

# **Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management**

Quarterly Progress Update (April - June 2023)

Update #5

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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 fifth 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 who dropped out.<sup>1</sup> It draws on evidence collected between April 2023 and June 2023 and was submitted alongside an accompanying slide deck.<sup>2</sup> 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 surveys.

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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 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

#### Six-month follow-up Post-completion Non-completion Issued to all participants All participants are Launch date: Launch date: Participants who start Launch date: two to six weeks after September 2021 contacted six months June 2022 the programme but June 2022 completing module 12 of after completion of the did not complete the Help to Grow: Mode: Mode: (completing <75% of programme to participate Telephone Management Online in a telephone interview Telephone the programme) are programme. It gathers designed to capture data contacted by feedback on the Frequency on the outcomes / impact Frequency telephone and asked Frequency processes associated Monthly Quarterly of the programme on Quarterly to provide feedback with delivery of the them and their busines on their experiences Waves completed: Some respondents will Waves completed: programme and Waves completed and reasons why they emerging evidence on have completed the post-5 did not complete the the short-term outcomes completion survey but programme. Next wave: Next wave: Next wave: in the Theory of 15th July 2023 September 2023 September 2023 Change.

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 June 2023, a combined total of 1,592 responses had been received to the post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 2):

- 5,920 SME leaders were invited to complete the post completion survey<sup>3</sup>. As of 31st June 2023, 866 responses had been received, representing a 15% response rate.<sup>4</sup>
- 1,716 SME leaders who completed HtGM before November 2022 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey. As of 31st June 2023, 726 responses had been received, representing a 42% response rate.<sup>5</sup>

The analysis presented on the following slides are based on the 1,592 responses to one or both surveys. Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n = 42).

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ipsos has produced a paper for DBT outlining measures that could be taken to improving the survey response rates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This is the adjusted response rate, excluding those SME leaders who were not eligible for the survey from the sample.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Response rate over time is based on cumulative figures.

Figure 2: Post completion and six month follow up survey response rates as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

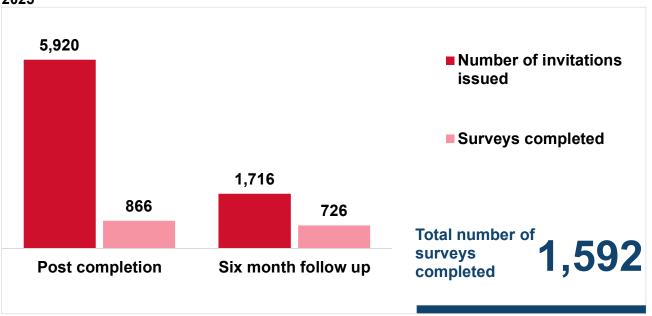
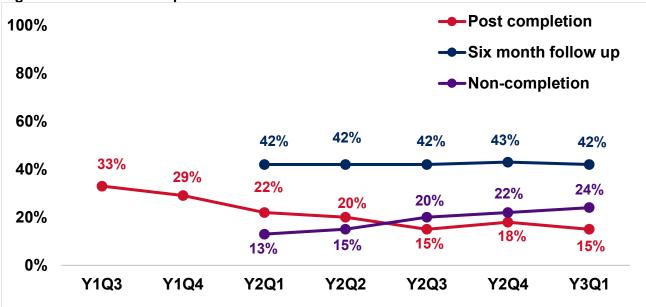


Figure 3: Cumulative response rates over time



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 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

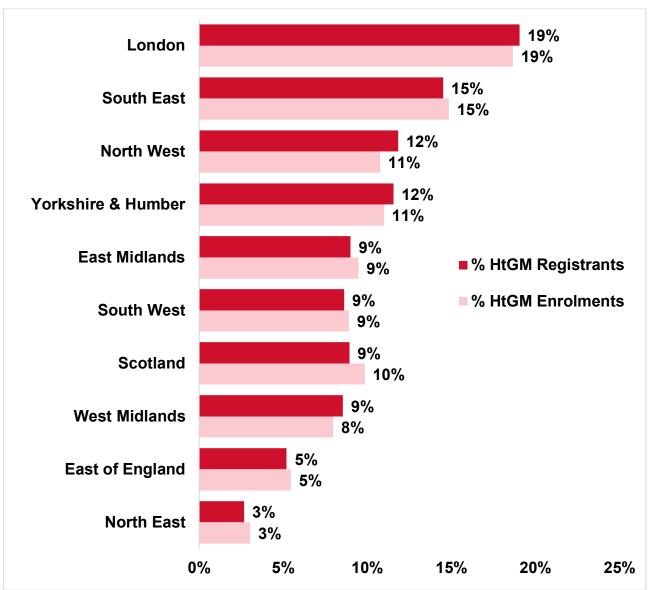
#### **Businesses**

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. Around one third of businesses registering or enrolling to HtGM were based in London or the South East (34% registering and 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' (both 16%). This includes activities of member organisations, repair of computers and other personal / household goods and personal services, such as hairdressers, beauty salons and gyms. This is followed by the manufacturing sector (14% of registrations and enrolments), the construction sector (both 11%) and the professional, scientific and technical sector (11% of registrations and 12% of enrolments). 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% registered / 37% enrolled) had been in operation for between 11 and 30 years (Figure 6).<sup>7</sup>
- 4) **Size:** firms registering and enrolling for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (median 12 registrants and 13 enrolments FTE) (Figure 7). The median annual turnover in 2022/23 financial year was £826k for registrants and £900k for enrolments, the average differed slightly (£2.31M for registrants and £2.43M for enrolments).8

Note: businesses that have been operating for less than one year are not eligible for the programme.
 Median results are reported here over mean because of large outliers. However, mean results are also presented in Figure 1.

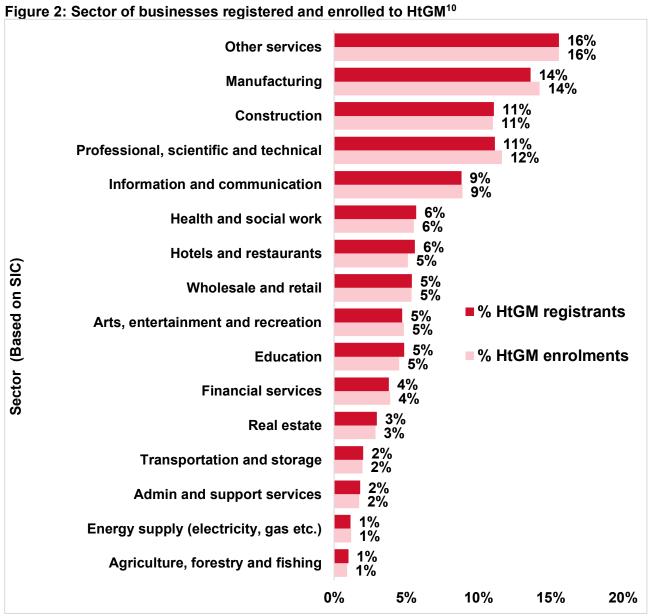
Figure 1: Location of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM9



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=8,275), enrolments (n=6,823). Question type: single choice, Note: 'OxCamArc' data constitutes East of England for DBT data; ONS SME Business Characteristics (2021). Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q1.

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

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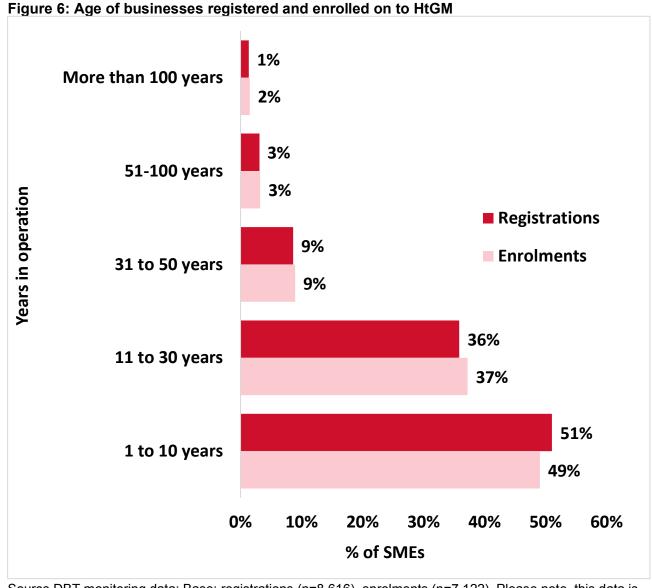


Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=8,783), enrolments (n=7,269).

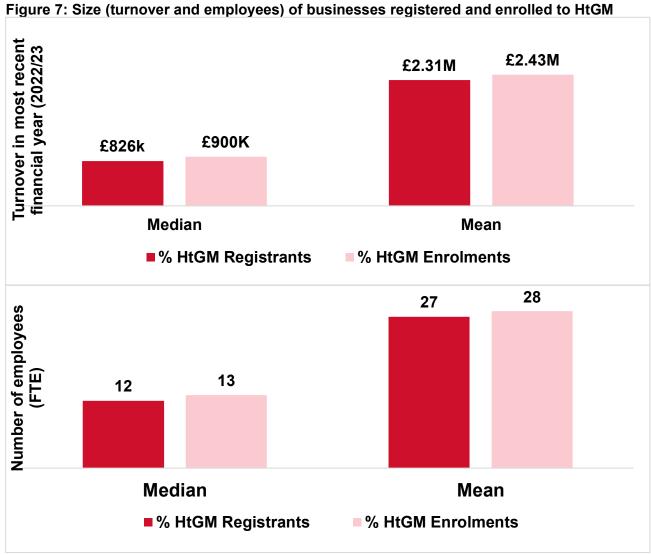
Sectors with 0% have been suppressed from the chart. Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q1.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.



Source DBT monitoring data; Base: registrations (n=8,616), enrolments (n=7,122). Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q1.



Source: HtGM Monitoring data, registrations (n=8,512), enrolments (n=7,040) Note: these data are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers. Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q1.

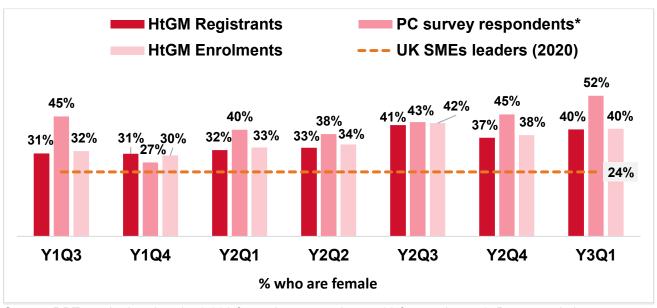
#### SME leaders

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 (40%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses.<sup>11</sup> The proportion of SME leaders registering for HtGM who are from an ethnic minority background (15%) is also nine percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses (see Figure 8).12

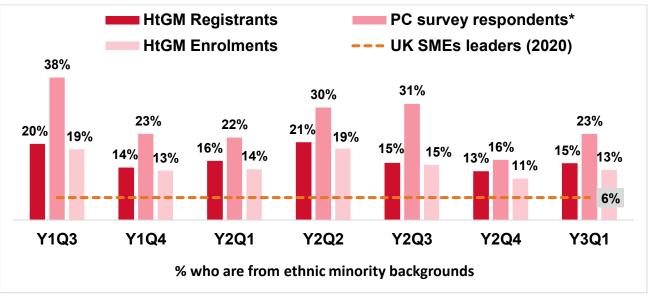
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Women owned and women led businesses provide a total of 24% private sector employment – Federation for Small Businesses - https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/supporting-women-s-enterprise-in-the-uk.html <sup>12</sup> Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf

The profiles of those responding to the post completion (PC) evaluation survey in terms of ethnicity and gender are slightly overrepresented when compared with all SME leaders involved in HtGM.

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

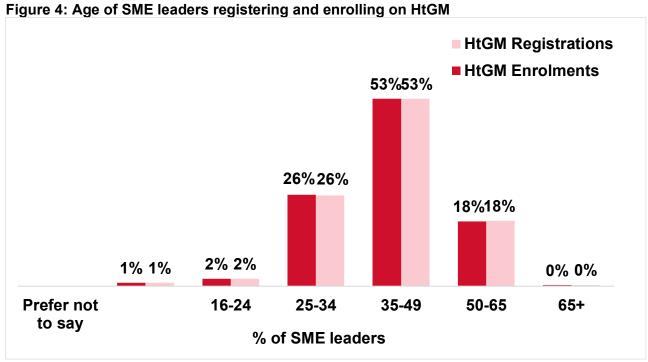


Source: DBT monitoring data (n=6,299 for registrants and n=5,469 for enrolments); Post completion survey (n=659); Leadership of small and medium enterprises (2023), Longitudinal Small Business Survey (2021). Note: Orange dashed line represents a singular point in time. It should be used to contextualise and not be interpreted as time series. Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q1.



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?'. Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to 20th October 2023.

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



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=8,773), enrolments (n=7,255). Please note, this data is now being calculated from PowerBI which is a slightly different data source to previous quarters. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q1.

# **Applying to HtGM**

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

## **Expectations and understanding of HtGM**

At the time of applying to the programme, SME leaders most commonly expected to improve leadership and management skills (75%), improve confidence in leading their business (74%) and have an increased awareness of productivity and growth (74%) through participating in HtGM.

Survey respondents were less likely to expect to improve their understanding of data analytics (23%), how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices (17%) and to widen their professional and peer networks (14%) through the programme.

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

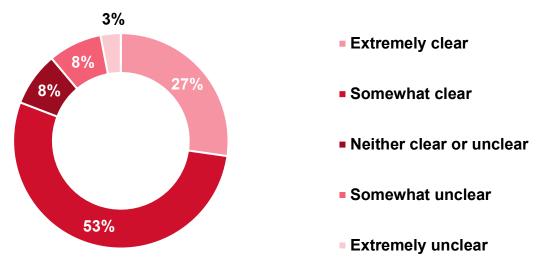


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 866 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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 extremely or somewhat 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: 866 (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 (Y3Q1), the top three modules of interest for programme participants at the time of applying were Strategy and Innovation (41%), Developing a Marketing Strategy (39%) and Finance and Financial Management (38%). This differs slightly to the previous quarter (Y2Q4), where Efficient Operations was in the top three and Developing a Marketing Strategy was not.

The proportion of programme completers reporting an interest Vision, Mission and Values at registration increased by 11 percentage points from the previous quarter (from 22% in Y2Q4 to 33% in Y3Q1).

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

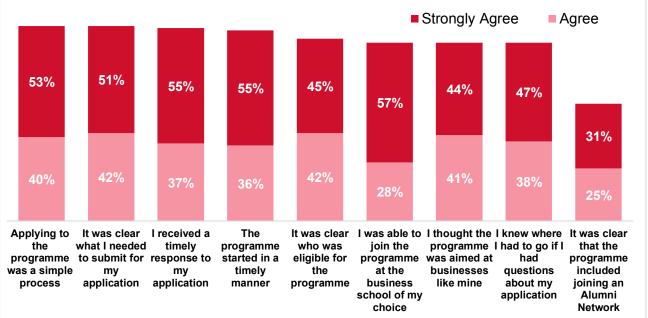


Source: Post completion survey; Base: (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y3Q1 (128), Y2Q4 (67) Note: Respondents could select up to three options.

Feedback remains positive on the application and onboarding process. Nearly all respondents agreed that the application process was simple (93%), submitting an application was clear (93%) and responses to applications were timely (92%).

In December 2022, an additional response option relating to the alumni network was added to the question presented in Figure 13. Findings continue to suggest that this was relatively unclear.

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: 866 (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 (285). This base excludes 'Not stated/not answered'

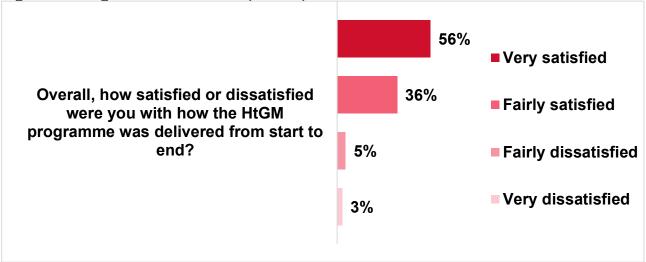
## **Experience of HtGM**

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 92% saying they were fairly or very satisfied and 8% saying they were fairly or very dissatisfied. Levels of satisfaction have remained stable in recent quarters (96% in Y2Q4 and Y3Q1).

Figure 14: Programme satisfaction (Overall)



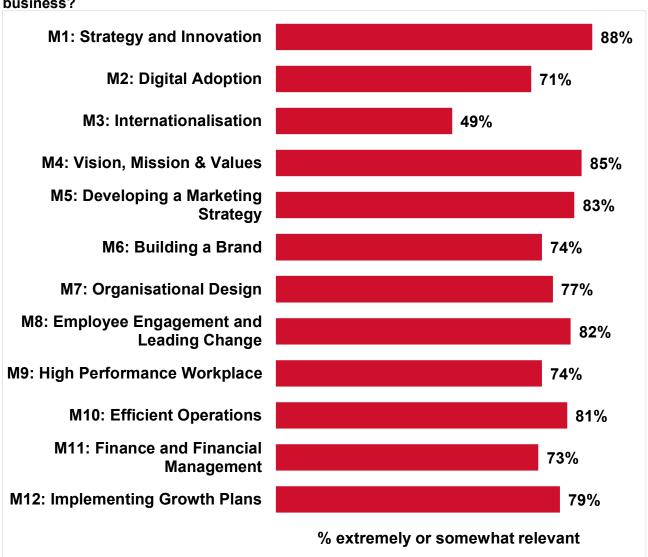
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 866 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Question type: single choice; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

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 (88% of programme completers considered this to be extremely or somewhat relevant) followed by Vision, Missions and Values (85%), Marketing and Strategy (83%), Employee Engagement (82%) and Efficient Operations (81%).

The module that saw the biggest increase in relevance since the previous quarter was Internationalisation, which increased from 43% in Y2Q4 to 54% in Y3Q1, following a 14 percentage point drop between Y2Q3 and Y2Q4.

The modules that saw the biggest decrease in perceived relevance since Y2Q4 were Organisational design (from 84% in Y2Q4 to 77% in Y3Q1) and Finance and Financial Management (from 79% in Y2Q4 to 73% in Y3Q1).

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



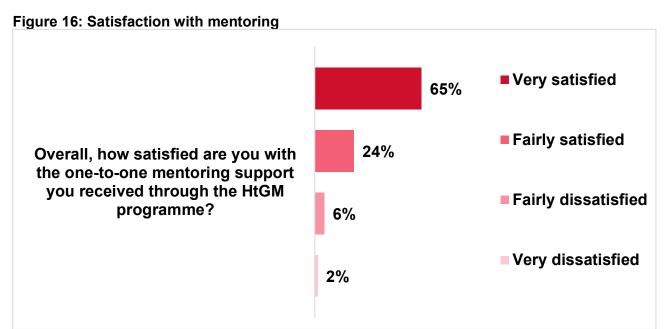
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 866 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Note: Respondents could select relevancy for each statement

### Mentoring

As of 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Y3Q1 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 mentoring support received. Of these, two thirds (65%) were very satisfied. Following a decrease in the last quarter (Y2Q4), satisfaction levels have improved (78% in Y2Q4 to 92% in Y3Q1 – see figure 24).

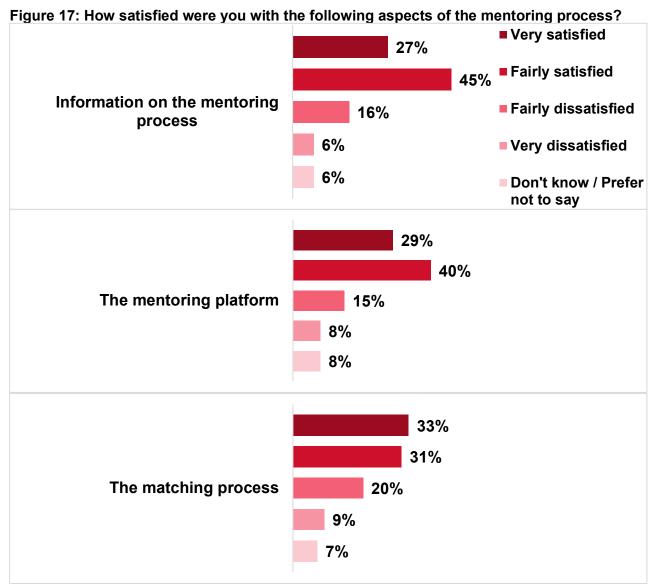


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 746 (Asked only to those that were matched to a mentor and had completed all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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, participants reported the highest levels of satisfaction yet with information on the mentoring process (72% were very or fairly satisfied with this), the mentoring platform (69%) and the matching process (64%). <sup>13</sup>

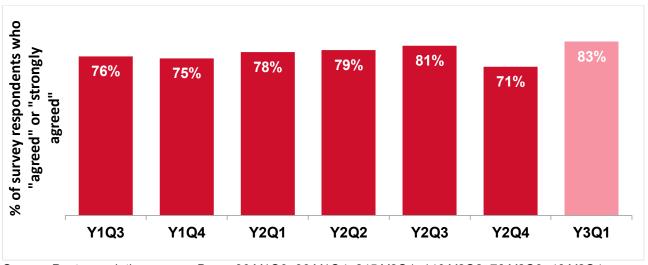
<sup>13</sup> DBT made changes to the mentoring matching process during delivery of the programme, whereby participants were given the option of being matched with a mentor by the mentoring consortium. These changes may not be reflected in the data at this point in time.



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 128 (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

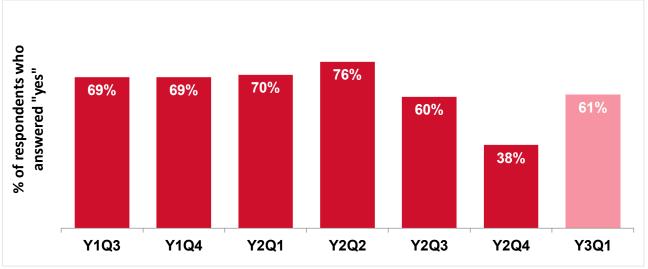
The majority (83%) of survey respondents thought their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs (Figure 18) and nearly two thirds of respondents (61%) had attended all ten hours of mentoring (Figure 19). Both have increased since Y2Q4.

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 (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?

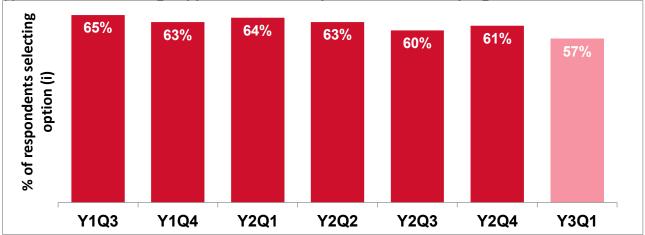


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 48 Y2Q4, 103 Y3Q1 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

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)

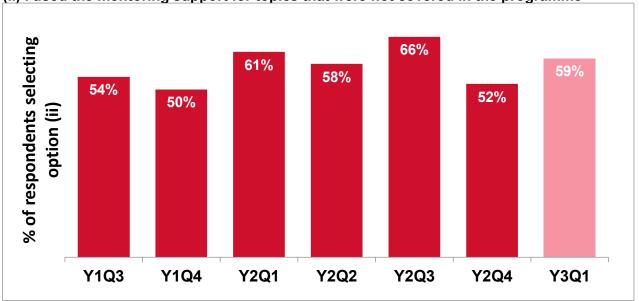
The mentoring support is used by programme participants to cover a range of topics both in the curriculum and beyond (Figure 20). The number of respondents using mentoring to build on topics in the programme has dropped since the voluntary model was introduced falling to 57% in Y3Q1, the lowest since the survey began.

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



Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); NB: for the first three charts, the tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves. 'Not stated' responses are excluded from the base Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1.

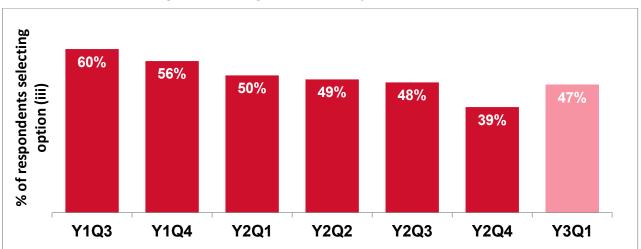
Figure 21: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support? (ii) I used the mentoring support for topics that were not covered in the programme



Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); NB: for the first three charts, the tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves. 'Not stated' responses are excluded from the base Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1.

Around two fifths (43%) of Y3Q1 respondents used mentoring to get help with their Growth Action Plan. This is the first quarter where there has been an increase on this measure, following a period of decline in each of the previous quarters of the survey.

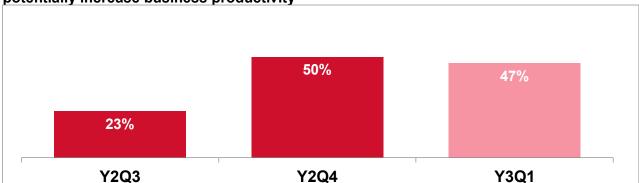
Figure 6: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support? (iii) I used the mentoring support to get help with my Growth Action Plan



Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); NB: for the first three charts, the tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves. 'Not stated' responses are excluded from the base Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1.

Almost half (47%) of respondents used mentoring to highlight tools to increase their business productivity.

Figure 23: Percentage of survey respondents who used mentoring to highlight tools to potentially increase business productivity



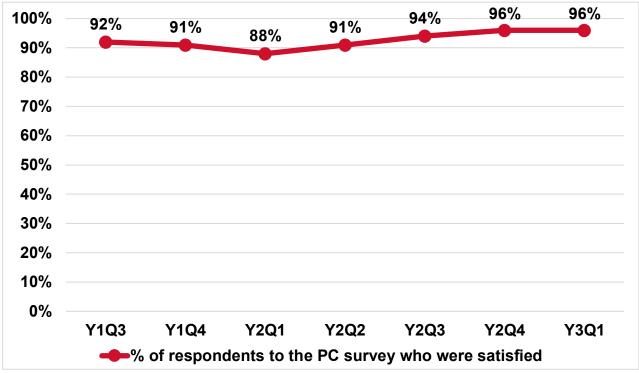
Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); includes the full base including all data codes. 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base Y2Q3, Y2Q4 and Y3Q1.

#### Satisfaction scores over time

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

- In the most recent quarter, 96% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered. This
  was in line with the equivalent figure for the previous quarter, which was the highest since
  the survey began.
- The proportion of programme completers who were satisfied with their mentoring support has also improved to the highest level since the survey began (92%) after dropping by more than ten percentage points in the previous quarter (from 89% in Y2Q3 to 78% in Y2Q4).

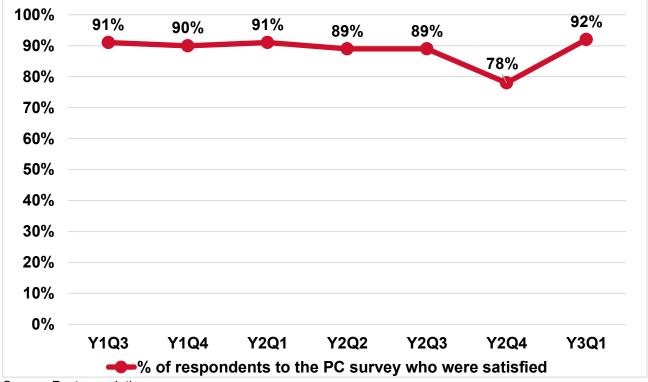
Figure 24: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how HtGM was delivered from start to end?



Source: Post completion survey

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

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 (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 survey<sup>14</sup>

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 those who did not complete to attend more of the programme. These findings are based on an aggregate response.

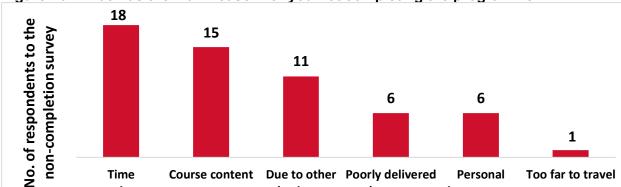


Figure 26: What was the main reason for you not completing the programme?

Source: Non completion survey Base: 42

commitment

required

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

business

commitments

lectures

cicrumstances



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

was not

relevant

<sup>14</sup> Commentary will be added to future reports once the sample size has increased.

Nothing could have supported 10 Changes to the content 7 The way content is delivered More face to face delivery Flexible learning / can learn on own time 5 More time between sessions Time off / less busy at work **Teaching style** Longer delivery period 3 Financial support Teachers with knowledge / real experience 2 More activites outside core delivery Fewer activities outside core delivery Changes to the teaching style

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

Source: Non completion survey; Base: 42

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

# **Self-reported individual outcomes**

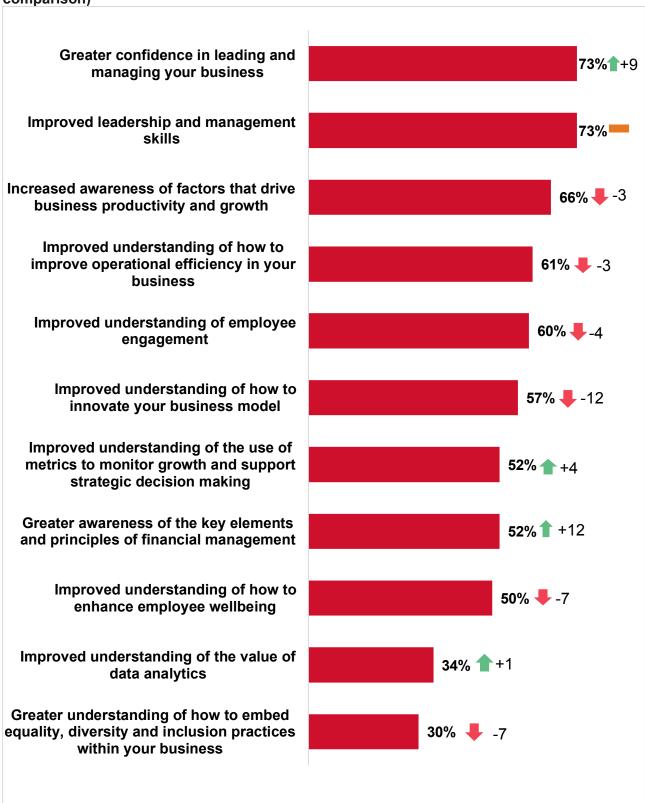
This section focuses on individual level outcomes. All findings presented are self-reported and should therefore be treated as indicative rather than conclusive.

Within six weeks, HtGM programme completers in Y3Q1 report having greater confidence in leading and managing their business (73%), improved leadership and management skills (73%) and increased awareness of productivity and growth (66%) (Figure 28).

There were some noticeable differences between responses in Y2Q4 and Y3Q1:

- The largest increase was reported for greater awareness of the key elements and principles of financial management, which increased by 12 percentage points between the two quarters. There was also a nine percentage point increase in the proportion reporting greater confidence in leading and managing their business.
- The largest decrease was in the proportion reporting an improved understanding of how to innovate their business model, which 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)

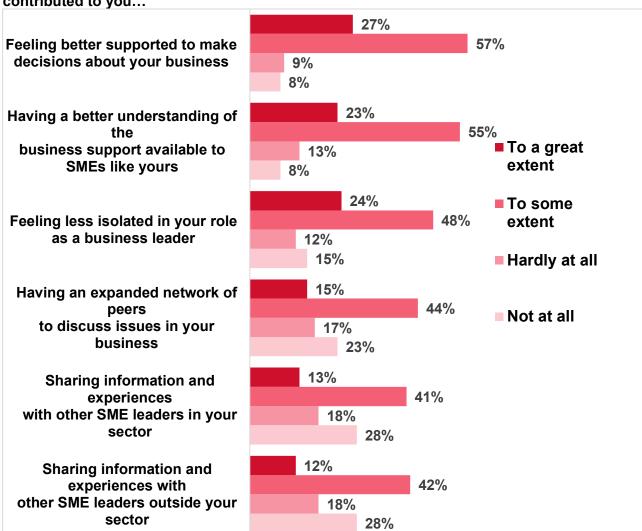


Source: Post completion survey; Base: Y3Q1 (128), Y2Q4 (67)

Note: bars show data from Wave 5 (Y3Q1) of the post completion survey, arrows show changes from Y2Q4 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 reported feeling better supported to make decisions, (84%), better understanding of support available (79%) and feeling less isolated in their role as a business leader (72%) to some or a great extent (Figure 29).

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

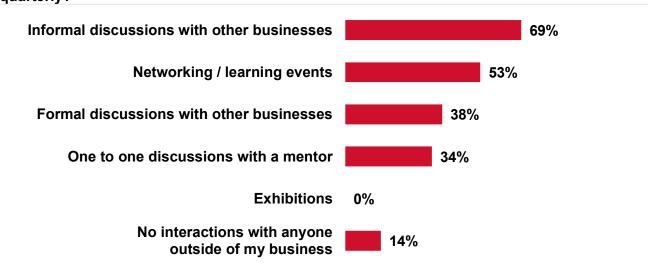


Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 726 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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 participants (86%) had interacted with SME leaders outside of their firm, typically through informal discussions (69%) or networking events (53%). The proportion of SME leaders who had no interactions with other SME leaders outside their firm has decreased since the previous quarter, from 15% to 12% (as shown in Figure 30, the aggregate figure is 14%).

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



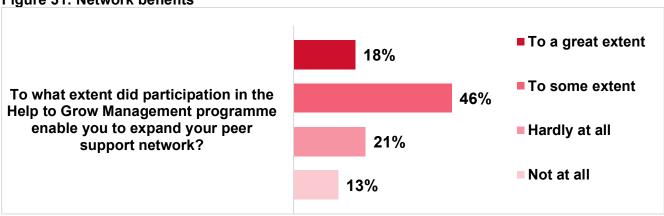
Source: Six month follow up survey; Respondents could select more than one option

Base: 726 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

## **Network benefits**

Overall, almost two thirds (64%) of SME leaders completing the programme reported that HtGM had helped to expand their peer network. This has decreased since the previous quarter (Y2Q4 69% to Y3Q1 55%).

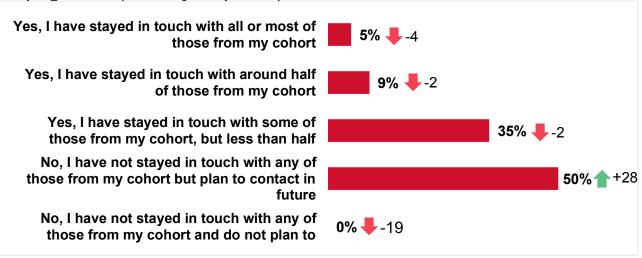
Figure 31: Network benefits



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 726 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

After six months, half of programme participants from Y3Q1 (50%) had stayed in touch with peers from their HtGM cohort and the remaining 50% intended to in the future. There was a 28 percentage point increase from the previous quarter in the proportion who said they intended to contact others from their cohort in future. This could be as a result of the expansion of the HtGM alumni offer.

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: 205 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y3Q1 (74), Y2Q4 (131) Note: bars show data from wave 5 (Y3Q1) of the six month survey (May-June 2023), arrows show changes from wave 4 (Y2Q4) (Jan-Mar 2023)

Nearly all SME leaders (97%) who completed HtGM said they were likely to recommend the programme to another business leader, with over two thirds (69%) being very likely to.

69% 28% 0%

Very likely Likely Not likely Not at all likely

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

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 726 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

## **Alumni activity**

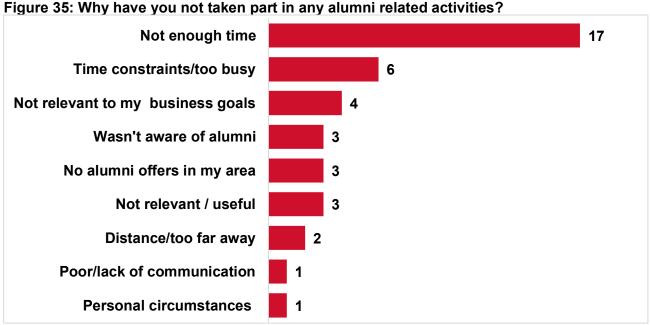
Please note the base size for data used in this section is small this quarter and should therefore be interpreted with caution. Respondent numbers are shown rather than percentages for charts with a base size below 50.

Over half of respondents (54%) said they had not participated in any alumni events or activities. However, over a quarter had signed up to the HtGM alumni newsletter (28%).

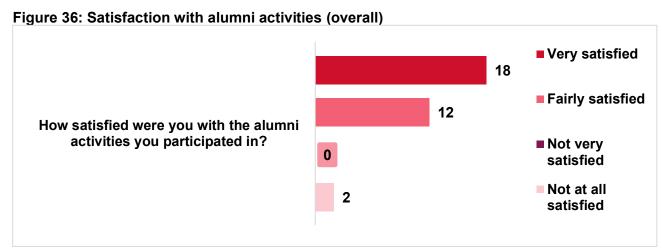
following have you taken part in? Signed up to HtGM alumni 28% newsletter HtGM alumni webinars 22% Accessed online alumni 20% articles and videos **HtGM** local events organised 18% by a business school HtGM regional alumni events 11% I have not participated in any 54% alumni events or activities

Figure 34: Have you participated in any HtGM alumni activities and, if so, which of the

Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 74. This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1.

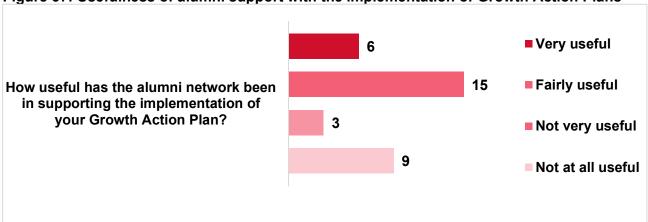


Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 40 (all completers who have not taken part in any alumni activities). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: very small base, interpret with caution.



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 34 (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

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



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 34 (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 strong capabilities and experience in a breadth of areas and, in most cases, these continued to strengthen up to six months after completing HtGM (see Figure 38).



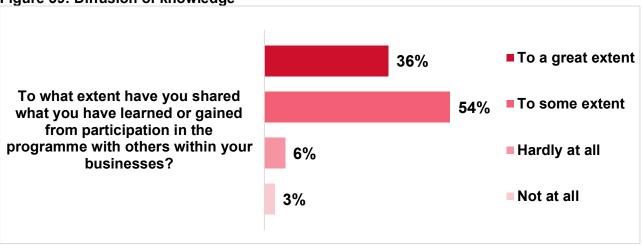


<sup>15</sup> Some survey response options have been shortened for reporting purposes: "understanding financial management and use of financial data" is "Understanding financial management and the use of financial data to support strategic decision making in the organisation" in the survey and "understanding 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: 177 (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 3% had not shared what they had learned with others. This diffusion of learning is one of the key mechanisms for generating the outcomes and impacts set out in the Theory of Change for the programme.

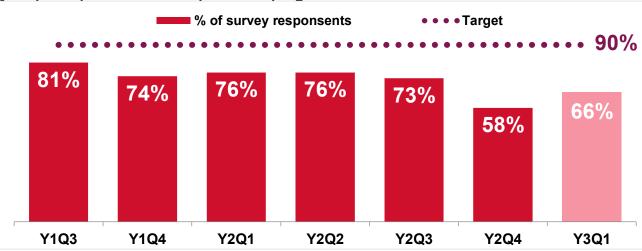
Figure 39: Diffusion of knowledge



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 726 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

To date, three quarters (73%) of all post-completion survey respondents reported that they had produced a Growth Action Plan for their business through participation in the programme. The latest quarterly data also suggests that the proportion of SME leaders producing a GAP has increased since the last guarter (from 58% in Y2Q4 to 66% in Y3Q1). There was a notable drop of 15 percentage points in this figure in Y2Q4 (from 73% in Y2Q3 to 58% in Y2Q4). The target of 90% completion set by DBT has not yet been reached in any quarter.

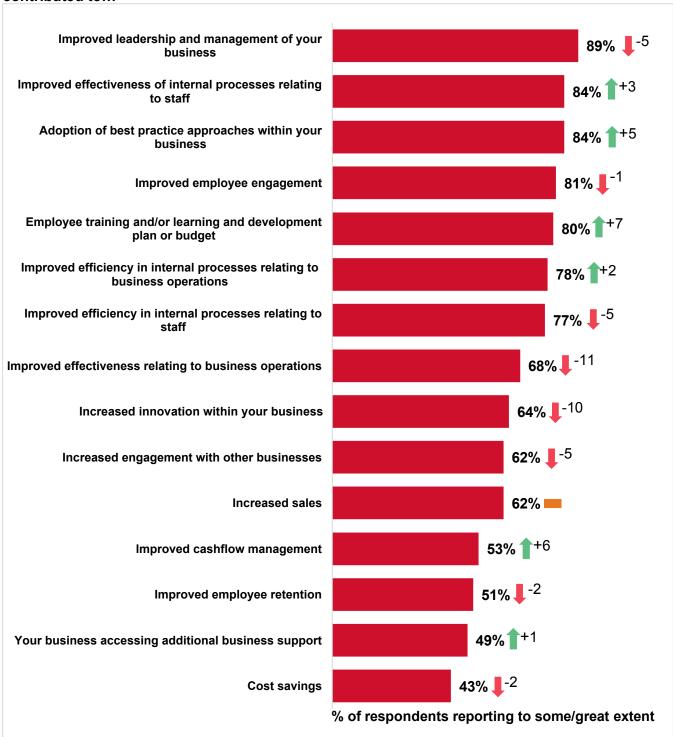
Figure 40: Have you produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP) for your business as a result of your participation on the Help to Grow programme?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 866 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses)

Within six months of completing the programme, participants report a range of business benefits. In the most recent guarter, Y3Q1, the most commonly reported benefits were improved leadership and management of business (89%), improved efficiency in internal staff processes (84%) and adoption of best practice approaches within your business (84%). Figure 39 shows that there were increases across all self-reported business benefits, with the largest increase for employee training and/or a learning and development plan or budget (seven percentage points) and improved cashflow management (six percentage points).

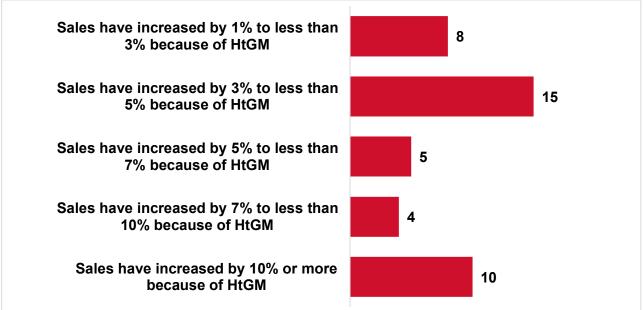
Figure 39: To what extent has participating in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to...



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 205; Y3Q1 (74), Y2Q4 (131) Note: bars show data from Y3Q1 of the post completion survey (May-June 2023), arrows show changes from Y2Q4 (Jan-Mar 2023). Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding; The 'increased sales' option was added this quarter (Y3Q1).

A new question asking how much sales had increased by to those who reported sales increases was introduced to the six-month follow up survey (Figure 40). As the question has only been asked in the last quarter, the number of responses are low and results should be interpreted with caution.

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: 46 (Question was introduced to Y3Q1) (Figure shows aggregate survey responses)

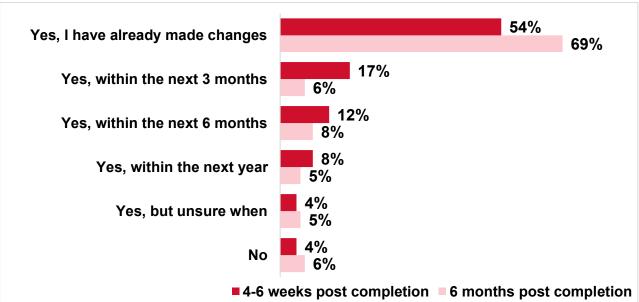
Note: Due to a small base size, whole numbers have been used instead of percentages. This question was asked to respondents who reported HtGM had contributed to increased sales. The chart excludes don't know and invalid answers. Total may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

## 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%).

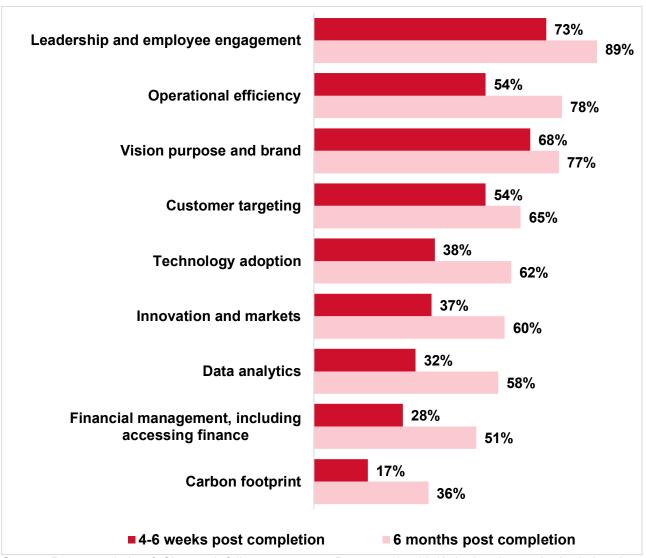
Figure 41: As a result of participation in HtGM, have you or do you plan to make any changes to the way you manage, organise, or operate your business?



Source: Post completion & Six month follow up surveys; Bases: 866, 726 (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: 471; 503 (Asked to those who had already made a change in their business) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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