



Lead with Strength. Build with Integrity.

The Strength Report 2025

Inside UK Coaching: who has it, why it helps and what holds it back

Contents



Foreword

Leadership coaching isn't a perk.

It's not a shiny extra you give someone once they've "made it" to the top. It's one of the most effective ways to help people lead with confidence, make better decisions and prevent the kind of problems that cost organisations time, money and trust.

At Be Business Fit, we've always seen coaching as a necessity, not a luxury. Yet in too many workplaces, access is patchy, misunderstood or saved for those in senior roles. That means missed opportunities; for the people who could grow, for the teams they lead and for the organisations that rely on them.

This is why we launched **The Strength Report** survey. We wanted to hear from real professionals about how coaching shows up in their organisations, who gets it and what's stopping wider access. The 170 responses we gathered tell a story that's both encouraging and frustrating: the appetite is there, the benefits are clear, but barriers remain stubborn.

To strengthen this picture, the report was peer reviewed by four independent industry coaches. Their input adds credibility and ensures the findings are balanced by multiple perspectives from within the coaching profession.

"I'd like support to lead my team better and manage conflict without it getting personal."

Source (Q8): What would you like the coach to support you to achieve?

Respondent ID: #64

Role (Q3): Middle Manager/Leader

Why this research matters

We believe coaching should be an everyday leadership tool, not a privilege for the few. The more organisations can make it normal, the more they'll see:



Leaders handling conflict early, not letting it fester



Managers confident enough to have the difficult conversations



Teams that trust their leaders because they see them growing too



Training that actually sticks because it's followed by support to put it into practice

For us, this isn't theoretical. Every grievance investigation avoided, every resignation averted, every team that finds its rhythm sooner; that's the return on coaching.

What we want you to take away

If you're a decision-maker: read the data and see the opportunity. There's a clear case to expand access, pilot coaching after training and make "permission to ask" part of your business culture.

If you're a leader without a coach: this report can give you the language and evidence to start that conversation.

If you're in L&D or HR: the numbers here can help you build the budget case you need.

"I wish coaching was available to everyone here, not just directors."

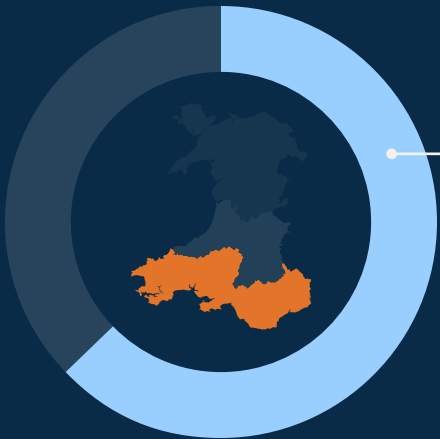
Source (Q19): Any other comments on leadership coaching in your organisation?

Respondent ID: #142

Role (Q3): Professional/Expert

170 responses
over
69 days

Q0: 170 responses; first=03/06/25, last=10/08/25



63%
based in
South Wales

Q3: 107/170



¹Q4: 128/170 ²Q5: 91/128



³Q12: 114/170

selected 114 times³,
yet actual recipients
are mostly senior⁴

⁴Q13: multi-select

Top barriers

- 104 Expense
- 96 Understanding what coaching is
- 78 Difficulty quantifying ROI

Q16: multi-select

52%
say coaching
happens in their
organisation

Q9: 89/170

Most common
price expectation:

£1,500
to £2,100

for 6×90 minute sessions

Q17: 60/170

Why this matters

The data reinforces what experience tells us: coaching is a driver of **confidence, decision-making and culture change**.

When it's only available to a few, organisations miss the chance to strengthen leadership at every level.

"Having a coach made me braver in making decisions and dealing with difficult people."

Source (Q19): Any other comments on leadership coaching in your organisation?

Respondent ID: #51

Role (Q3): Senior/Executive Leader

How we gathered the data

Survey Window:

69 days
3 June 2025 to
10 August 2025

Responses captured via online questionnaire promoted through Be Business Fit’s professional network, social media and partner channels.

Dataset Q0

Respondent Roles:

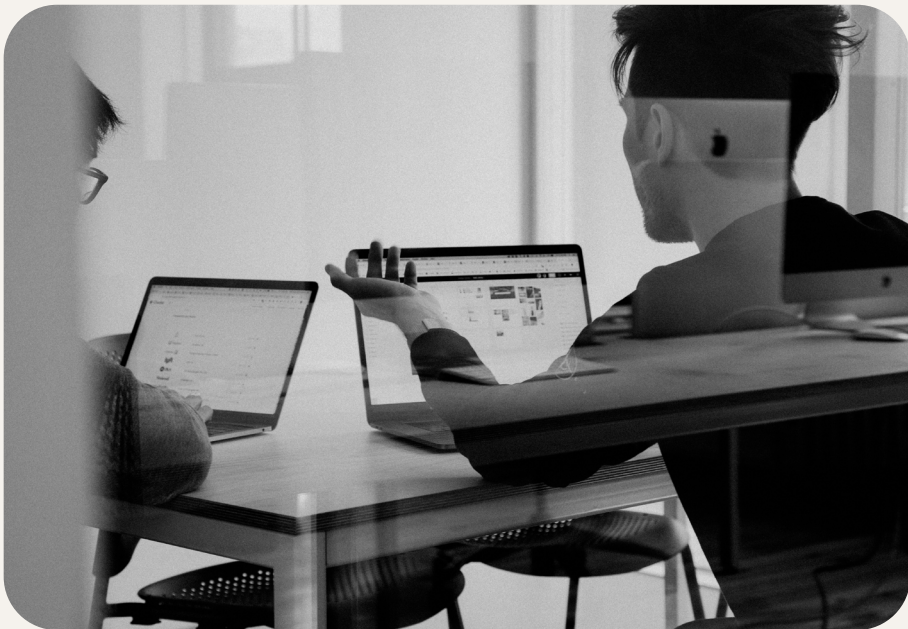
Board, Business Owners, Senior/Executive Leaders, Middle Managers, Team Leaders, Professionals/Experts

Dataset Q2

Locations:

Majority in South Wales (107/170), with representation from London & SE, Midlands, SW England, Mid & North Wales, NE England and other UK locations

Dataset Q3



Question Types:

Combination of single-choice, multi-select and open-text questions to capture both measurable trends and narrative insights

Dataset structure



Total Responses:

170
complete submissions

Dataset count



Caveats

- Regional weighting:

South Wales accounted for **63% of responses**, reflecting Be Business Fit’s established network. While this offers strong regional insight, future editions will target a more even UK spread.

- Self-selection bias:

Respondents opted in, so results may reflect **higher-than-average interest** in leadership and coaching.

- Multi-select questions:

Some totals **exceed 170** because respondents could choose multiple applicable options.

- Free-text answers:

Quotes have been **anonymised** and selected to **reflect the range of perspectives**; no editing was done beyond removing identifying details.

- No weighting applied:

Data is presented as **raw counts** and percentages **for transparency**.

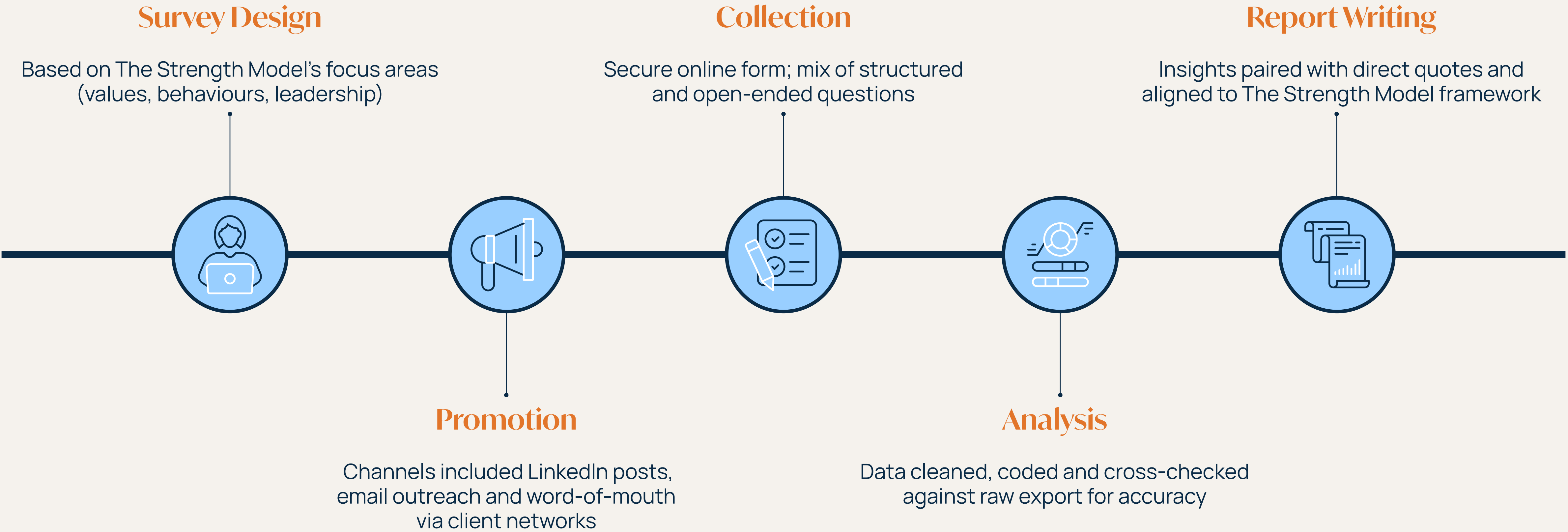
"I took part because I think more leaders need to talk honestly about what coaching actually is."

Source (Q19): Any other comments on leadership coaching in your organisation?

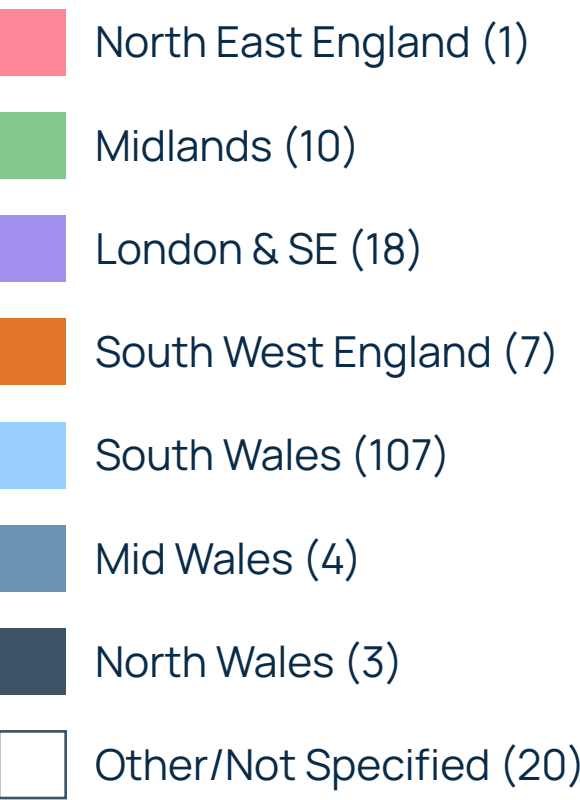
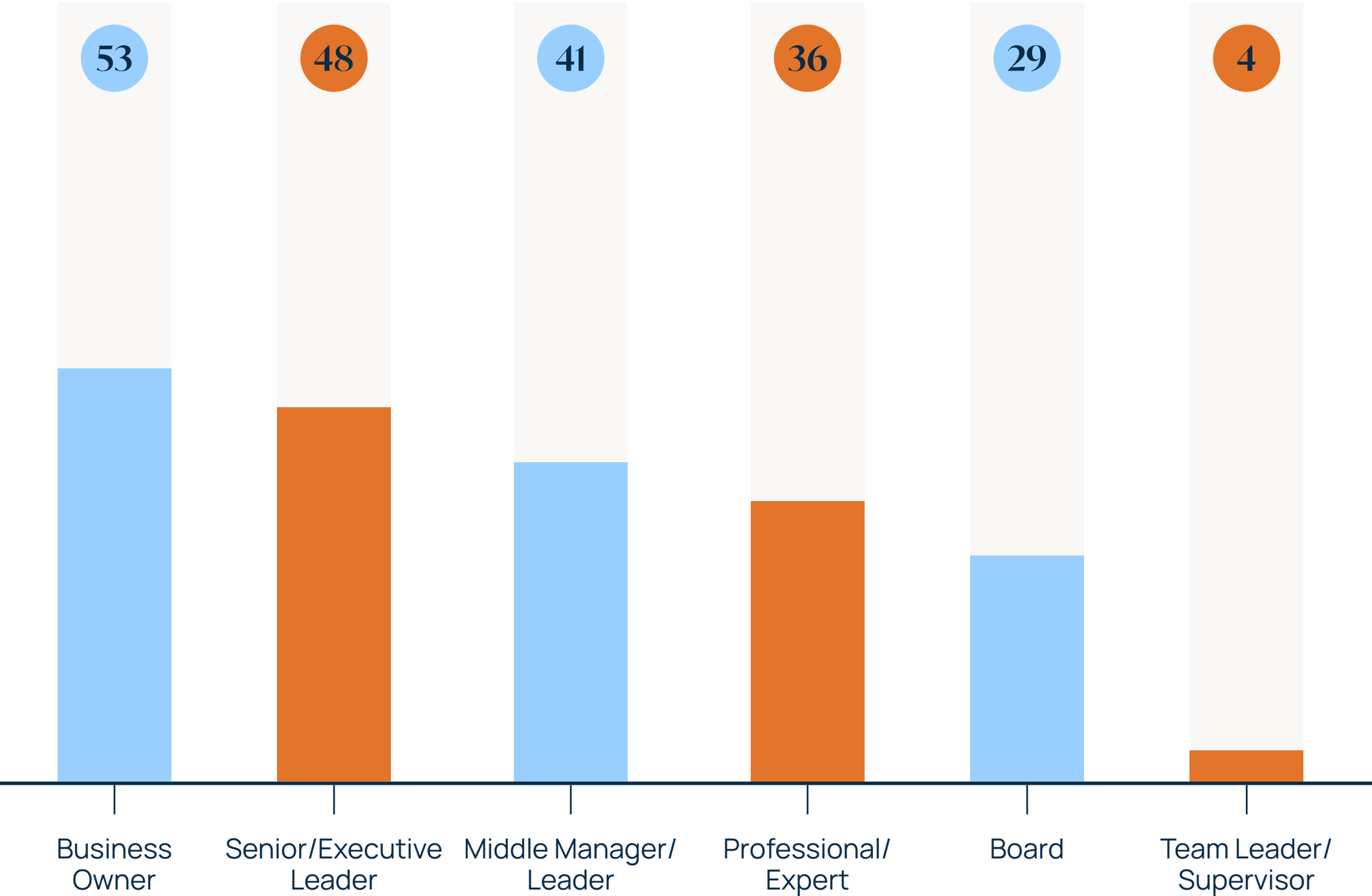
Respondent ID: #37

Role (Q3): Business Owner

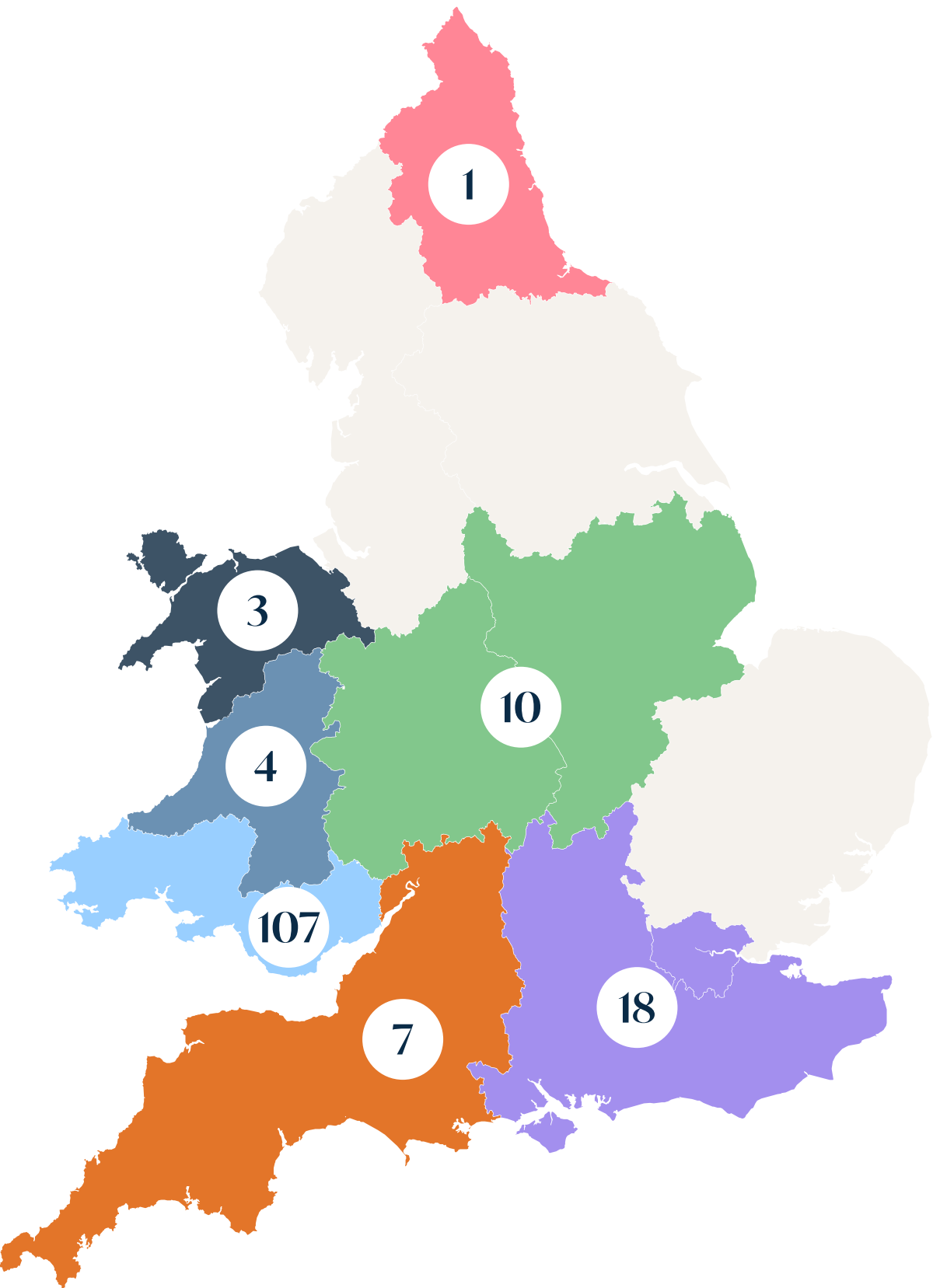
The survey process



Who responded



Note on “Other” responses:
“Other” responses reflect genuine entries that fell outside the listed regions or didn’t fit the predefined categories. These are not missing responses but represent locations beyond the areas shown on this map.



Who responded

The response set is **broad** and **practical**.

Senior leaders, owners and middle managers make up the bulk, with experts and team leads adding useful front-line perspective. Regionally, the story is led by South Wales (63%), with coverage across England and the rest of Wales.

That weighting mirrors the current network and gives strong regional insight; future editions will aim for a more even UK spread while keeping this grounded, real-world feel.

"It is important to
continue to **grow** your
staff and **invest** in their
development."

Source (Q19): Any other comments on leadership coaching in your organisation?

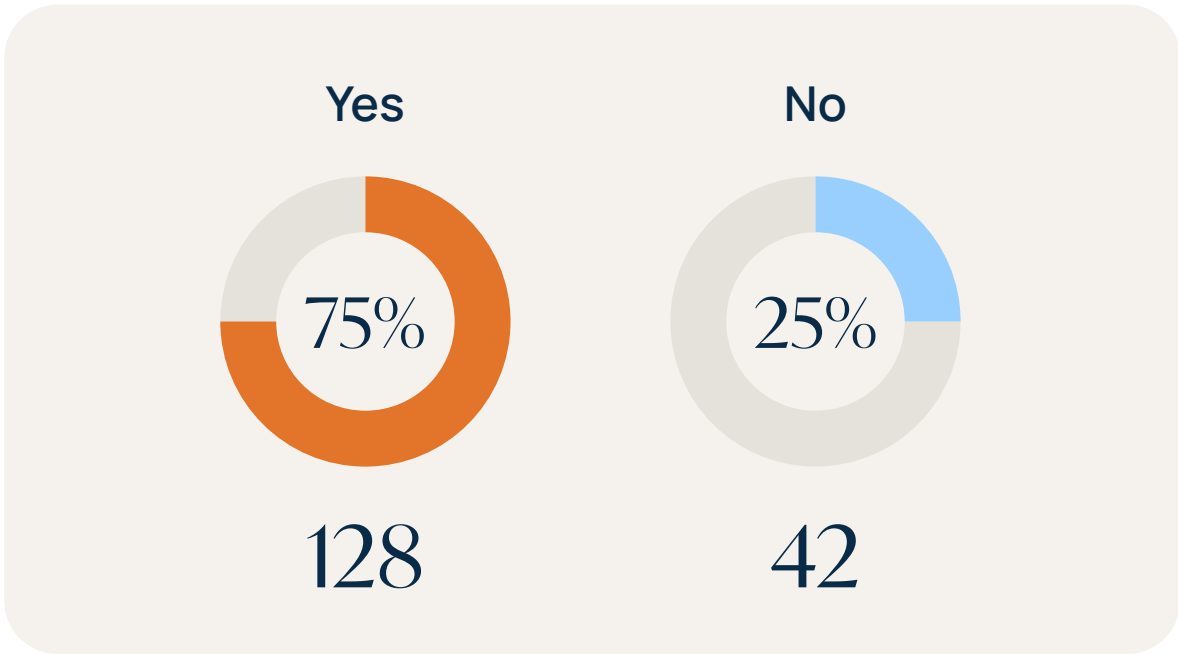
Respondent ID: #16

Role (Q3): Senior/Executive Leader

Access to coaching today

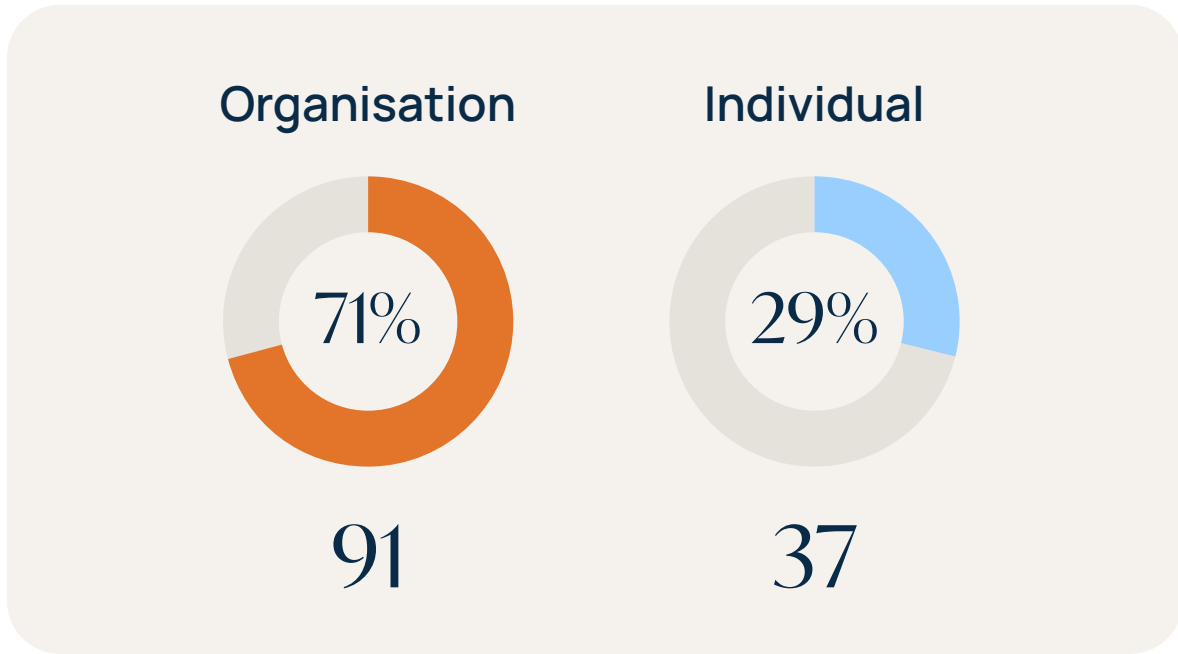
1

Ever had 1:1 coaching?



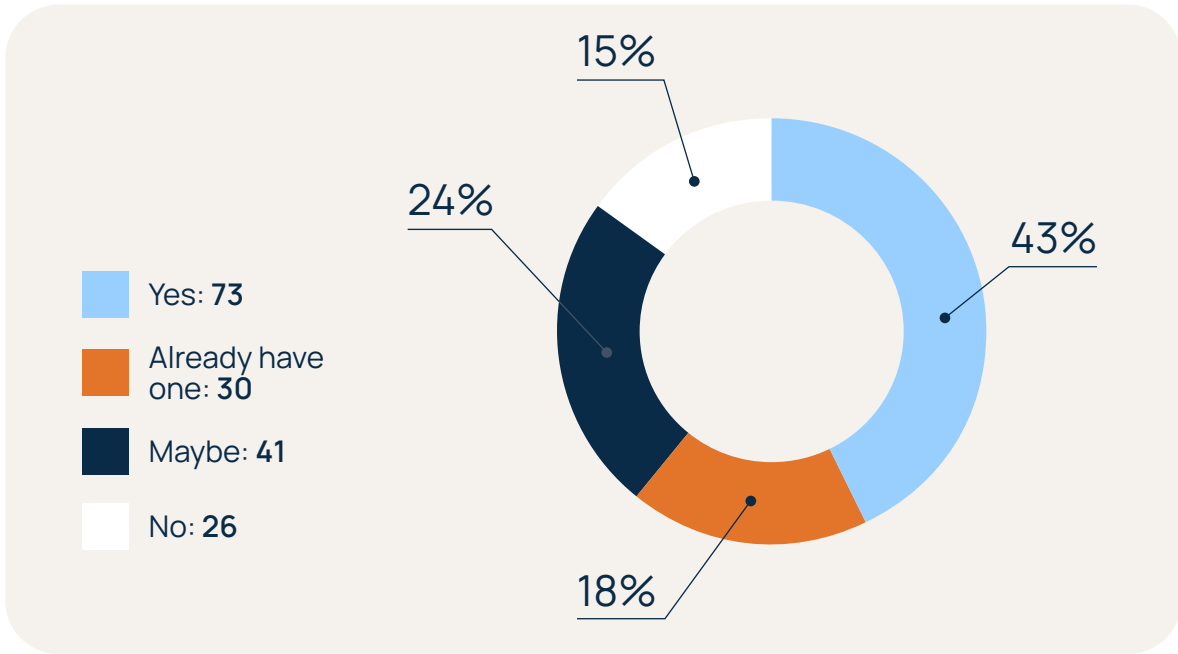
2

Who paid?



3

Would you like a coach in the future?



Access to coaching today

Three-quarters of respondents have experienced **1:1 coaching**.

And in most cases their organisation covered the cost. The self-funding (29%) shows something important: people are willing to invest their own money when they see the value. That's a strong signal for budget-holders; if coaching is offered, it's likely to be well-used and well-regarded.

The interest holds across job levels. Regardless of seniority, people see the value in coaching. Those who already have access talk about confidence, clarity and having a trusted sounding board. Those who don't often link their interest to managing conflict, stepping up in role, or making better-quality decisions. This isn't a reluctant audience; it's a group ready to engage when the opportunity is there.

"To further develop my leadership skills and **improve my confidence** when managing challenging situations."

Source (Q8): What would you like the coach to support you to achieve?

Respondent ID: #87

Role (Q3): Middle Manager/Leader

"To help me **think differently** about challenges and not just go for the quick fix."

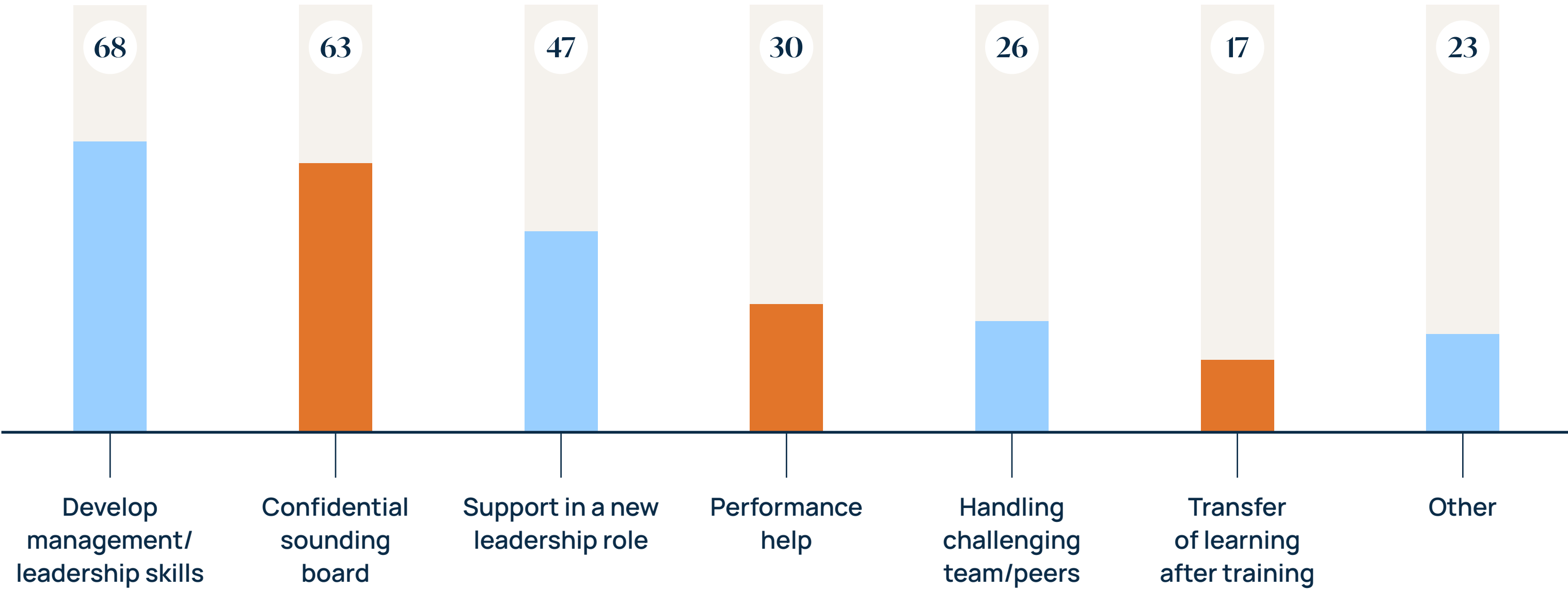
Source (Q8): What would you like the coach to support you to achieve?

Respondent ID: #87

Role (Q3): Middle Manager/Leader

Why people use coaching

Reasons chosen by those who've had coaching



"To have someone to challenge my thinking and make me see things differently."

Source (Q7): Why did you have a coach?
Respondent ID: #102
Role (Q3): Senior/Executive Leader

Why people use coaching

The reasons people turn to coaching speak to both **skill-building** and **support** in high-pressure moments.

Leadership skill development tops the list, closely followed by the need for a confidential sounding board; a space to test ideas and talk openly without the noise of organisational politics.

The behaviour here tells its own story: many seek coaching when they're stepping up to new responsibilities, handling difficult dynamics, or trying to change how they work. That pattern reflects a proactive mindset; people aren't waiting for things to break before getting help, they're looking for ways to do the job better now.

"I'd like support to lead my team better and manage conflict without it getting personal."

Source (Q8): What would you like the coach to support you to achieve?

Respondent ID: #64

Role (Q3): Middle Manager/Leader

"I was new to a leadership role and needed someone to help me find my style and confidence."

Source (Q7): Why did you have a coach?

Respondent ID: #59

Role (Q3): Senior/Executive Leader

Perception vs practice

Who do you think coaching is primarily for?
(*multi-select*)

- ✓ Anyone: **114**
- ✓ Senior/Executive Leaders: **50**
- ✓ Middle Managers: **37**
- ✓ High potentials/emerging leaders: **28**
- ✓ Others: smaller counts in dataset

Who generally has the coaching
in your organisation?

- ✓ Senior/Executive Leaders: **50**
- ✓ Middle Managers: **37**
- ✓ High potentials/emerging leaders : **28**
- ✓ Others: smaller counts in dataset

Perception vs practice

On paper, the consensus is clear: most respondents believe coaching should be for *anyone*.

In practice, however, the picture shifts and access still clusters at senior and middle-management levels.

This gap isn't about a lack of demand. As we've seen, interest spans the organisation and people are willing to invest their own time and money. The reality is that access is often driven by hierarchy, budget cycles or perceived status. For organisations, this is both a limitation and an opportunity: widening access could tap into a ready audience that's already motivated to make the most of coaching.

"It's seen as a reward,
not a tool — that
needs to change."

Source (Q19): Any other comments on leadership coaching in your organisation?

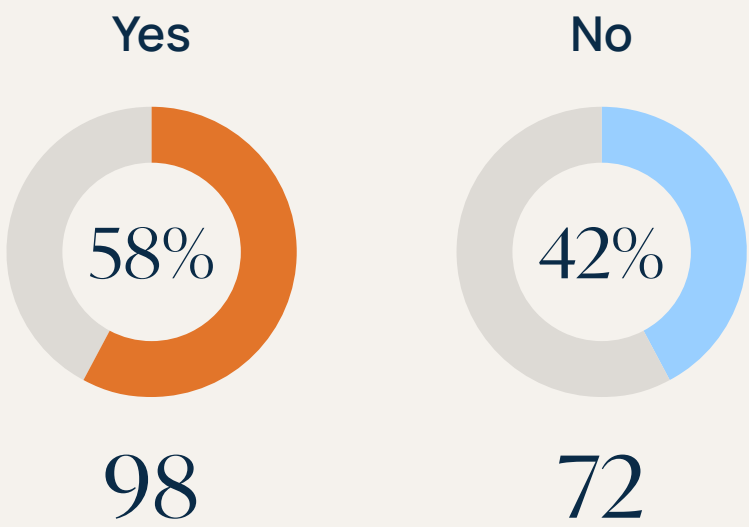
Respondent ID: #131

Role (Q3): Middle Manager/Leader

Coaching & training

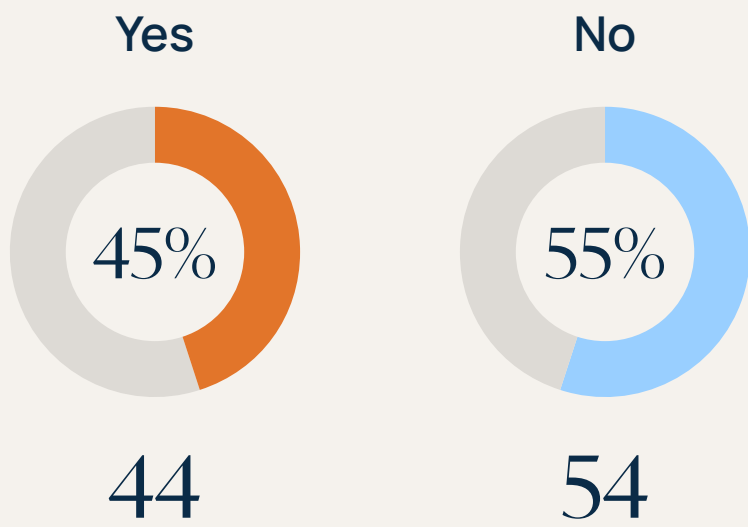
1

Attended management/
leadership training
in the last 5 years?



2

Of those trained, received
post-training coaching?



"After training, I
knew what to do but
not always **how to**
— coaching would
have made it stick."

Source (Q11): Would coaching have supported you after training?
Respondent ID: #84
Role (Q3): Senior/Executive Leader

Would coaching have supported you after training?*

*From open-text responses to Q11

Just over half of respondents have had management or leadership training in the past five years. Yet among those, fewer than half had access to coaching afterwards. That's a significant gap; training provides the knowledge, but without follow-up support, behaviour change can stall.

The open-text responses to this question are revealing. Many described feeling confident about what to do after training, but less clear on how to apply it in their specific context. Others mentioned struggling to keep new skills front of mind once they were back in day-to-day pressures.

From a prevention standpoint, this is where coaching earns its place. Building a short-term coaching period into training programmes can bridge the gap between knowledge and confident execution, increasing the return on investment for both the learner and the organisation.

Key Terms

Apply. Confidence.
Embed. Practice.
Follow-up. Reinforce.
Implement.

“Training was great, but without **follow-up** I slipped back into old habits.”

Source (Q11): Would coaching have supported you after training?

Respondent ID: #46

Role (Q3): Professional/Expert

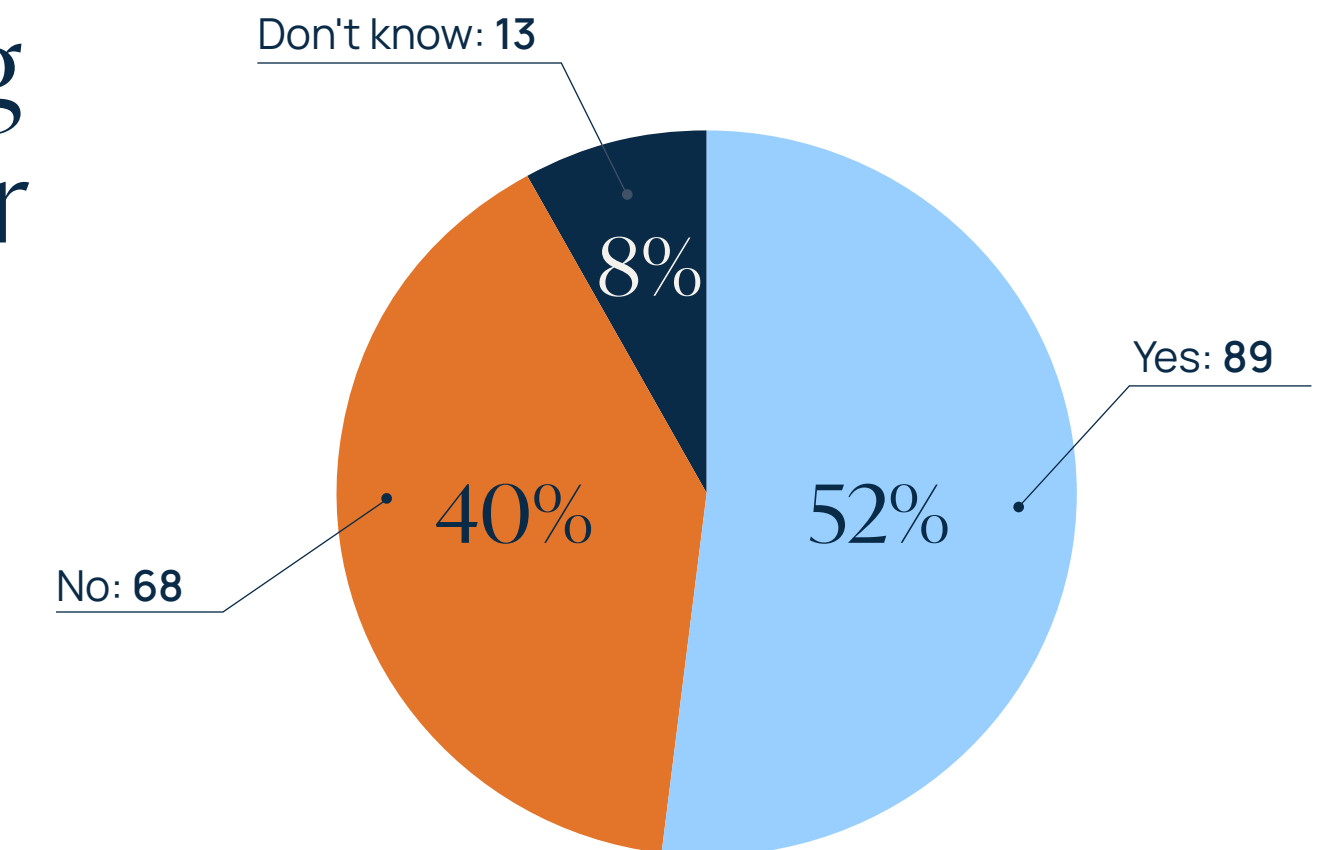
Where coaching happens (and by whom)

Just over half of respondents say their organisation offers 1:1 coaching. Among those, delivery is split between external coaches and a mix of internal/external provision, with only a small minority relying solely on in-house delivery.

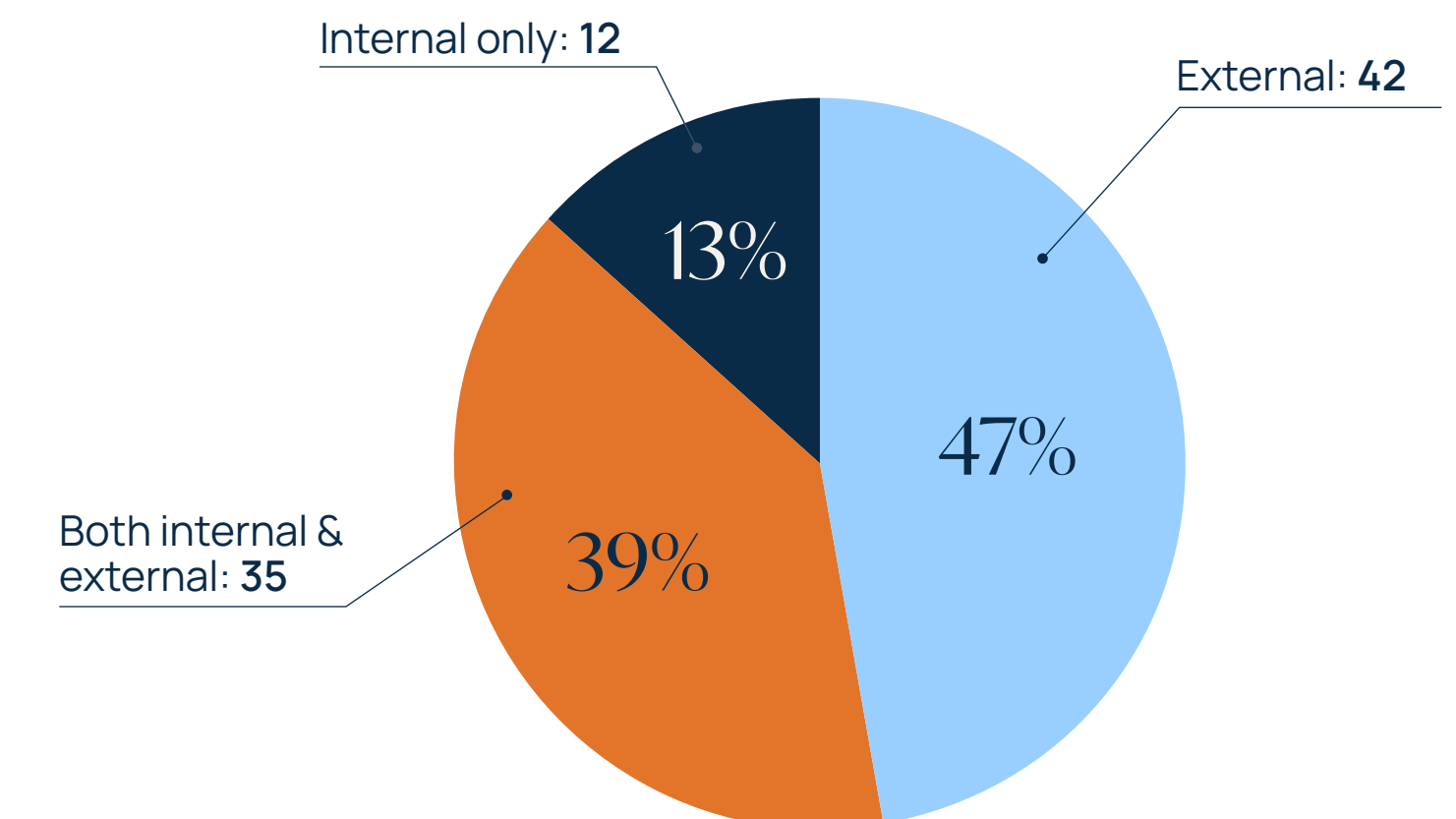
Trust and confidentiality often play a big role in how coaching is perceived and used. External coaches can offer neutrality and a safe space for candid discussion, especially on sensitive issues. Internal coaches, on the other hand, can bring sharper organisational context and may be better placed for tactical, skills-based support.

There is a right time, a right place and a right person for both internal and external coaching. External coaching tends to add the most value in strategic development, high-stakes transitions, or sensitive conflict work. Internal coaching works best for reinforcing skills, embedding processes and supporting day-to-day performance.

Does 1:1 coaching take place in your organisation?



If yes, who delivers it?



Barriers to coaching

Number of respondents who selected that barrier (multi-select Q16)

It's expensive:

104

Therapy stigma:

20

Only for the most senior:

55

Senior leaders
not supportive:

31

People don't really
understand what leadership/
executive coaching is:

96

Managers/leaders scared to ask:

96

Difficult to
quantify ROI:

78

Perception:
coach = poor
performer:

38

Time-consuming/takes people away from the day job:

47

What people think coaching should cost

Most respondents place a reasonable programme cost at £1,500–£2,100 for 6 sessions, with just over a quarter expecting it to be less than £1,500. Only a small minority see value in spending above £3,000.

This price anchoring matters. For budget-holders, knowing where expectations sit can shape how programmes are designed and communicated. It also reinforces the need to link investment to measurable outcomes, otherwise, “too expensive” will remain a default objection.

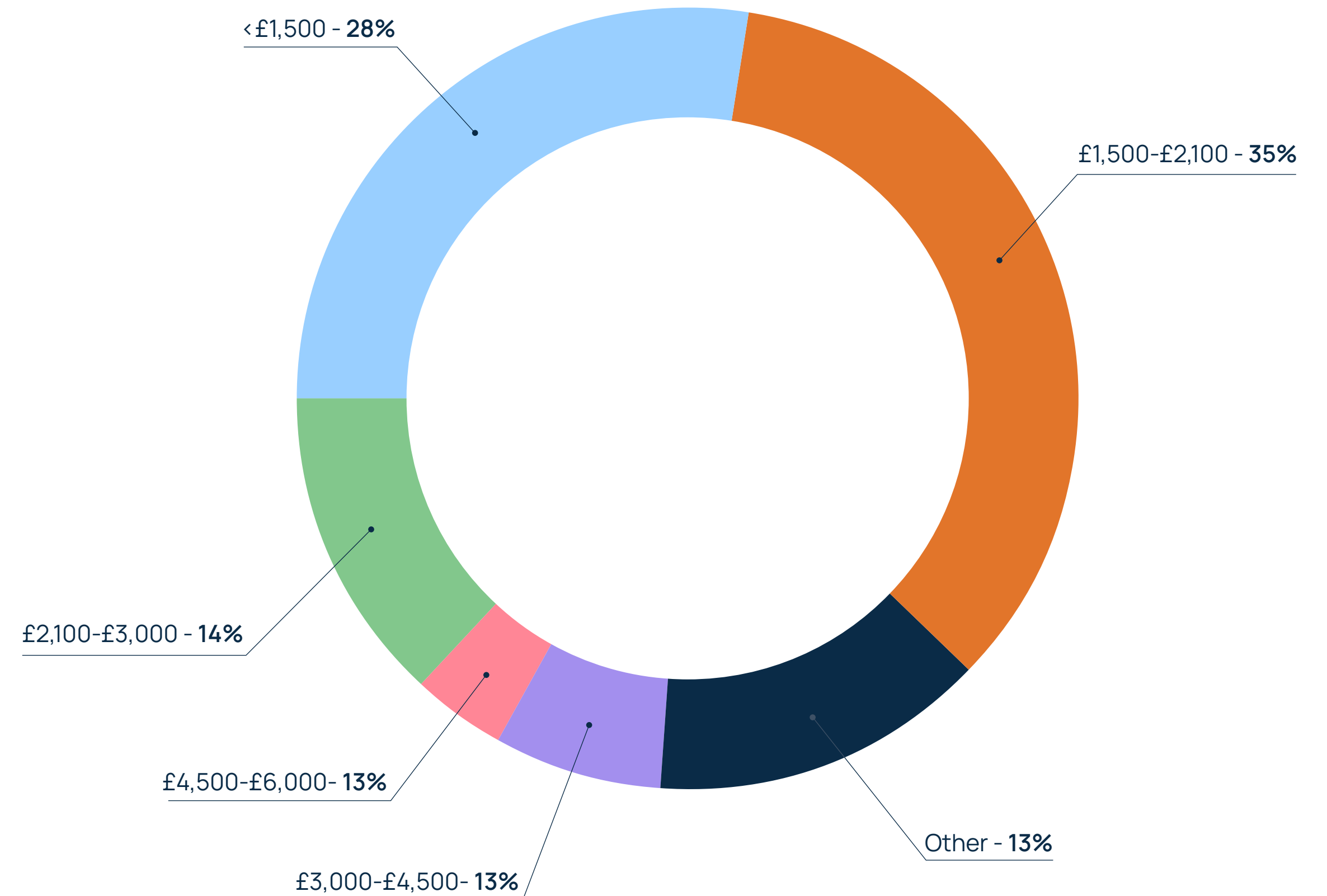
"It's only expensive if you don't see the results and you won't if you don't follow through."

Source (Q17): What do you think is a reasonable amount?

Respondent ID: #125

Role (Q3): Business Owner

Reasonable amount for 6×90-minute sessions over 6 months



ROI panel

Coaching is often one of the first things to be cut when budgets tighten and seen as a 'nice-to-have' rather than a necessity. But what's the real cost when a manager or leader doesn't get the support they need? For someone stepping into a new role, having an independent space to test ideas, set direction and build relationships can be invaluable. The impact shows up in clearer communication, stronger engagement and better results. Without that support, though, small issues can fester, confidence slips, and tensions turn into formal complaints. The panel below shows a comparison: the hidden costs of an unresolved grievance versus the proactive investment that coaching represents.

The cost of *not* coaching

Grievance investigation (6-12 weeks)	£22,000+
Suspensions/overtime cover costs	£4,500
Manager time diverted from core work	£2,000+
Potential legal cost	£5,000+
Recruitment/Onboarding replacements	£6-12k per role
Productivity/Morale impact	Hard to quantify but significant
Reputational Impact	Damaged client/stakeholder trust

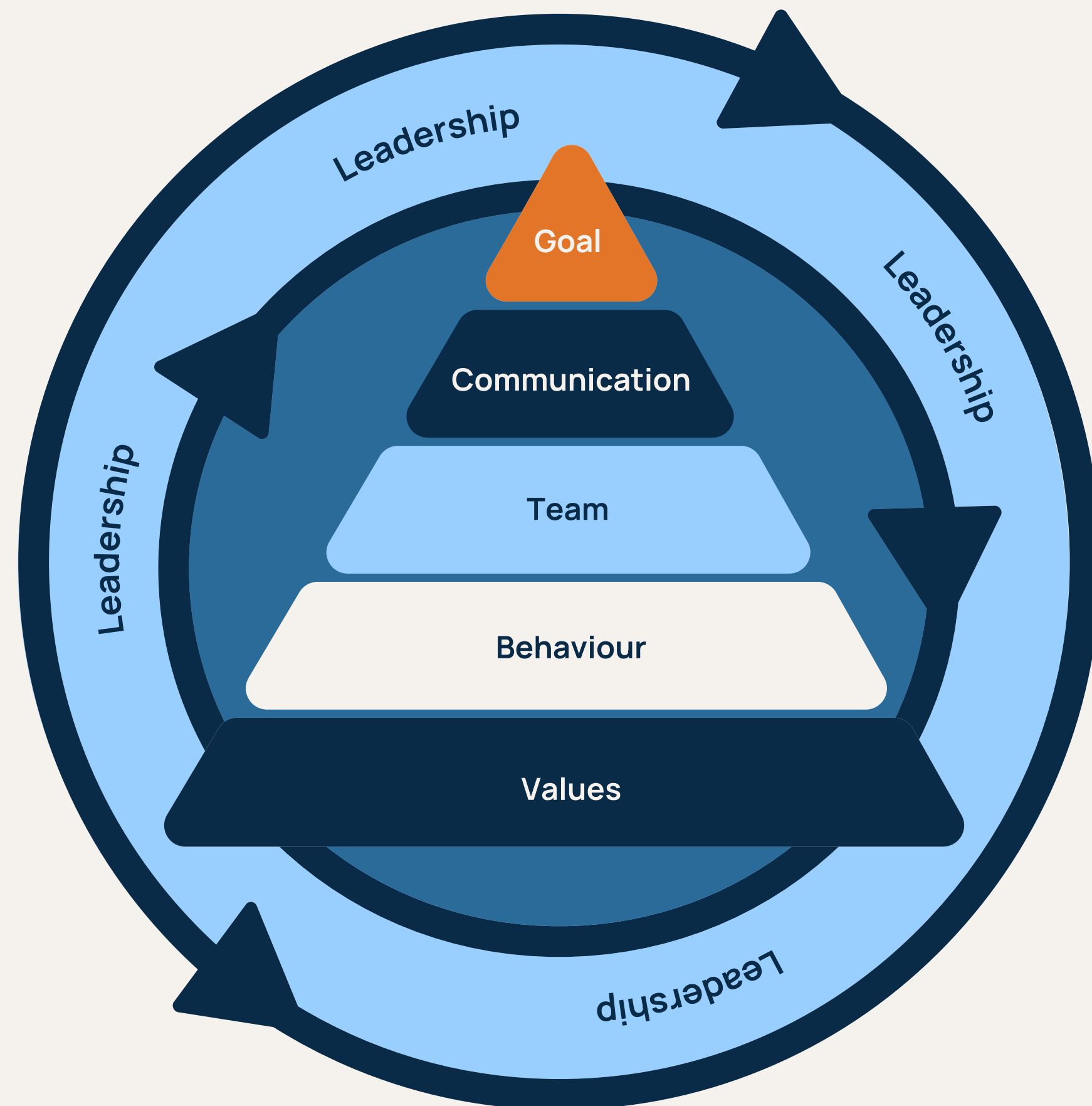
Higher-end coaching programme investment (based on survey)

6×90-minute sessions over 6 months:

£4,500–£6,000

Framed this way, the programme cost is **less** than the expense of a single unresolved issue escalating to formal action.

Connecting the data to leadership needs



Although the survey used different language, the most common reasons leaders seek coaching align closely with the five focus areas in **The Strength Model**. This reinforces that the model isn't an abstract concept; it **reflects real-world challenges** leaders are already trying to solve.

Data Source

Q7 in the dataset: Why did you have a coach? (multi-select)

Filter applied: Only respondents who answered "Yes" to Q6 ("Have you ever had 1:1 coaching?") – 128 respondents

Each number = count of respondents (out of 128) who selected that specific reason in Q7

% = $(\text{count} \div 128) \times 100$ (rounded to nearest whole %)

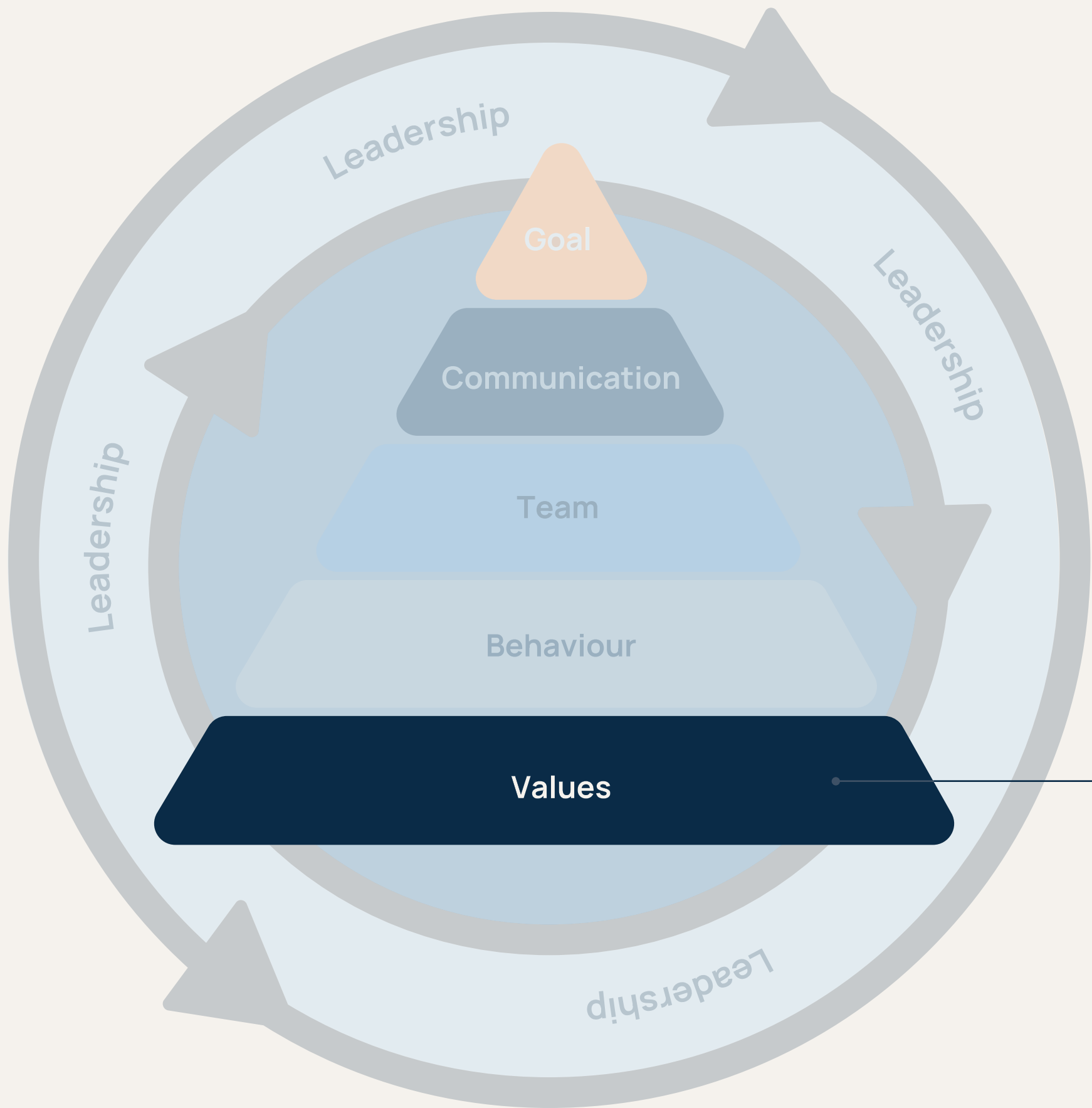
“Having someone to keep me on track meant I didn’t just learn something once — I kept using it.”

Source (Q8): What would you like the coach to support you to achieve?

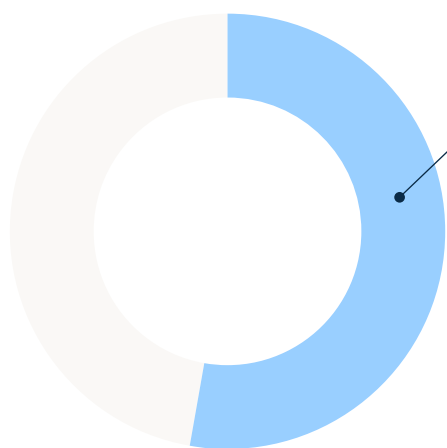
Respondent ID: #92

Role (Q3): Senior/Executive Leader

Connecting the data to leadership needs



Values

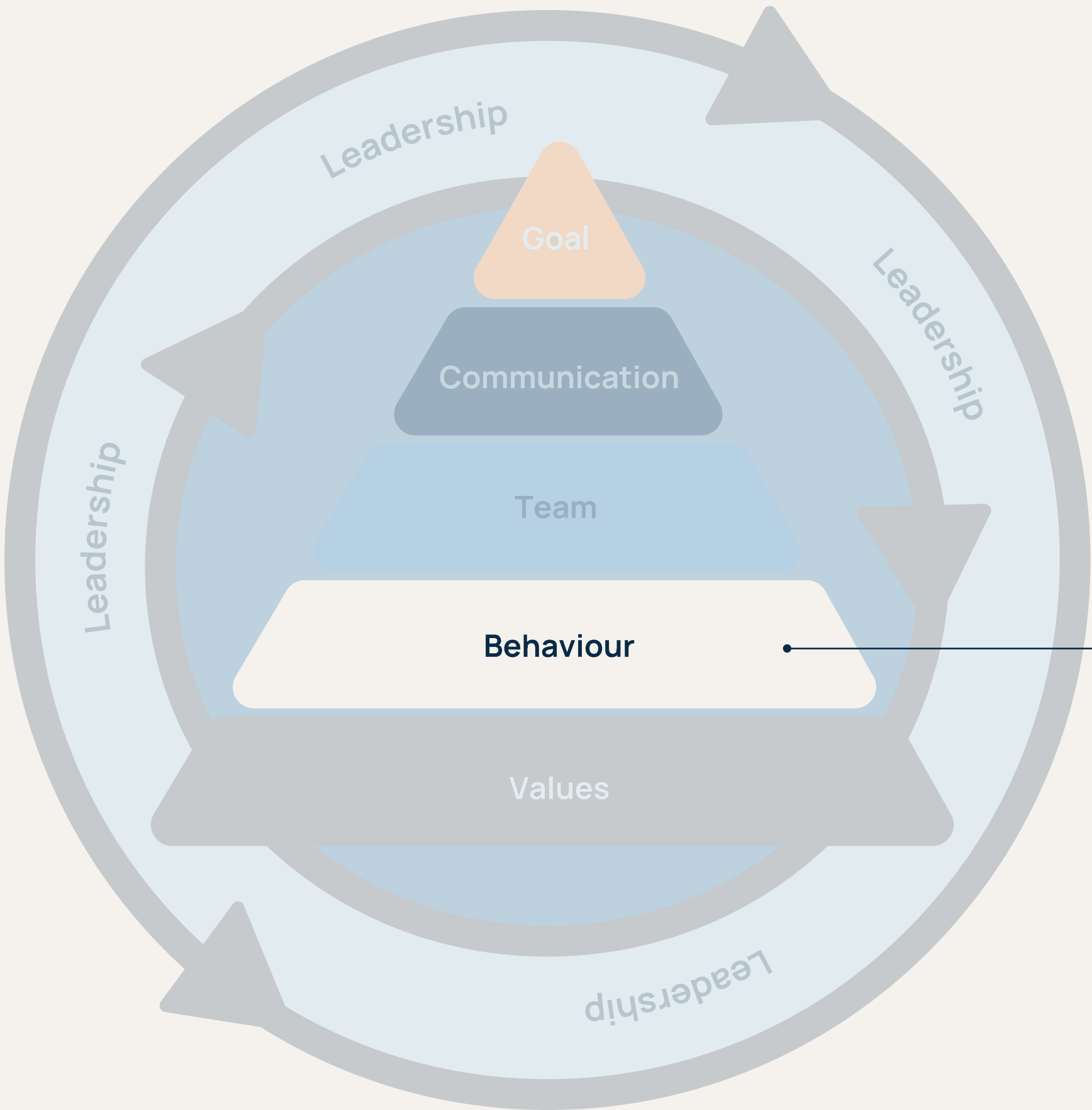


68 respondents (53%)
Number of respondents who have had coaching and selected “Develop management/leadership skills” in Q7.

Themes: building confidence to lead in line with personal and organisational values; staying consistent under pressure.

Values in the Strength Model are about **leaders knowing what they stand for and acting accordingly**. Skill development through coaching often focuses on aligning day-to-day decisions with those values; so leaders can be trusted and consistent, even in high-stakes situations.

Connecting the data to leadership needs



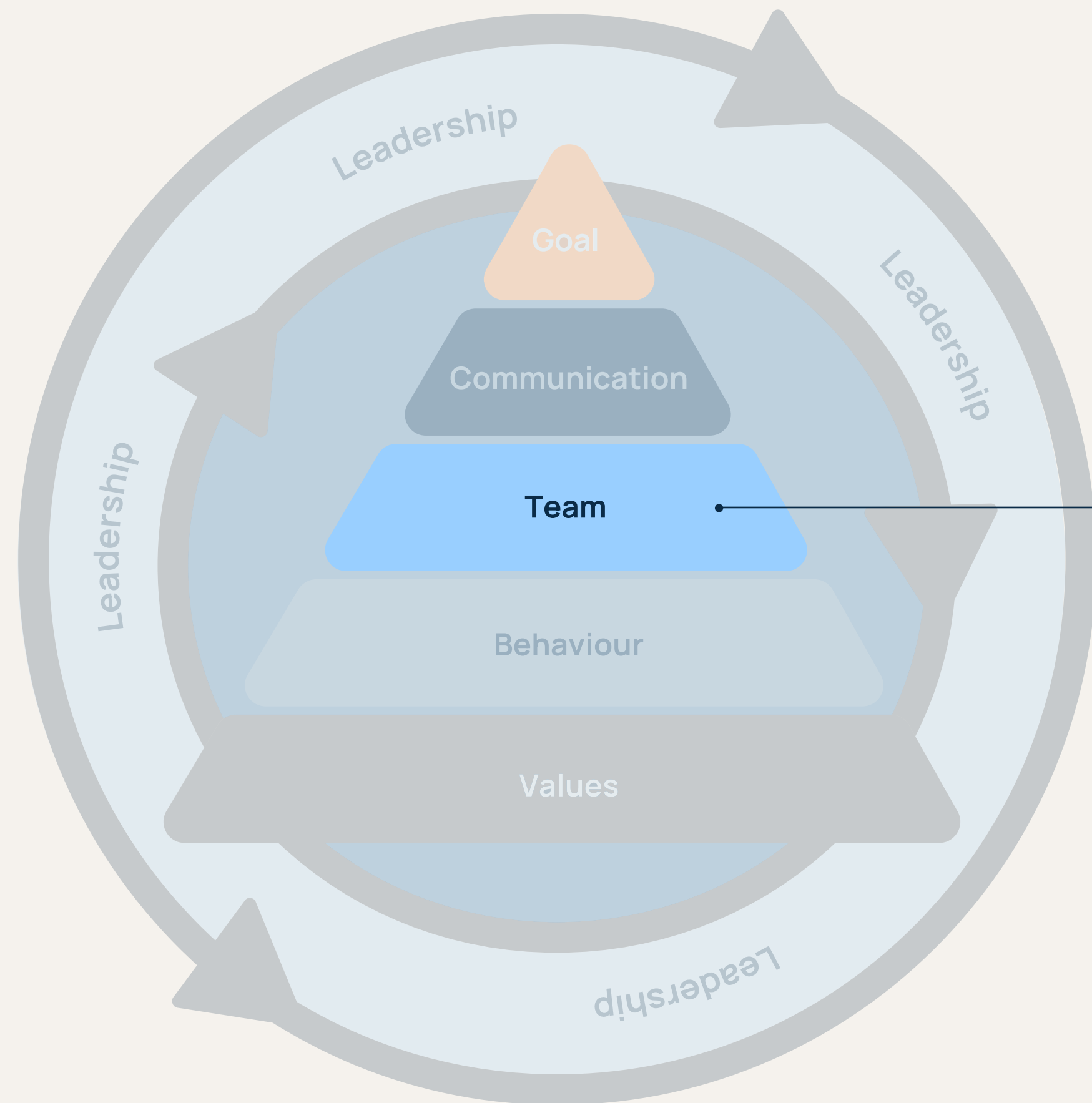
Behaviour



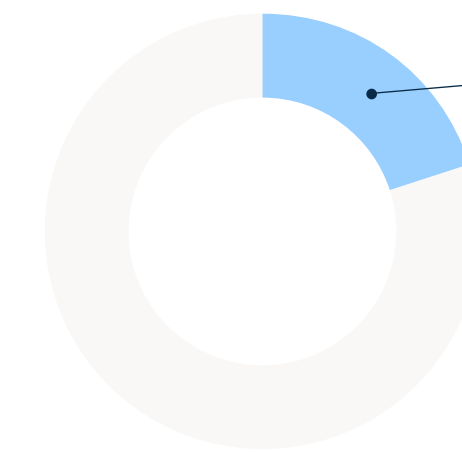
Themes: improving how they manage people; breaking unhelpful habits; modelling behaviours they want from their team.

Behaviour is where **values become visible**. Coaching helps leaders see how their actions are perceived and make deliberate shifts; reinforcing the behaviours that **build credibility and trust**.

Connecting the data to leadership needs



Team



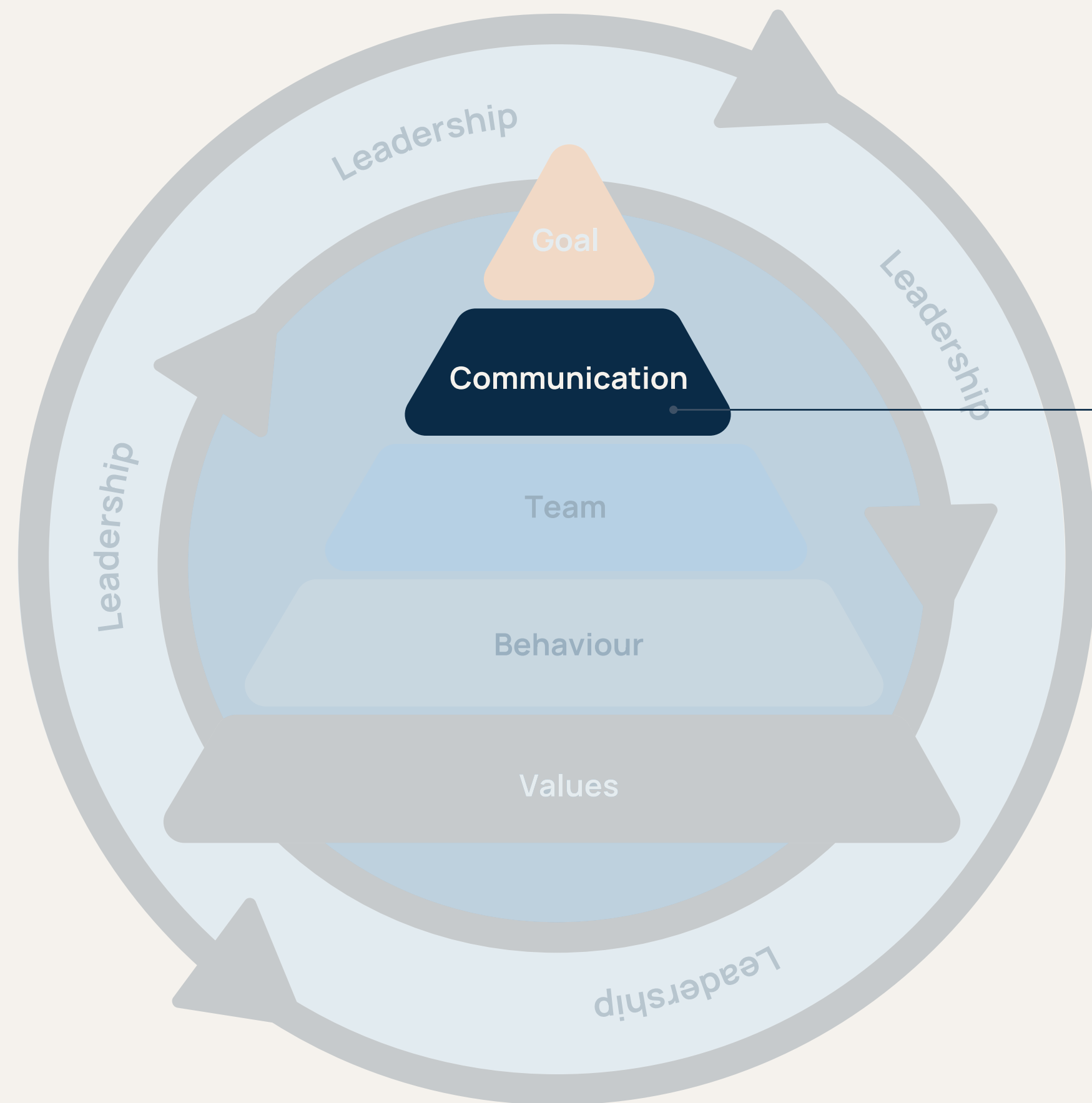
25 respondents (20%)

Number of respondents who have had coaching and selected “Handling challenging team/peers” in **Q7**.

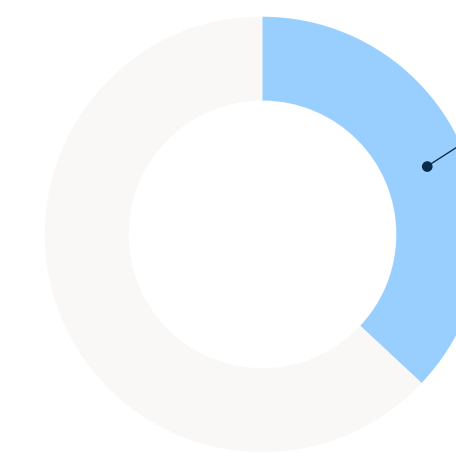
Themes: managing conflict before it escalates; navigating difficult relationships; improving team dynamics.

The Team element of the model focuses on **creating an environment where people can thrive without unnecessary friction**. Coaching supports leaders to address tensions early, strengthening team cohesion and avoiding costly disputes.

Connecting the data to leadership needs



Communication



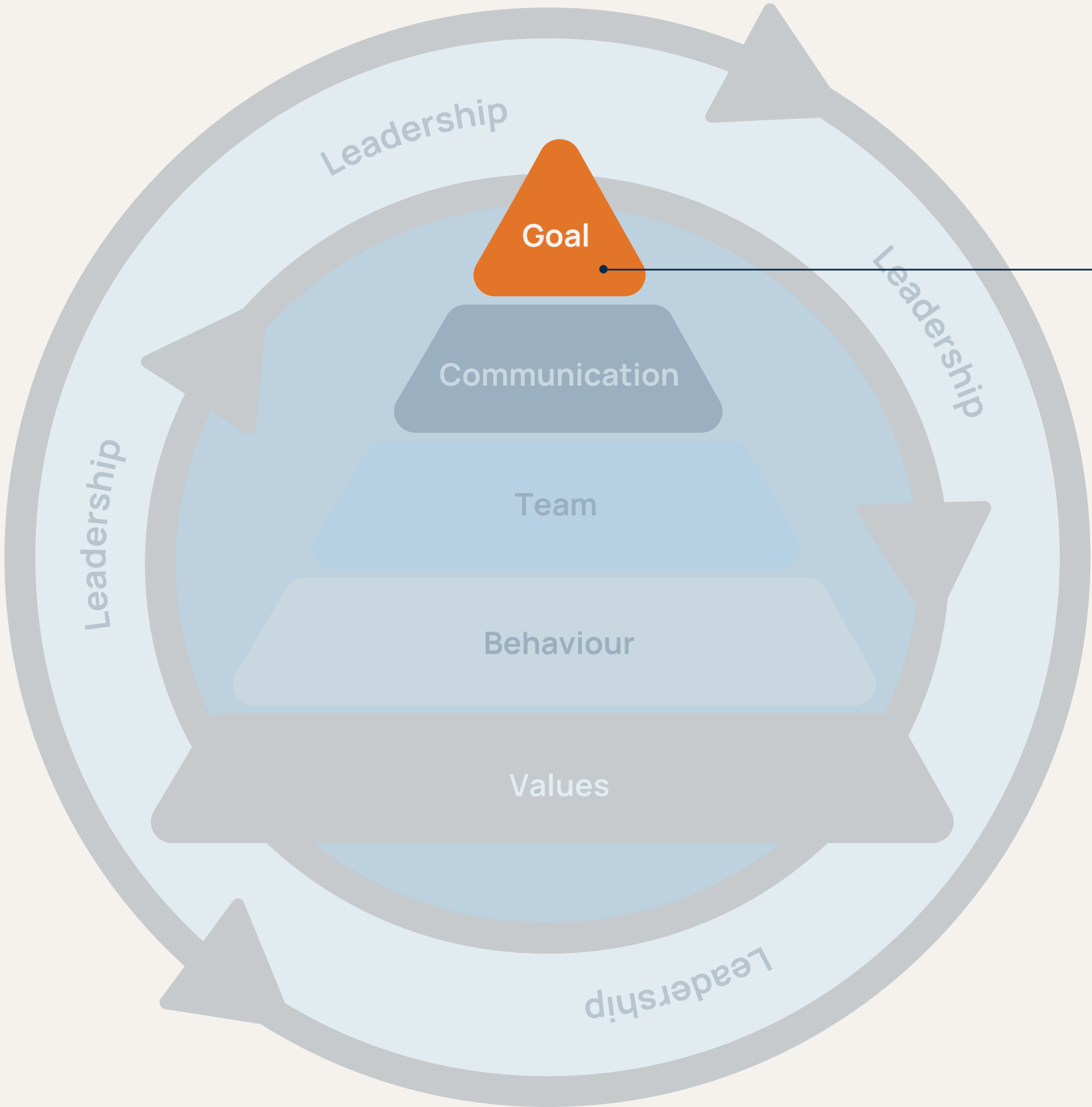
47 respondents (37%)

Number of respondents who have had coaching and selected “Support in a new leadership role” in Q7.

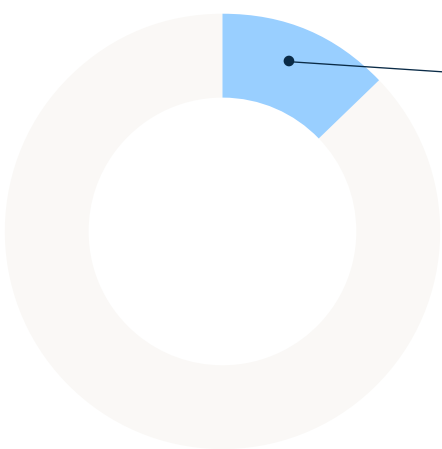
Themes: clarifying expectations; communicating direction in a new role; being understood and trusted quickly.

Communication in the Strength Model is about making sure **messages land as intended and people feel heard and valued.** Leaders stepping into new roles often use coaching to sharpen how they communicate priorities and vision.

Connecting the data to leadership needs



The Goal of the Business



17 respondents (13%)

Number of respondents who have had coaching and selected “Transfer of learning after training” in Q7.

Themes: keeping business goals front-of-mind; linking individual development to organisational objectives; sustaining progress after training.

This part of the model ensures leadership activity **supports the organisation’s long-term aims**. Coaching in this context helps leaders apply what they’ve learned in a way that drives results for the business, not just personal growth.

Recommendations



1

Start leadership support from *day one*

Make coaching **part of your recruitment package**. Next time you need to recruit, whether internally or externally, offer the successful candidate the opportunity to have a coach for 3–6 months. Not only does this demonstrate that you want to set them up for success from the start, but it also shows your commitment to investing in their development and providing the confidential sounding board that many leaders value.



2

Integrate coaching into development

Integrate **3–6 months of coaching** into at least one leadership or management training programme. This addresses the “transfer of learning” gap, where only 13% of coached respondents cited post-training support.



3

Make “permission to ask” *explicit*

Address cultural barriers by adding clear policy language stating coaching is available and encouraged. This directly responds to the survey data **showing 51 respondents felt leaders are scared to ask and 20 highlighted stigma** around coaching. By making permission explicit, organisations can remove fear, reduce stigma and normalise coaching access across all levels.

Recommendations



Match *coach type* to the *need*

For behavioural shifts, high-stakes transitions, or conflict prevention, use external coaches – confidentiality and neutrality are key here. For skills development or ongoing support, other coaching options may be appropriate depending on context.

Chemistry matters: the effectiveness of any coaching relationship depends on trust and fit between coach and coachee.

“It’s hard to explain what coaching actually involves, so it’s easy for people to dismiss it.”

Source (Q16): Why isn't coaching seen more frequently?

Respondent ID: #91

Role (Q3): Professional/Expert

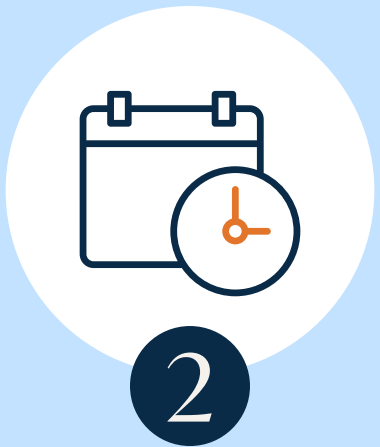
How to make the case for coaching

The process is more nuanced than this and will depend on your role, situation and the challenges you’re facing. But these are some of the basics to think about when introducing or requesting coaching in your organisation. Many leaders and managers don’t fully understand what coaching involves or how it helps. Taking time to explain the process, share real examples and set clear expectations can reduce barriers and build support. Be Business Fit can help with this through briefings or workshops tailored to your organisation.



Identify the **outcome** you want to achieve.

Be clear about whether it’s leadership development, team performance, succession planning or another priority.



Suggest a **short pilot** (3–6 months).

A pilot allows you to test impact, reduce risk and build internal evidence for wider rollout.



Understand **investment** expectation.

Coaching investment varies depending on the coach, context and programme length. The survey showed a broad range of costs (see previous slides), so it’s important to do some research or ask the coach you’d consider working with about their fees. Costs can vary widely, but being clear on typical expectations helps make the case more credible.



Link your request to **organisational priorities or KPIs**.

Position coaching as a solution that supports existing goals rather than an “extra.”

How to use this report

This is a snapshot of what **170 leaders** and **professionals** across the UK are saying about coaching: where it's *working*, where it's *missing* and what's *getting in the way*.

If you're a senior leader or HR decision-maker, consider running a short internal survey to understand your own organisation's appetite for coaching. This not only surfaces hidden demand but also builds a clear case for investment. Be Business Fit can support you in designing and delivering this exercise, ensuring the right questions are asked and the results translate into practical next steps.

“The right coach is someone who asks the questions you didn't realise you needed to answer.”

Source (Q8): What would you like the coach to support you to achieve?

Respondent ID: #84

Role (Q3): Middle Manager/Leader

To get the most from it:

1

Share it internally

Use it to spark discussion among your leadership team, HR and L&D colleagues.

2

Book a short read-out

Host a 30–45 minute session to walk through the findings and discuss how they compare to your own context.

3

Set outcomes upfront

Link coaching activity to measurable goals, such as improved team scores, reduced conflict incidents, or faster ramp-up in new roles.

4

Run a pilot

Choose one cohort or programme and integrate coaching for 3–6 months. Track outcomes against cost, culture and capability.

About the author

Sam Heighway is the founder of Be Business Fit, a leadership consultancy specialising in behaviour-led coaching, conflict prevention and leadership capability building.

With 30 years of experience working with organisations across sectors, Sam's approach is grounded in real-world leadership challenges and a belief that prevention is better than cure. Her work helps leaders build strength, act with integrity and deliver results without compromising the wellbeing of their teams.

This report was peer reviewed by a group of independent industry peers, whose expertise and perspectives have added depth, balance and credibility to the findings. Special thanks go to Heather Ansley-Myers, Ria Burrage-Male, Amanda Morgan and Evelyn Thomas for their contributions as independent reviewers and valued voices within the coaching community.



If you've found the insights in this report useful, consider supporting **City Hospice**, a charity close to our work at Be Business Fit.

City Hospice provides essential palliative care and bereavement support for families in Cardiff. Their work ensures that people facing some of life's toughest moments are cared for with dignity and compassion.

At Be Business Fit, we believe leadership is also about giving back. Supporting City Hospice is one way we connect our work on strength, care and prevention to the wider community.



Contributors

Thank you to the 170 leaders, managers and professionals across the UK who completed the survey and shared their experiences of coaching. Every chart, theme and quote in this report comes directly from their responses.

“It’s easier to be honest
with someone **outside** the
organisation.”

Source (Q10): If yes, who delivers it?

Respondent ID: #73

Role (Q3): Professional/Expert



If you've read something here that made you think differently about coaching, pass it on. The more we talk about the role of coaching in everyday leadership, the **stronger our workplaces become.**

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