

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

Quarterly Progress Update (October to December 2023)

Update #7

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 seventh in a series of quarterly updates to DBT, presenting evidence collected through Ipsos' ongoing programme of surveys with SME leaders completing the programme and those that dropped out.¹ It draws on evidence collected between October 2023 to January 2024 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 = April-June 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

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 June 2022 contacted Six-months the programme but June 2022 completing module 12 of after completion of the did not complete the Help to Grow: Mode: Mode: Mode: programme to participate (completing <75% of Online Management in a telephone interview Telephone the programme) are Telephone programme. It gathers designed to capture data contacted by Frequency Frequency feedback on the on the outcomes / impact Frequency telephone and asked Monthly Quarterly processes associated of the programme on Quarterly to provide feedback with delivery of the them and their business. on their experiences Waves completed: programme and Waves completed: Some respondents will Waves completed and reasons why they emerging evidence on have completed the postdid not complete the the short-term outcomes completion survey but programme. Next wave: Next wave: Next wave: in the Theory of not all. 15th February 2024 12th February 2024 12th February 2024 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 January 2024, a combined total of 2,160 responses had been received to the post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 2):

- The post-completion online survey was issued to 7,745 SME leaders who completed HtGM by December 2023. 1,140 responses have been received, representing a 15% response rate.³
- In total 2,448 SME leaders who were reported to have completed HtGM before May 2023 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey, 1,020 responses had been received, representing a 42% response rate (adjusted to account for ineligible leads in the sample). Both post-completion and the follow up survey response rates remain the same as last quarter.⁴

The analysis presented on the following pages are based on the 2,160 responses to one or both surveys. Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n = 71).

³ Ipsos has produced an updated report containing measures to be taken that can be taken to improve the survey response rates. An adjusted response rate is not provided for the post completion survey because there were very low instances of ineligible contacts in the sample.

⁴ This is the adjusted response rate, excluding those SME leaders who were not eligible for the survey from the sample. The completion figure is lower than transparency data as there can be a delay reconciling completion statuses. Transparency data can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/help-to-grow-management-course-enrolments-and-participant-completions

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

Figure 2: Post completion and six month follow up survey response rates as of 31st January 2024

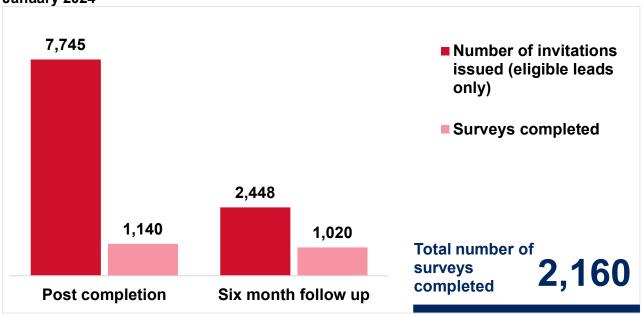
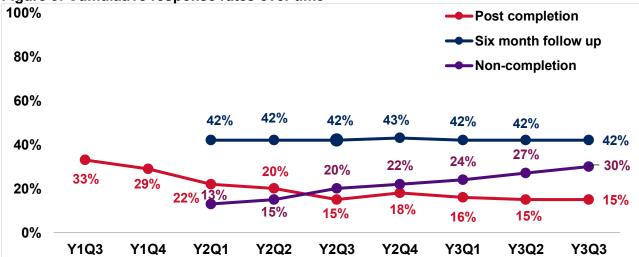


Figure 3: Cumulative response rates over time



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

⁵ Response rate over time is based on cumulative figures.

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 (32% registering, 31% 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)⁶.
- 4) **Size**: firms registering and enrolling for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (median 12 FTE registering / 15 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 (£2.76M for registrants and £2.93M for enrolments)⁷.

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

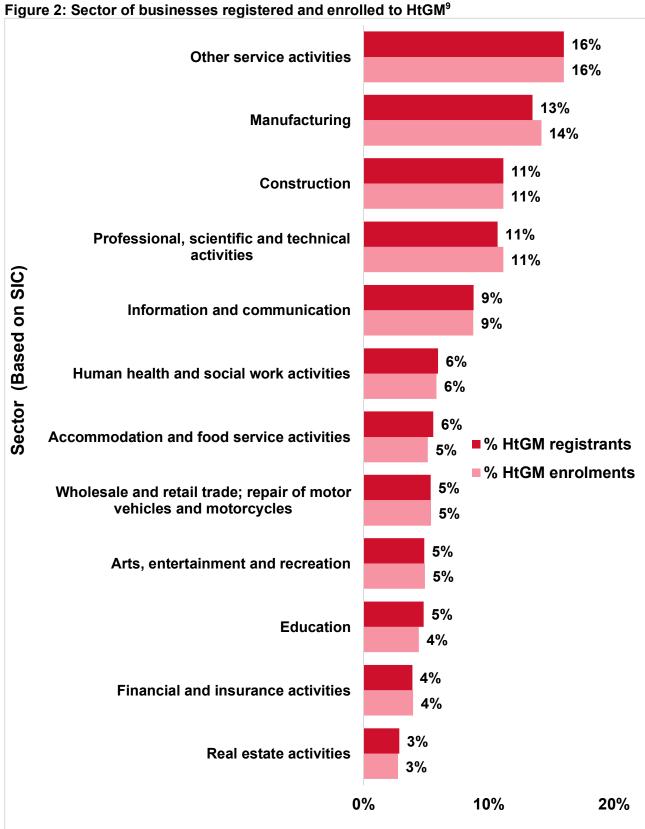
⁷ Median results are reported here over mean because of large outliers. However, mean results are also presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Location of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM⁸

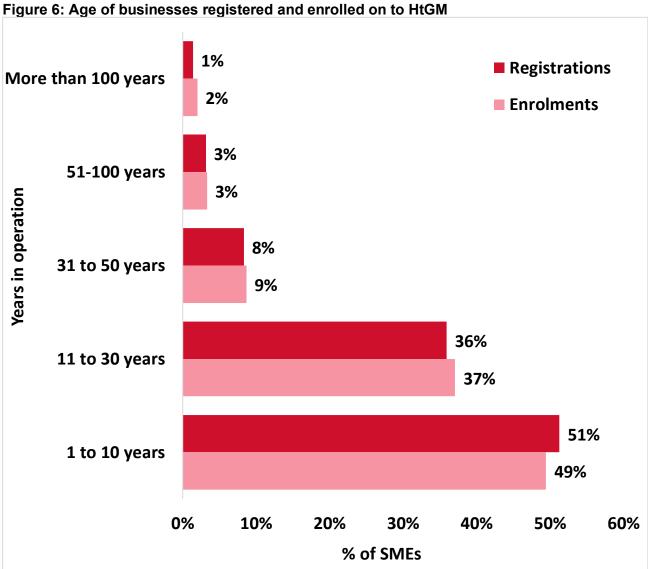
Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=8,175), enrolments (n=7,097). Question type: single choice, Note: 'OxCamArc' data constitutes East of England for DBT data; ONS SME Business Characteristics (2021). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q3.

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



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

Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=8,175), enrolments (n=7,097). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q3.



% of SMEs

Source: DBT monitoring data; Base: registrations (n=8,015), enrolments (n=6,957). Includes all HtGM data

up to Y3Q3.

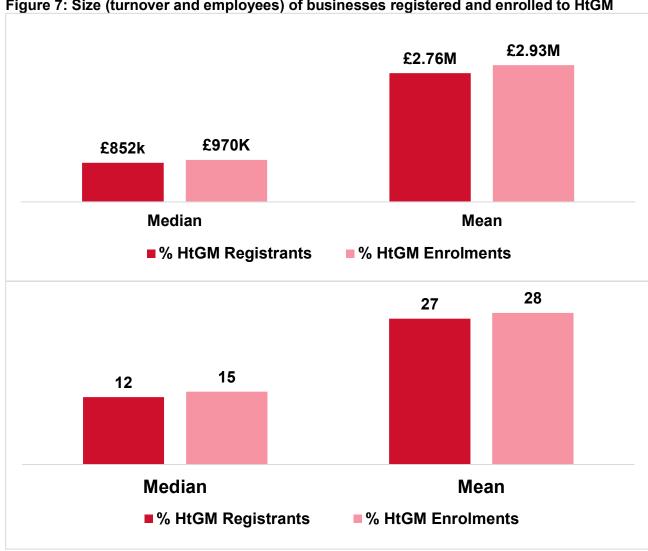


Figure 7: Size (turnover and employees) of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM

Turnover source: HtGM Registration form (n=8,110), enrolments (n=7,038) Number of employees (FTE) Source: HtGM Registration form (n=7,454), enrolments (n=4,469) Note: these data are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers. Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q3.

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 guarter, the proportion of female SME leaders registering on the programme (41%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses (24%). The proportion of SME leaders registering for HtGM who are from an ethnic minority background (17%) is also 11 percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses (see Figure 8). 1112

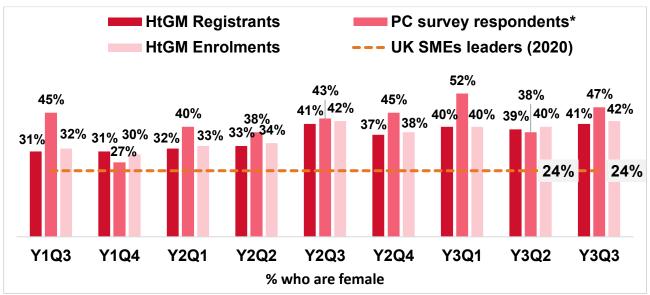
¹⁰ Women owned and women led businesses provide a total of 24% private sector employment – Federation for Small Businesses - https://www.fsb.org.uk/resource-report/supporting-women-s-enterprise-in-the-uk.html

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

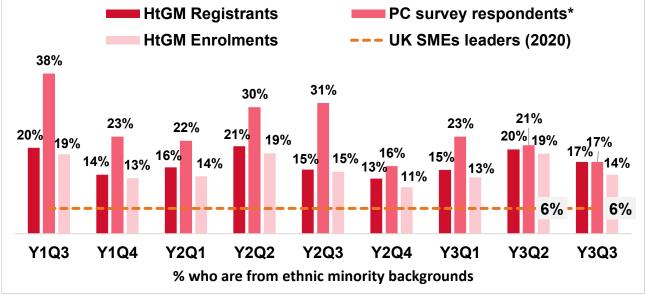
¹² Please note: this figure has not been tested for statistical significance

The profile of those responding to the post completion (PC) 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



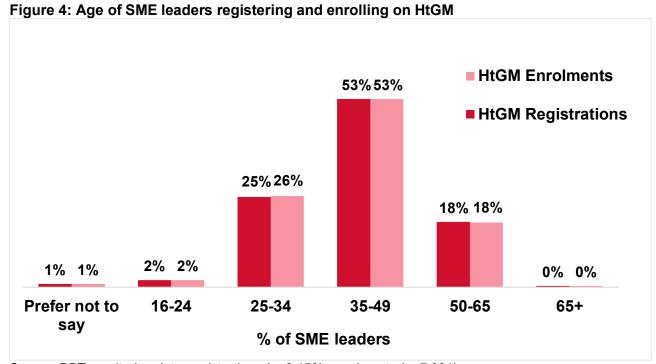
Source: HtGM Registration form (n=8,329 for registrants and n=7,148 for enrolments); Post-completion survey (n=659); Leadership of small and medium enterprises (2023), Longitudinal Small Business Survey (2021). Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q3. Note: Orange dashed line represents a singular point in time. It should be used to contextualise and not be interpreted as time series.



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

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

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



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=8,158), enrolments (n=7,081) Includes all HtGM data up to Y3Q3.

Applying to HtGM

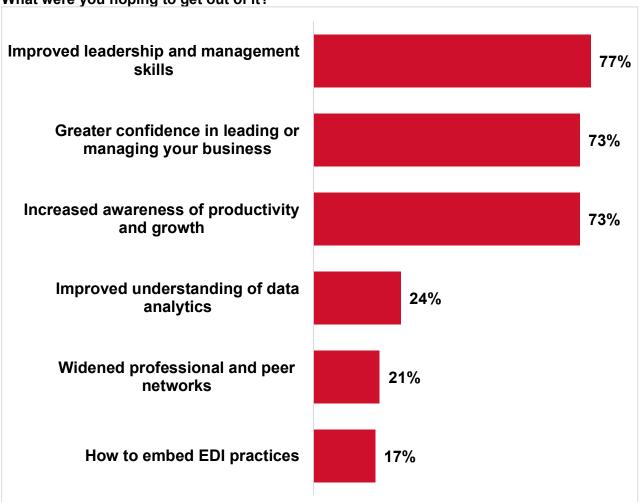
This section presents the evidence to date on programme completers' expectations of the programme, understanding of the programme's aims and objectives and experiences of the application process.

Expectations and understanding of HtGM

Through participating in HtGM, SME leaders most commonly expected to improve leadership and management skills (77%), 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 (21%) 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?

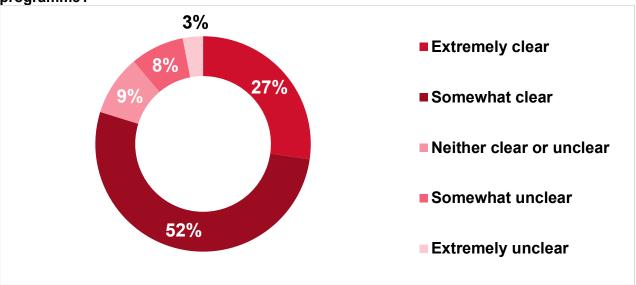


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1,140 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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: 1,140 (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 (Y3Q3), the modules reported by programme completers as being of most interest at the time of applying were Employee Engagement and leading change (39%), and Strategy and Innovation/ Efficient Operations (both 37%). This differs slightly to the previous quarter (Y3Q2), where Strategy and Innovation was top three and Efficient Operations was not.

Employee Engagement and Leading Change/ Efficient Operations has seen the biggest increase in interest since the previous quarter (both increasing by 6 percentage points in Y3Q3 compared to Y3Q2).

programme? 37% M1: Strategy and Innovation 49% 14% **M2: Digital Adoption** 11% M3: Internationalism 12% 29% M4: Vision, Mission & Values 35% 36% M5: Developing a Marketing Strategy 32% 12% M6: Building a Brand 8% 18% M7: Organisational Design 22% M8: Employee Engagement and Leading 39% Change 33% 14% **M9: High Performance Workplace** 13% 37% **M10: Efficient Operations** 31% 36% **M11: Finance and Financial Management** 33% 12% M12: Implementing Growth Plans 13% ■ Y3Q3 ■ 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); Y3Q2 (1136), Y3Q3 (138)

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 (93%), submitting an application was clear (94%) 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 (72% Y3Q2, 70% Y3Q3).

■ Strongly Agree Agree 52% 54% 46% **57%** 57% 48% 43% 58% 38% 42% 41% 39% 41% 38% 35% 35% 28% It was clear Applying to I received a The It was clear I knew where I was able to I thought the It was clear programme what I the timely programme who was I had to go if join the that the programme started in a needed to eligible for I had programme was aimed at programme response to submit for was a simple my timely the questions at the businesses included application my process manner programme about my business like mine joining an application application school of my Alumni Network choice

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: 1,140 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses). Question type: Single choice per statement.

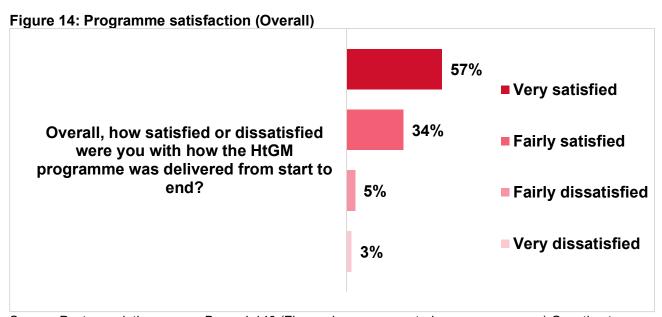
Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding. The code 'It was clear that the programme included joining an Alumni Network' was added in Y2Q3, meaning it has a smaller sample (515). This base excludes 'Not stated/not 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.



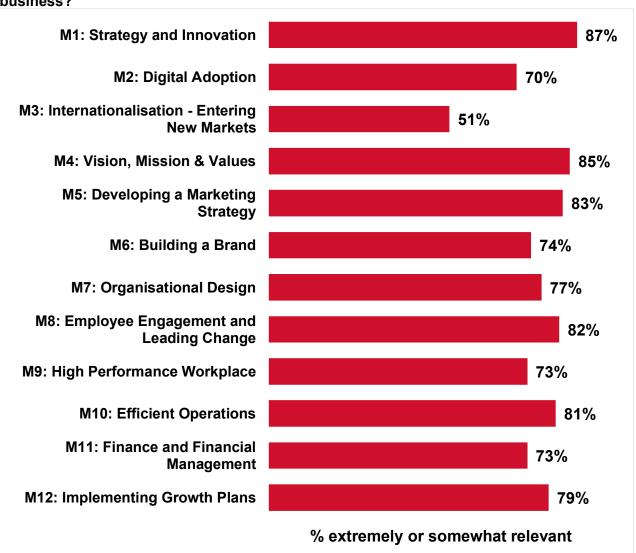
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1,140 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Question type: single choice; Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

Participants are reporting high levels of satisfaction with the overall design and content of the modules. To date, Strategy and Innovation was deemed most relevant (87%) by programme completers with Vision, Missions and Values (85%), Developing a Marketing Strategy (83%), Employee Engagement and Leading Change (82%) and Efficient Operations (81%) also deemed highly relevant (see figure 15).

The module that saw the biggest increase in relevance since the previous quarter was Finance and Financial Management, which increased from 70% in Y3Q2 to 78% in Y3Q3.

Internationalisation was considered to be the least relevant module and has remained consistently low across all quarters compared to other modules. However, Y3Q3 saw an increase since the previous quarter (57% in Y3Q2 to 62% in Y3Q3) and is the highest % across all quarters for this module since the survey began.

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



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1,140 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

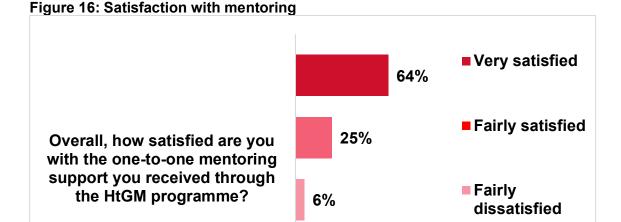
Note: Respondents could select relevancy for each statement

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 Y3Q3 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 amongst participants are high. Around nine in ten (89%) survey respondents were satisfied with mentoring support received. There has been a slight decrease in satisfaction since Y3Q2 (86% to 84% in Y3Q3 – see figure 25).



3%

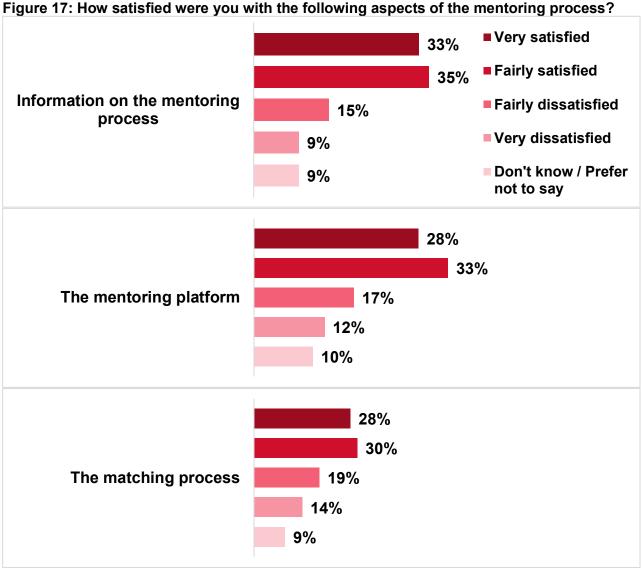
Source: Post completion survey; Base: 943 (Asked only to those that were matched to a mentor and had completed all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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.

Very

dissatisfied

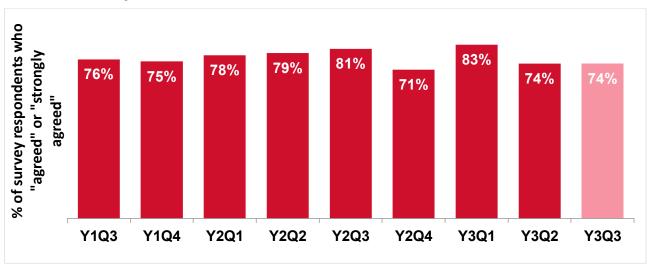
In the most recent quarter, all aspects of the voluntary mentoring model have seen an increase in satisfaction compared to Y3Q2. This includes information on the mentoring process (68%), the mentoring platform (61%) and satisfaction with the matching process has stayed the same (58%).



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 138 (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

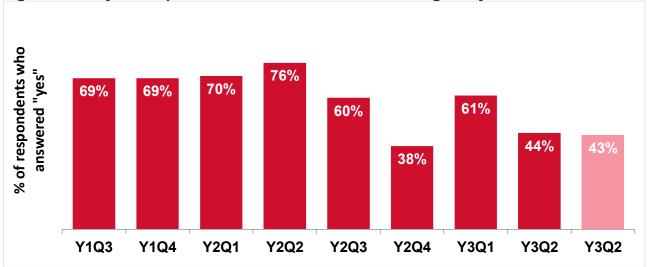
In Y3Q3, the majority (74%) of survey respondents thought their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs. This has stayed the same as the previous quarter Y3Q2. Over two-fifths of respondents (43%) had attended all ten hours of mentoring, which has seen a slight decrease since the previous quarter.

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, 114 Y3Q3 (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?

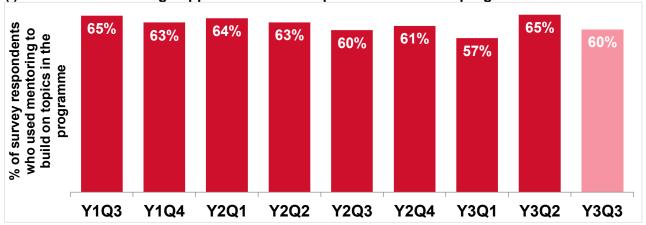


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 245 Y2Q1, 140 Y2Q2, 78 Y2Q3, 48 Y2Q4, 103 Y3Q1, 109 Y3Q2, 114 Y3Q3 (Asked only to those who were matched with a mentor) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

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 cover topics in the programme has decreased since the last quarter (from 65% in Y3Q2 to 60% in Y3Q3). The amount using mentoring to cover topics not in the programme increased since the last quarter, but this has fluctuated throughout programme delivery.

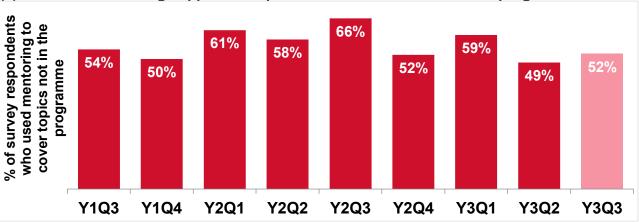
Figure 20: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support? (i) I used the mentoring support to build on topics covered in the programme



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2, 97 Y3Q3 (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

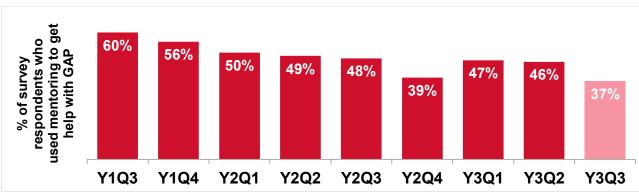


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2, 97 Y3Q3 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

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.

Respondents who used their mentoring to get help with Growth Action Plan has seen a decrease since the previous quarter (46% in Y3Q2 to 37% in Y3Q3), the lowest figure since the survey began.

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

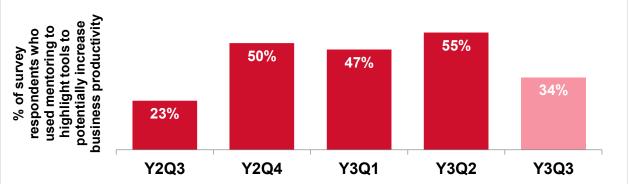


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2, 97 Y3Q3 (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter); Question type: single choice

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.

The amount of respondents using mentoring to highlight tools to increase business productivity decreased since the last quarter (55% in Y3Q2 to 34% in Y3Q3).

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, 97 Y3Q3 (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

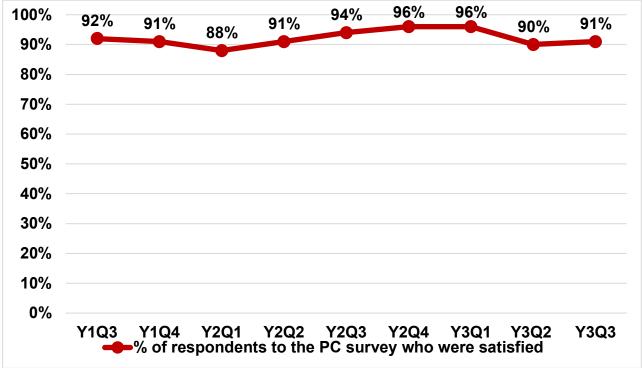
Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded. This measure was introduced in Y2Q3. The chart includes the full base including all data codes.

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 (Y3Q3), 91% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered.
- The proportion of programme completers who were satisfied with their mentoring support dropped by two percentage points relative to the previous quarter (from 86% in Y3Q2 to 84% in Y3Q3).

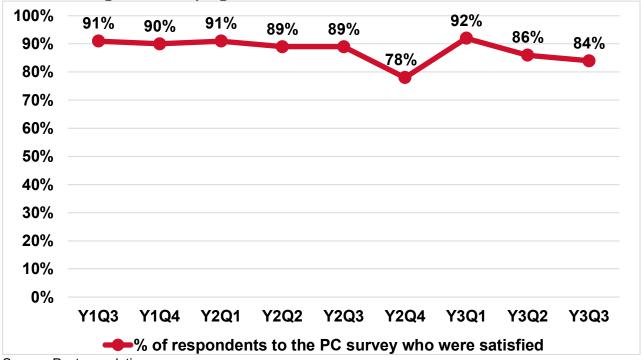
Figure 24: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how HtGM was delivered from start to end?



Source: Post completion survey

Base: 85 Y1Q3; 91 Y1Q4, 256 Y2Q1, 149 Y2Q2, 90 Y2Q3, 67 Y2Q4, 128 Y3Q1, 136 Y3Q2, 138 Y3Q3

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



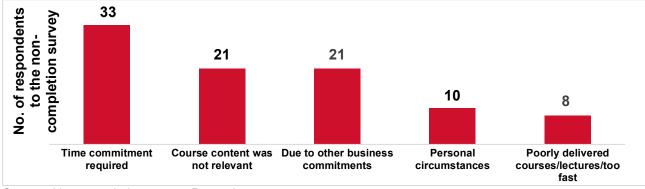
Source: Post completion survey

Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 73 Y2Q3, 36 Y2Q4, 88 Y3Q1, 95 Y3Q2, 102 Y3Q3(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 survey¹³

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: 67

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

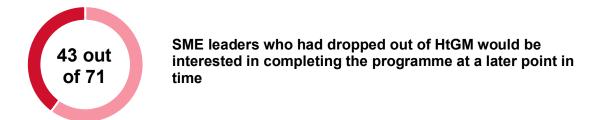
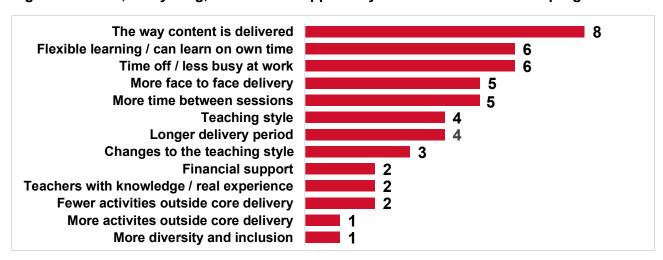


Figure 27: What, if anything, could have supported you to attend more of the programme?



Source: Non completion survey; Base: 64

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

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

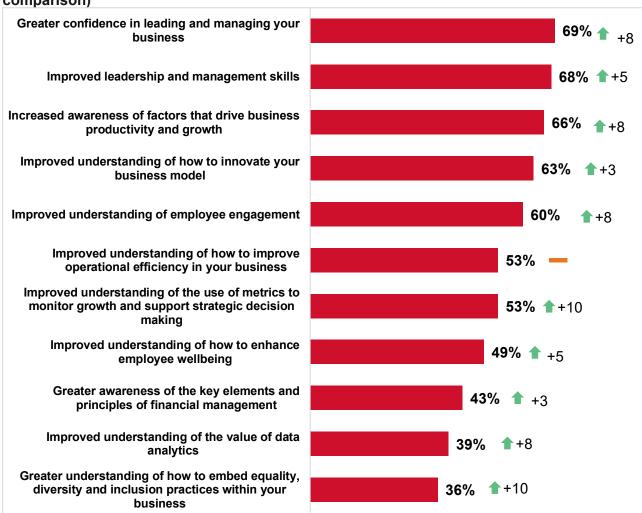
Self-reported individual outcomes

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 Y3Q3 report having greater confidence in leading and managing their business (69%), improved leadership and management skills (68%), and an increased awareness of factors that drive business productivity and growth (66%) (Figure 28). There were some noticeable differences between Y3Q2 and Y3Q3¹⁴:

- Improved understanding of the use of metrics to monitor growth and support strategic decision making increased by 10 percentage points.
- Greater understanding of how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices within your business also increased by 10 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: Y3Q2 (136), Y3Q3 (138)

Note: bars show data from Y3Q3 of the post completion survey, arrows show changes from Y3Q2 and

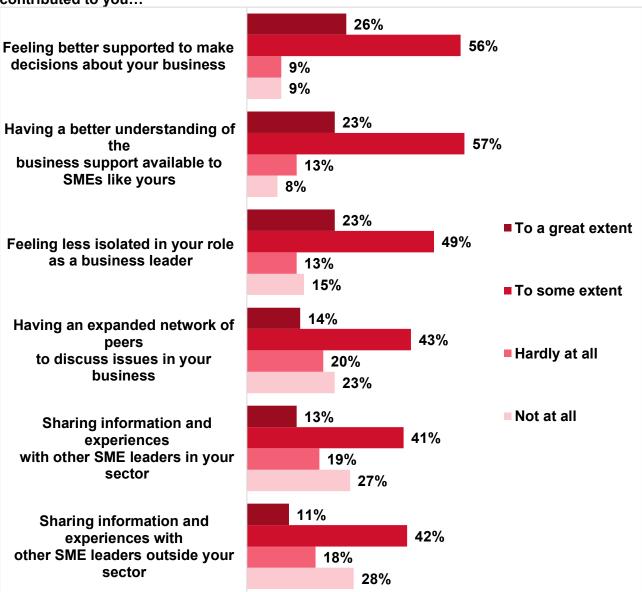
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¹⁴ Please note: this figure has not been tested for statistical significance

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 (80%) 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...

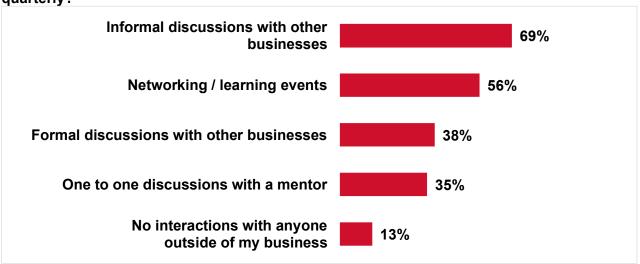


Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 1,020 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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 (69%) or networking events (56%). The proportion of programme completers who did not engage with other business leaders at all has increased from 10% to 13% (as shown below, the aggregate average is 13%).

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



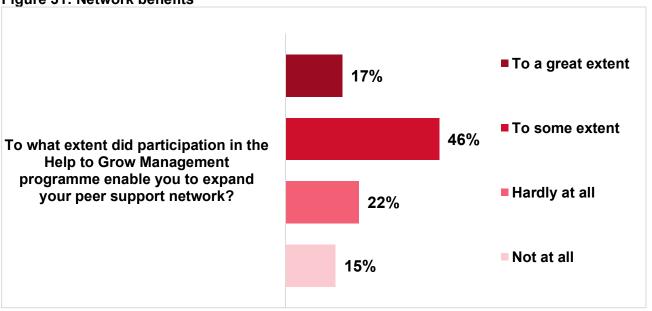
Source: Six month follow up survey; Respondents could select more than one option

Base: 1,020 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Note: The chart only includes response options with >1%

Network benefits

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

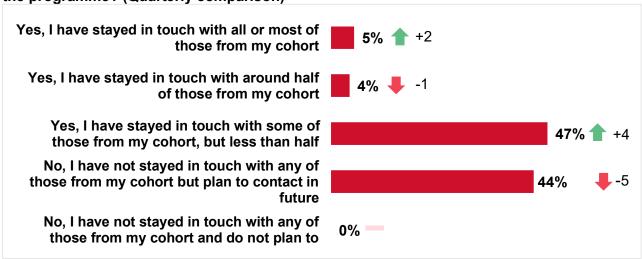




Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,020 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Overall, around two thirds (62%) of SME leaders completing the programme reported that HtGM helped to expand their peer network. This has slightly increased since the previous quarter (Y3Q2 56% to Y3Q3 60%).

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: 294 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y3Q3 (147), Y3Q2 (147) Note: bars show data from Y3Q3 of the six-month survey (October 2023 -January 2024), arrows show changes from Y3Q2) (May-June 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.

64% 29% 4% 2%

Very likely Likely Not likely Not at all likely

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

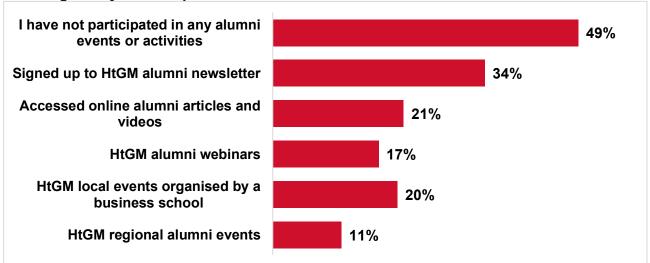
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,020 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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.

Almost 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 (34%).

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: 368. This is a new question added at Y3Q1.

The most common reason for not taking part in alumni activities were not having enough time/being too busy (49%). A further 9% said they were not aware of the alumni network and 5% said they did not find it relevant / useful.

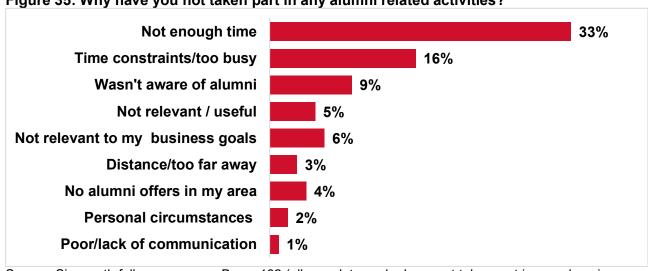
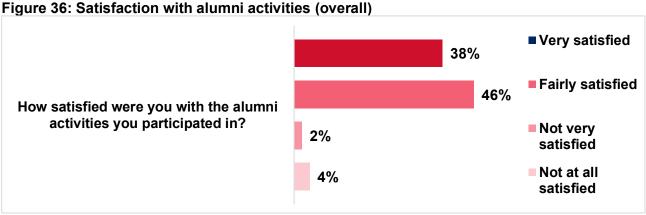


Figure 35: Why have you not taken part in any alumni related activities?

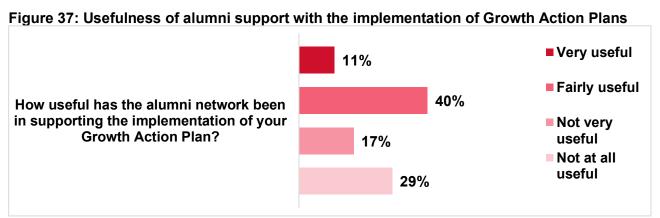
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 182 (all completers who have not taken part in any alumni activities). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: very small base, interpret with caution.

The majority of respondents participating in alumni activity were very/fairly satisfied with the alumni activities they participated in 84%).



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 186 (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 were mixed views on whether the almuni network was useful in supporting the implementation of Growth Action Plans. Over half of repsondents (51%) found it very/fairly useful for this purpose, whilst 46% found it not very/not at all useful.



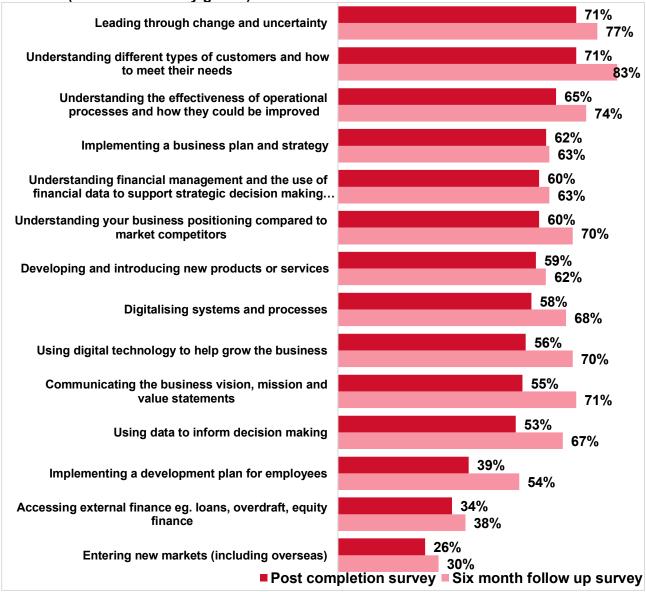
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 186 (all completers who have taken part in an alumni activity). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: very small base, interpret with caution.

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 reported 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")

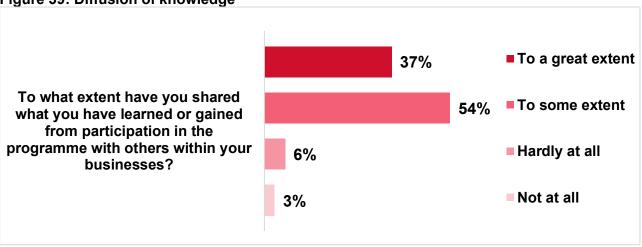


¹⁵ Some survey response options have been shortened for reporting purposes: "understanding financial management and use of financial data" is "Understanding financial management and the use of financial data to support strategic decision making in the organisation" in the survey and "understanding effectiveness of operational processes" is "Understanding the effectiveness of operational processes" 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: 239 (respondents answering both surveys) (This figure reports aggregate responses); Note: Graph shows Very strong/strong NET

Most (91%) respondents to the post-completion survey had gone on to share what they had learned or gained from participating in the programme with others in their business (to a great/some extent) (Figure 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.

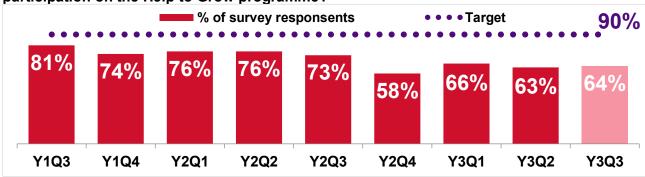




Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,020 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

To date, almost three quarters (64%) of all post-completion survey respondents said they had produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP) for their business through participation in the programme. The quarterly 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.

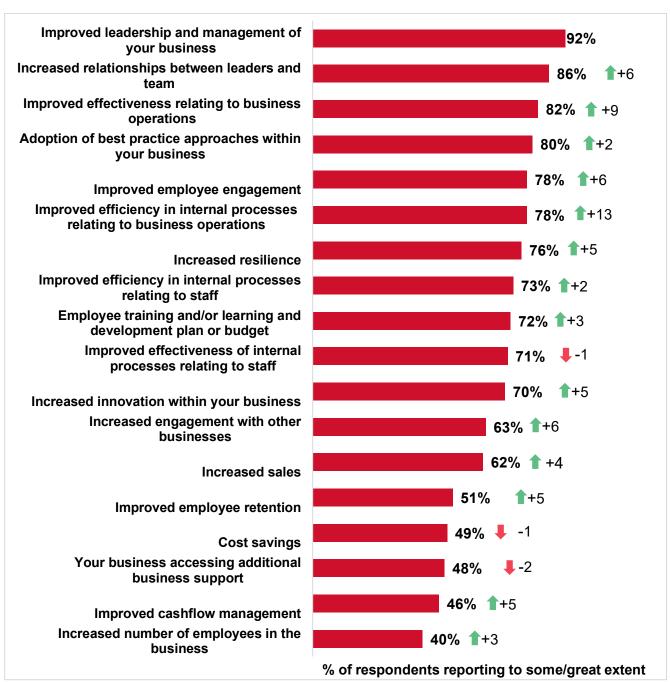
Figure 40: Have you produced a Growth Action Plan for your business as a result of your participation on the Help to Grow programme?



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1,140 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses)

Within six months of completing the programme, participants report a range of business benefits. In the most recent quarter, Y3Q3 the most commonly reported benefits were improved leadership and management of their business (92%), increased relationships between leaders and team (86%) and improved effectiveness relating to business operations (82%).

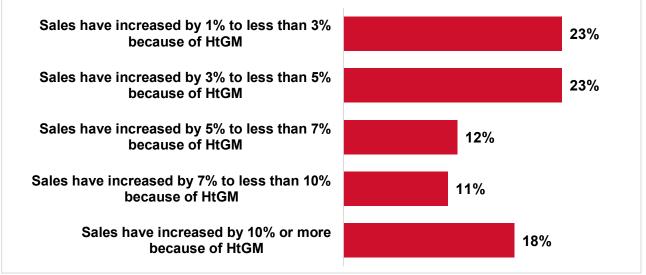
Figure 39: To what extent has participating in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to...



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 368; Y3Q3 (147), Y3Q2 (147); Note: bars show data from Y3Q3 of the post completion survey (July-October 2023), arrows show changes from Y3Q2 (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: 222 (Question was introduced to Y3Q1) (Figure shows aggregate survey responses)

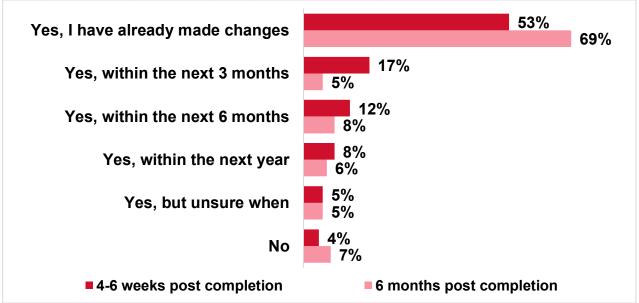
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported HtGM had contributed to increased sales (96%).

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%), operational efficiency (78%) and vision, purpose and brand (77%) (see figure 42).

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: 1,140, 1,020 (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: 604; 704 (Asked to those who had already made a change in their business) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)



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