Department for
Business & Trade

Evaluation of Help to Grow: Management

Quarterly Progress Update (April to August 2025)

Ipsos and the Institute for Employment Studies

Contents

Introduction

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) 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 thirteenth 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.[1] It draws on evidence collected April to August 2025 and was submitted alongside an accompanying slide deck.[2] In this report, quarterly data corresponds to the financial year of HtGM delivery (i.e., Y4Q4 = January to March 2025, Y4Q3 = October to December 2024) and refers to the period of time in which SME leaders completed the questionnaire.

This report includes quarterly data from Y4Q4 add (additional boost), which is an additional sample boost that was launched for the post-completion survey, to increase overall response rate.

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. Differences between quarters are only reported if they are statistically significant. This means that the findings are unlikely to have occurred by random chance. Statistical significance is likely due to a real relationship between variables, rather than random variation in the data.

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

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

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

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. The dates for the next surveys are pending the beginning of phase 2 of the evaluation.

Figure 1: Overview of HtGM Evaluation surveys

Post-completion

Issued to all participants two to six weeks after completing module 12 of the Help to Grow: Management programme. It gathers feedback on the processes associated with delivery of the programme and emerging evidence on the short-term outcomes in the Theory of Change.

Launch date: September 2021

Mode: Online

Frequency Monthly

Waves completed: 42 (including additional boost*)

Next wave: N/A

Six-month follow-up

All participants are contacted Six-months after completion of the programme to participate in a telephone interview designed to capture data on the outcomes / impact of the programme on them and their business. Some respondents will have completed the post-completion survey but not all.

Launch date: June 2022

Mode: Telephone

Frequency Quarterly

Waves completed: 14*

Next wave: N/A

Non-completion

Participants who start the programme but did not complete (completing <75% of the programme) are contacted by telephone and asked to provide feedback on their experiences and reasons why they did not complete the programme.

Launch date: June 2022

Mode: Telephone

Frequency Quarterly

Waves completed: 14

Next wave: N/A

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. Where changes between quarters are reported, caveats have been included to clarify whether the change is statistically significant or not.

*Year 4 (additional boost): An additional sample boost was launched for the post-completion survey, to increase overall response rate. This cohort would have completed the HTGM programme by May 2025.

*Please note that the pre-election period impacted the six month follow up survey fieldwork dates for **Y4Q1**.

Survey update

As of 31st August 2025, a combined total of 4,005 responses had been received to the post-completion and six month follow up surveys (Figure 2):

- A total of **13,647** post-completion online survey invited were issued, designed for SME leaders who completed HtGM before 20th August 2025. **2,050 responses** had been received, representing a 15% response rate [3].

[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.

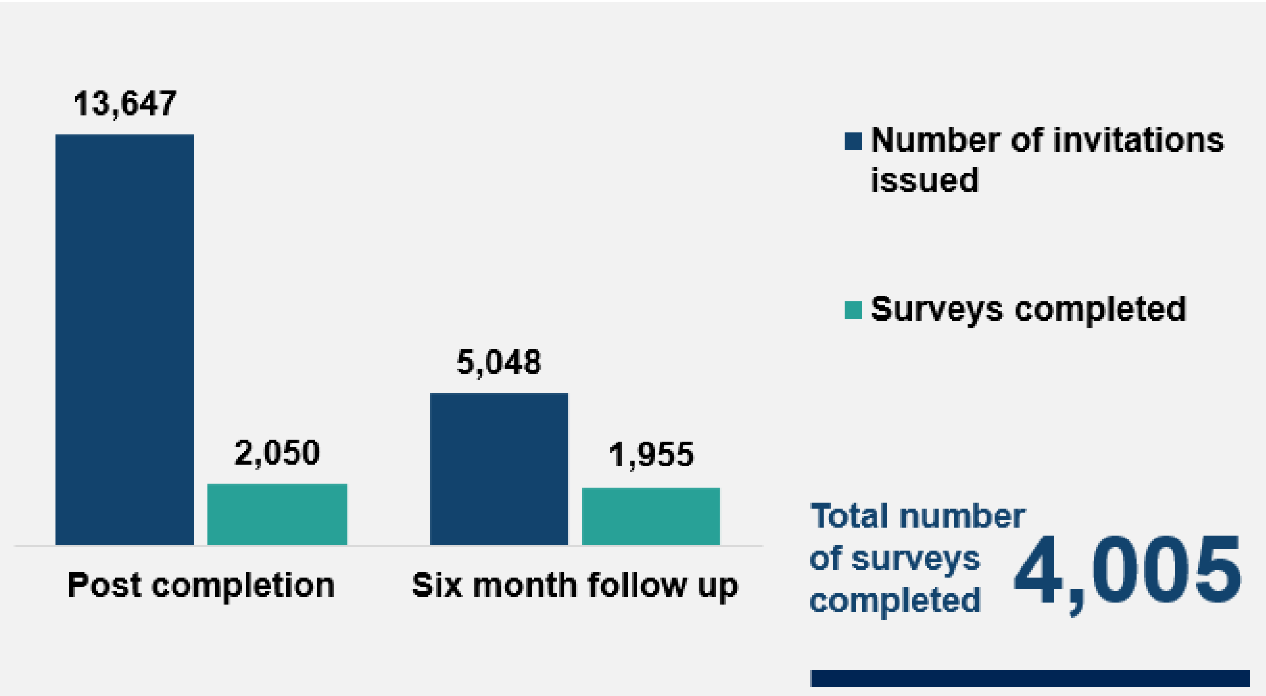
- In total **5,048** SME leaders who completed HtGM before August 2025 have been contacted to take part in the six-month follow up telephone survey. **1,955** responses had been received, representing a 38% response rate (adjusted to account for ineligible leads in the sample).

- Both post-completion and the follow up survey response rates remain relatively consistent overall. The post-completion and six-month follow-up surveys have the same response rate compared to the last quarter.

The analysis presented in the following report is based on the **4,005** responses to one or both surveys. Results from the non-completion survey are reported separately due to small sample sizes (n = 107).

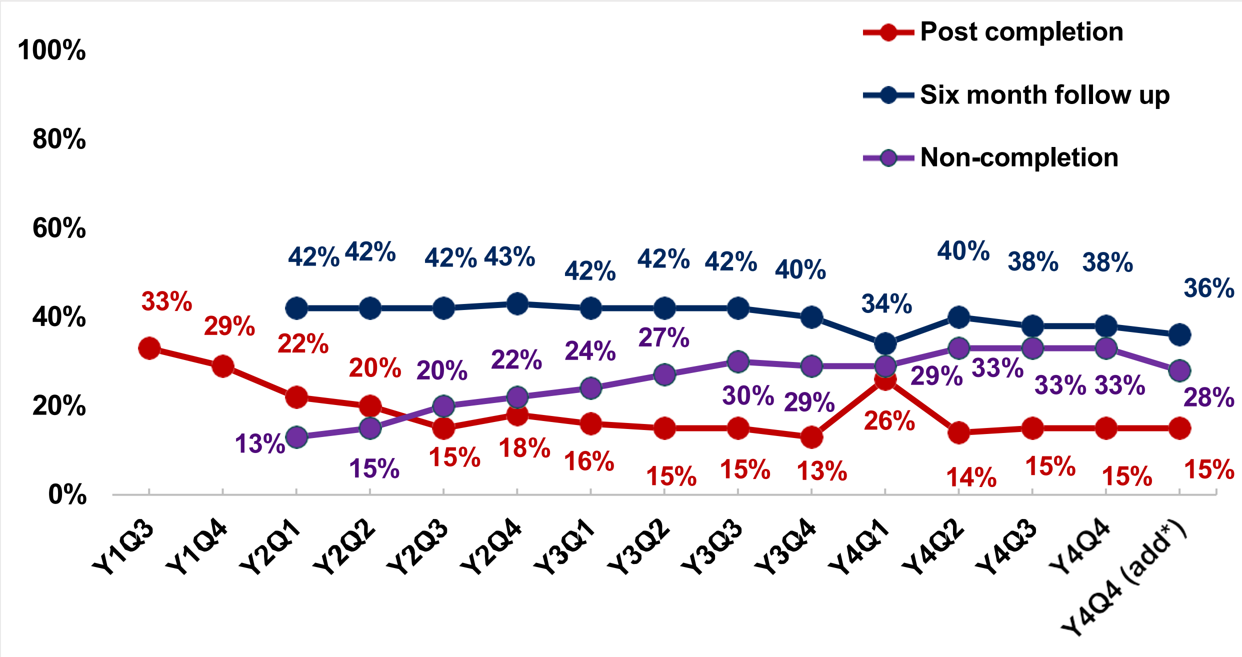
Figure 2 shows how the aggregate response rates to the three surveys has varied over time.[4]

Figure 2: Post completion and six month follow up survey response rates as of 31st August 2025



[4] Response rate over time is based on cumulative figures.

Figure 3: Cumulative readjusted 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, reporting on aggregate statistics):

1) **Location:** the programme has generated interest from businesses across all regions of the UK. Around one third of firms registering or enrolling to HtGM were based in London (17% enrolments, 18% registrations) and the South East (15% enrolments, 14% registrations).

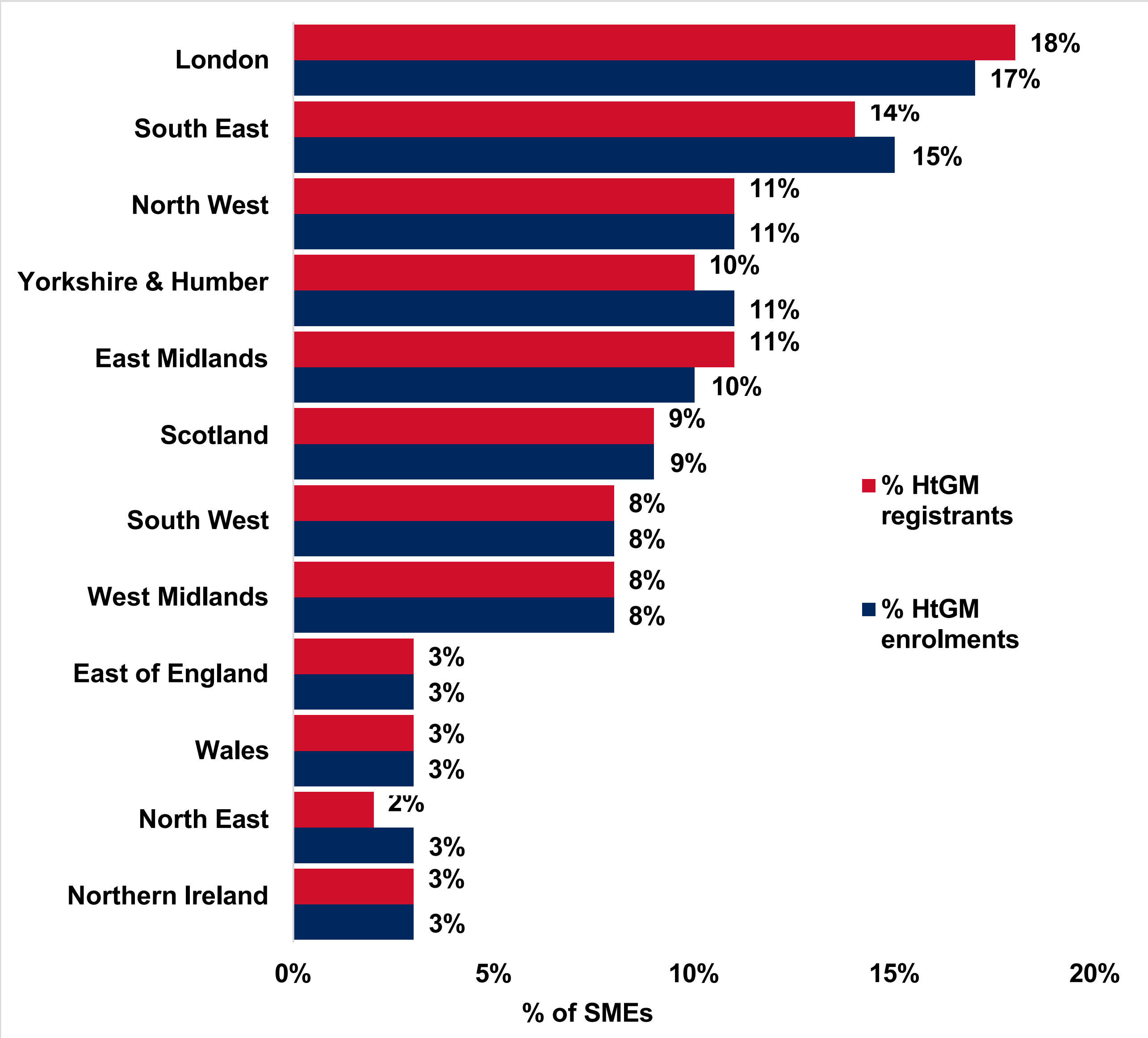
2) **Sector:** businesses that registered for HtGM operate across a broad range of industry sectors (Figure 5). The largest proportion of SMEs who registered/ enrolled on the programme operate in ‘Other service activities’ (17% and 16%). This includes activities of member organisations, repair of computers and other personal / household goods and personal services, such as hairdressers, beauty salons and gyms. This is followed by the manufacturing sector (14% for registrations and 15% for enrolments) and the construction sector (both registrations and enrolments 11%). The remainder operate across a range of different industries. This is consistent with previous quarters of the HtGM programme.

3) **Age:** around half of SMEs that registered (50%) and enrolled (47%) on HtGM had been in operation for between one and ten years. More than a third (36% registering, 38% enrolling) had been in operation for between 11 and 30 years (Figure 6)[5].

4) **Size:** firms registering and enrolling for HtGM were typically small SMEs in terms of employment (median 12 FTE registering / 13 FTE enrolling) (Figure 7). The median annual turnover in 2024/25 financial year was £852k for registrants and £970k for enrolments. The average differed slightly (£2.76M for registrants and £2.93M for enrolments)[6]. This has remained consistent in previous quarters.

[5] Note: businesses that have been operating for less than one year are not eligible for the programme.
[6] 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 HtGM[7]



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=13,921,), enrolments (n=11,597). Question type: single choice, includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add vars)

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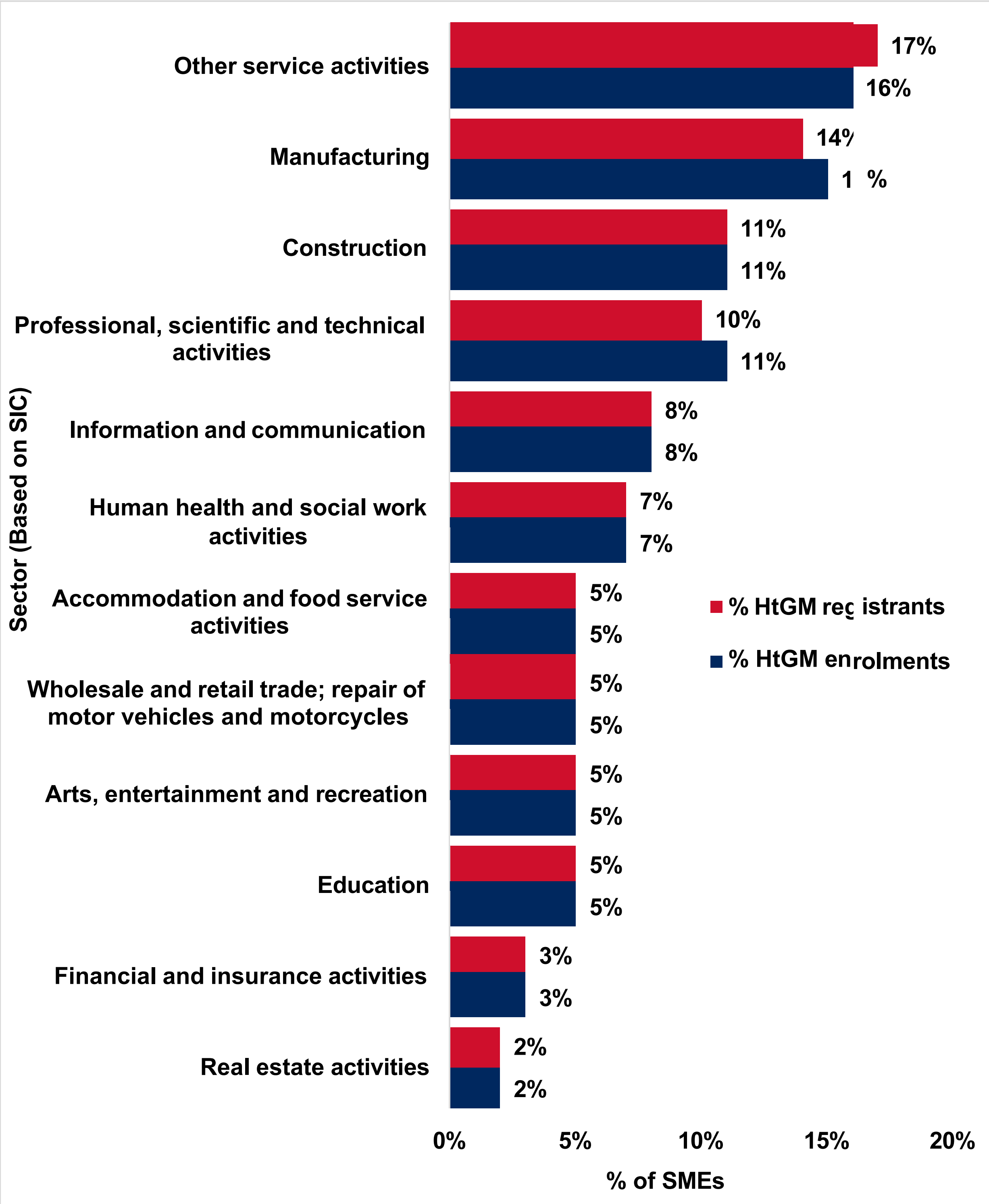
[7] SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

Figure 2: Sector of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM[8]



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=13,921), enrolments (n=11,597). Includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add vars). Sectors with a % less than 2 are not displayed on the chart (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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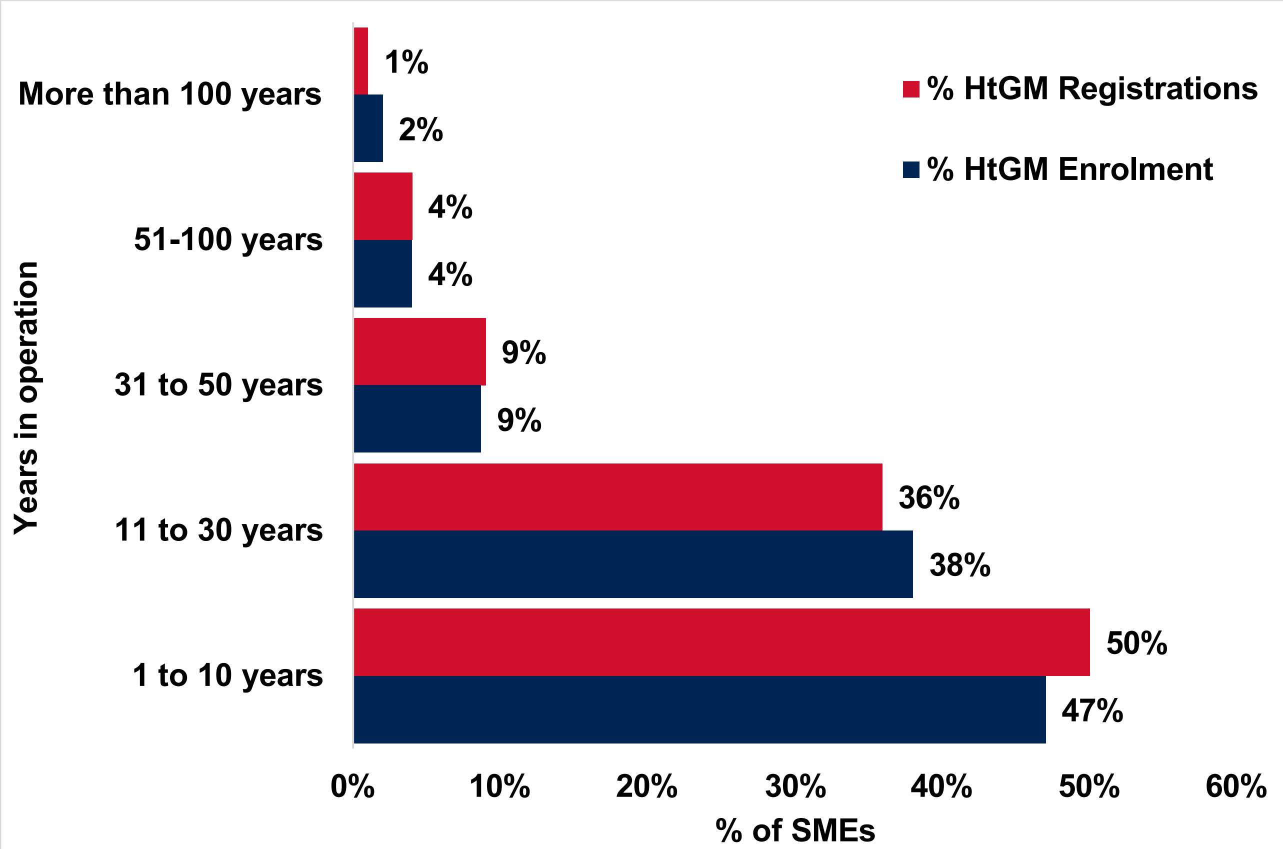
[8] SME population data are restricted to only include SMEs with 5-249 employees to align to HtGM eligibility.

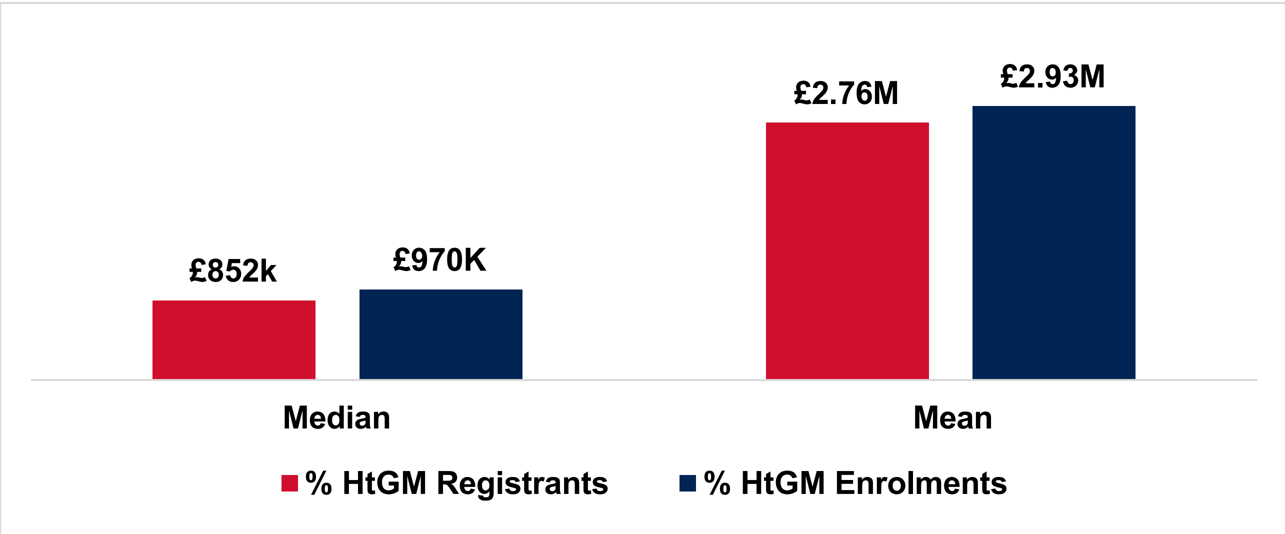
Figure 6: Age of businesses registered and enrolled on to HtGM



Source DBT monitoring data; Base: registrations (n=13,691), enrolments (n=11,439). Includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add vars) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses).

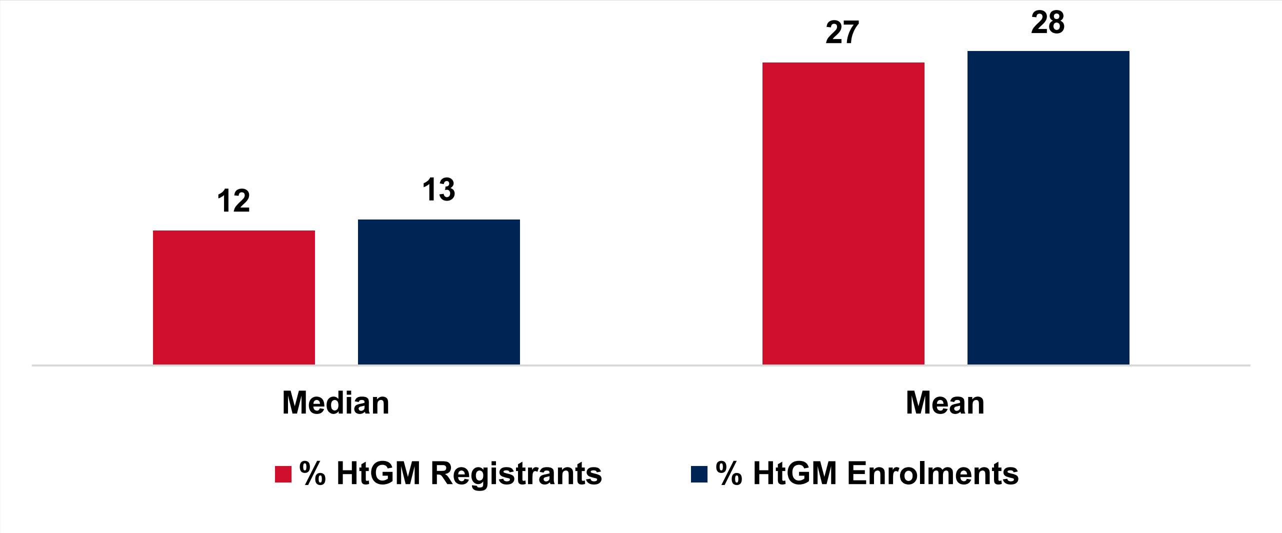
Figure 7: Size (turnover and employees) of businesses registered and enrolled to HtGM

Figure 7.1: Turnover



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=13,921), enrolments (n=11,597) Note: these data are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers. Includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add vars)

Figure 7.2: Number of employees (FTE)



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=13,921), enrolments (n=11,597) Note: these data are based on Ipsos analysis and exclude outliers. Includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add vars)

SME leaders

The HtGM programme continues to attract 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 Y4Q4 (additional boost), the proportion of female SME leaders registering on the programme (36%) is higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by female-led businesses.[9] The proportion of SME leaders registering for HtGM who are from an ethnic minority background (15%) is also 9 percentage points higher than the proportion of private sector employment accounted for by ethnic minority-led businesses (see Figure 9).[10]

The profile of those responding to the post completion (PC) evaluation survey is broadly in line with all SME leaders involved in HtGM in terms of ethnicity and gender.

Please note the remainder of the report refers to Y4Q4 add, which refers to the additional fieldwork period undertaken after the planned Year 4 timeframe. Since the post-completion and follow up are undertaken after programme completion, this includes data from Year 4 programme participants.

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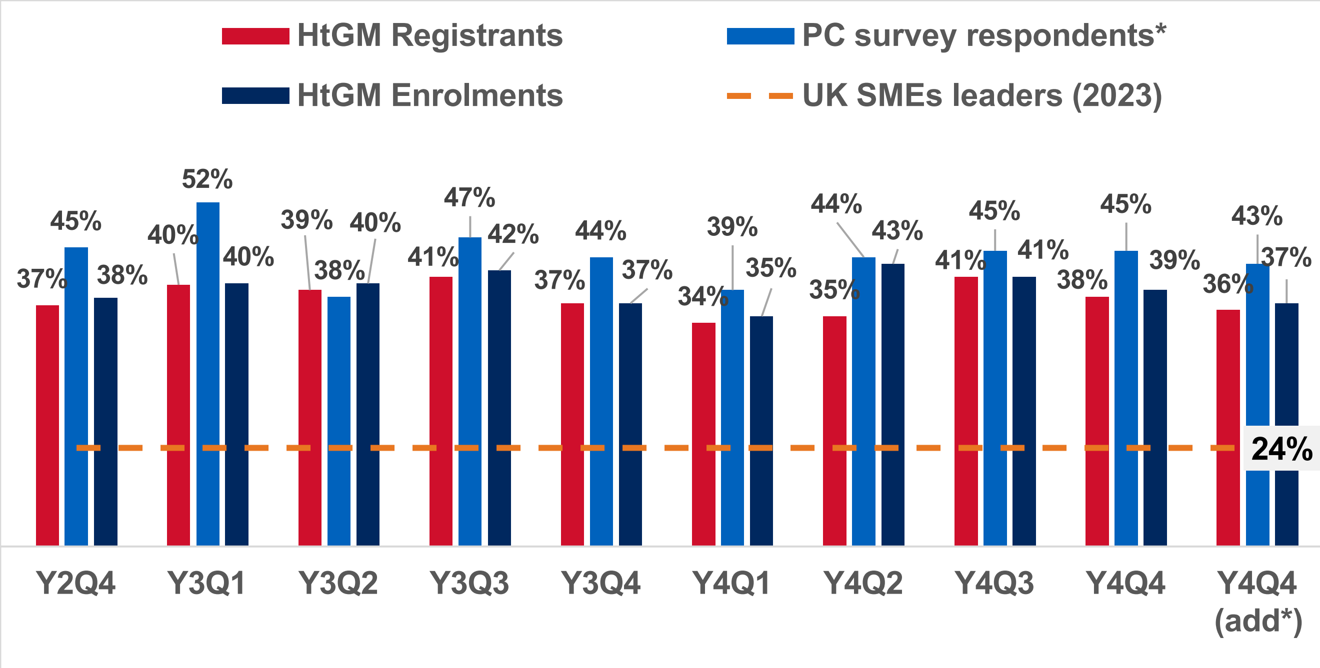
[9] 15% of SMEs in the wider SME population are led by women- [Small Business Survey (2023)]
[10] Government Statistics (2020) Workforce and business: Leadership of small and medium enterprises - https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf

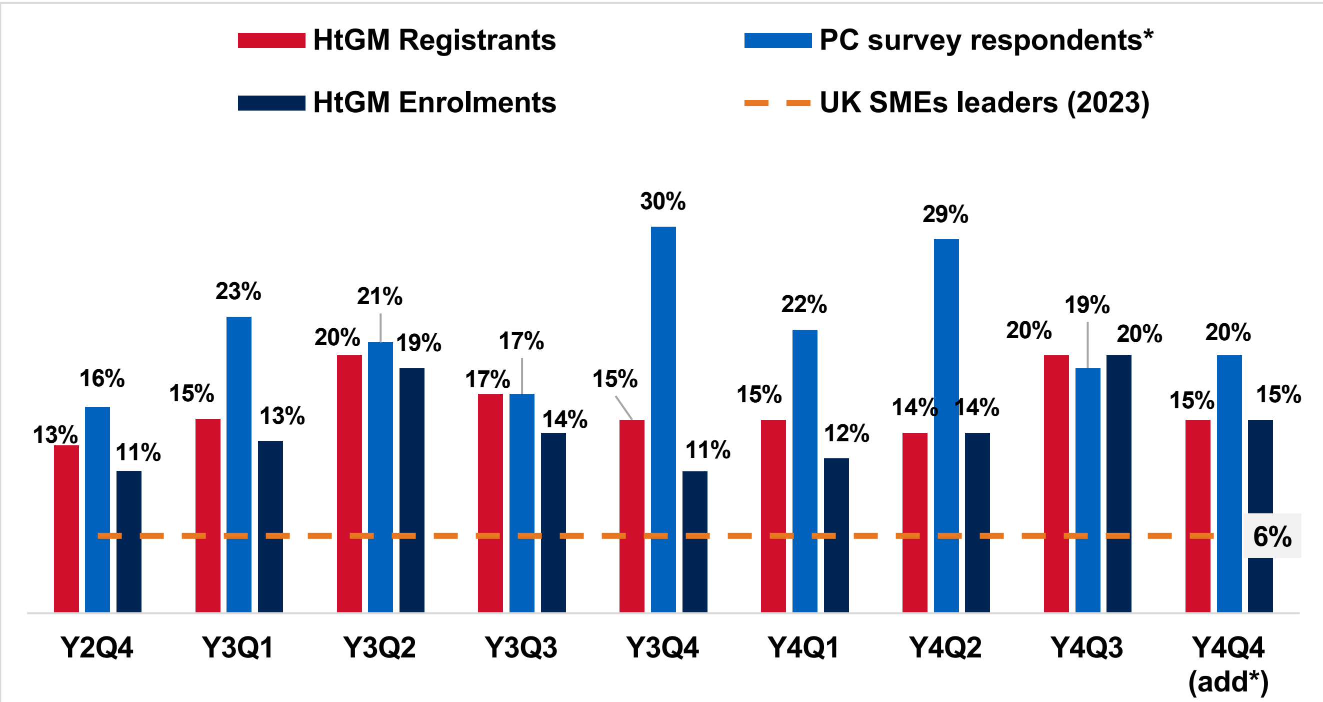
Figure 3: Proportion of SME leaders who are female



Source: HtGM Registration form (n=13,921), enrolments (n=11,597); Leadership of small and medium enterprises (2023), Longitudinal Small Business Survey (2021). Includes all HtGM data up to August 2025.

*****PC survey respondents answering yes to 'Are any of the senior leaders in your business female'

Figure 9: Proportion of SME leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds



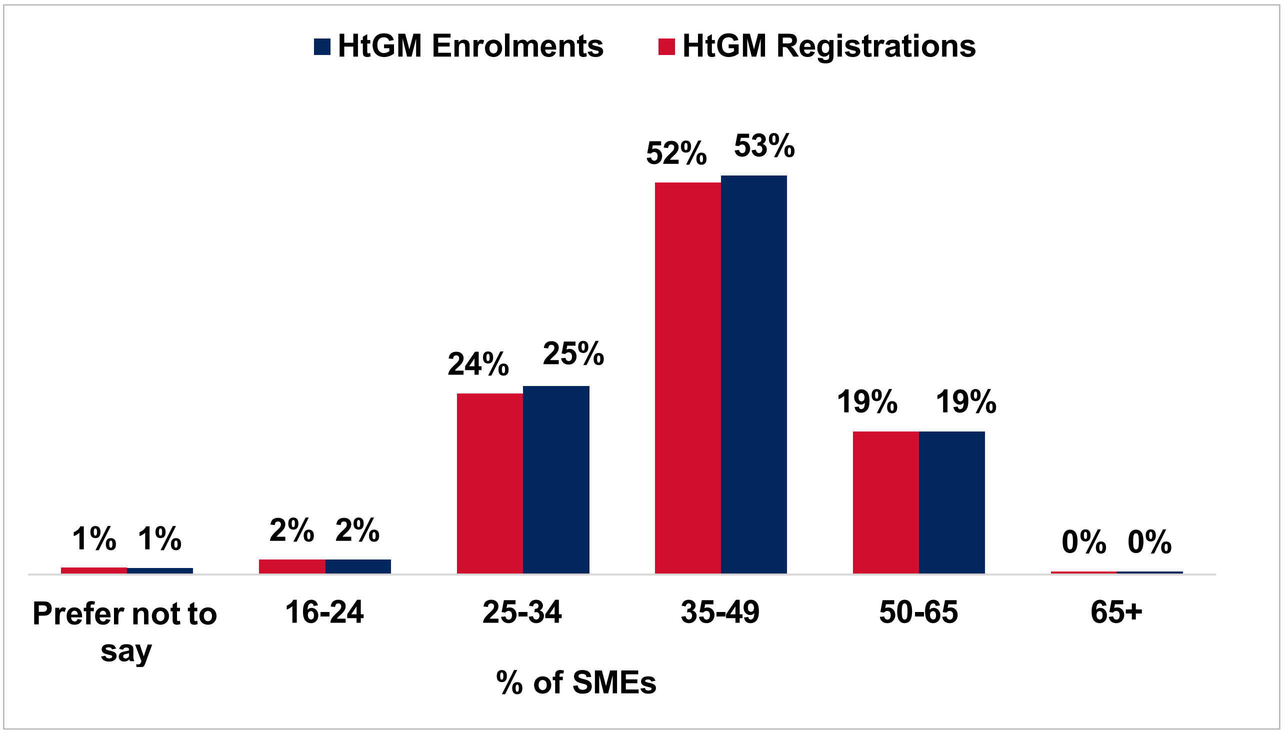
PC survey respondents answering yes to 'Are any of the senior leaders in your business from an ethnic minority background?'
Source: HtGM Registration form *(n=13,921), enrolments (n=11,597*); Post-completion survey (n=1,955); Leadership of small and medium enterprises (2023),

Longitudinal Small Business Survey (2023). Includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add*) (figure shows aggregated survey responses).

*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?' *Includes additional wave*

To date, just over half of SME leaders registering (52%) and enrolling (53%) to the programme were aged between 35-49 years (Figure 10). One quarter (registering 24%, enrolling 25%) were aged between 25-34 years and one in five were aged between 50-65 years (19% both registered and enrolled).

Figure 10: Age of SME leaders registering and enrolling on HtGM



Source: DBT monitoring data, registrations (n=13,921), enrolments (n=11,597) Includes all HtGM data up to Y4Q4 (add vars) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Applying to HtGM

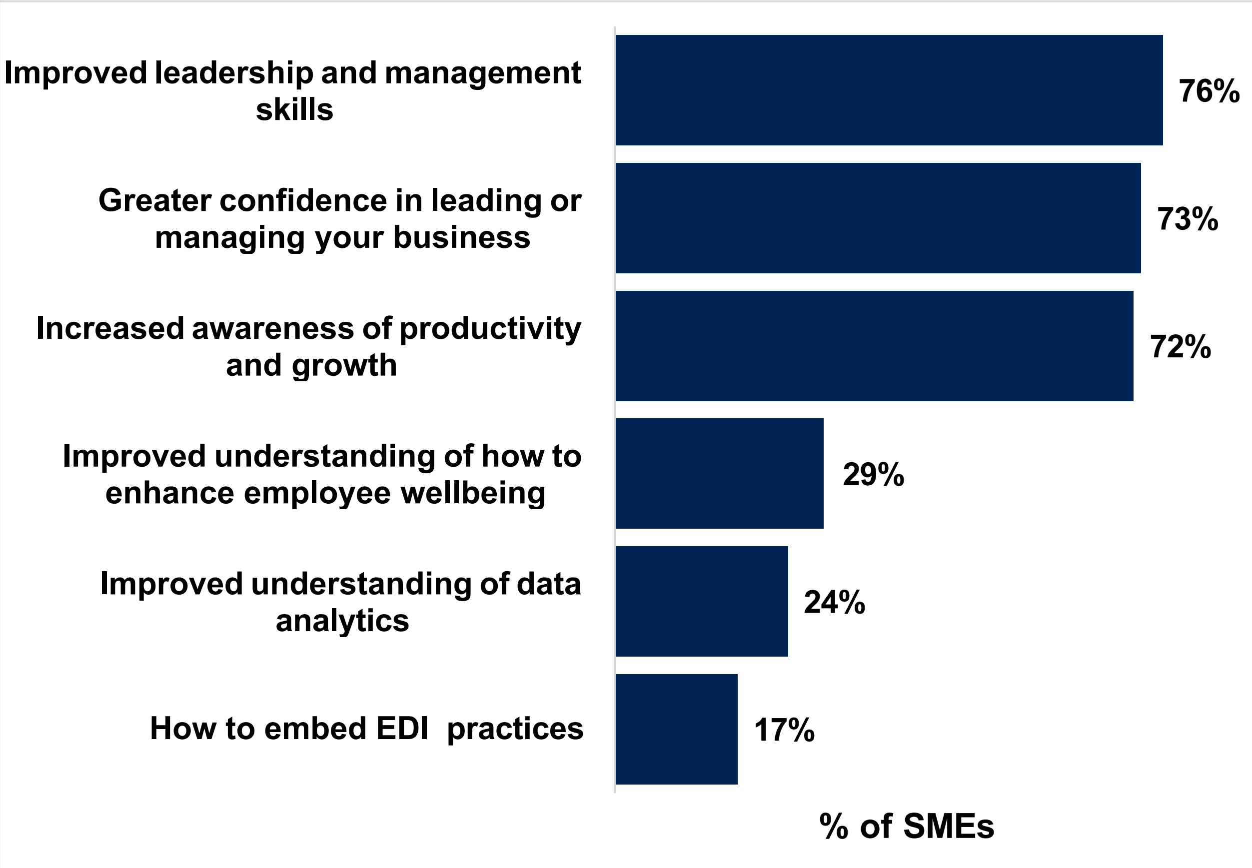
This section presents the evidence to date, unless stated otherwise, on programme completers' expectations of the programme, understanding of the programme's aims and objectives and experiences of the application process.

Expectations and understanding of HtGM

Through participating in HtGM, SME leaders most commonly expected to improve leadership and management skills (76%), improve confidence in leading or managing their business (73%) and increase awareness of productivity and growth (72%). This has been consistent across quarters.

Survey respondents were least likely to expect to improve their understanding of how to enhance employee wellbeing (29%), improve their understanding of data analytics (24%), and how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices (17%).

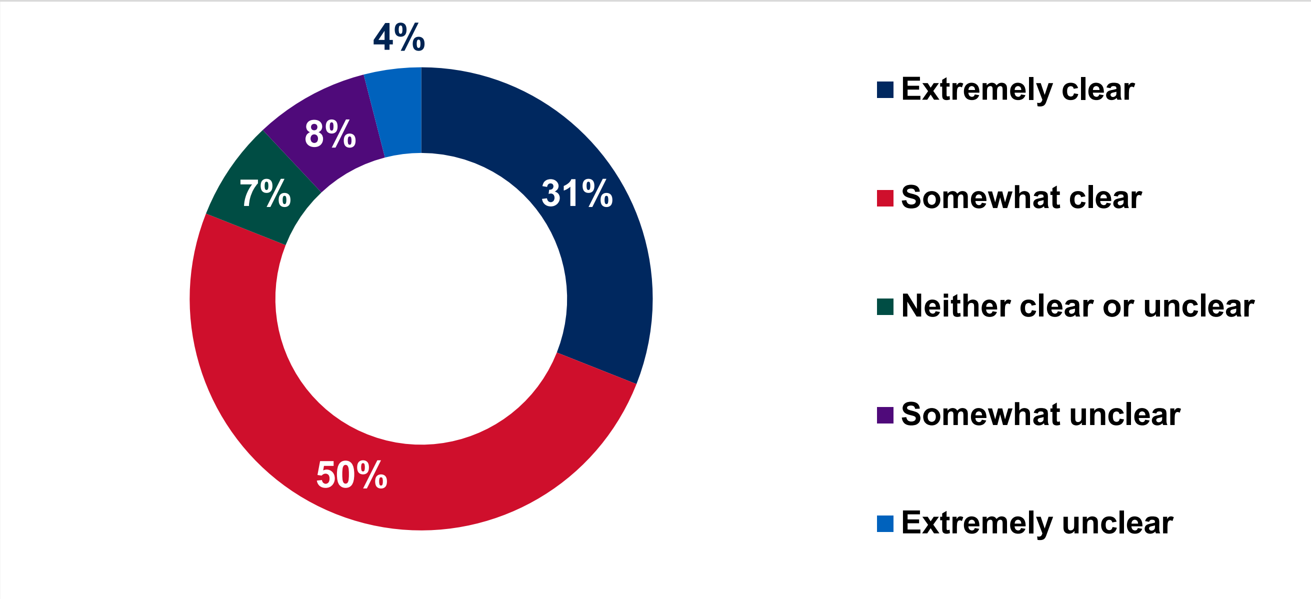
Figure 11: What were your expectations of the Help to Grow: Management programme? What were you hoping to get out of it?



Source: Post-completion survey Base: 2,050 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)
NB: 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 clear on the programme's aims and objectives at the time of application. Around one in ten (12%) were unclear. This has been consistent through all quarters.

Figure 12: When you applied, how clear were you on the aims and objectives of the programme?

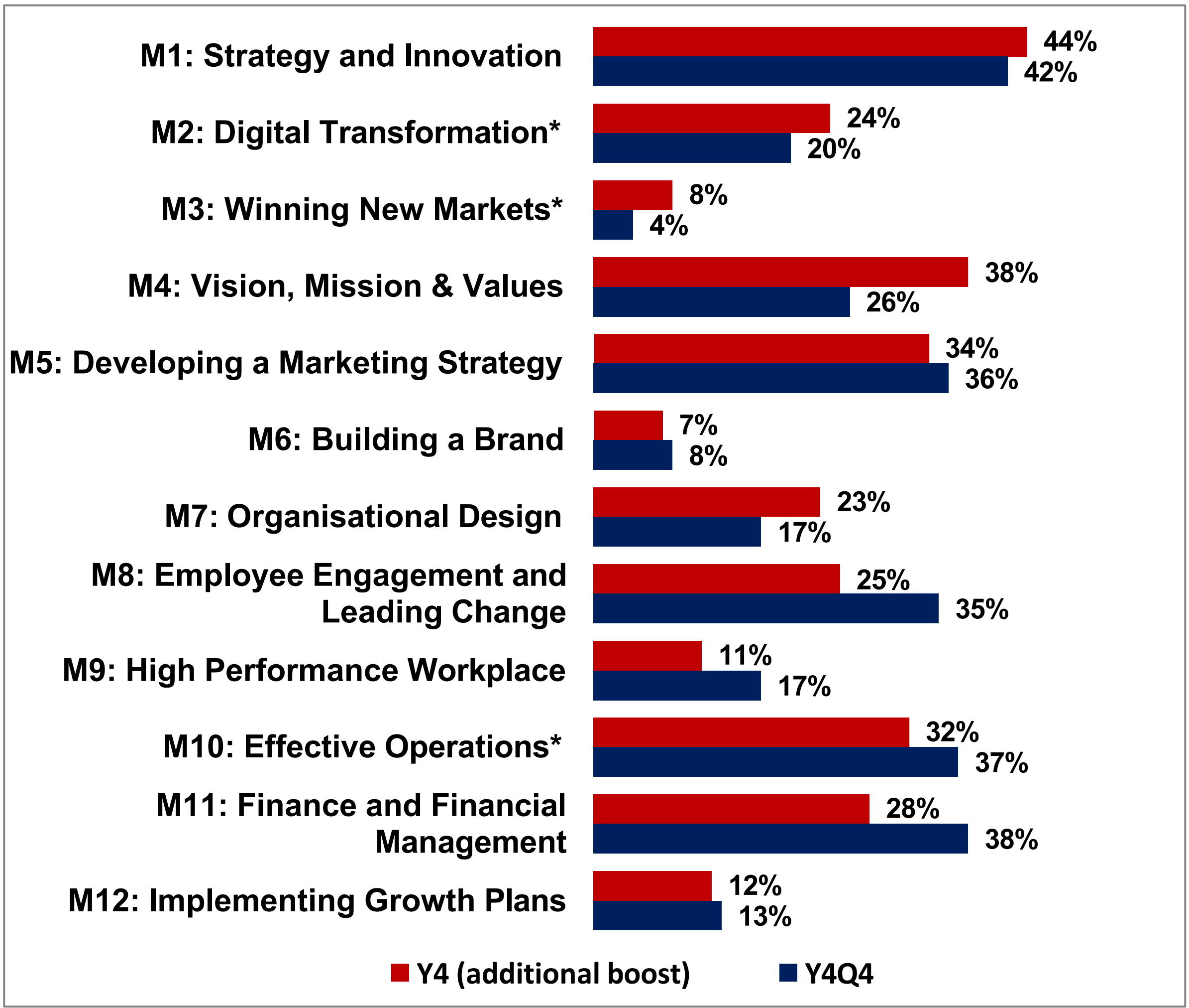


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 2,050 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses). Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

Motivations and experience of applying

In the most recent quarter (Y4 additional boost), the modules reported by programme completers as their top four modules of interest at the time of applying were Strategy and Innovation (44%), Vision, Mission & Values (38%), Developing a Marketing Strategy (34%) and Effective Operations (32%). Vision, Mission & Values saw the largest increase compared to the previous quarter going from 26% to 38%, which was statistically significant. The largest decreases was Finance and Financial Management and Employee Engagement and Leading Change (38% in Q4 to 28% in Q4 additional boost, 35% in Q4 to 25% in Q4 additional boost, respectively). Neither of these decreases were statistically significant.

Figure 13: Which three modules were you most interested in when you signed up to the programme?

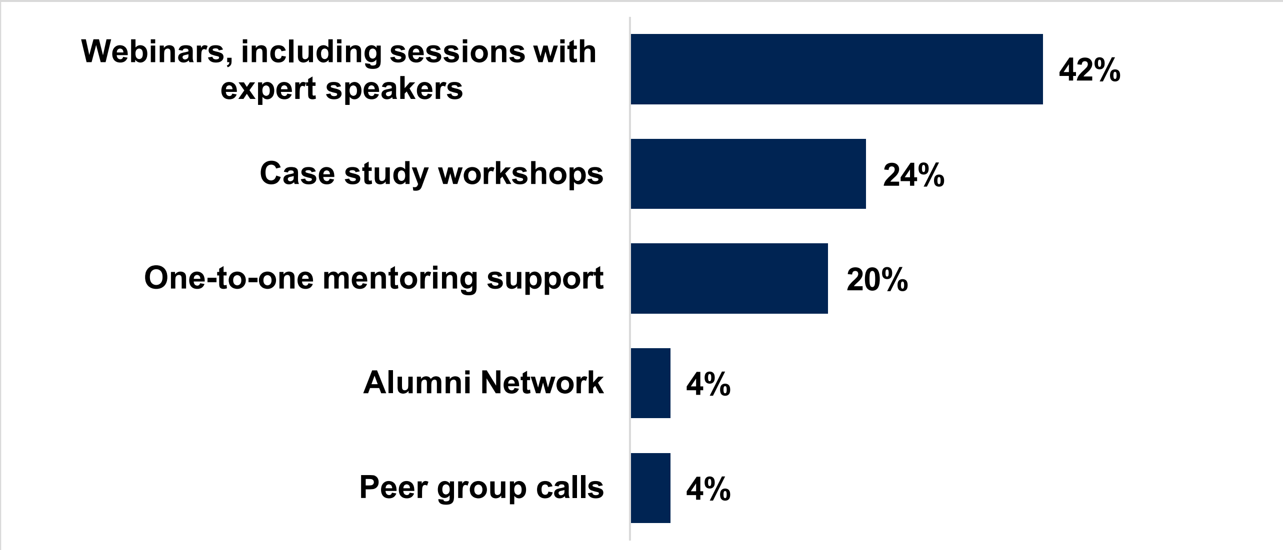


*Source: Post completion survey, Base: (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Y4 additional boost (130), Y4Q4 (168). *These module names were updated in 2023- the chart has been updated to reflect this.*[11]

When signing up to the programme, SMEs were most interested in webinars, including sessions with expert speakers (42%), case study workshops (24%) and one-to-one mentoring support (20%). This question was added in Y4Q1.

[11] These module names were updated in 2023 and the chart has been updated to reflect this. M2 was formally called Digital Adoption, M3 was formally called Internationalisation and M10 was formally called Efficient Operations.

Figure 14: Which element of the programme were you most interested in when you signed up to the programme?



Source: Post completion survey. Base: 804 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Note: This question was added in Y4Q1, so has a smaller base size. NB: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding.

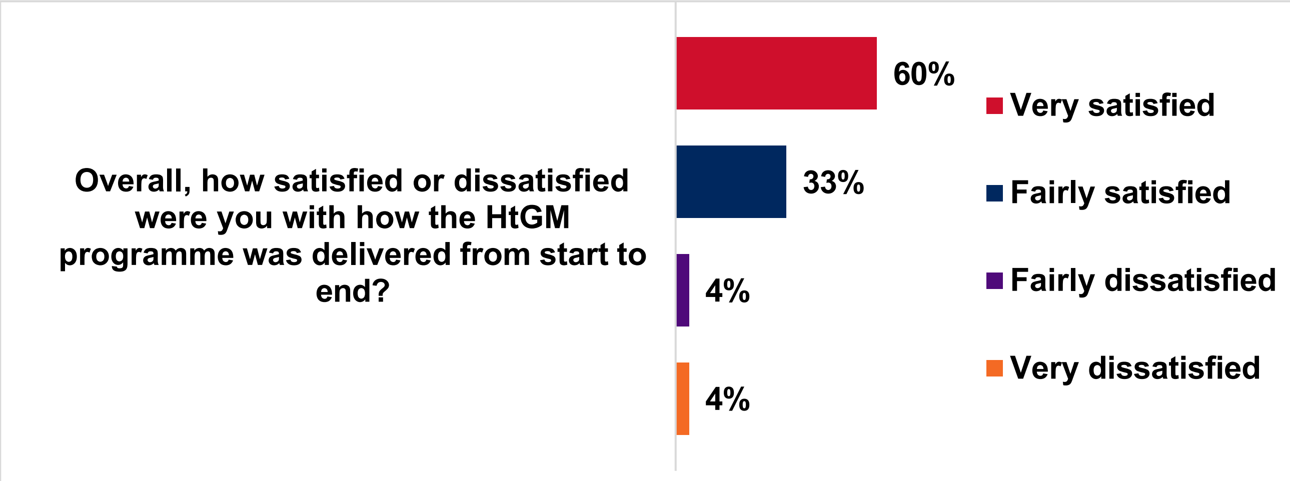
Experience of HtGM

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

Delivery

Overall, SME leaders are reporting high levels of satisfaction with programme delivery, with 93% saying they were fairly or very satisfied[12] and 8% saying they were fairly or very dissatisfied. This consistent with previous quarters.

Figure 15: Programme satisfaction (Overall)



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 2,050 (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. In the latest quarter, Vision, Mission & Values was deemed most relevant (88%) by programme completers, followed by Strategy and Innovation (86%) and Developing a Marketing Strategy (83%). All modules saw a decrease since Q4, except for Vision, Mission & Values (+1%) and Organisational Design (no change).

The module that saw the biggest decrease in relevance since Y4Q4 was Effective Operations, which decreased from 90% in Y4Q4 to 78% in Y4 additional boost (this difference is statistically significant).

Winning New Markets was deemed to be the least relevant module and has remained consistently low across all quarters, compared to other modules. This figure saw a decrease of 10 percentage points (63% in Y4Q4 to 53% in Y4 additional boost) but was not statistically significant.

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[12] *Aggregate responses might not match individual responses due to rounding*

Figure 16: How relevant were each of the Help to Grow: Management modules to your business?

Source: Post-completion survey; Base: Y4 additional boost (130), Y4Q4 (168), NB: bars show data from Wave 12 (Y4Q4) of the Post-completion survey, arrows show changes from Y4Q4. Respondents could select relevancy for each statement. **These module names were updated in 2023- the chart has been updated to reflect this.*[13]

[13] These module names were updated in 2023 and the chart has been updated to reflect this. M2 was formally called Digital Adoption, M3 was formally called Internationalisation and M10 was formally called Efficient Operations.

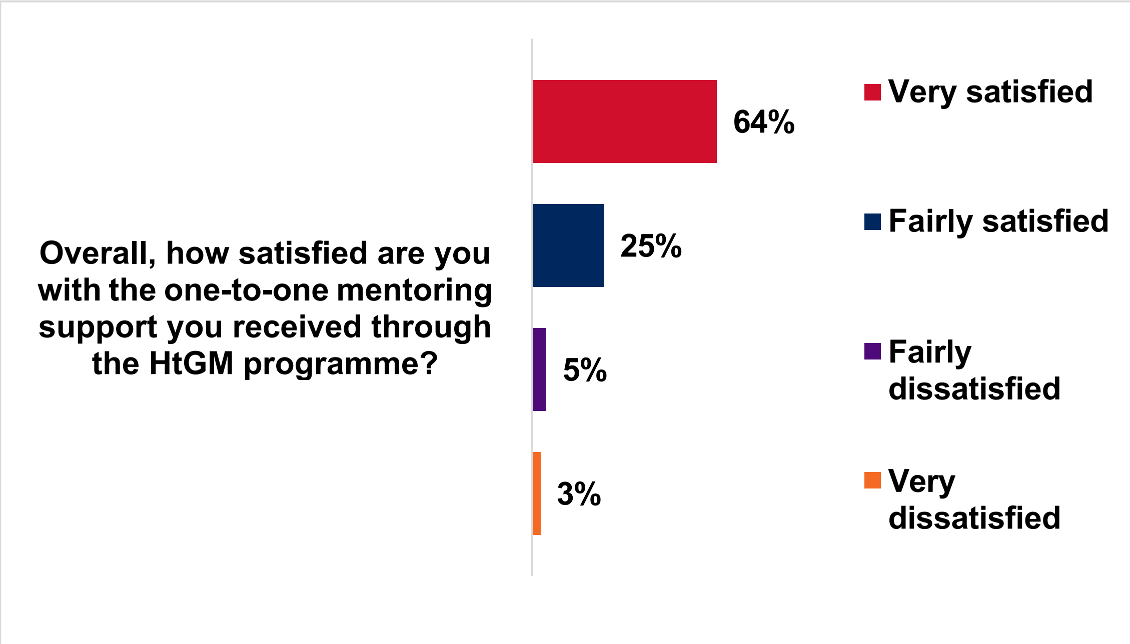
Mentoring

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 Y4Q4 additional boost 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, on an aggregate level, satisfaction amongst participants was high (89%). Satisfaction reached its highest, since the survey began, in the previous quarter (Y4Q4), with 93% of survey respondents feeling satisfied with mentoring support received, compared to 85% in Y4 additional boost (this is a statistically significant decrease).

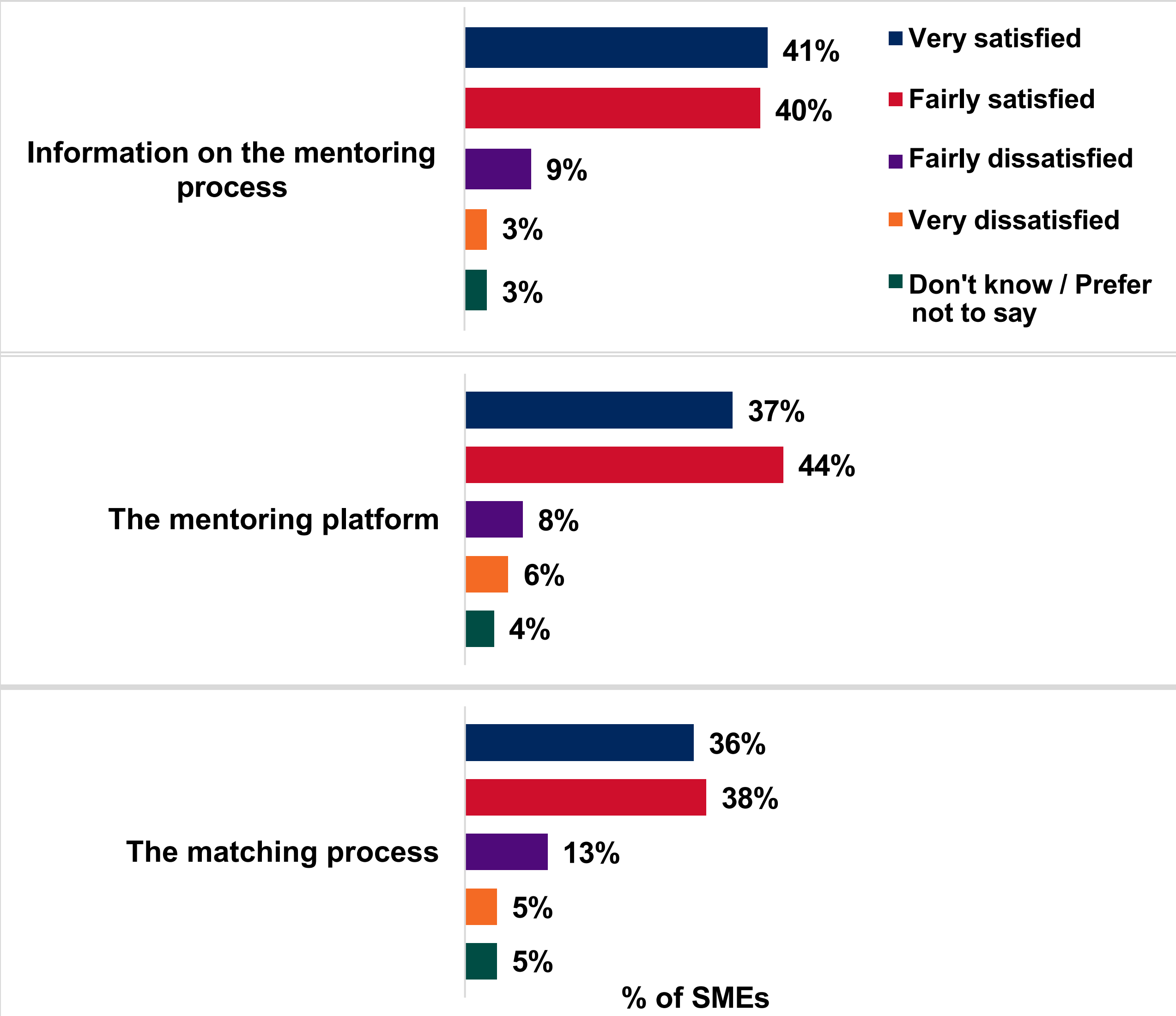
Figure 17: Satisfaction with mentoring



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 1,707 (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.

Overall satisfaction of the voluntary mentoring model has been consistent over the past two quarters, with Information on the mentoring process and the mentoring platform having the highest level of satisfaction (both 81%). Satisfaction with the matching process saw a small increase, from 73% in Y4Q4 to 75% in Y4 additional boost. This change was not statistically significant.

Figure 18: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the mentoring process?

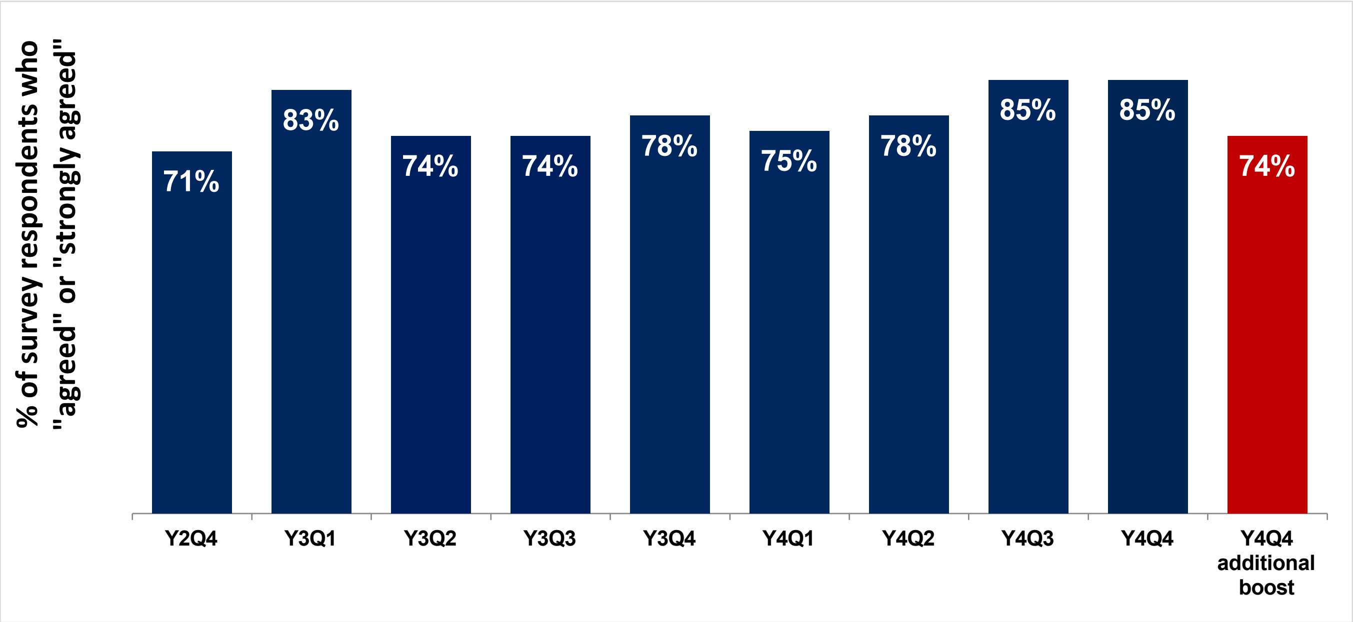


Source: Post completion survey; Base: 130 (Figure shows quarterly responses from Y4Q4 additional boost) (This question was added to the survey in December 2022 resulting in a smaller sample); Question type: single choice per statement

In Y4 additional boost, the majority (74%) of survey respondents thought their mentor's experience was well matched to their needs. This is the lowest percentage since Y3Q3, also 74%. This saw a statistically significant decrease from Y4Q4 (85% to 74%).

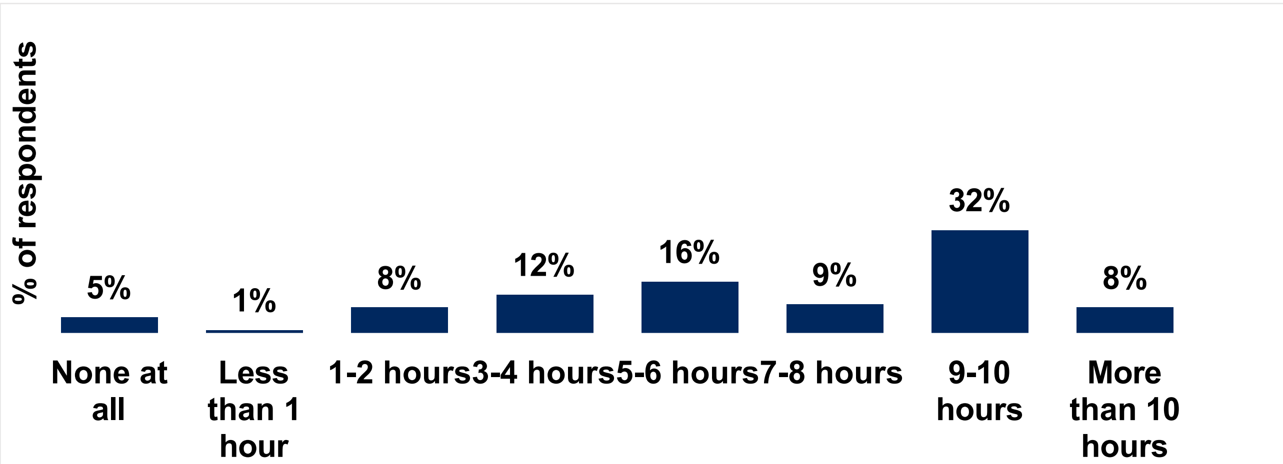
In Y4 additional boost, SME leaders most commonly (32%) completed 9-10 hours of mentoring and around one third of SME leaders (30%) completed/attended less than 5 hours. Only 8% completed/attended more than 10 hours. This has remained consistent with previous quarters. SME leaders who were receiving 0 hours of mentoring had decreased from 14% in Y4Q4 to 5% in Y4 additional boost. This was a statistically significant decrease

Figure 19: 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, 81 Y3Q4, 175 Y4Q1, 120 Y4Q2, 147 Y4Q3, 142 Y4Q4, *119 Y4 additional boost.*

Figure 20: How many hours of mentoring did you complete / attend?



Source: Post-completion survey; Base: 130 (*Y4 additional boost)* (Figure shows quarterly response). Question type: single choice.

The mentoring support is used by programme participants to cover a range of topics both in the curriculum and beyond (Figure 21). In Y4 additional boost, four in ten SME's (40%) used the mentoring sessions to cover existing topics in the programme. This is a decrease (10 percentage points) compared to the previous quarter, though not statistically significant. Respondents who used their mentoring to cover topics not in the programme also saw a slight increase since the previous quarter, from 55% in Y4Q4 to 52% in Y4 additional boost. Again, this is not statistically significant.

Figure 21: 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

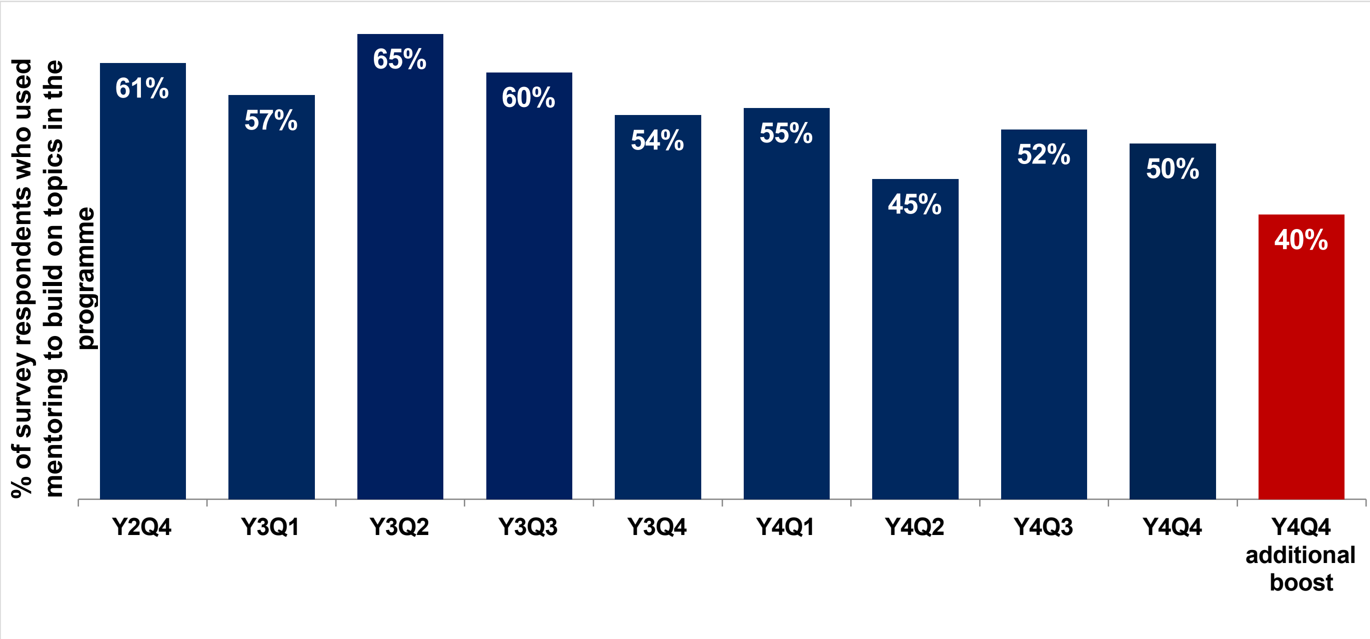
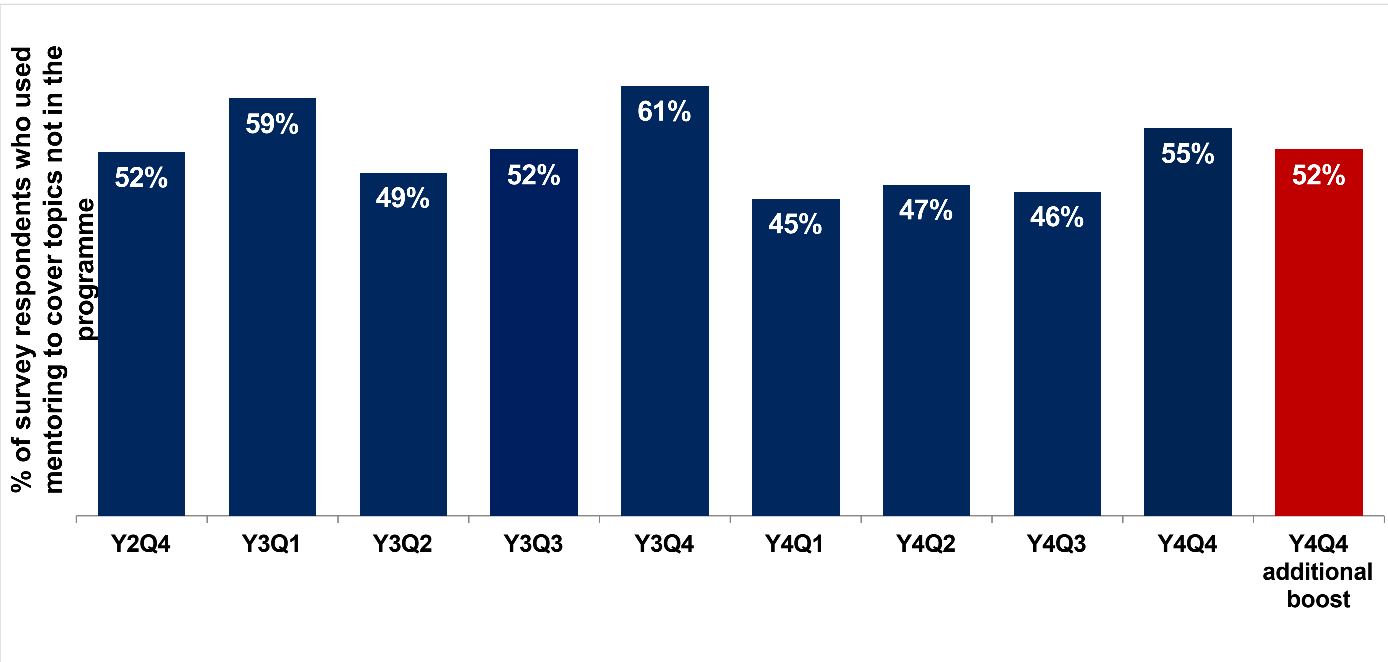


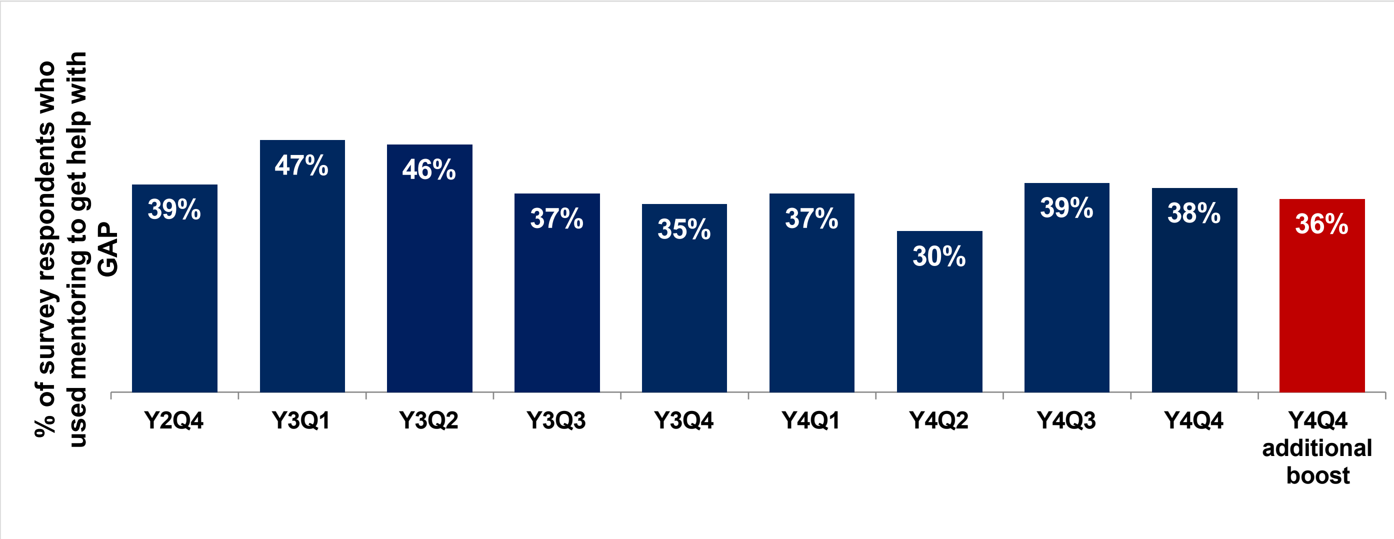
Figure 22: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support? (ii) I used the mentoring support for topics that were not covered in the programme



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2, 97 Y3Q3, 71 Y3Q4, 171 Y4Q1, 119 Y4Q2, 145 Y4Q3, 137 Y4Q4 ,118 Y4 additional boost (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter). Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3, Y2Q4, Y3Q1 and Y4Q1. The tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves.

In Y4 additional boost, around one third (36%) of SME leaders used their mentoring sessions to develop their Growth Action Plan (GAPs), remaining consistent with Y4Q4 (38%).

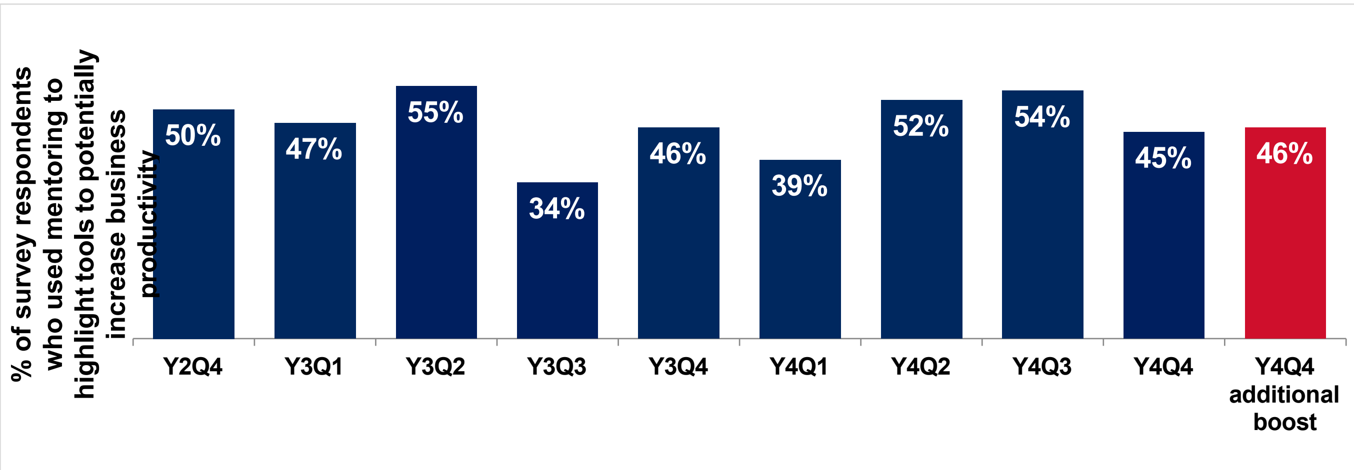
Figure 23: Which of the following describes how you used one-to-one mentoring support? (iii) I used the mentoring support to get help with my Growth Action Plan



Source: Post completion survey; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2, 97 Y3Q3, 71 Y3Q4, 171 Y4Q1, 119 Y4Q2, 145 Y4Q3, 137 Y4Q4, 118 Y4 additional boost (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter). Note: 'not stated' responses are excluded from the base in Y2Q3, Y2Q4, Y3Q1 and Y4Q1. The tools to increase productivity code has been excluded to match the base from previous waves.

The proportion of respondents using mentoring to highlight tools to increase business productivity has stayed consistent with the previous quarter, though this has fluctuated since its introduction in Y2Q3 (45% in Y4Q4 to 46% in Y4 additional boost). This is not statistically significant.

Figure 24: 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; Base: 80 Y1Q3; 88 Y1Q4, 242 Y2Q1, 139 Y2Q2, 67 Y2Q3, 31 Y2Q4, 81 Y3Q1, 78 Y3Q2, 97 Y3Q3, 71 Y3Q4, 171 Y4Q1, 119 Y4Q2, 145 Y4Q3, 137 Y4Q4 ,118 Y4 additional boost (all who were matched with a mentor and did all/some mentoring hours) (Figure shows all responses to date, by quarter).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.

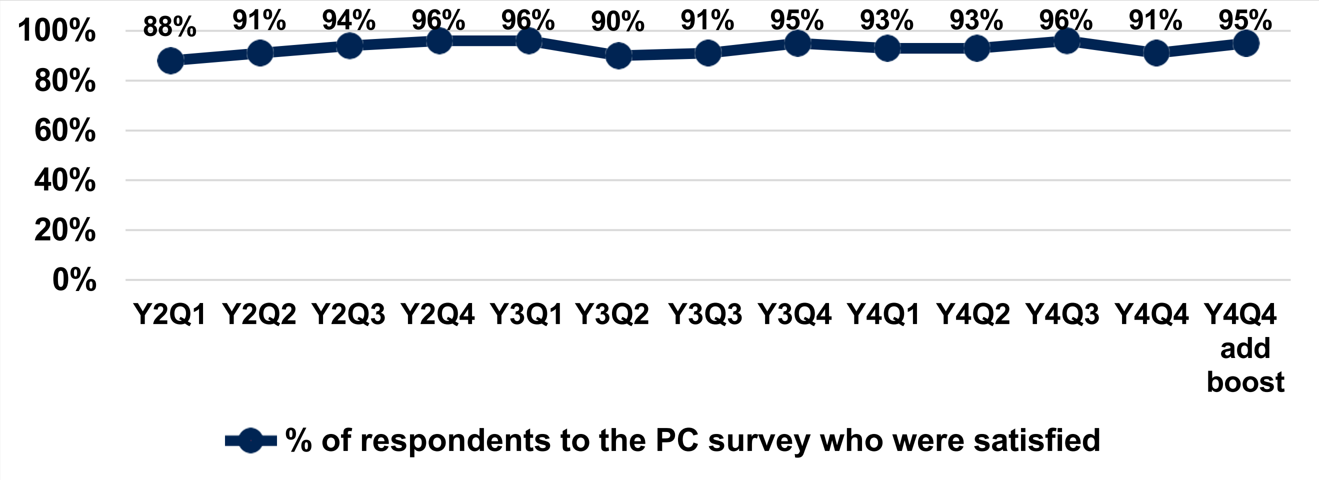
Satisfaction scores over time

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

- In the most recent quarter, 95% were satisfied with how the programme was delivered.

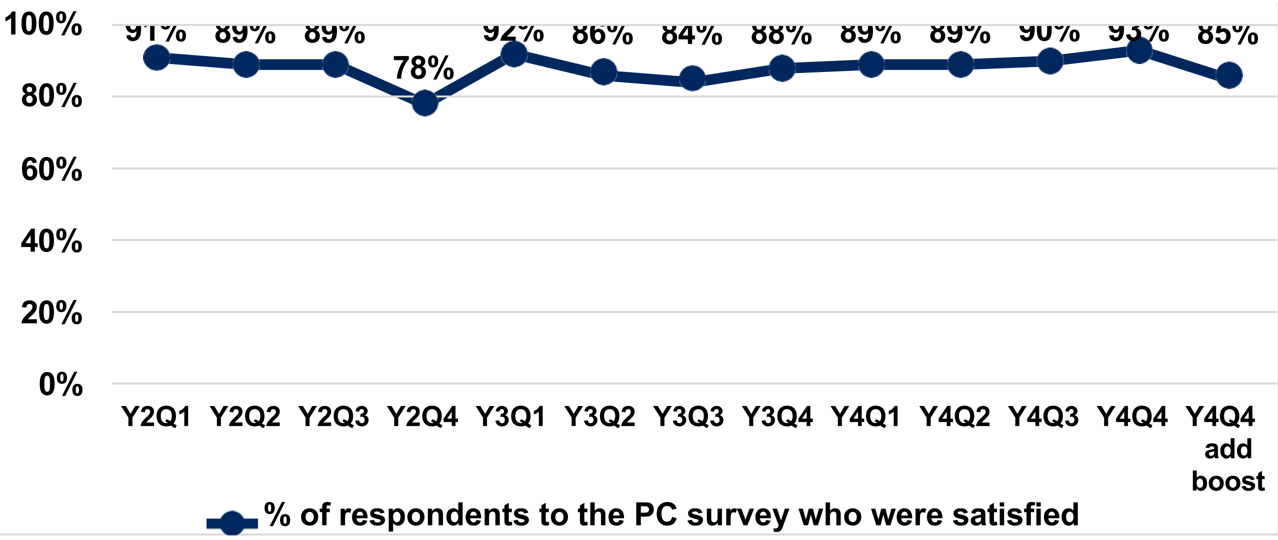
- The proportion of programme completers who were satisfied with their mentoring support has remained consistent. In contrast to Y4Q4 where satisfaction was the highest since the survey began, Y4Q4 additional boost satisfaction levels were the lowest in the past five quarters (85%).

Figure 25: 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 Y3Q3,106 Y3Q4, 200 Y4Q1, 134 Y4Q2, 172 Y4Q3, 168 Y4Q4, 130 *Y4 additional boost*

Figure 26: 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, 74 Y3Q4, 171 Y4Q1, 119 Y4Q2, 145 Y4Q3, 137 Y4Q4 , 118 Y4 additional boost (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.

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.

HtGM programme completers most reported gaining confidence in leading and managing their business (72%), increased awareness of factors that drive business productivity and growth (69%) and improved leadership and management skills (67%).

All individual outcomes have seen a slight increase or decrease since the previous quarter (Y4Q4). Increased awareness of factors that drive business productivity and growth and Improved understanding of how to innovate your business model both saw a 3-percentage point increase from Y4Q4 (not statistically significant). Greater understanding of how to embed equality, diversity and inclusion practices within your business saw the biggest decrease from 32% in Y4Q4 to 25% in Y4Q4 additional boost. This is a statistically significant decrease.

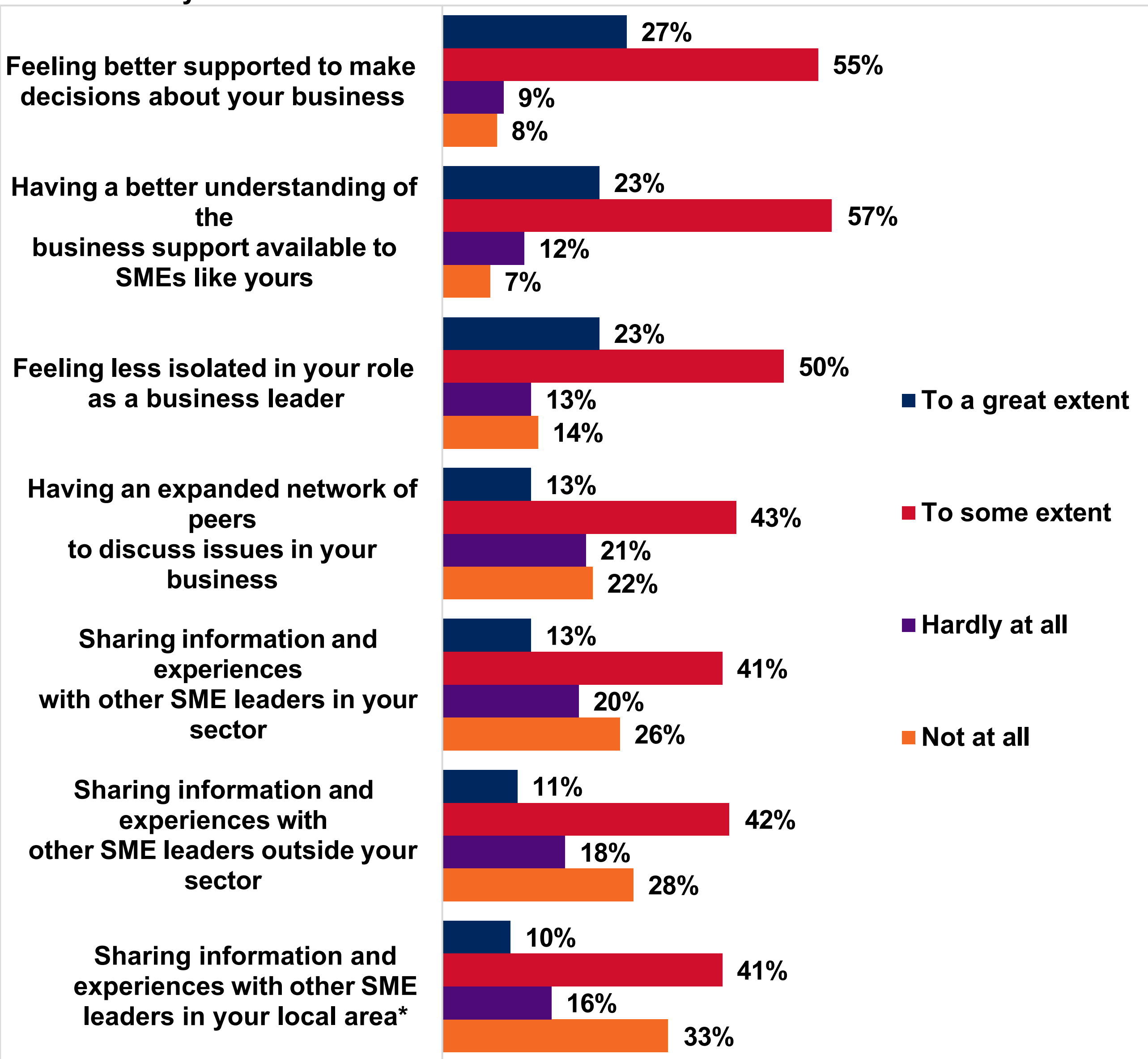
Figure 29: Which (if any) of the following have you learned or gained from participation in the Help to Grow: Management programme? Please select all that apply (Quarterly comparison)

Source: Post-completion survey; Base: Y4 additional boost (130), Y4Q4 (168)
NB: bars show data from Wave 13 (Y4 additional boost) of the Post-completion survey, arrows show

percentage point changes from Y4Q4; 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 (81%) and feeling less isolated in their role as a business leader (73%).

Figure 30: To what extent has participation in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to you…

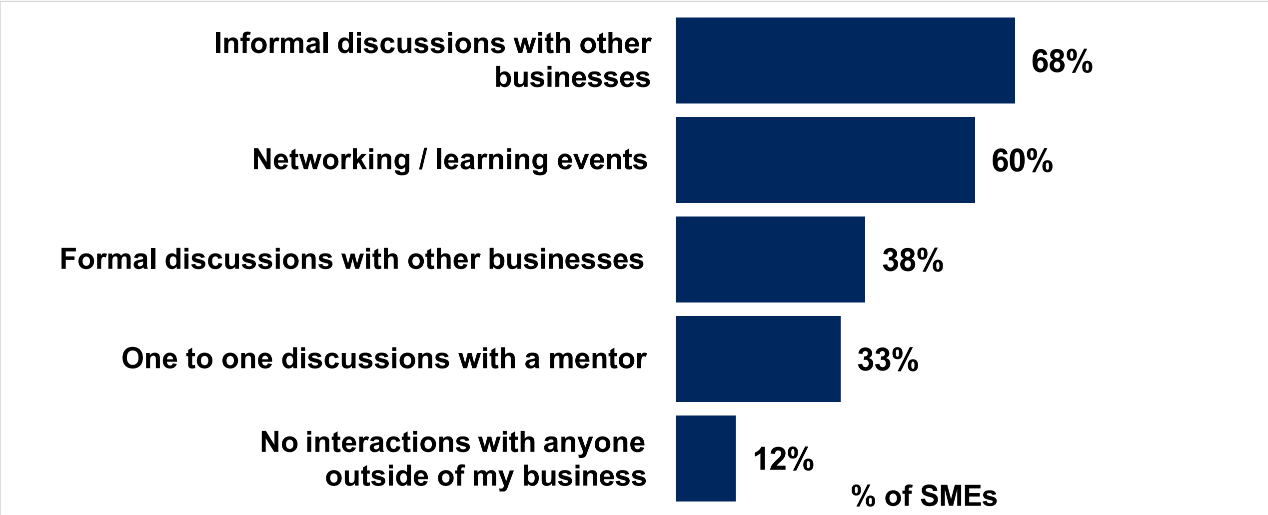


Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: 1,955 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) Note: * This variable was added at Wave 12, so has a smaller base size (395)
Note: Figures based on aggregating categories may not always reflect the sum of the individual answer categories due to rounding

Since completing the programme, most SME leaders had interacted with SME leaders outside of their firm, typically through informal discussions (68%) or networking events (60%).

The proportion of programme completers who did not engage with other business leaders at all has remained at the aggregate average at 12%.

Figure 31: Since completing the programme, what activities do you engage in at least quarterly?

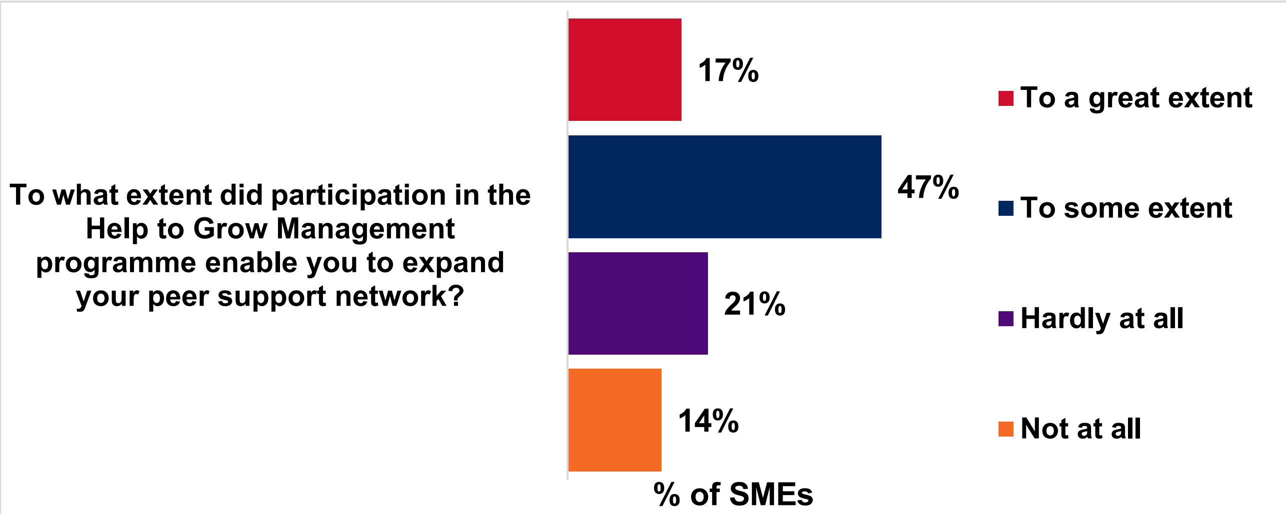


Source: Six month follow up survey; Respondents could select more than one option. Base: 1,955 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses). Note: The chart only includes response options with >1%

Network benefits

Overall, around two thirds (64%) of SME leaders completing the programme reported that HtGM helped to expand their peer network. This is consistent with the previous quarter.

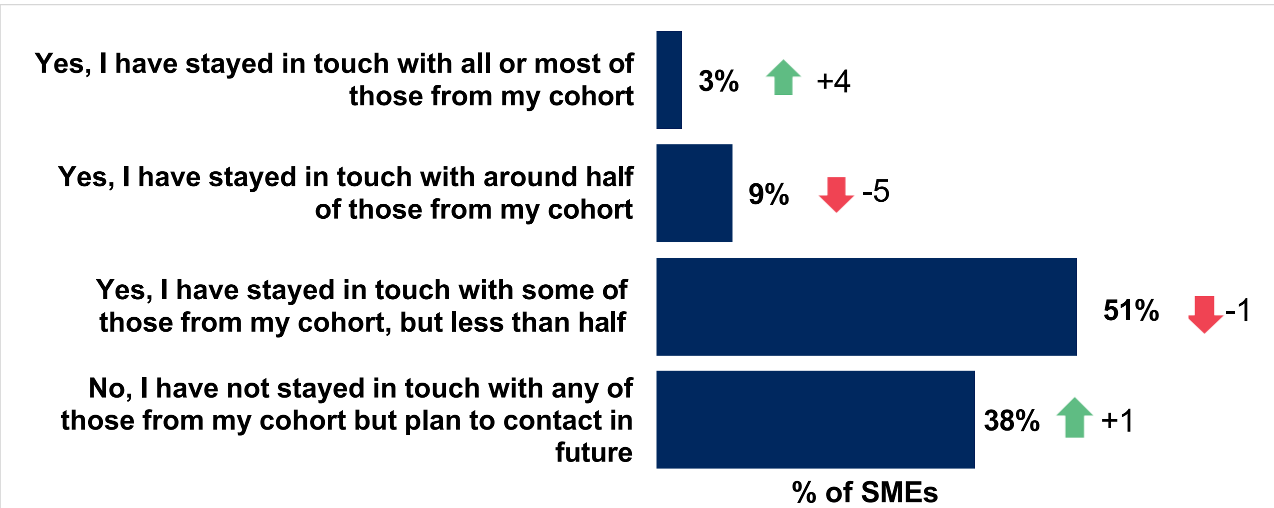
Figure 32: Network benefits



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,955 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Since launch, more than half of programme participants from this wave (63%) had stayed in touch with peers from their HtGM cohort within 6 months, and 38% have not stayed in touch.

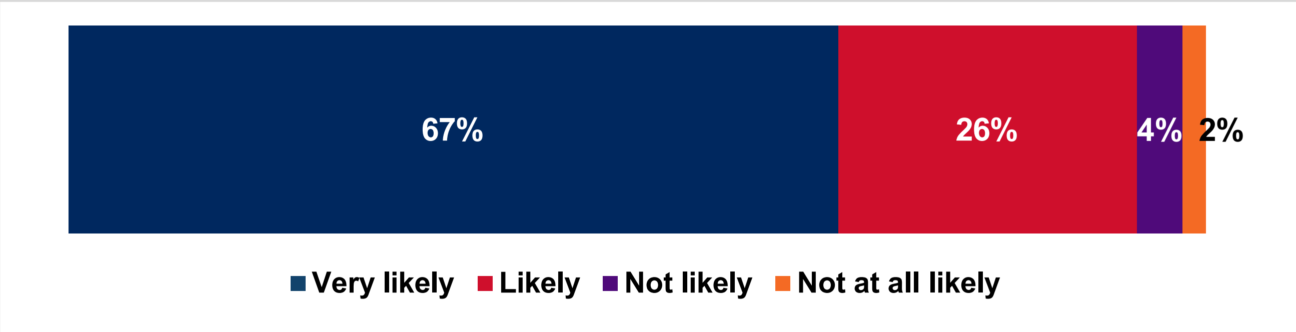
Figure 33: Have you stayed in touch with peers from your HtGM cohort since you completed the programme? (Quarterly comparison)



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base:219 (Figure shows quarterly survey responses); Year 4 additional boost (219), Y4Q4 (82). NB: bars show data from Year 4 additional boost and arrows show changes from the previous wave.

Nearly all SME leaders (93%) were likely to recommend HtGM to another business leader, with over two thirds (67%) being very likely to.

Figure 34: How likely would you be to recommend HtGM to another business leader?



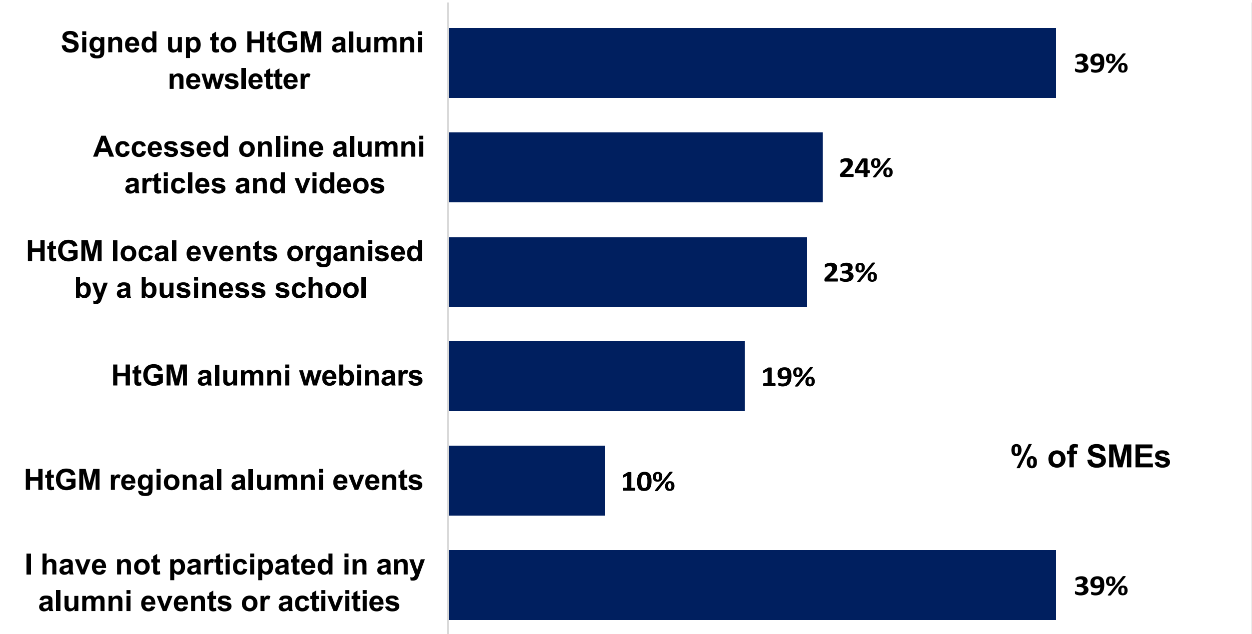
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,955 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Alumni activity

Please note: the alumni survey questions presented and discussed in this section were added from Y3Q1 so base sizes are smaller.

Almost one in four (39%) respondents said they had not participated in any alumni events or activities six months after completing the programme. However, over one third had signed up to the HtGM alumni newsletter (39%), followed by online alumni articles and videos (24%) and HtGM local events organised by a business school (23%).

Figure 35: Have you participated in any HtGM alumni activities and, if so, which of the following have you taken part in?

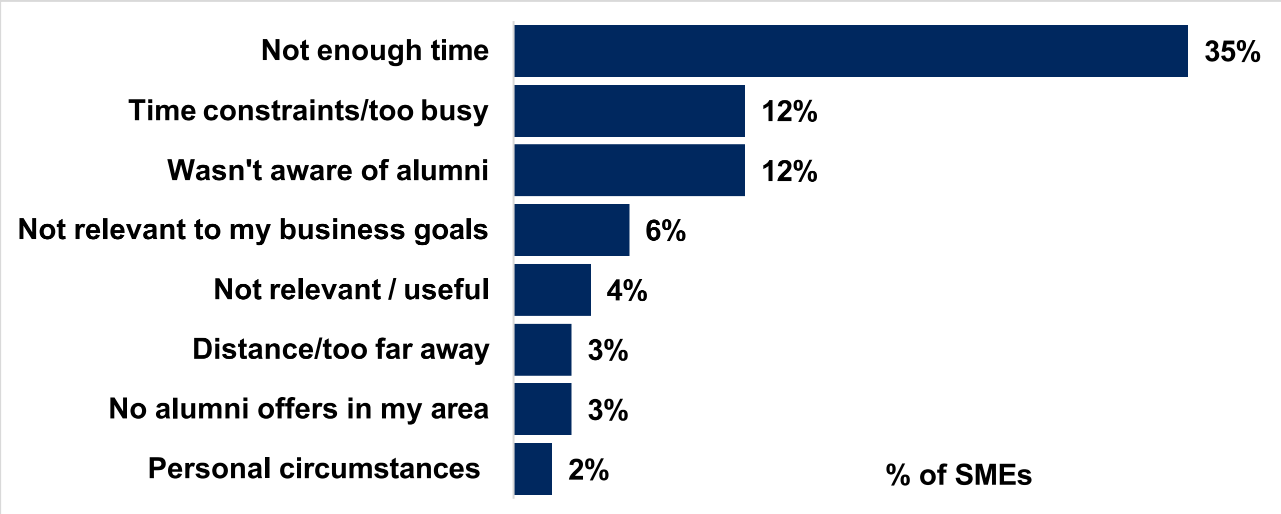


Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,303 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses). This is a new question added at Wave 5.

The most common reasons for not taking part in alumni activities were not having enough time (35%). time constraints/being too busy (12%) and not being aware of alumni (12%). A further 6%

reported that it wasn't relevant to their business goals and 4% reported that they did not find it relevant or useful.

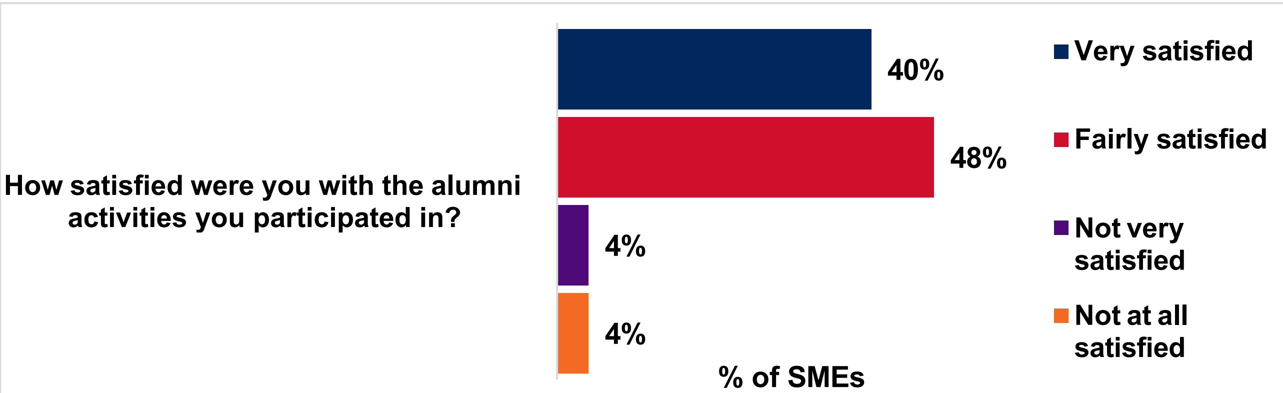
Figure 36: Why have you not taken part in any alumni related activities?



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 506 (all completers who have not taken part in any alumni activities). This is a new question and was added at Y3Q1. Note: Small base, interpret with caution. (Figure shows aggregated survey responses).

The majority of respondents participating in alumni activities were very/fairly satisfied with them (89%).

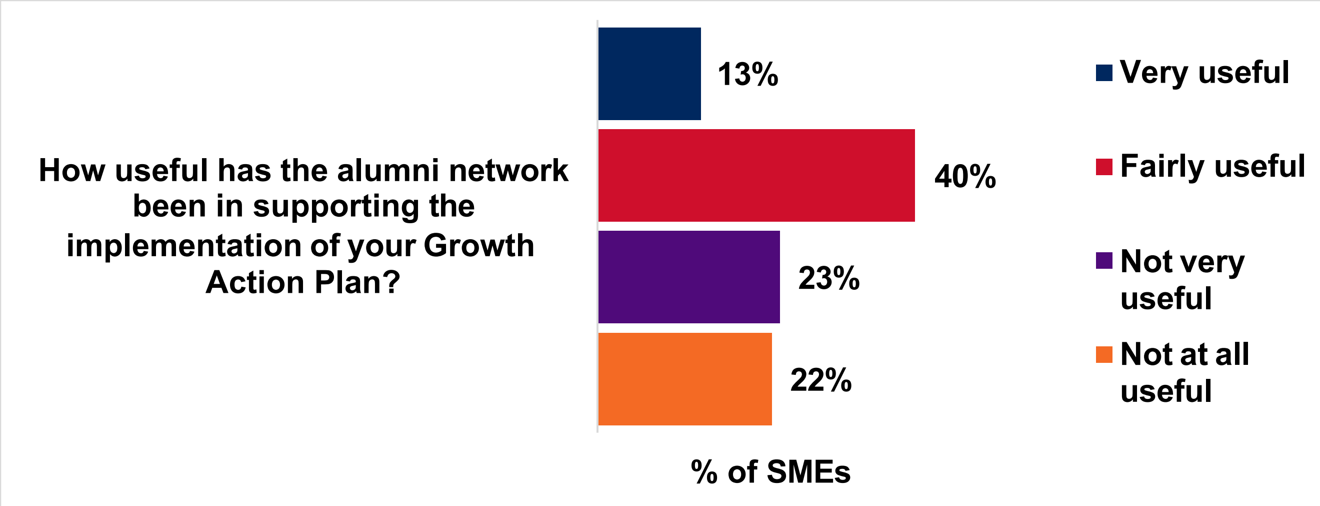
Figure 37: Satisfaction with alumni activities (Overall)



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 784 (all completers who have taken part in an alumni activity). This is a new question and was added at Wave 5. Note: Small base, interpret with caution. (Figure shows aggregated survey responses). Individual figures may not add up to reported figures due to rounding.

There are mixed views on whether the almuni network is useful in supporting the implementation of Growth Action Plans. Over half of repsondents (53%) found it very/fairly useful for this purpose, whilst 45% found it not very/not at all useful.

Figure 38: Usefulness of alumni support with the implementation of Growth Action Plans



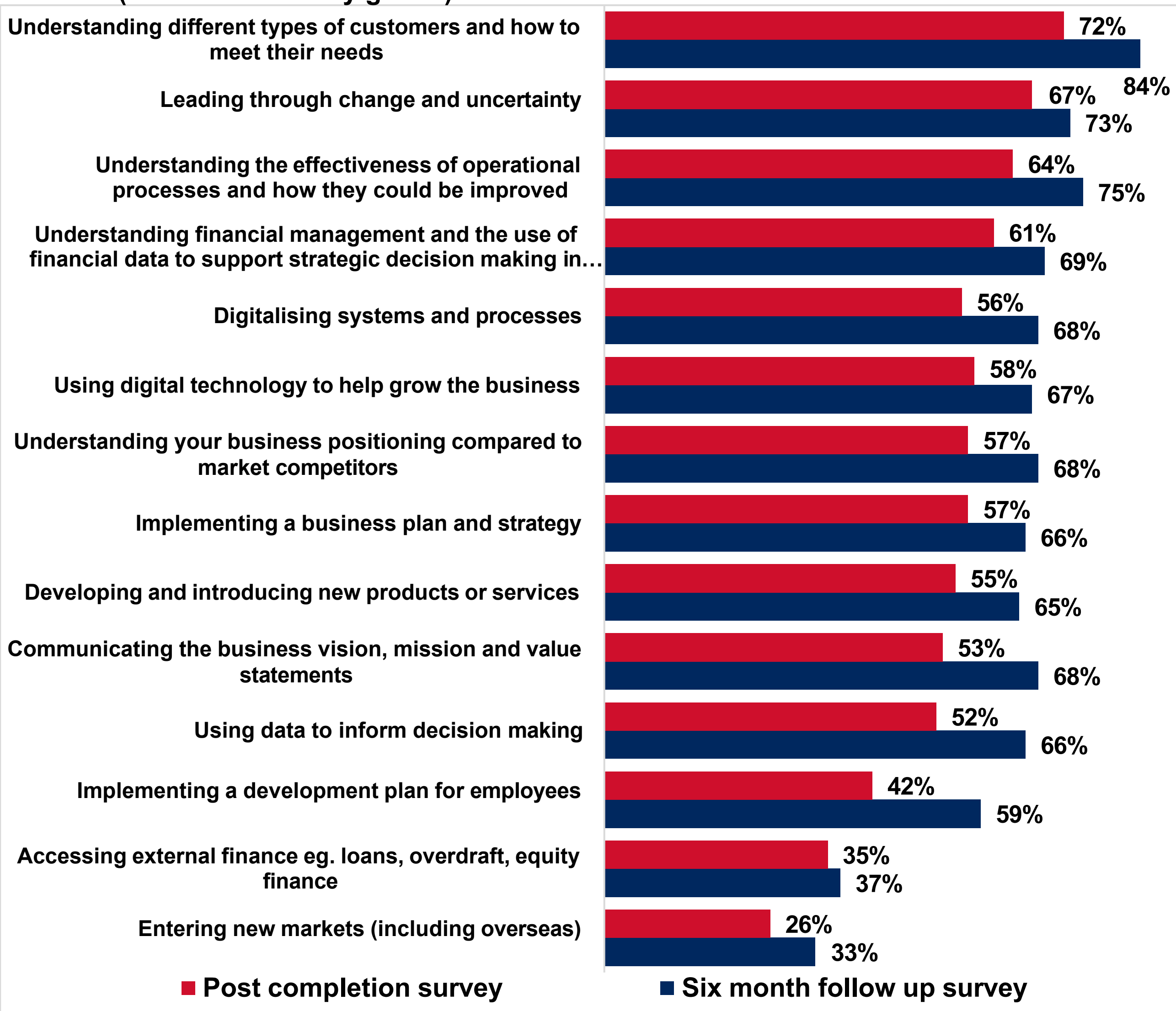
Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 784 (all completers who have taken part in an alumni activity). This is a new question and was added at Wave 5. (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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.

Upon completing the programme, SME leaders report that their firms have good capabilities and experience across a breadth of areas, and, in most cases, these continued to improve up to six months after completing HtGM (see Figure 39).

Figure 39: How would you rate your own firm's capabilities and experience in the following areas?[14] ("Good" and "Very good")

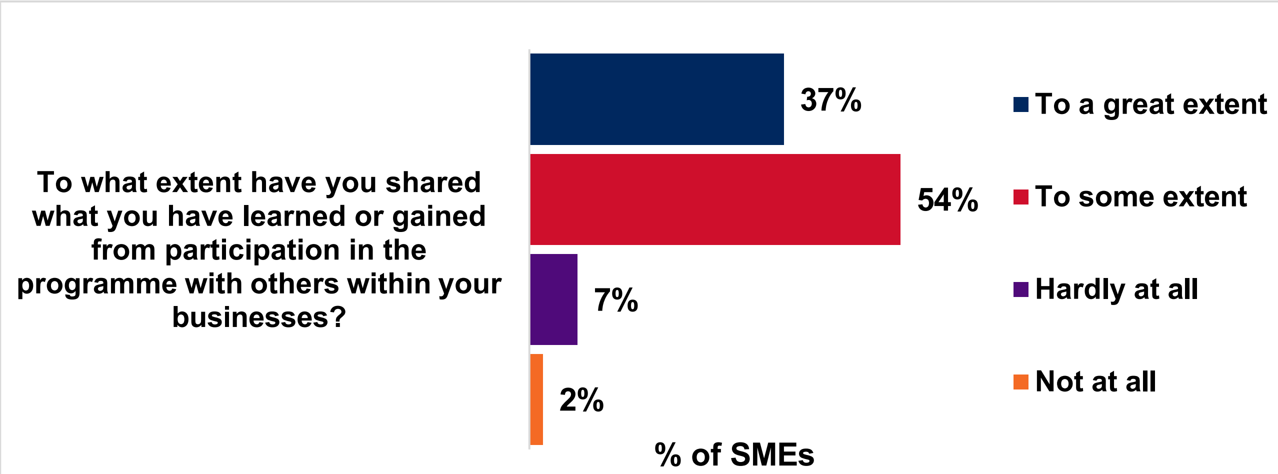


[14] Some survey response options have been shortened for reporting purposes: "understanding financial management and use of financial data" is "Understanding financial management and the use of financial data to support strategic decision making in the organisation" in the survey and "understanding 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: 551 (respondents answering both surveys) (This figure reports aggregate responses); Note: Graph shows Very strong/strong NET

Most (91%) programme completers 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 40). Only 2% 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.

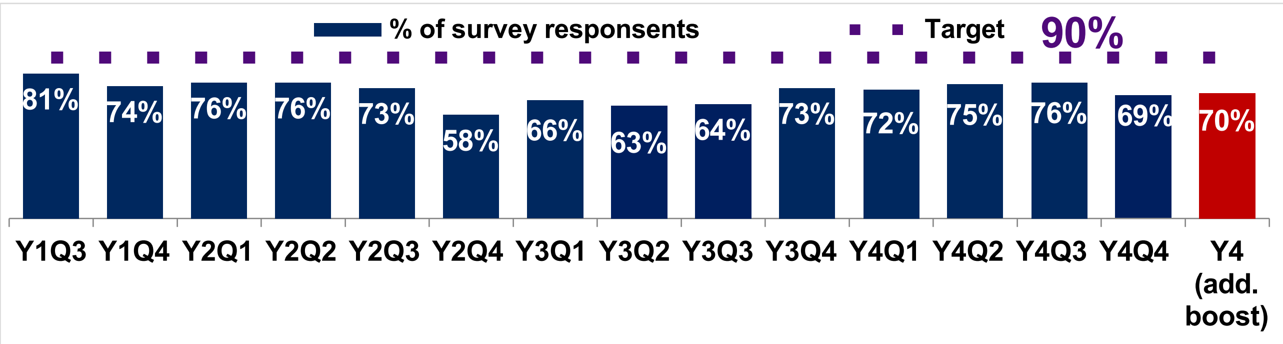
Figure 40: Diffusion of knowledge



Source: Six month follow up survey; Base: 1,955 (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

In Y4 additional boost, seven in ten of all post-completion survey respondents said they had produced a Growth Action Plan (GAP) for their business through participation in the programme. The figure has remained relatively constant since the survey began. The target of 90% completion set by DBT has not yet been reached in any quarter.

Figure 41: Have you produced a Growth Action Plan for your business as a result of your participation on the Help to Grow programme?



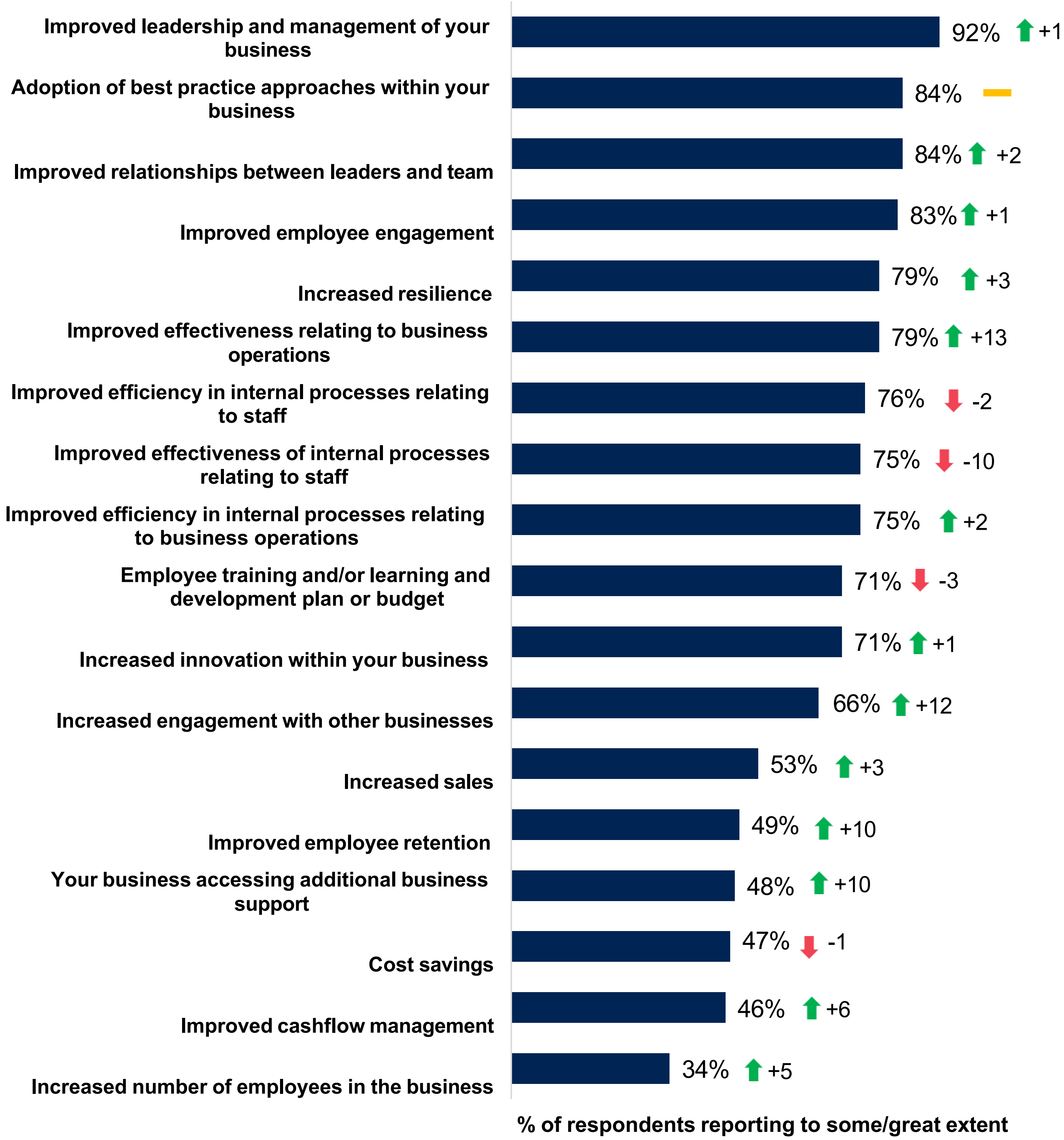
Base: Y1Q3 (85), Y1Q4 (91), Y2Q1 (256), Y2Q2 (149), Y2Q3 (90), Y2Q4 (67), Y3Q1 (128), Y3Q2 (136), Y3Q3 (138), Y3Q4 (106), Y4Q1 (200), Y4Q2 (134), Y4Q3 (172), 168 Y4Q4, Y4 additional boost (130) (Figure shows quarterly survey responses)

Participating in Help to Grow has had a variety of positive impacts. Most notably, improved business leadership and management (92%), adoption of best practice approaches (84%) and increased relationships between leaders and team (84%).

Since Y4Q4, the biggest decrease was increased effectiveness of internal processes relating to staff (10 percentage ppt decrease). The greatest increase was improved effectiveness relating to business operations (13 percentage ppt increase). Neither of these changes are statistically significant.

Figure 42 shows the results from the most recent quarters, but the differences are not statistically significant.

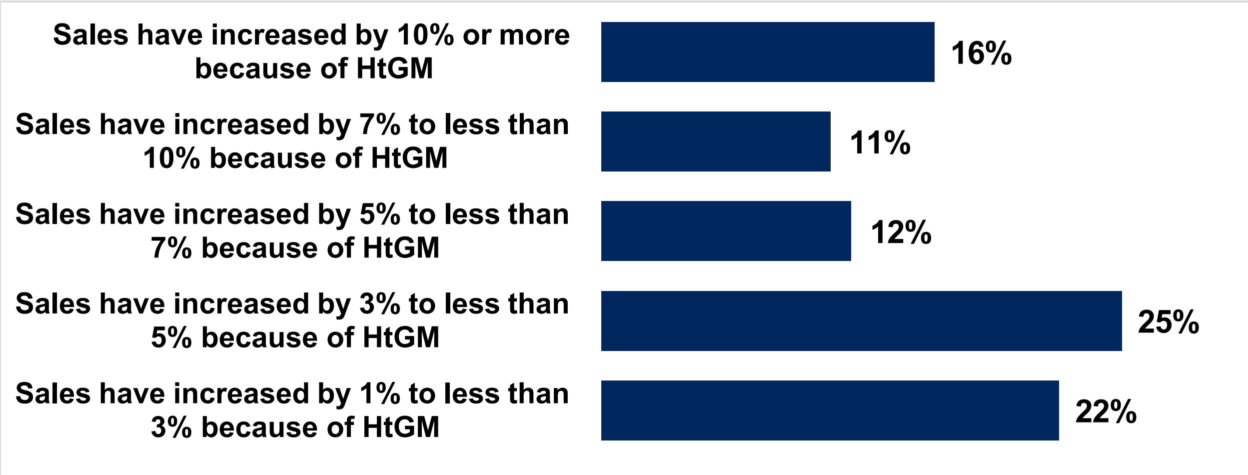
Figure 42: To what extent has participating in the Help to Grow Management Programme contributed to…



Source: Six-month follow up survey; Base: W14, (219) W13 (94) NB: bars show data from Year 4 additional boost of the six-month follow up (August 2025), arrows show changes from Wave 13 (March 2025)

Most SME leaders (86%) agreed that participation in the HtGM programme increased sales within six months of completion. The size of this increase was typically modest, most commonly an increase of less than 5% (46%). Nearly one-fifth (16%) reported that sales had increased by 10% or more because of the programme.

Figure 43: 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: 760 (Question was introduced at Y3Q1) (Figure shows aggregate survey responses)

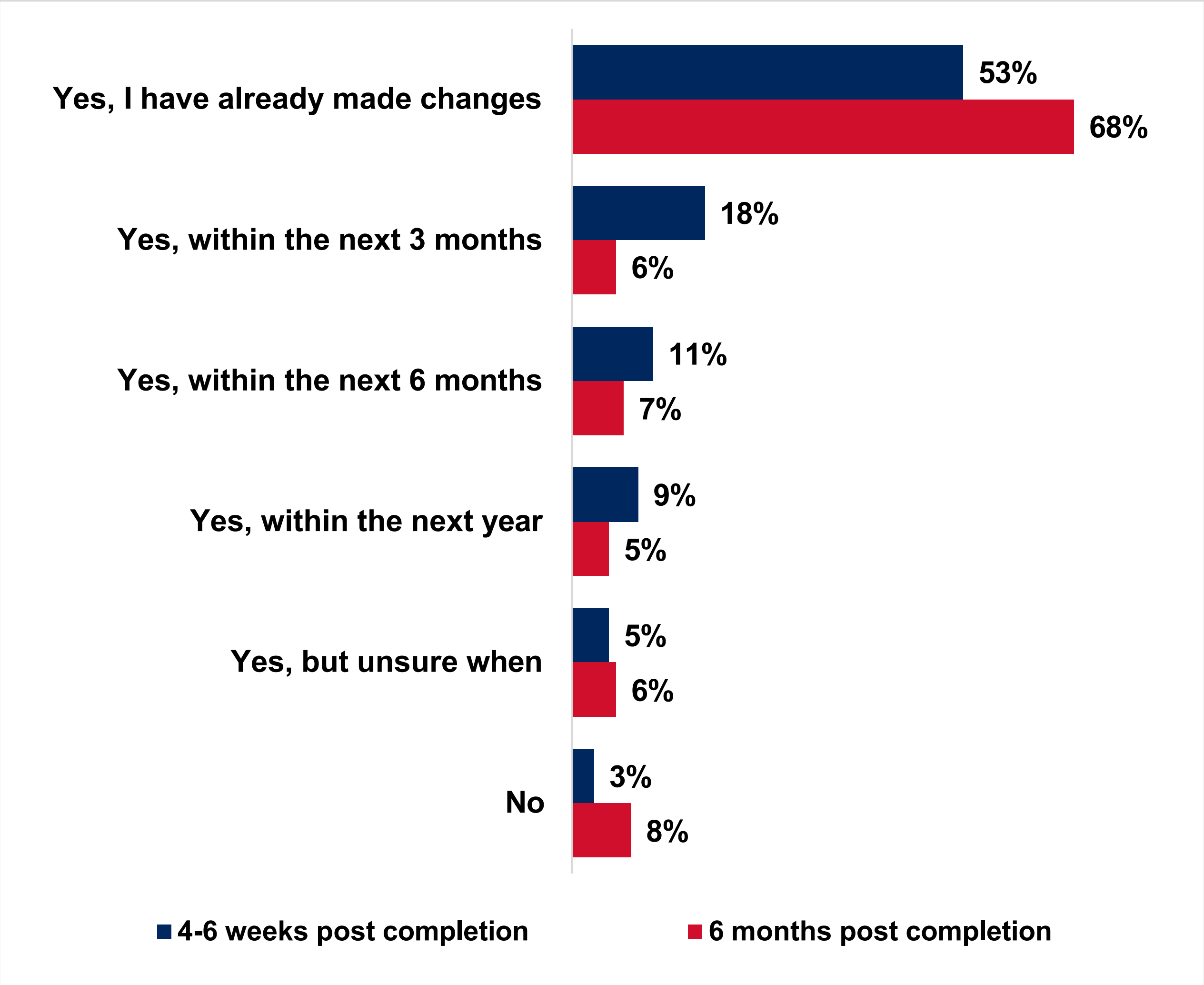
Business outcomes immediately following completion vs 6 months later

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 (68%) had already made changes to their business, typically to their leadership and employee engagement (88%), operational efficiency (78%) and vision, purpose and brand (76%). (Figure 44, Figure 45).

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 44: 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 (2,050) & Six month follow up surveys (1,955) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

Figure 45: 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 (1,091) & Six month follow up surveys (1,324); Asked to those who had already made a change in their business) (Figure shows aggregated survey responses)

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Published by Department for Business and Trade
June 2026