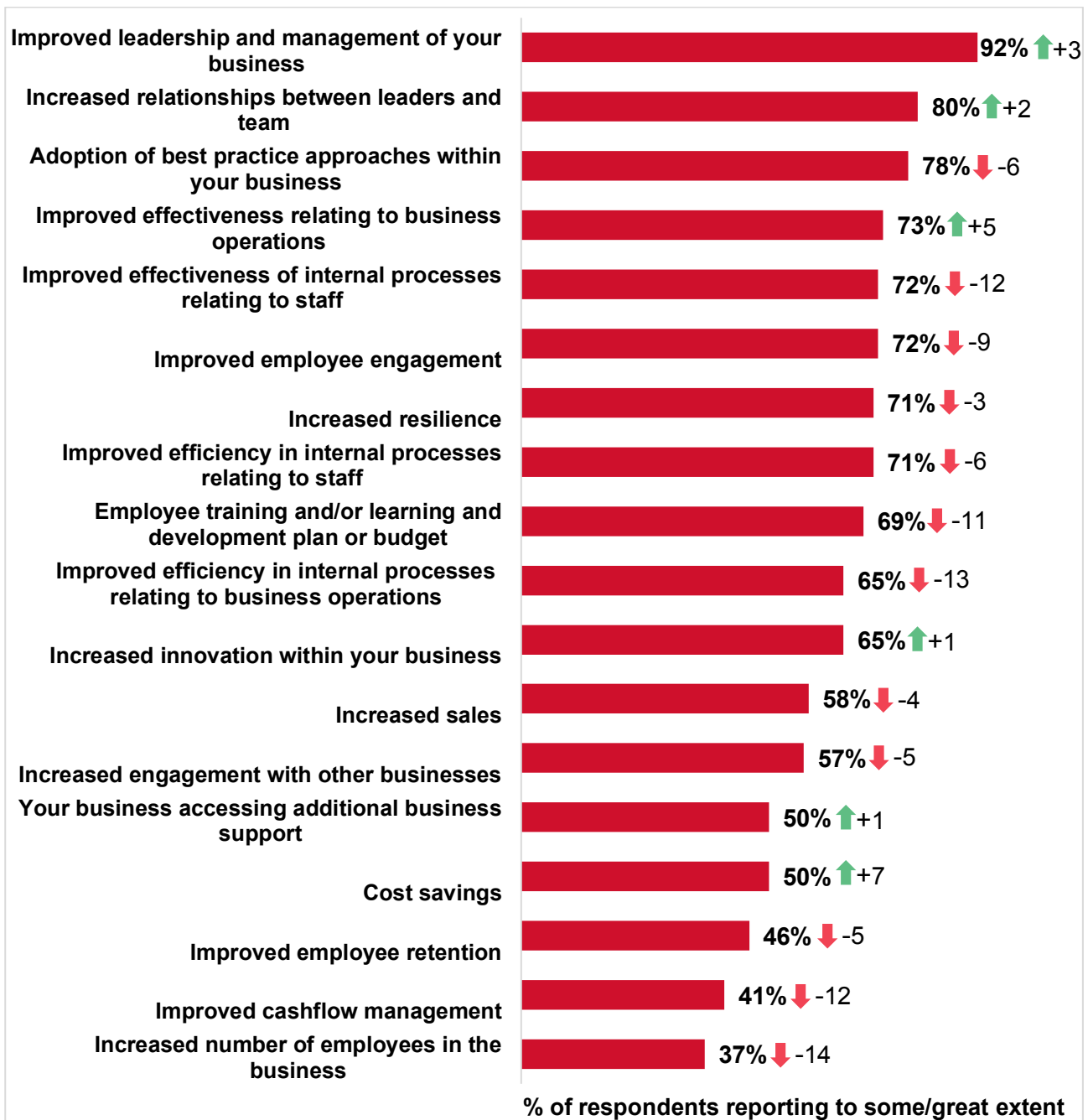
Figure 40: Have you produced a Growth Action Plan for your business as a result of your participation on the Help to Grow programme?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1002 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses)

Within six months of completing the programme, participants report a range of business benefits. In the most recent quarter, Y3Q1, the most commonly reported benefits were improved leadership and management of their business (92%), increased relationships between leaders and team (80%) and adoption of best practice approaches within their business (78%). Figure 39 shows that cost savings was the self-reported benefit with the highest increase since the last quarter an increase of seven percentage points). The number of respondents reporting HtGM contributed to an increased number of employees in their business decreased the most (by 14 percentage points).

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



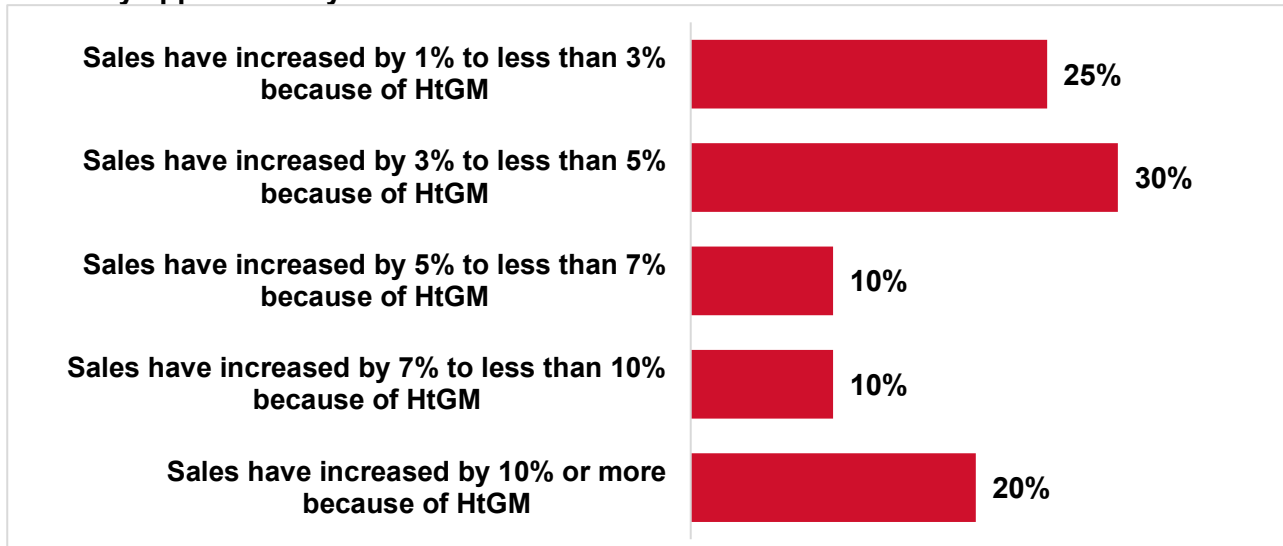
Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 221; Y3Q2 (147), Y3Q1 (74); Note: bars show data from Y3Q2 of the post completion survey (July-October 2023), arrows show changes from Y3Q1 (May-June 2023).

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

A new question was introduced to the six-month follow up survey for those who said their sales had increased to ask by how much (Figure 40). As the question has only been asked in the most recent two quarters, the total number of responses is relatively low and results should therefore be

interpreted with caution. However, it does provide some early self-reported evidence that to suggest that HtGM is contributing to increased sales amongst participating businesses.

Figure 40: Earlier you mentioned that the Help to Grow Management Programme increased sales. By approximately how much did the sales increase?



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 119 (Question was introduced to Y3Q1) (Figure shows aggregate survey responses)

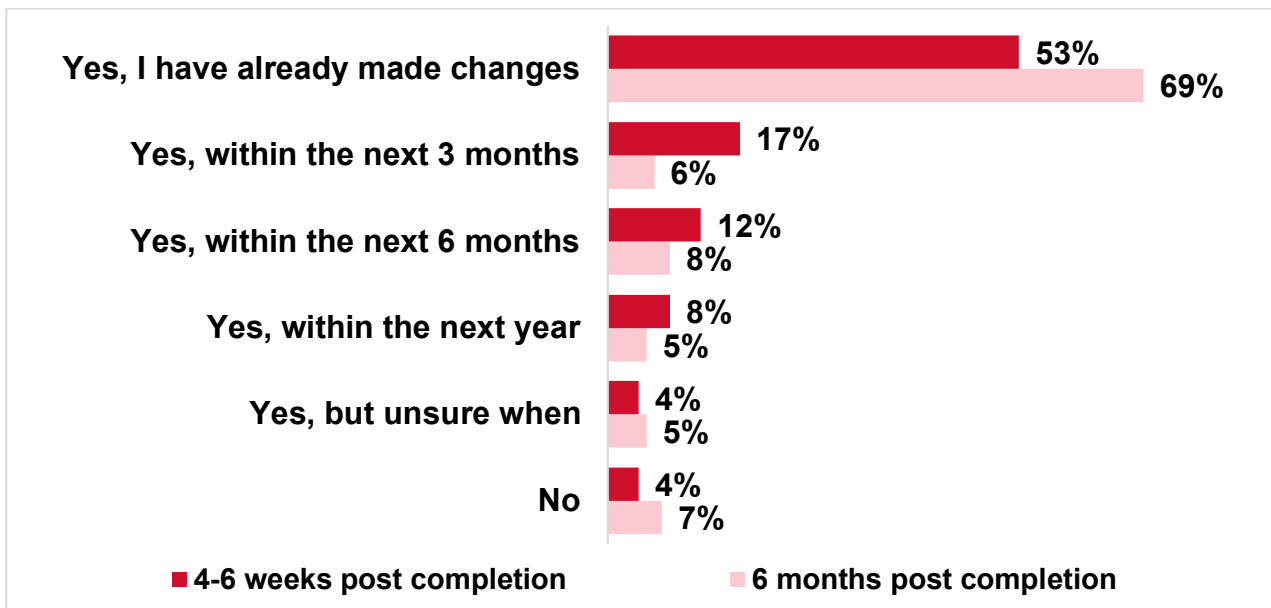
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported HtGM had contributed to increased sales. The chart excludes don't know and invalid answers. Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Business outcomes immediately following completion vs 6 months later

The two surveys have different samples and so comparisons between them should be interpreted as indicative only rather than definitive.

After six months, most business leaders (69%) had already made changes to their business, typically to their leadership and employee engagement (89%) and operational efficiency (78%).

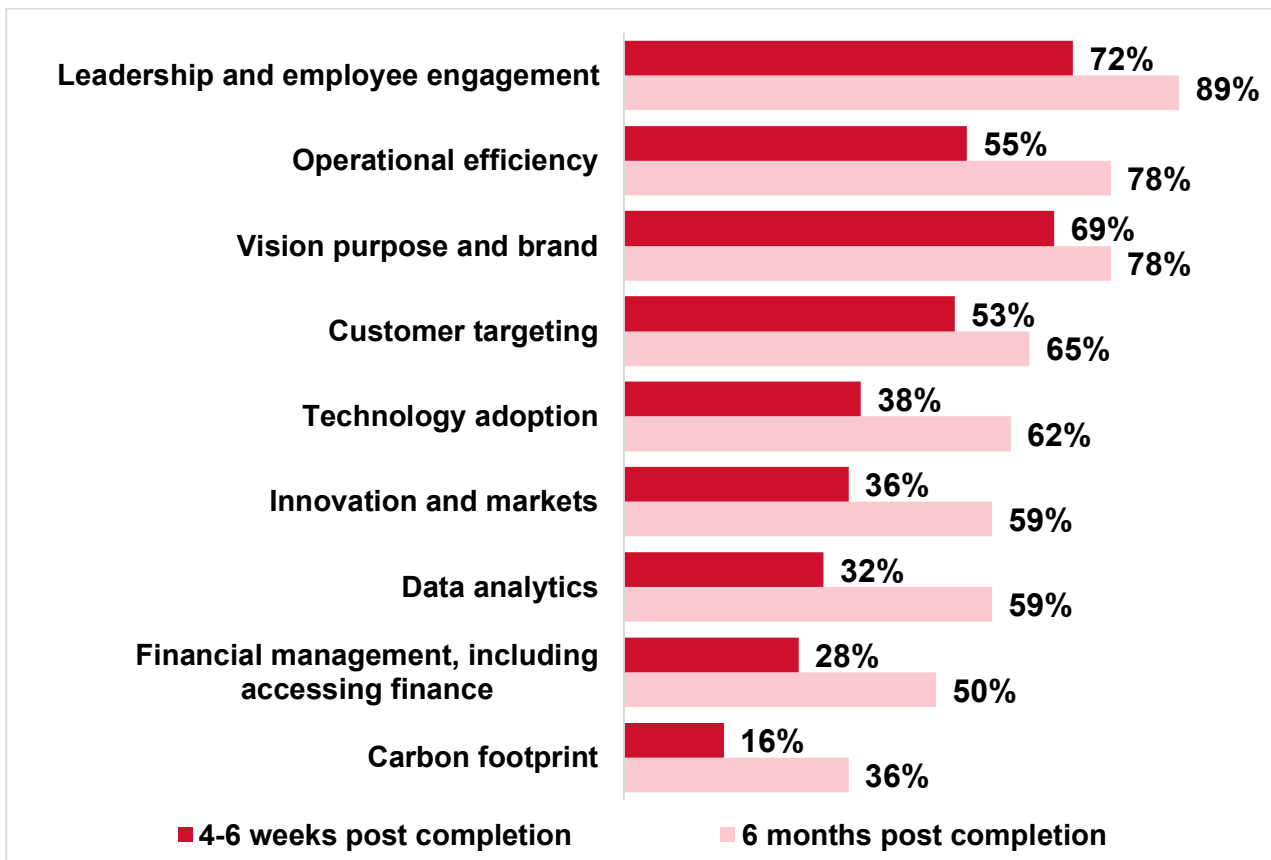
Figure 41: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you or do you plan to make any changes to the way you manage, organise, or operate your business?



Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Bases: 1002, 873 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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 42: 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: 536; 601 (Asked to those who had already made a change in their business) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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